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Overview

Repository	Archives The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art 5401 Bay Shore Road Sarasota, FL 34243 archives@ringling.org
Creator	The Ringling Bros.' World's Greatest Shows
Title	The Ringling Bros.' World's Greatest Shows Booking Correspondence
Dates	1914-1916
Extent	3 linear feet
Language	English, German, French
Arrangement	Alphabetical
Summary	Correspondence to The Ringling Bros.' World's Greatest Shows (Ringling Bros.), from circus acts, talent scouts and agencies, regarding booking acts for Ringling Bros.' circus. Documentation includes a Ringling Bros.' typed list of circus act lithographs and photographs.

Administrative Information

Provenance	Not researched
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The Ringling Bros.' World's Greatest Show Booking Correspondence

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Cite as

Credit must be given for any use of materials. The credit line should read: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Florida State University, The Ringling Bros.' World's Greatest Shows Booking Correspondence 1914-1916 and should include box and folder listing.

Processing Note

Processed by Sarah Lewis, 2024. The collection was originally arranged in alphabetical order in a legacy binder with lettered tabs. Correspondence is largely incoming with some outgoing, arranged alphabetically by writer. The name of act and/or name of correspondent. Talent agent correspondence is arranged under the name of the agent or agency, and may include the name of act(s). Material is in English unless noted. English translations, photographs, and the number of correspondences are also noted.

Historical Note

August Frederich and Salome Rungeling married in 1852 and had seven sons and one daughter. August changed the family name to Ringling to make it easier to spell and pronounce. August worked as a harness maker, and the family lived in Iowa and Wisconsin, often on the edge of poverty. Interested in circus from childhood, five of the brothers (Al, Otto, Alf, Charles and John) formed a traveling show in the 1880s.

The show changed its name several times and by 1914 it was called The Ringling Bros.' World's Greatest Shows, and was headquartered in Baraboo, Wisconsin. Each of the five brothers had their own specialty in the circus business: Al hired the performers; Otto kept track of the money; Alf did the advertising; Charles oversaw promotion; and John was in charge of scheduling.

The brothers found success, and by 1900 they had one of the largest traveling circuses in the United States. In 1907 Ringling Bros. bought their rival, Barnum & Bailey Circus. The two shows operated separately until 1919. In 1915 Ringling Bros. was the largest circus in the U.S. with 84 rail cars, Barnum & Bailey had 82 rail cars.

From 1914-1916, the Ringling Bros. prospered despite several difficulties: the war in Europe caused problems in securing foreign performing acts especially from Europe; the sudden death of Al Ringling on January 1, 1916; and in the fall of 1916 they lost more than 100 horses in a fire. They recovered from these setbacks, and their revenue continued to grow.

Scope and Content Note

Documentation consists of letters exchanged with circus performers, talent scouts, talent agencies and Ringling Bros. relating to booking performance acts for the 1915-1917 seasons. Additional documentation

The Ringling Bros.' World's Greatest Show Booking Correspondence

includes a typed list of lithographs (posters) and photographs of circus acts.

There are correspondence, photographs, postcards, sketches, advertising printed material and a list of lithographs (posters) and photographs of circus acts. Correspondence is addressed to Charles Ringling, Al Ringling, or the Ringling Brothers. Most of the correspondence is written by acts seeking contracts for the next season. Letterheads are often graphically elaborate with descriptions and illustrations. There are correspondences written on hotel letterhead and letters are written in English, German and French. Content details the descriptions of acts, discussion of salaries, the act's availability, and performance history. Of note are letters from the Erretto trio, informing that they can't fulfill their contract because they are being held as prisoners of war.

Subject Headings

Circus

Circus owners

Advertising--Circus

Circus--United States—History

Circus performers

Talent scouts

Contents of the Collection

Box 1

Folders:

1. Miss Aeda, Krammann, Aeda, 2 photograph postcards, German with translation, 1914.
2. Backman's Animal Show; Backman, J. T., 1914.
3. Four Bards, telegram, 1914.
4. The Barretts (2), Original Hat Novelty, 1916.
5. Three Bartos; Barto, James O., 1914.
6. The Marvelous Belford Troupe of American Acrobats (2), Belford, Geo, 1915.
7. Bernie Bros: Great Sensational Athletes, 1914.
8. "10 – Bonomor Arabs -10", includes newspaper clipping.
9. Bornhaupt, Charles, Vaudeville Promoter (4), various acts, 1914.
10. Bornhaupt, Charles, Vaudeville Promoter (4), various acts including the Four Tosca Sisters and Four Readings, 1915.
11. Bornhaupt, Charles, Vaudeville Promoter (4), Tankwai Troupe, 1915.
12. Bornhaupt, Charles, Vaudeville Promoter, Chay Ling Hee, Six Nankings, 1915.
13. Bornhaupt, Charles, Vaudeville Promoter, Paul Gordon, 1915.
14. Bornhaupt, Charles, Vaudeville Promoter, The Five Metzettis, 1915.

