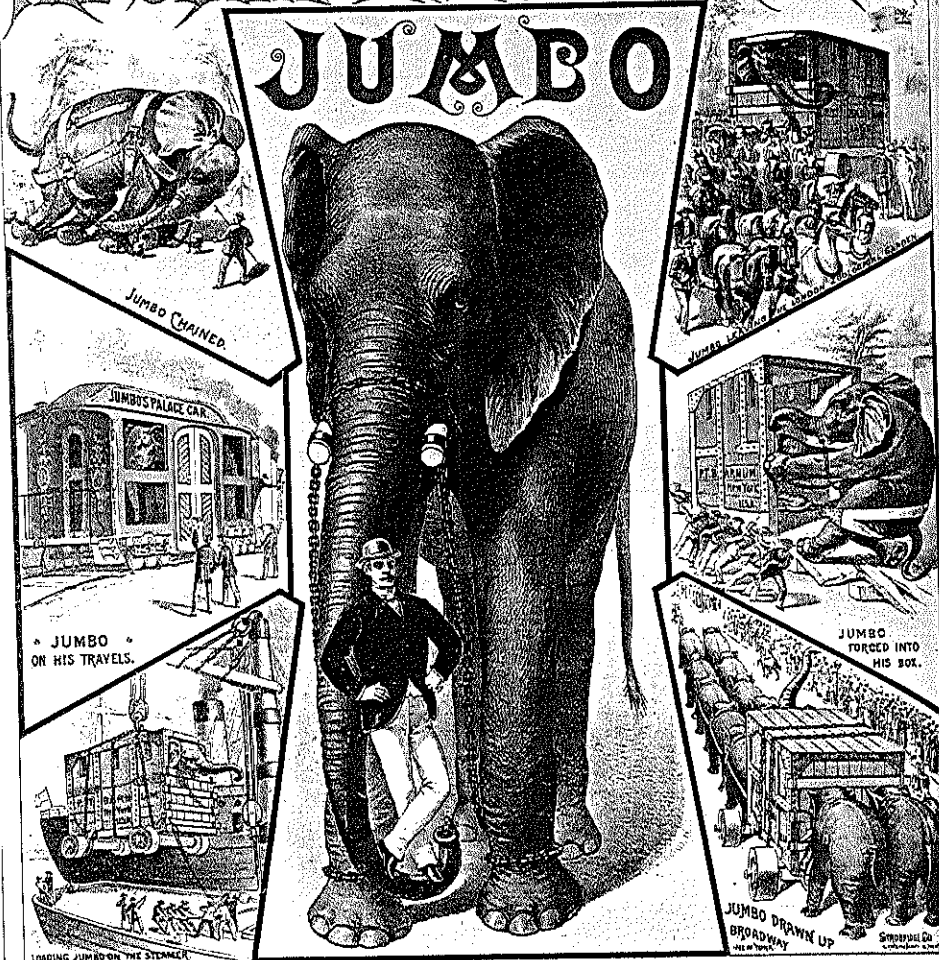


**P.T. BARNUM'S GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH,  
& THE GREAT LONDON CIRCUS COMBINED WITH**

**THE GIANT AFRICAN ELEPHANT**

**JUMBO**

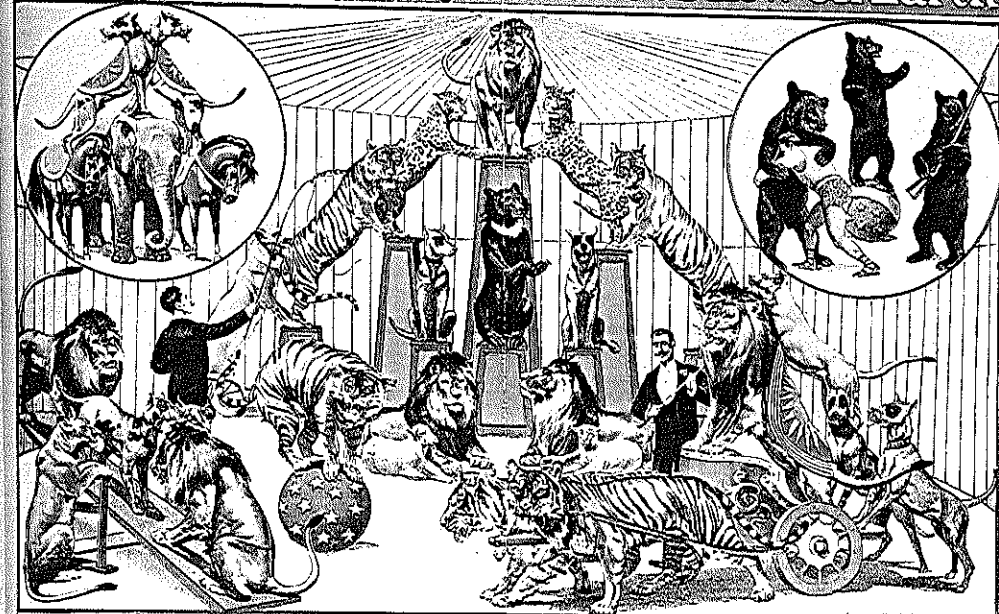


**THE REMOVAL OF THE BIGGEST ELEPHANT IN THE WORLD WAS REMONSTRATED AGAINST BY THE WHOLE BRITISH NATION. BARNUM refused to accept ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS, as RANSOME for him, but insisted the fulfillment of the Contract & Bonds.**

**SANGERS ROYAL BRITISH MENAGERIE & GRAND INTERNATIONAL ALLIED SHOWS.**

\* VISITS EUROPE & AMERICA \* BARNUM, BAILEY & HITCHINSON, SOLE OWNERS. \* DAILY PERFORMS 6,000 \* REPRESENTING \$3,000,000 \*

**The Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth**



**STARTLING AND SUBLIME EXHIBITION OF SAVAGE WILD BEASTS AND DOMESTIC ANIMALS, EXEMPLIFYING THE DIVINE DECREE THAT "THE LION AND THE LAMB SHALL LIE DOWN TOGETHER."**

**THE WORLD'S GRANDEST, LARGEST, BEST AMUSEMENT INSTITUTION**

Plate 5. "Startling and Sublime Exhibition of Savage Wild Beasts and Domestic Animals," Barnum & Bailey, 1894. Animal trainers showed their "mastery" over gun-toting bears, unfathomable cliques of dogs, tigers, and the biblically evocative teams of lions and lambs lying next to each other. (Lithograph courtesy of Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis., with permission from Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey,® The Greatest Show on Earth,® B+B-NL4-94-1F-7)

Plate 4. "Jumbo," Barnum & London, 1882. Although reportedly reluctant to leave England in 1882, Jumbo soon became a profitable feature at Barnum's circus. Killed by a train in 1885, Jumbo still toured—in skeletal form—after his death. (Lithograph courtesy of Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis., with permission from Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey,®)

