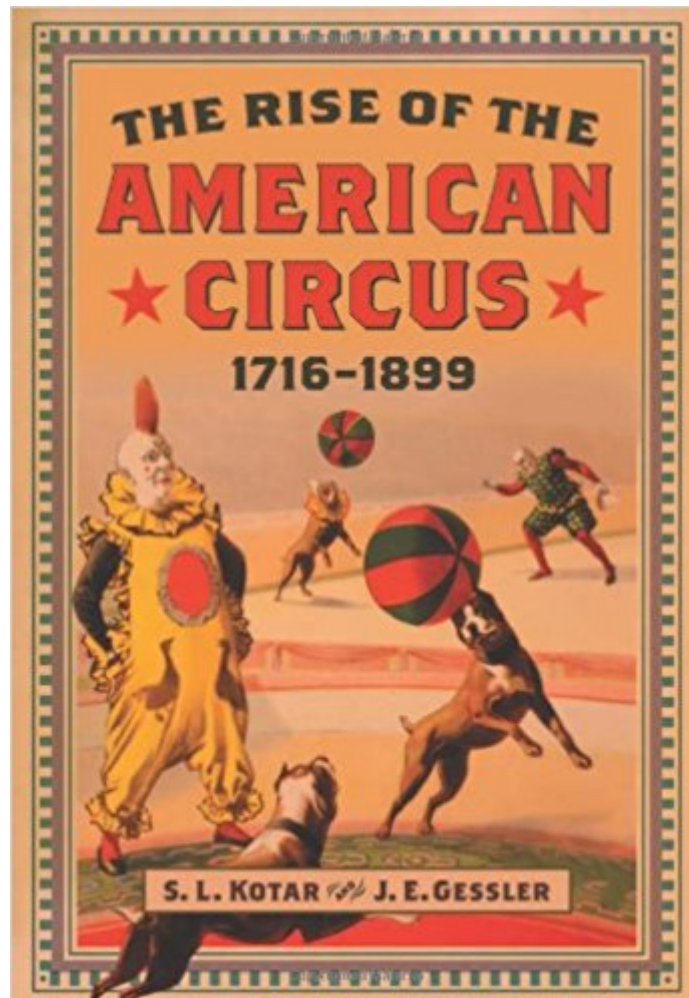




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The Rise Of The American Circus, 1716-1899



Synopsis

To both young and old, the circus remains an icon of American entertainment, a wholesome pastime untouched by the passing years. But the modern circus, with its three rings, ringmaster, animals, and acrobats, is the product of nearly three hundred years of evolution. This intriguing work chronicles the history of the American circus from its roots in England through its importation to America to the end of the nineteenth century. It introduces the early pioneers of the circus, addresses business concerns such as management and training, and discusses the development of the show itself, including the incorporation of menageries, the need for animal training and care, the addition of circus music, the use of the tent, and the unique attractions of side shows and "freaks." Personal stories of those who made their lives under the "big top" are woven throughout the narrative, adding an intimate perspective to one of America's most enduring entertainments.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Kotar and Gessler...showcase the companies, human and animal acts, and mixed responses to this evolving form of entertainment." --Reference & Research Book News.

S.L. Kotar of St. Louis has been writing (together with J.E. Gessler) for more than four decades, beginning with scripts for television's Gunsmoke. J.E. Gessler lives in St. Louis.

This book is an excellent reference on the history of the circus in England and in the United States. It is an exhaustive listing of names, places, playbills, performers, owners and other details. It will

doubtless grace the shelves of many academic libraries. It is, however, excruciatingly boring to read. The authors have compiled a massive amount of data, but they have not really written a book of the sort one reads - there is neither academic commentary nor any expansion on the lists. Even potentially exciting events such as elephants falling through bridges are rendered in barely interesting prose. If you want to know why the circus had such an influence in the United States or want to understand the experience of the circus from either the perspective of the audience or the performer, you will have to search out other books. This book is worth owning by those who are passionate about circus history or those who need to find historic details about specific circuses or people. Otherwise, don't bother.

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