

Oral History Interview
with
Mark Cannon

Interview Conducted by
Juliana Nykolaiszyn and Tanya Finchum
June 15, 2012

The “Big Top” Show Goes On:
An Oral History of Occupations Inside and Outside the Canvas Circus Tent

Oklahoma Oral History Research Program
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An Oral History of Occupations Inside and Outside the Canvas Circus Tent

Interview History

Interviewer: Juliana Nykolaiszyn, Tanya Finchum

Transcriber: Adam Evans

Editors: Miranda Mackey, Tanya Finchum

The recording and transcript of this interview were processed at the Oklahoma State University Library in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Project Detail

The “Big Top” Show Goes On: An Oral History of Occupations Inside and Outside the Canvas Circus Tent aims to preserve the voices and experiences of those involved with the work culture associated with Hugo, Oklahoma’s tent circus tradition.

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Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recordings and transcripts of the interview with Mark Cannon is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on June 15, 2012.

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About Mark Cannon...

Mark Cannon was born in 1951 in Hugo, Oklahoma and lived there until 1998 when he relocated to Shawnee, Oklahoma. Mark is the grandson of Vernon and Jewell Pratt who are credited with bringing to Hugo the first circus to establish winter quarters there. Vernon Pratt loved circuses and eventually would own and operate the James Christy Brothers Circus for around fifteen years. He trained horses and performed a Liberty Act. In 1947 Vernon took the circus to Hawaii where Mark’s parents met where his mother (Betty Jean) was performing a trapeze act and his father was a local electrician. Vernon passed away in the early 1960s and the circus was sold.

Mark graduated from Hugo High School during the time the Vietnam Conflict and joined the army reserves. He attended the University of Oklahoma for a couple of years and married his high school sweetheart (Mary Jane Jeffrey Cannon), a graduate of Oklahoma State University. They have been married for over forty years, have three children, five grandchildren, and reside in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

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Mark Cannon

Oral History Interview

Interviewed by Juliana Nykolaiszyn
& Tanya Finchum
June 15, 2012
Shawnee, Oklahoma



Nykolaiszyn *My name is Juliana Nykolaiszyn, also with me is Tanya Finchum. We’re with the Oklahoma State University Library, part of the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program. Today is Friday, June 15, 2012. We’re in Shawnee, Oklahoma, interviewing Mark Cannon. Thank you so much for joining us today.*

Cannon Thank you for coming.

Nykolaiszyn *We’re going to talk with Mark today about the circus. This is part of the Circus oral history project we’re doing with the Library [of Congress]. We first want to learn a little more about you. Could you tell us the year you were born and where you grew up?*

Cannon I was born in 1951 in Hugo, Oklahoma. I lived there until 1998, currently live in Shawnee.

Nykolaiszyn *Can you tell us a little about your parents?*

Cannon Well, I lost my mother a couple years ago. She was born and raised her whole life in Hugo. We’ll get into this later, but they met in the Hawaiian Islands, wherein as my grandfather took a circus over there. They met and got married. He was born and raised in the Hawaiian Islands. He moved back to Hugo and he lived there the rest of his life and died there. So, like I say, they’re both deceased. But my dad had a good life. He passed away when he was eighty-six and my mother was about the same age, too. That’s a little bit about me.

Nykolaiszyn *Well, your family has deep roots in Hugo and a strong circus tie to the Hugo community. It all really starts with your grandparents. Can you tell us about your grandparents, their names and their profession?*

Cannon

Well, my grandfather's name was Vernon Pratt. People from Hugo may recognize the name Pratt. There were several brothers, and they were all in the grocery store business. He had a fascination with circuses. He attended a circus, it's my understanding, over in Arkansas. The circus was finishing up the year there. It was the end of their time for that year, and they didn't have a place to winter, park everything. They repaint and rebuild and work on all the trucks and all that [during the winter]. So, my grandfather offered to let them come to Hugo and stay out in his pasture, a ranch that he owned south of Hugo.

It's my understanding that the next year, they came and stayed there again, and then they eventually bought property, the circus. The Millers, they own quite a bit of land on the east side of Hugo, now. It just kind of took off from there. As I was growing up, I can remember there being five or six different circuses. I lived out south of Hugo and there was one right across the street from us, across the highway. Out on the east side, there were several out there. That was my granddad, and then my grandmother was from there, too. She was a Patterson. Her name was Jewel Patterson. She passed away just a few years ago at 103. She was a great, great lady. That's a little bit about them.

Nykolaiszyn

At some point, did Vernon start a circus?