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15. Bornhaupt, Charles, Vaudeville Promoter, various acts available for 1916 season, 1915.
16. Bornhaupt, Charles, Vaudeville Promoter, Choy Ling Hee, 1916.
17. The Original Boston Bros, 1914.
18. Burilian, Charles (3), 1915-1916.
19. The Burrus Sisters and Comic Groom Tight Wire Act, 1915.
20. The Great Calbo Mexican Wire Walker, 1914.
21. Nettie Carroll Troupe: Tight Wire Artists; Carroll, Nettie, 1914.
22. Carson, J., Australian with a stock-whip.
23. Castrillon, G., acrobatic troupe, 1915.
24. Ceado, W. E., 1915.
25. Cevene Troupe (2), 1914, 1915.
26. Vernitta (Vernetta) Clark Trio, photograph postcard, 1914.
27. Geo. Cole Troupe: Acrobatic Wire Act, photograph postcard, 1915.
28. Jack Corelli & Co., 1916.
29. Corizon, Valier and Harisha, 1915.
30. Correia, John, horse act, 1914.
31. Chung Ling Troupe (2), photograph postcard, 1916.
32. Aerial Cromwells, telegram, 1914.
33. Darling Sisters; Darling, Denver, 1916.
34. Dawnay, Rose, ballet mistress.
35. The Dayton Family, 2 8x10 photographs.
36. The Riding Davenports', Davenport, Albert, 1915.
37. S. Della-Casa Agency, Americk Troupe, 1914.
38. S. Della-Casa Agency, Graus Bros., 1914.
39. S. Della-Casa Agency, mentions a variety of acts, 1914.
40. S. Della-Casa Agency, Erretto Trio (7), writing as prisoners of war, 1914-1915.
41. S. Della-Casa Agency, The Rixford, photograph, Errettos, 1915.
42. S. Della-Casa Agency (2), various acts, 1915.
43. S. Della-Casa Agency, various acts, Farboni's Troupe, photograph postcard, 1915.
44. S. Della-Casa Agency, various acts, Borsinis, photograph postcard, Hun-Guno-Truppe (photograph postcard), 1915.
45. S. Della-Casa Agency, Hassan Trio, photograph postcard, 1915.
46. S. Della-Casa Agency, The Great Mr. Vallejo, 1915.
47. S. Della-Casa Agency, The Grace Brothers, 1915.
48. S. Della-Casa Agency, The Morandinis (2), 5 photograph postcards, 1916.
49. S. Della-Casa Agency. 1916.
50. S. Della-Casa Agency, Mr. Charles and Mr. Severin, pantomime, 1916.
51. The Famous Delno Troupe: Sensational and Laughable Aerialists (4), Delno, Bert, 1915, 1916.
52. The Three Dylons, includes newspaper clipping, 1914.
53. Demarr, Harry (2), frog and contortion act, 1914.
54. DeVaro, Chas, Charlie, Zemater, comedy triple bar artists, 1914.
55. The Original Dollar Troupe, Beickert, Martin, manager, 1914.
56. Dooley, Mr. Bernard, includes Gus St. Leon's Great United Circus program, 1915.