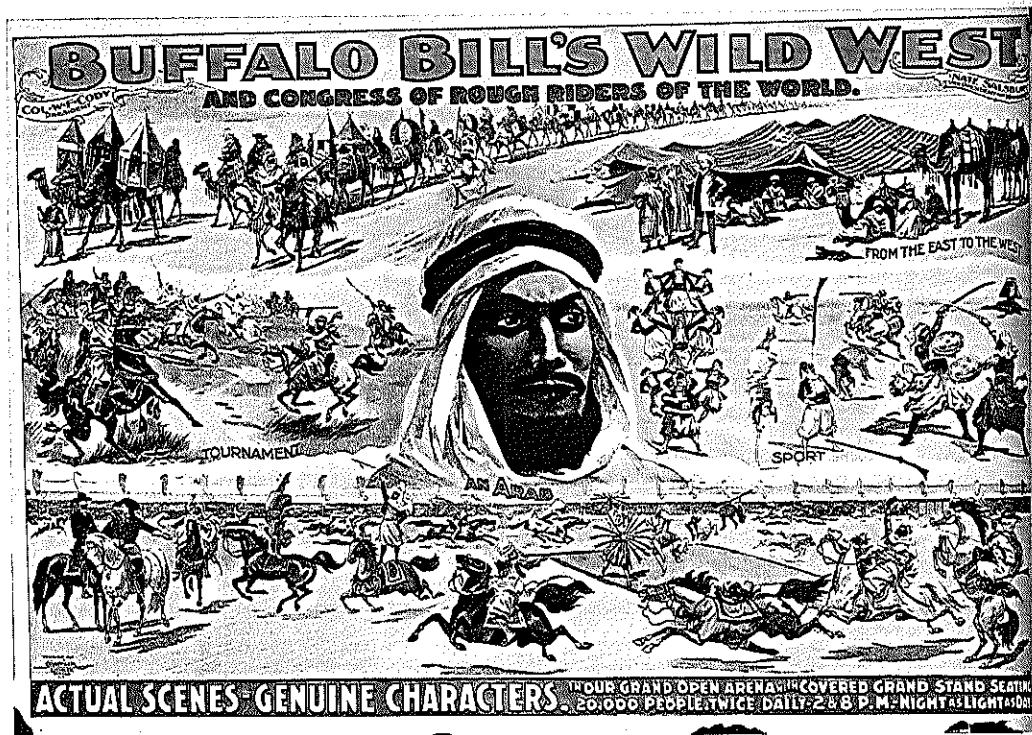


Plate 6. "An Arab," Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World, 1896. From trick riding to circuslike contortionism and acrobatic gun play in the desert, Arab "cowboys" performed as "typical" representatives of their race. Note also that in 1896 the show promised "night light as day" with its brand-new electric spotlighting system. (Lithograph courtesy of Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis., BBWW-NL48-96-1F-3)

(opposite)

Plate 7. "1776, Historic Scenes and Battles of the American Revolution," Adam Forepaugh Shows, 1893. This spec highlighted the long roots of American exceptionalism, celebrating the peaceful democratic transfer of power and civic virtue as a model for all nations. (Lithograph courtesy of Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis., A4P-NL450-93-2SU-2)



The Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth



THE MAHDI OR FOR THE VICTORIA CROSS SCENE 2<sup>d</sup>. A NATIVE CARAVAN AND ENCAMPMENT SHOWING THE SPORTS, PASTIMES, MILITARY & HOME-LIFE OF THE SOUDAN. OVER 1000 MEN, WOMEN & HORSES IN THE ACTION OF THE PLAY.

Platē 8. "The Mahdi," Barnum & Bailey, 1898. While abroad, Barnum & Bailey remained au courant with English audiences. At the circus, England's ongoing war in the Sudan became an orientalist spectacle, complete with acrobatic natives, reversed pyramid building, pageantry, veiled women, and terrified white captives. (Lithograph courtesy of Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis., with permission from Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey,<sup>®</sup> The Greatest Show on Earth,<sup>®</sup> B+B-NL38-98-1F-5)

cut a hole in the women's dressing tent and peek inside. Female performers would alert Mann and the rest of the male workers that a peeping Tom was on the premises. The men would sneak up on the offending voyeur, kick him in the pants while he was crouched over looking through the hole, and then punch him in the face with leather dress gloves as he whirled around in surprise. Mann noted with disgust: "And [the voyeurs] always held out when asked that was their privilege. And if you looked in their window, of course, they'd have you arrested."<sup>250</sup>

In the transient, crowded environment of Circus Day, male spectators found plenty of opportunities for bad behavior. In some respects, the ephemeral circus offered its audiences a world without consequences. Whereas permanent amusements maintained ties to the communities in which they were located, the circus folded up its tents and moved on. The itinerant character of the American circus provides yet another reason why female performances remained unregulated during the Progressive Era. But, as this chapter has demonstrated, the transience of the circus tells only part of the story. The mobile circus was a staging ground in which multiple shifting American attitudes about gender, race, and the female body were negotiated and contested at the turn of the century. Ultimately, the circus's contradictory impulses toward female nudity demonstrate that societal attitudes toward women's growing participation in public life were ambivalent. In contrast, male performers—Euroamerican big-top players in particular—were relatively absent in circus publicity campaigns. Press releases seldom focused on circus men's background, class status, romantic life, or costuming. In contrast to their extensive marketing strategies for restraining scantily clad circus women, impresarios had little need to justify male players' presence in public life. Instead, impresarios emphasized the startling acts themselves. The next chapter will explore these variegated representations of the male circus body.