



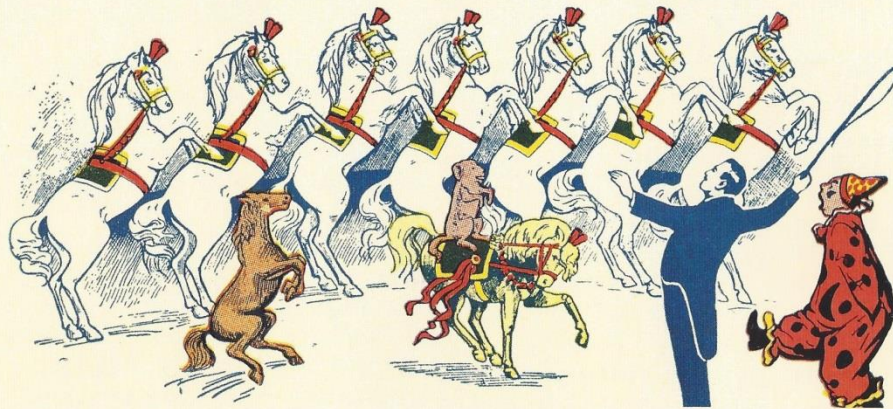
MARVELLOUS MISS MAY, QUEEN OF THE CIRCUS

THE HISTORY DETECTIVE

Use a magnifying glass to find the following animals that performed at Wirths Circus:

- o kookaburra
- o dromedary
- o polar bear
- o tiger
- o snake
- o seal
- o kangaroo
- o hippopotamus
- o bison
- o elephant





TRAINING

Luckily, the treatment of performing animals in circuses has changed over the last two centuries. In the early 1800s, animal trainers 'tamed' rather than 'trained' wild animals, using pitchforks, torches, hot irons and thick leather whips to control them.

In the 1880s, Carl Hagenbeck introduced the 'gentling' system, in which, rather than subduing wild animals through ill-treatment, trainers gained their trust and used treats to encourage them to perform. But, because animal trainers were still forcing wild animals to act against their nature, Hagenbeck advocated using a 'whip, cane, broom or kitchen chair' to 'ward off attacks'. Whips continued to be used in circuses as a 'traditional symbol of authority, partly for dramatic effect and partly as a signalling device' for the animals.

ANIMAL ACTS

Wirth Brothers Circus usually started its show with an animal act. Over the years, these included Monsieur Ragoul's tigers, which pulled and rode in a chariot; Monsieur Marco's troupe of performing lions, leopards, bears, dogs and goats; Herr Schmidt's dancing polar and grizzly bears; and Captain Huling's musical seals. Feeding such animals was a major task for the circus, as 10 lions and three tigers ate over 100 kilograms of raw beef a day.

Today, most people prefer to see wild and exotic animals in their natural habitats rather than performing in circuses. For this reason, many contemporary circuses do not include wild animal acts, and the Australian Capital Territory and a number of local councils around Australia have banned performances by circuses that feature such animals.

HISTORICAL STORYTELLING

- Read this information from *Marvellous Miss May, Queen of the Circus* about animals performing in circuses in the late 1800s.
- Write a story about an animal performing in Wirth Brothers Circus.
 - What sort of animal is it?
 - What acts does it perform?
 - How is it treated?
 - Does it like being in the circus?
- Give your story a catchy title!



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Marvellous Miss May, Queen of the Circus (NLA Publishing)