

CWM Audio 4-13
Ed and Jenny Rooney Interview, March 9, 1971
 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT
 Part 3

Ed Rooney: ... where the old foot-bridge was across, back in the winter quarters there. They put a bridge across there, I think, now. They bring the wagons over, and they're all stored in the round house over there. And the cars, too.

Jennie
 Rooney: I was telling Dave about us learning our act in the elephant barn.

Ed Rooney: Yeah.

Jennie
 Rooney: And about the baby elephants. Yeah.

Ed Rooney: Yeah. This baby elephant. They couldn't do anything with him. Every time they would go to take the little one out, he'd squeal, and they'd run up and beside him, like that.

Jennie
 Rooney: The big ones.

[00:00:30]
 Ed Rooney: And they could beat them and everything. The mothers, you see ... Not the mothers, but the ones that had adopted him, see. So, they just had to let him go. So, they had these bottles, you know, they were trying to teach him to walk across like the old ones did.

Richard Flint: Right.

Ed Rooney: So, he took it on himself and went out there and walked across the bottles just by himself, and came back there but they couldn't do anything with him because every time they went to make him work they'd ... The old ones would rush to him.

Jennie
 Rooney: But he'd do it if he felt like it.

Richard Flint: Right. Right.

[00:01:00]
 Ed Rooney: The Gorman Show, they had two old elephants. Dutch and Pop. And they had them for years. And along the ... They got two more. Little ones. Babies. So, each one of them adopted a kid. So, they used to take ... They were working elephants, and they used to go out and push the wagons around over lots, you see. So, they let the little ones in the menagerie, and took the elephants out on the side and they were pushing the wagons in. The little ones saw a gopher or something, anyway, something scared it and it squealed. And the others, just one elephant over here, and the other one over there, and run right through the seats and the canvas and everything else. And went in there, feeling all over this little guy to see what was the matter with him, you see. But they did that twice. And then they used to take the little ones along with them, because they'd

[00:01:30]

tear everything to pieces.

[00:02:00]

Richard Flint: When you were first in the circus, I don't know whether you ever heard any of the old timers talking at all ... What sort of reputations did some of the old shows such as Forepaugh and Sells Brothers have? Did you ever hear any of this talk? I don't know if you ever [crosstalk 00:02:19].

Jennie Rooney: Well, they were all big shows.

Ed Rooney: They were all big shows.

Jennie Rooney: But the little grafting shows.

Ed Rooney: Yeah.

Jennie Rooney: They were 1899 to 1900. Now they were, they were bad shows, you know.

[00:02:30]

Richard Flint: Can you remember what people talked about those shows?

Ed Rooney: Well, Jen can tell you about the ... What was it?

Jennie Rooney: Van Amburg.

Ed Rooney: Van Amburg Show ... What was his name?

Jennie Rooney: Jeremiah.

Ed Rooney: Jeremiah Mugivan and Bert Bowers is who manages that.

Richard Flint: Right. Right. Can you recollect any more now that we've just been talking, here, about that circus, at all?

Jennie Rooney: Well, I think little personal things, but it wouldn't be interesting to you.

[00:03:00]

Richard Flint: Well, these are what shed light on the larger picture, you know, if anything comes to mind. Because, of course, with that show they made their money to buy the [Hegenbeck Wallace 00:03:09] and the [crosstalk 00:03:09].

Jennie Rooney: Well, all I remember are just silly little things. On the Van Amburg Show, there was a woman there, and she had hurt her knee, and it was permanently ... Stick knee. She had a little girl our age. So, in the dressing room, this little girl, she was playing with matches. And her mother told her not to. And this is when Meme and I ... We're the same age. She's a year younger than I am, but we were kids like that ... And this little girl, she was playing with matches, and the mother said, "Stop." Well, she also had a [inaudible 00:03:42] comb in her hand. So, she lit this comb and it flared up, you know,

[00:03:30]

exploded.

She threw it in her mother's lap and the mother couldn't run because she had a stick let, so the mother asked me and I to chase the little girl, you know. Well, we're running, and we got her, and brought her back. And she got an awful whooping.

[00:04:00]

Richard Flint: I would guess so.

Jennie: It's things like that I remember.

Rooney:

Richard Flint: Can you compare just the living accommodations and so on, of the Van Amburg with Ringling Show? Was it quite a contrast?