Cannon

He did. I was talking to my cousin, my mother's sister's son, it's a shame these people passed away and we didn't document it better. But I do know for a fact that as early as 1947, he had a circus because in 1947, he took a circus to the Hawaiian Islands on a ship. My cousin, which his mother, her name is Rita Joe. My cousin has shared with me on a couple different occasions that his mother remembered standing out in front of the ship and going under the Golden Gate Bridge. But anyway, he took the circus to the Hawaiian Islands. My father was an electrician there, and he worked for Hawaiian Electric. It's my understanding that he stayed out at the circus area to make sure if something went wrong with the electricity that he would be there to manage it. At that point, they met, he met my mother. She was active in the circus as far as she did stuff on the trapeze and different things. A lot of the pictures that we've talked about, there's pictures of her doing this stuff. Anyway, they met. And keep in mind, my dad, he was born and raised out on the Hawaiian Islands and lived in Honolulu. In about two weeks, they got married and he moved back to Hugo and lived there the rest of his life. He was probably born in '21 and he came back in '47, so he was probably twenty-five or twenty-six years old. And then he lived there for sixty years.

Nykolaiszyn

That's a big jump from Hawaii to Hugo.

Cannon I'm telling you. I'm telling you. (Laughter) If you've been to Hugo, you know it. But that's how he got here and that's a little bit of history that I know took place.

Nykolaiszyn *When he and your mother returned to Hugo, what did they do?*

Cannon My father was in the propane business and he had a plumbing and electrical shop. He had some licensed plumbers, and that's mostly what he did. He had a few other little ventures. They had a bowling alley. He had a miniature golf course. He got a truck and started selling propane to rural areas. It grew over the years and it supported us. It was a profitable business. We were never wealthy or anything, but we never lacked for anything. That's what he did. My mother, she was in the florist business for years and years. I think probably twenty-five years. She did that up until just a few years before she passed away.

Nykolaiszyn *So, did the tie to the circus end after they got back from Hawaii?*

Cannon No, I was discussing this with my cousin, trying to get some bearings on it and some facts. This was in like '47. I know they were in Hawaii. I was born in '51 and after my third grade year in school, I would have been probably ten years old. That would have been in '61 or '62. As soon as school was out, they were up in Kansas or Nebraska and I got to go up and go with the circus and stay with my grandmother and grandfather. We went through Nebraska and South Dakota, North Dakota. We went all the way up to the Canada border. So, I know he still had the circus in '61 or '62. So, that's a span of fourteen or fifteen years. I know that it ended shortly thereafter because my grandfather, he passed away, I think, in September '65. He had a heart attack. I know he hadn't been active in the circus for several years, so that was probably '61 or '62 was about the end of this deal.

The name of that circus as I remember it was James Christy Brothers Circus. I can remember my grandfather, he ran the whole thing. But I would get up about four o'clock in the morning and go with my grandmother and we'd put out arrows for the trucks to know where to go. I remember I had a big stapler, it was like a hammer. She'd tell me which way to point them and point them down, tell them to slow down, right or left. I'd put them on trees or telephone poles and use that stapler. We'd get there early and then she would be responsible for getting food for everybody. They had a trailer with a kitchen in it. That's a little bit of the time frame, as I remember.

Nykolaiszyn *That's quite an adventure for a young kid.*

Cannon Yes, like I say, I was about ten or eleven years old. I got to ride the

elephant every day, like in the grand entry. I'd ride the elephant and then they had a horse and they asked for somebody to come out of the stands. So, I'd go down there and I'd ride this horse. It'd run around the ring. It had a belt on and had a rope that went up to like a carwash that swings around. This horse would do it and I'd fall off. Of course, I wouldn't fall off because I had the rope and had the big belt on that would catch me. I'd hold onto its tail and go around and round the ring. I was just a little kid, so it was pretty wild.

Finchum *What were the campers like at that time?*

Cannon What we stayed in?

Finchum *Yes.*

Cannon My grandparents, they had a—it looked like an old—I don't think it was an eighteen-wheeler, but it was a tractor-trailer rig. It was just an old box trailer. It had a place up over the fifth wheel, and my grandmother was pretty good at fixing things up, making them look pretty. She turned it into a house that was pretty crude, but had the beds up over the fifth wheel. You step down and she had a little kitchen area. They conducted all the business there, the ticket sales and all that. It wasn't much to it, but that's what they lived in. That's what they traveled in. It's not like you see today. There weren't Airstreams or Winnebagos or anything. (Laughs)

Finchum *I understand water was always an issue?*

Cannon It was always an issue. Weather. I saw some tents blow, literally, away. All the employees of the circus would have to—the tent would be on the ground, and they would have to—everybody that was with the show, they had to get out there and sew up the rips. So, it was a traveling, interesting deal.

