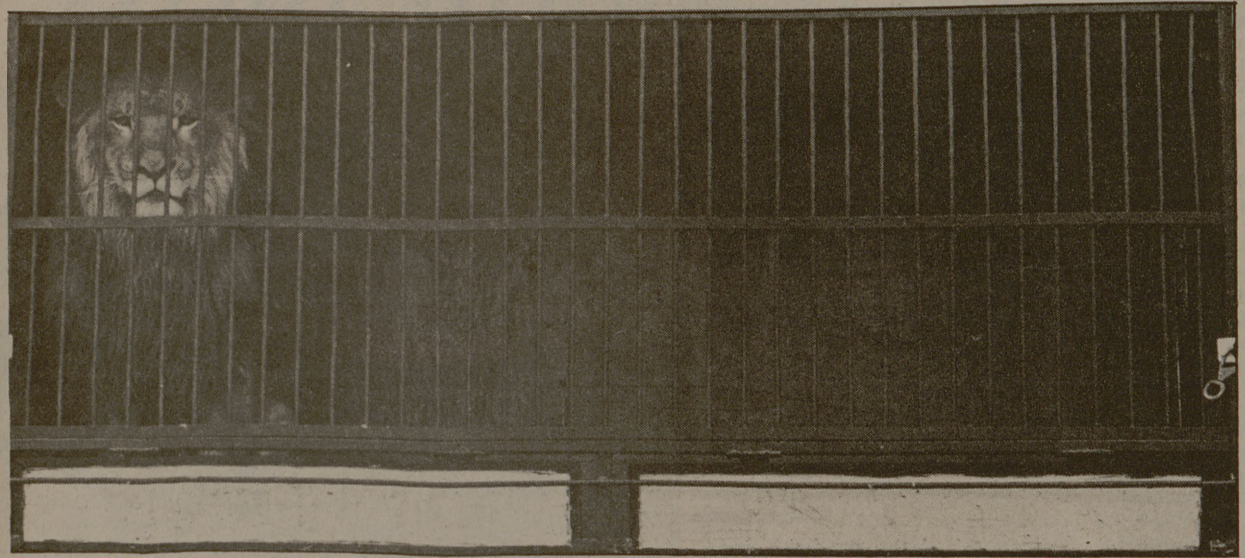
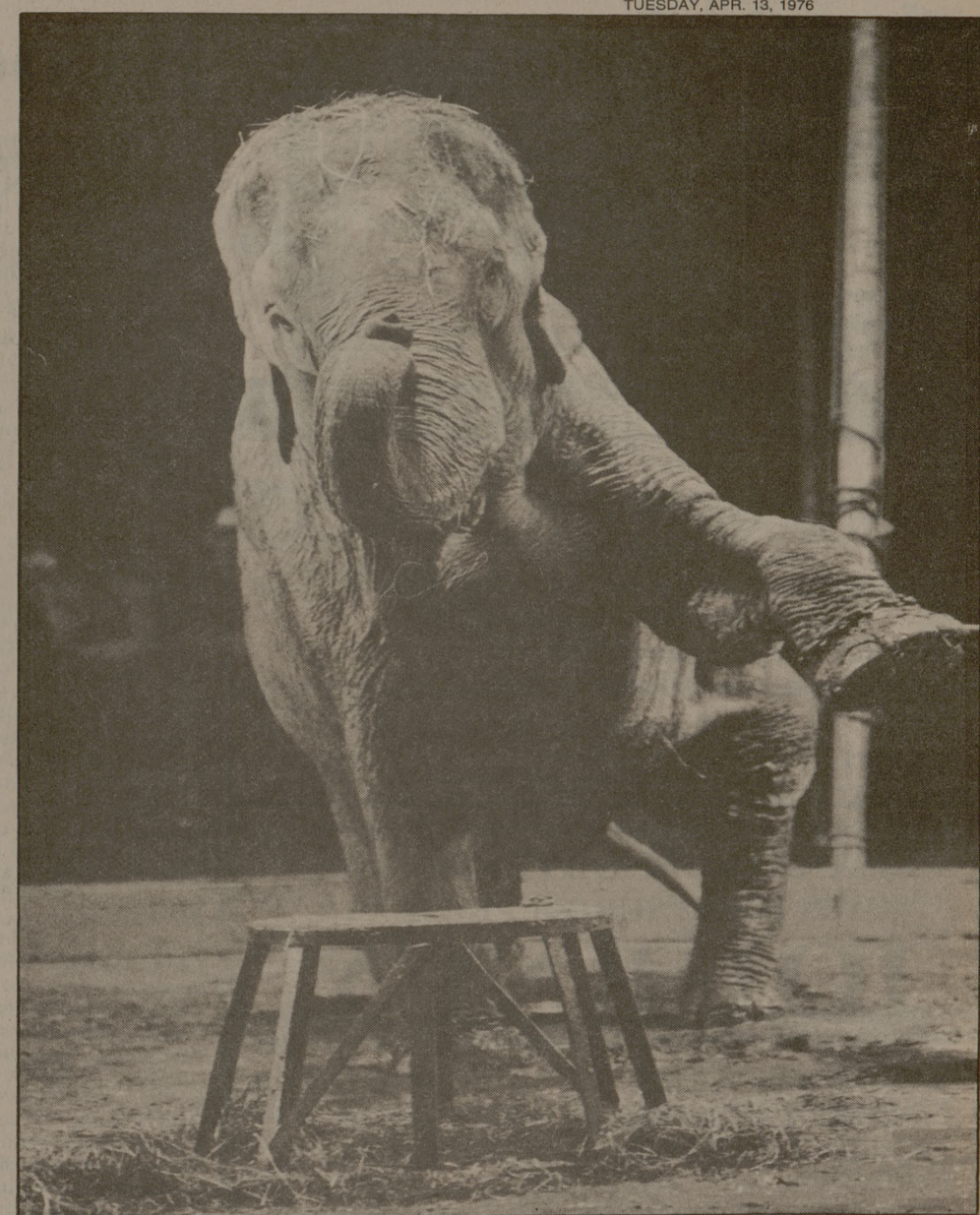


Under the big top . . .



TRAPPED LIKE A RAT
Big cats are kept in tiny cages



STAR
The elephants are the high-point of the circus



ACROBAT AND HELPER
Acrobatics form a large part of the show

The circus. What is it? To the viewer it's a bright spangled parade, the quiet tension of a high wire act, small children laughing at the clowns.

To circus people it is a series of one- or two-night stands. It is hard, backbreaking work and long hours practicing and tending the animals.

The Carson and Barnes Circus set its tent last Monday on a vacant lot across FM 2818 from K-Mart.

Heavy rains made the field a sea of mud. But it was the only place available for the two performances.

The big semi-trailers were soon bogged down and two elephants were set to work freeing them. At a word from their trainer, the elephants were soon pulling and pushing the huge trucks around the field. They didn't have to be told twice what was needed.

Work went on in mud and rain and all was ready for the first show that afternoon. A few hours of laughter and applause and it was all over. The tent came down that night and was readied for the trip to the next town.

Next day, only a field of drying mud was left, covered with tracks of animals, people and trucks. And, of course, memories.

—Douglas Winship

photos by
Douglas Winship



ELEPHANTS HAVE TO WORK
Elephants pull the big trucks out of the mud

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