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57. Ce Dora in the Golden Globe; Hadfield, Charles, manager, 1916.
58. La Dora, photograph, Beckman, Dora, 1915
59. Dorian Fife Drum and Bugle; White, Edward E., 1915.
60. The Mittu Dumitrescu Troupe (3), 1915, 1916.
61. Dupre, Dottie, wild west rider, 1915.
62. 4 Flying Ellet Sisters, 1915.
63. Ercole, C. M., Universal Theatrical Exchange, 1915.
64. F. Ewann's G., 2 photograph postcards, French with English translation, 1915.
65. The Aerial Fausts, 1916.
66. Ferguson, Barney; Mack, John, Stars of McCarthy's Mishap Co., 1916.
67. American Florence Troupe of Acrobats; Florence, Zella, 1914.
68. Florenz Trio (2), Florenz Family Acrobats, Florenz, Alfred, 1914, 1915.
69. Frank's California All Star Wild West, Hafley, C. Frank, 1915.
70. Frasher, Enos; sensational aerial artist, 1915.
71. "3 – Fredericks – 3", John Frederick's Trio, 1914.
72. "5...Charles Fisher Troupe...5", 1914.
73. Genzen and Cortes, 1915.
74. The Great Georgette Co., juggling act, French, 1916.
75. Gerard, includes envelope, 1915.
76. Gerner, strongest boy, photograph postcard, 1915.
77. Golem, Mirza, German with translation, 1914.
78. Gonziles, Jose & wife, wild west show, 1914.
79. Gothard Trio, photograph postcard, 1914.
80. The Gougets, French, photograph postcard, 1916.
81. Graham, C. W., Capt. Geo Dowling English Giant, 1915.
82. Bee Ho-Gray's Western Attractions (3), Gray, Weaver, 3 photographs, 1914-1915.
83. Grayson, Geo., comedian, 1916.
84. Guzmani Trio, 1914.
85. Gyigy, A, German, 1915.
86. Abou Ben Hamid Troupe, 1914

Box 2

Folders:

1. Hassan Ben Ali Arabs Co., Inc., 1914.
2. Hass Brothers (2), Haas, Oscar, 1915.
3. Royal Hawaiian Entertainers, Noble, Oscar C., 1916.
4. Helliott's Bears (2), 1915.
5. Henricksen, Heinrich (3), tiger act, German with translation, 1914.
6. Capt. Henricksen, King of all Ski Acrobats, 1915.
7. Hermandos Big Comedy Circus, Hermandos, Carlos, 1915.
8. Hillerdt, Oswald, chimpanzee act, 1916.
9. Hobson, Homer (2), equestrian act, 1915.
10. Hopper, Charles, comedian, 1916.
11. Capt. Huling & Sea Lions (2), 1914.

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12. Hutchinson, William, bucking horse and steer rider, photograph, 1915.
13. Imperial Troupe, Inas Troupe.
14. The Irmenas.
15. Three Jahns, Jahns, M., German, 1915.
16. Jennier, Geo, clown, 1915.
17. Jordan, Ruby (2), single trapeze, 1915, 1916.
18. Jungmann Family, Jungmann, Albert, German, 1915.
19. Flying Keelers, 1915.
20. Kelly La Tell Troupe.
21. King Brothers, comedy athletes, 1915.
22. Kruser, Herman W. (2), 1914, 1915.
23. The Flying La Marrs, 1915.
24. The Casting Lamys, sensational gymnasts, 1915.
25. La-Tell Brothers, 1915.
26. Leach = La Quinlan Trio (3), 1914.
27. Leon Sisters & Company (2), 1915, 1916.
28. Lohse, Ralph; Sterling, Nana, gymnasts, includes newspaper clipping, 1915, 1916.
29. The Lorch Family (3), Lorch, Lewis, 1914.
30. The Loretta Twins, 1914.
31. Lowande, M., comedy mule, 1915.
32. P. G. Lowery's Dixie Minstrels, 1915.
33. Manello, Carl (2), telegram, 1914.
34. Marguerite & Hanley, 1914.
35. H. B. Marinelli, Ltd., Managers and Promoters (3), various acts, 1914, 1915.
36. H. B. Marinelli, Ltd., Managers and Promoters, Bobker Ben Ali Arab Acrobats, 1916.
37. Bob Marr: The Original Clown, 1916.
38. Marsh, H. B., roller skater, 1915.
39. 5 Martells, Martell, Al, 1914.
40. 10 Martonis, Karoly, Edward, manager, German with translation.
41. Maynard, Frank, clown, 1915.
42. The Four Mayos, 1914.
43. McDanell's Trick Roller Skate, photograph postcard only.
44. McIntyre's: America's Favorite Rifle & Pistol shots, 1916.
45. McLeod, Tex, 1914.
46. Melville, Frederic (2), announcer, 1916.
47. The Five Metzetti (2), Metzetti, Leon, 1914, 1915.
48. Upside Down Millette, Millette, Ed., 1914.
49. Les Soeurs Milvile, Ell, Girard Hut, Frech, 1915.
50. Minno and Partner: The Dude and the Chorus Girl, 1915.
51. The Colonial Montrose Troupe, Montrose, Camillo, 1914.
52. The 5 Juggling Mowatts, Mowatt, Ben, 1915.
53. Four Mullers (2), Gene Muller Troupe, 1914, 1915.
54. The Neffsky Troupe, Neffsky, Max, 1914.
55. The Three Nelsons, 2 photographs, 1914.