Finchum *Did you have siblings?*

Cannon I had three sisters, one older and two younger. They were around it periodically. For some reason, I got to travel with it for about two and a half, three months. So, I got a little exposure to it.

Finchum *So, you attended all your school in Hugo, elementary and high?*

Cannon Oh, yes. I mean, the summer that I got to go, since school was out, I left and then I came back. I didn't miss any school. But there were kids, and still are, that were home schooled and they would have to do their work as they traveled. But that wasn't my situation. It was just an opportunity

for me to experience and be with my grandparents.

Finchum

You didn't get the bug?

Cannon

I did not get the bug. (Laughter) Obviously, my grandfather had the bug. I wish I knew some facts and figures whether he really ever profited from it greatly or it was just something he wanted to do. If you've been around circuses, it's a grind. Set up, tear down, move, weather and stuff breaking down.

Finchum

How many children did your grandparents have?

Cannon

Vernon and Jewel, they had two daughters—my mother, Betty Jean, and then Rita Joe. She was from Corpus Christi, and my mother was born and raised in Hugo.

Finchum

Did any of the grandkids get into the circus business?

Cannon

Never. No one ever went that direction. It's interesting, down there, now—you mentioned you know the—you got to talk to the Byrds, and their kids have gotten into it. There's the Rawls, one of their daughters. He finally kind of semi-retired. He's active. He's been the mayor and on the council and stuff. They had a daughter, and she married a young man named Fry, Frank Fry, and they took the circus out. So, I've seen instances where the siblings did follow them, but it didn't happen in my family.

Finchum

Did they stay in the grocery business?

Cannon

No, he got out of the grocery business. Again, I don't know the years, but there were years that he was doing some of both. Not at the end. Like I said, some of the old videos I have have pictures of the old grocery stores.

Nykolaiszyn

We've heard some people say that he invested in other shows in town?

Cannon

You know, those are things that—I mean, I was fourteen or fifteen years old when he died. I never discussed the finances. I don't think that my grandparents ever accumulated anything to speak of, but obviously, he got to do something he loved. I guess it supported him. But at the end, I doubt if it was sold for any amount of money.

Finchum

They liked it well enough to keep staying in Hugo, though.

Cannon

Yes, yes.

- Finchum** *Found something else to do, too.*
- Nykolaiszyn** *And I think when people talk about Hugo and circus, his name is almost always brought up as being an important part of why Hugo has the circus.*
- Cannon** I think the Millers and the original circuses that were there appreciated the fact that he offered the place for them to winter. They were always grateful. I know in some of the articles you read, his name will appear periodically, giving him credit for kind of starting that—turned Hugo into Circus Town, USA. There’s still a lot of activity down there now. You all have been there. I haven’t kept up with it, but you know there’s the elephant breeding program, and there’s still a few circuses. It’s pretty interesting to go out there and look at.
- Finchum** *Did he ever perform on the circus or was he just the...?*
- Cannon** You know what, he didn’t perform. He was a nice looking man. He had a full head of hair when he passed away. He didn’t perform, but he trained horses and he worked those in show. I think they called it a Liberty Act. He had, I think, some of the videos, he had one set, they were like black or black and white horses. They’d go in circles and all turn at the same time, rear up, put their feet on the next horse’s back. He did that. I guess, probably, he was the ringmaster. My grandmother didn’t perform, but my mother and her sister, Rita Joe, both performed. There’s pictures, a lot of pictures and documentation of what they did.
- Finchum** *And what did they do?*
- Cannon** It was trapeze and stuff on ropes and...
- Finchum** *Swinging ladder...*
- Cannon** Yes, yes.
- Nykolaiszyn** *Did your mother miss it?*
- Cannon** She didn’t do it. She passed her—I think there was seven years difference in my mother and father’s age. She got married when they were in Hawaii so she got out of it pretty quick. I don’t know the exact age, but she was probably eighteen, nineteen years old. That was the end of it for her. My grandfather had circuses after that and I know she wasn’t active.
- Finchum** *And her sister?*