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56. The Four Nevaros (4), Nevaro, Ollie, 1914, 1916.
57. Orbasany, Irma, cockatoos.
58. Orlando, Max, strong man, 1915.
59. Orton Troupe, photograph postcard, 1916.
60. Pickard Bros. Seals, 1915.
61. Padron, Esteban, tight rope, Spanish with translation, 1915.
62. Pallenberg, Emil, German with translation, 1914.
63. The Aerial Patts, Patt, Tom, (3), includes photograph postcard, 1915, 1916.
64. Patty, Alexandre, head balancing, 1915.
65. Paulhan Team, Paulhan, L., 1914.
66. Peloquin Globe Trotter, Hutchinson, Ed. R.
67. Pitrot, Richard, talent scout, Les Rinchs, German, 1914.
68. Pons & Pons, 1915.
69. Pouchot, Chas. A., Promoting Director (4), Imperial Troupe, Mr. Tamaki, 1916.
70. Pouchot, Chas. A., Promoting Director, Nederveld's Motorcycle Riding Baboons.
71. Two Reas, Reas, Hermann, German with translation, 1915.
72. Reed, France, 1915.
73. Francis Reed & Partners, Loudron, Paul, 1915.
74. Renello Sisers, Renello, Fred, 1914.
75. Rex's Comedy Circus, 1914.
76. Riccobono Brothers' Horses, 1914.
77. Rice, Sully & Scott, 1916.
78. Rice & Dore Water Carnival, 1915.
79. Rio & Helmer, 1916.
80. Riva – Larsen Troupe Equilibrists, 1915.
81. Les 2 Rodriguez, 1914, 1915.
82. Roeder's Invention, Roeder, H., 1914.
83. The Ronaldos, Ronaldo, Ed., 1914.
84. 3 Rooneys, Rooney, Leonard A., 1914.
85. Russell Ladies Band, 1914.
86. Sabel, Max, (2), 1916.
87. The Great Salores Whirling Demons, 3 Salores, 1916.

Box 3:

Folders:

1. Sasse, Chas. L., Freres DeKock, 1916.
2. Sasse, Chas. L., Resua Troupe, photograph, 1914.
3. Sasse, Chas. L., Orlando – Barenco Riding Family, 2 photograph postcards, 1914.
4. Sasse, Chas. L., list of acts offered, 4 Parrells, 3 photographs, 1914.
5. Sasse, Chas. L., list of acts offered, The Moritz Consul Family, R. Havemanns Raubtierschule, 1914.
6. Sasse, Chas. L., contracts for acts, 1914.
7. Sasse, Chas. L., 4 Melillo Sisters, German, postcard, 1914.
8. Sasse, Chas. L., lists of acts offered with salaries, 1914.

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9. Sasse, Chas. L., Rolland Bros., 1914.
10. Sasse, Chas. L., The Reckless Trio, photograph, 1914.
11. Sasse, Chas. L., Renard Trio, includes sketch of act, 1914.
12. Sasse, Chas. L., Michel Richardini Troupe, 2 photograph postcards, 2 photographs, 1914.
13. Sasse, Chas. L., La Kremolina – Darras Trio, 1914.
14. Sasse, Chas. L., The Great Golden Troupe, 1914.
15. Sasse, Chas. L., Gaudsmidts: Clown Acrobats with Dogs, 1914.
16. Sasse, Chas. L., Emil Pallenbergs Bears, 1914.
17. Sasse, Chas. L., The LeGrohns, 5 photograph postcards, 1914.
18. Sasse, Chas. L., The Fire Yoscarys, 4 photographs, 1914.
19. Sasse, Chas. L., Geo. Cole Troupe, 1914.
20. Sasse, Chas. L., The Great Kullervo Bros, 1914.
21. Sasse, Chas. L., Delfinos – Pacheco Family, 1914.
22. Sasse, Chas. L., various acts, 1914.
23. Sasse, Chas. L., Max Gruber & Mlle Adelina and others, 1915.
24. Sasse, Chas. L., Reusa, Borros Sisters, 1915.
25. Sasse, Chas. L. (2), Albers Polar Bear Act, 1915.
26. Sasse, Chas. L. Andresen Bros, 1916.
27. The Savoy's & Co: Acrobatic Bull Terriers, Savoy, James, includes booklet with reviews, 1914, 1915.
28. Paul Schultze Theatrical & Variety Agency (3), 11 photograph postcards, German and English, various acts, 1914.
29. Paul Schultze Theatrical & Variety Agency, 4 Sisters Blumenfeld, 3 Sisters Facori, 1914.
30. Paul Schultze Theatrical & Variety Agency, Garden Sisters, 1914.
31. Paul Schultze Theatrical & Variety Agency, The 3 Grona Sisters, 3 photograph postcards, 3 photographs, 1914.
32. Paul Schultze Theatrical & Variety Agency, 2 Apollina's, 1914.
33. Paul Schultze Theatrical & Variety Agency, Proserpi Family, 1914.
34. Paul Schultze Theatrical & Variety Agency, Pallenberg's Bears, Richard Weise's Bears on Roller-Skates and Cycles, 1914.
35. Paul Schultze Theatrical & Variety Agency, salary listing for acts, 1914.
36. Paul Schultze Theatrical & Variety Agency, 1915.
37. Serra, R., aerial, 1915.
38. Aerial Shaws, 1914.
39. Shonhof, Carl (2), 1915.
40. Short, Royal Insurance Company, 1916.
41. Smalletto's All Wool Circus, photograph postcard, 1914.
42. Smith, Chas. A., 1915.
43. St. Allon, Edna & Billy (2), 1914.
44. Staines Comedy Circus, Staines, R.H., 1915.
45. Stevens Troupe, 1915.
46. The Stickneys Equestrians (3), Stickney, Robert, 1914, 1915.
47. Sweden's Heavyweight Lifters (2), Anderson, Emil and Peterson, Gust, 1915
48. "10 – Tango Argentino Gaucho Riders – 10", Karoly, Edward, Manager, 1914.

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49. The Tantlingers, 1916.
50. 4 Tornados (3), includes newspaper clipping, 1914.
51. Thompson, Ray (2), horse show, 2 faded photographs, 1914.
52. Victor, Karl, strong man, 1914.
53. The 4 Victors: Leaping Acrobats; Dobson, Chas., 1915.
54. Vitorio and Georgetto.
55. The Aerial Yorkes, 1914.
56. The Great Youlians, clown, 1916.
57. The Wallett Family, Wallett, W. F., 1914.
58. 3 Walseys, 1914.
59. Webb, Horace, 1914.
60. Wheat & Zeldo, trapeze, 1914.
61. White's Circus, White, John, 1914.
62. The Great Wiley, Wiley, W., German with translation, 1914.
63. Wilson & Aubrey, trio, 1914, 1916.
64. Woods & Woods, 1914.
65. Edward Weyerson Theatrical Enterprises (2), Captain Teibor's Seals and other acts, 1914.
66. Edward Weyerson Theatrical Enterprises, various acts, 1914.
67. Edward Weyerson Theatrical Enterprises, various acts, 1914.
68. Edward Weyerson Theatrical Enterprises (2), Hermando's Comedy Circus, 1914.
69. Zagwell & Royer, Presents, Royer, Archie, various acts, 1914.
70. Aerial Zerados, 1914.
71. Zoberdie, F., 1915.
72. "17 - Pekin Zouaves - 17", Wilkins, Wm., 1915.
73. Troupe of the Zouaves, Devlin, H. C., 1915.
74. Lithographs & Photographs of acts, typed list, 1914.

Box 4: Oversized

Folders:

1. The Blue Ribbon Trio, Two Nibbles, Mike & Ed, 1916.
2. Arthur Borella and Co., 1915.
3. Harris Twins Co., 1915.
4. Hermando's Comedy Circus, 1914.
5. Mankin, the Frog Man, 1914.
6. Oscar Lowande's Troupe, 1915.
7. The 4 Meurs, 1915.
8. Le Petite Mille Vorter, Seeker, Lew, 1914.
9. The Four Portia Sisters; Verheyen, E., 1915.
10. The Original Regals, Regal, Emil, 1916.
11. Rio & Norman: Herculean Gymnasts and Rope Artists, 1915.
12. Sasse, Chas. L., Carl Eugen Troupe, 1914.
13. Sasse, Chas. L., Les Leggerts, 1914.
14. Shepherd, Burt, "The Whip King," 1915.
15. Wills & Hassan; Willis, Louis L., 1915.

16. The Great Zella; Zella, H., 1916.