- Cannon** Same way. She didn't stay in it, either. When they went to the Hawaiian Islands, I'm going to guess she was probably fourteen, fifteen years old.
- Finchum** *Are your grandparents buried there in Hugo?*
- Cannon** Yes, they are. They're not buried in what they call the Showmen's Rest. They're buried east of there, probably three or four hundred yards. I don't know that in '64, when my grandfather died, that that was started yet. I don't know. Y'all may know the history of Showmen's Rest, when it was started.
- Finchum** *Mid-'60s, I think.*
- Cannon** Mid-'60s, yes. Of course, it's real popular that when you buy two plots you'll be buried next to each other. So, they're close, but not in that area.
- Finchum** *When was the last time you were at a circus?*
- Cannon** It's been a while. (Laughter) I have a son that lives in Greely, Colorado, and my wife's brother lives in Fort Collins. The circus from Hugo was in Estes Park just recently. They all went up to it. So, a little contact there. Some of our kids—I have a daughter that lives in Dallas, and she went to school with some of the kids that are on the circus now. She still knows them. I think they have a little contact, keep in touch.
- Nykolaiszyn** *Well, the circus is a big part of the Hugo community. Growing up, could you tell a difference in town?*
- Cannon** It's interesting. I don't know what people's perception of circus people are. This isn't a knock on carnivals, but some people may, not necessarily to be ugly, but you talk about carnies or that kind of thing. I can tell you that the circus people—my father was in the propane business, in the plumbing, electrical. These people, when they came in, obviously they would get all their funds probably before they went back out. My dad did a lot of business with these people. A lot of them would leave town owing him money, and he always said that he never got cheated. They always paid. They were a high-class bunch of people.
- Of course, now, there's a lot of acts that come from Argentina, Mexico, that kind of stuff. You can tell a difference. When these people came back into town, they were an impact financially. They spent a lot of money. They bought auto parts and food. There is a lot of people that benefitted from trading. Now they have events to welcome them in, and they usually have the first show there before they go out on the road. They'll open in Hugo. So, yes, you were always real aware of it. You'd go down Kirk Street, which is where the circuses are, and there'd be

twenty-five or thirty elephants tied up, one after the other. Go out there and see—where can you go to see a whole herd of elephants? Pretty interesting.

Finchum *You lived there during the time that D.R. was still around. Did you have any interactions with him?*

Cannon Not really. I can see him just plain as day, but I didn't have any dealings with him. I knew who he was and met him and talked to him, but don't remember a whole lot about him. I'm sure y'all have documented that he died on the road and they froze him and waited until they came in where they could have a proper—quite a lot of fanfare. Pretty interesting.

Nykolaiszyn *Were you down there for the funeral?*

Cannon I was not. I'm sure you've seen some articles. There's some big articles written about it.

Nykolaiszyn *Looking back on your family's legacy in the circus, how do you hope people remember Vernon Pratt?*

Cannon Well, it's my memory that they were well-liked and thought of in the community. My grandmother, she was probably the finest, strongest Christian woman I've ever met. She was remarkable. Of course, he died at a pretty young age, but I think they were very well thought of. It's just that I didn't get to experience my grandfather near as long as I did my grandmother. She was here just a few years ago. But they were well-known in the community. Of course, it's not a very big community, but I think everybody knew them. They had a good reputation. I don't know if that's exactly what you're asking me.

Finchum *How do you stay informed of what's going on in Hugo?*

Cannon Just about everybody has passed away, but I still have some friends down there. I owned some real estate stuff down there until recently. Like I say, I've got some friends. My mother and father were divorced along the way. He remarried and we're close to his second wife, my step-mother. She's a great lady. We go down and we see her. We still have contacts down there. We end up back down there, so we kind of keep up. Pretty informed about what's going on. Can't live someplace for that period of time...

Finchum *After high school what did you do?*

Cannon After high school I went to college. The Vietnam War was going on. I joined the army reserves, went to basic training, came back and went to

OU for a couple years and kind of hooked back up with my high school sweetheart that I'd been chasing since the third grade. (Laughter) We got married and that's about forty years ago and we're still married. That's kind of the whole thing in a nutshell. I came here in '98. I'd been in the insurance business and transferred here. It's been a good move, we enjoy living here.

Finchum *I guess we can say on camera—why OU instead of OSU? (Laughter)*

Cannon Yes, I said OU, didn't I? I said a bad word, didn't I? (Laughter)

Nykolaiszyn *That's all right.*

Cannon My wife graduated from OSU.

Nykolaiszyn *Well, good!*

Cannon But I have two sons who graduated from OU.

Nykolaiszyn *Well, we won't hold it against you.*

Cannon So, if you go look in the closet in there, there's... We go to all the football games and stuff, so she's kind of converted. (Laughter)

Nykolaiszyn *Well, you kind of keep your finger a little bit on the pulse of the circus. I mean, you grew up in an area that is known for the circus.*

Cannon Yes.

Nykolaiszyn *Where do you think the circus is going to go in the next ten to twenty years? I know it's kind of hard to predict.*

Cannon Yes. It's got to be a tough business. I will say this. I don't know that my grandparents ever made a lot of money in the circus. I don't want to speak for the Millers, but I know they've done really well. Gee, I don't know. I guess if it's in somebody's blood, they can make it happen. I guess if you get bit by the bug, I guess that somebody can make it work. Like I say, it's a tough life. I don't know who is left of that deal. The Byrds have a couple daughters, I don't know, are they involved?

Nykolaiszyn *Yes.*

Cannon I don't know how old Geary is, but they're not that young anymore. But when I go down there, I have to make the circle and just kind of look at it. It's not that I know what's going on, but just something...

Nykolaiszyn *Drive down Kirk Road.*

Cannon Yes, drive down Kirk Road, just kind of drawn to it a little bit.

Nykolaiszyn *Where in Hugo was the original Pratt property?*

Cannon The ranch?

Nykolaiszyn *Yes.*

Cannon I call it the ranch. Go south of Hugo like you're going to Paris. You know where the road splits and turns into a four-lane? You go about two miles and there's a cut in the road there, a crossroad, and there is a sign that says, "Goodland." You ever seen that?

Nykolaiszyn *Yes.*

Cannon Well, he pretty much owned from the old highway—there's two highways. There's the four-lane and what they call the old highway. If you turned to go down to Goodland, he owned pretty much from the highway all the way down to Goodland. That's where they wintered. That's where a lot of the—even he had his stuff there. That's where he trained the horses and all that stuff.

Nykolaiszyn *Is that property still in the family?*

Cannon No. The old house is still up on the hill. I always kind of wished I owned it because of the memories. I kind of grew up up there. A guy named Joe Anderson bought it. I don't know that it's still in their family. He's not alive, and I don't know if his wife Bernice is or not. But I don't know who owns it now, to be honest with you.

Finchum *As a third grader, what part of the circus did you enjoy the most?*

Cannon Gee, I don't know. I was real involved in it, like I told you earlier. I got to ride the elephant and the horses, and I'd go eat with the rest of the people. It wasn't much of a vacation. It was the same deal. It was seven days a week. I don't know that I had to do any work so it was an adventure more than anything else. What my grandmother tried to do is we would go different places. She would show me—we went to the Black Hills. I remember we went to the Corn Palace. I can remember, but there wasn't a lot of time for it. It was a grind. It wasn't anything easy about it.

Nykolaiszyn *There's a lot of work.*

Cannon It was a lot of work. Something was always broke or dragging a truck in or some problem, somebody not getting along. It was a tough life.

Finchum *You got to eat in the cookhouse with the rest of...?*

Cannon The cookhouse. I was trying to think of what to call that a minute ago, but it was a cookhouse.

Finchum *Did they have to sit in certain places? Did you have assigned seats?*

Cannon No, I remember tables and just benches. I guess the food was okay. I don't remember it being bad, but it probably wasn't five star cuisine.

Finchum *Or you could have popcorn later.*

Cannon I think I could have all the popcorn and cotton candy that I wanted. I remember I got a splinter in my hand and got blood poisoned. I had to go get some shots, but I didn't ever... Thinking back, if I had a kid in the third grade and I'd known he was doing the things I was doing, I'd probably have had a fit. But nothing ever happened. The elephant they had, his name was Hank. It's my understanding that he killed a couple men. They ended up destroying him. Shooting and killing him, putting him to sleep, whatever. I rode him in that grand entry every day. He'd lift his leg up and I'd shimmy up there. They had a big harness on him, and I'd hold on to that and... Pretty good memories.

Nykolaiszyn *Just your normal summer vacation.*

Cannon Yes, how many third graders get to go to the circus for...?

Finchum *Do you remember some of the smells?*

Cannon Yes. Oh, yes. They were probably unique. Probably in the cook trailer or what you called it a minute ago...

Finchum *Cookhouse.*

Cannon Cookhouse, yes. The canvas, they'd roll that canvas up and had a big truck that that rolled it up. That's the first thing, they'd unroll that canvas and they'd use the elephant just like you see. You saw the movie that was recently out. If you read that book, there is even some mentions of a couple circuses that were in Hugo. Other memories I had was is that we grew up south of town. I mentioned where my grandfather's ranch or whatever was. Well, the property actually started where I grew up. It was the old highway and then the property started. They came in and cut through with the four-lane that goes from Hugo to Paris. Across the road

from us, there was a circus called Cole Circus. I can remember going up there. There was a barn they kept the elephant in there. There was a gentleman, his name was Tandy, T-A-N-D-Y. I'd go up there every day and hang around. They wintered there. I had a lot of exposure there. I remember he was my buddy. I was a little ole kid. He was my buddy. I made him a pineapple upside down cake. I baked it and I was taking it to him. I was crawling over this fence, and I remember I dropped it and it landed right upside down and it just splattered on the ground. (Laughter) Had to go and make him another one. But anyway.

Nykolaiszyn

Good memories.

Cannon

Yes, good memories.

Finchum

What are some of the other circuses you remember from Hugo?

Cannon

Well, there was Carson Barnes and Al G. Kelly Miller Brothers and there was my grandfather's circus. At least one of them I remembered was James Christy Brothers, and I don't even know who James Christy was.

Finchum

Haven't come across that name.

Cannon

Al G. Kelly Miller Brothers was, I guess, the big, the original. Then Carson Barnes kind of spurred off of there. Y'all probably know more history about it than I do.

Finchum

I've read of a Stephens Brothers. Does that ring a bell?

Cannon

There was a Stephens Brothers. I think my grandfather was associated with Stephens Brothers. See, that's what's a shame. Everybody is gone, and we don't have—obviously, he had the bug or he wouldn't have done the thing, but it's just a little bizarre that somebody would put that stuff together. I don't know if it was for the love of the road or the entertainment.

Finchum

And not having had done it before or been exposed to it.

Cannon

Yes, because he was probably—he was sixty-five when he died, sixty-four, sixty-five. He died in '65, so he was probably born about the turn of the century. So, he was probably around pushing fifty when he started the thing. It's not like he—his family wasn't in it. He didn't inherit it. He wasn't brought up in it. He just got the bug at middle age and decided to do it.

Finchum

And it worked for a while. And to go to Hawaii with it...

- Cannon** Yes. And there's his kids right on the front of the boat. I guess it looked like something from *The Titanic*, going under the Golden Gate Bridge. I spoke with a gentleman recently that took a sailboat across. It took him about three weeks. They were probably out in the middle of the water for at least a couple weeks, ten days or something.
- Nykolaiszyn** *Well, it's a good family legacy.*
- Cannon** I can't stress—not just necessarily my parents, but from what I know, the Rawls—you've met David and Bobby—when I moved here, I had been in the Lion's Club with their father, Harry. I'm telling you, he was as nice a guy as I've ever met. He always spoke well of my granddad. I mean, they were good people. Everything I know about the Millers and Rawls, all those people that are still down there and their kids, they're high class, good people. There wasn't any crimes. You didn't hear anything about stealing or anything bad going on. It was a very honorable bunch of people.
- Finchum** *Hardworking, too.*
- Cannon** Yes, guarantee you they work.
- Nykolaiszyn** *Everybody worked.*
- Cannon** Everybody worked. Yes, it was interesting. You had multiple roles. I think even the performers had to chip in and help.
- Nykolaiszyn** *Is there anything else you'd like to add or tell us today?*
- Cannon** No, I wish I was more of a history buff, but I've tried to pick—when you all called and talked to my wife, I kind of tried to pick everybody's brain about stuff. Everybody's kind of—we didn't document any of that, so. I know it all happened because I was there and I have videos and you've seen pictures of it. Just kind of an interesting lifestyle for those people.
- Finchum** *And you can say you rode an elephant.*
- Cannon** Rode an elephant. All my family got to ride elephants. In all the home videos, everybody rode elephants.
- Finchum** *They were all Hank or different ones?*
- Cannon** Oh, no, they were different elephants. I just remember this particular... He'd do a show and they had like an eighteen wheeler. This elephant lived in the back half of it, probably a somewhat cruel life. But I

remember he'd get mad and he'd hit on the steel cage. But that breeding program down there is...

Finchum *Amazing.*

Cannon Yes.

Nykolaiszyn *Well, thank you so much for giving us a little bit of background on your grandparents. We really appreciate it.*

Cannon Yes, I'd like to see the whole thing put together. I could probably learn some stuff.

Finchum *Thank you very much.*

----- *End of interview* -----