Jennie: Well, no, they don't compare. No. It was as nice though, that's for sure.

Rooney:

Richard Flint: Right. Right. But did anything stand out, or ... ?

Jennie: No, because the smaller shows fed very well in their cookhouse, all the performers. They did always have good meals.

Rooney:

[00:04:30]

Richard Flint: Was the reputation of a cookhouse an important consideration if you were looking for a job?

Jennie: Well, not ... No, because it's supposed to be good, and it was.

Rooney:

Richard Flint: Right.

Jennie: Now, the Ringling show, when they ... They never lowered the tent, the cook tent, on the ground. Did you know that?

Rooney:

Richard Flint: No.

Jennie: They spread clean, new straw. Bales and bales of it, and they'd spread it. And then the cookhouse tent would come down on that clean straw.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: That was so when you were eating, that the dirt around the tent wasn't going to fall on the tables, you see.

Jennie: Never anything like that, even heard of.

Rooney:

[00:05:00]

Richard Flint: Oh, so special care of cookhouse department.

Ed Rooney: Oh, yes.

Jennie: And the man that was manager of that, his name was Art Blood. And he had that many

Rooney: years.

Ed Rooney: Before that it was ...

Jennie George Blood.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: No, before that was ...

Jennie Stanley? No, he wasn't on it.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: No, Stanley was ... He was there in town, John Stanley.

Richard Flint: Right. In fact, I spoke with him the other night.

Ed Rooney: Oh, did you? He's writing the book.

Richard Flint: Right. Yes, he was.

Ed Rooney: Yeah, I was in asking him some things the other day. Well, he used to ... He was a head waiter on the show. He only waited in ...

[00:05:30]
Jennie Mr. and Mrs. Charlie's tent.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: Mrs. Charlie's tent, you see.

Jennie Little private dining room.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: Their private tent. And then he used to come down here and work on the symphony. On the Charlie on his boat in the wintertime. Of course, we came down here two different winters. We were down there in 1924 and we went to Cuba with Mr. and Mrs. Charlie. Then, we went up on Lake Okeechobee, fishing and hunting, you see.

Jennie Shark river fishing.
Rooney:
[00:06:00]
Richard Flint: What sort of people were Mr. and Mrs. Charlie?

Ed Rooney: Oh, they were [inaudible 00:06:01].

Jennie They were nice. They're good people.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: They were nice, real good people.

Jennie She was a teacher before she married Charles Ringling.
Rooney:
Richard Flint: Now, you said that's how you ...

Jennie
Rooney: And Mr. Charlie was a regular fellow. Mr. John wasn't like Mr. Charlie at all. I suppose if he liked the people he would condescend, but he always stood ... He was a big man, you know, and tall, and ... He'd say two or three words and then he'd go spit. That was his mannerism. And he didn't care if it splashed or not. Is that right, or not? I guess it's right.

[00:06:30]

Ed Rooney: That's right.

Jennie
Rooney: So ... But, at that time he owned a extinctious lion, and-

Richard Flint: He could afford to be different.

Jennie
Rooney: Yeah, he could afford to be different. But Mr. Charlie wasn't that way at all.

Richard Flint: He was quite an accomplished musician, Mr. Charlie, wasn't he? Interested in music?

Ed Rooney: Who was that?

Richard Flint: Mr. Charlie.

Jennie
Rooney: No.

Ed Rooney: No. Let me see, I think he played the violin a little bit, but-

Jennie
Rooney: His daughter.

[00:07:00]

Ed Rooney: His daughter was a singer, and Robert [inaudible 00:07:02] was a singer, too. And because Mrs. Charles used to play the pipe organ in the house out there, which is now the new college.

Richard Flint: Right. Right. I'm just trying to think of all the things to cover. You got talking a bit about the Forepaugh Sells, the Forepaugh and the Sells, and the reputation these shows had. Before you were in the business, I'm just wondering if you heard anything about these old shows at all?

[00:07:30]

Ed Rooney: No.

Jennie
Rooney: No.

Richard Flint: What did you think of your first season on the circus, when you finished?

Ed Rooney: I thought it was great.

Jennie
Rooney: I mean, he was only 12 years old.

Richard Flint: 12 years old. Oh.

Jennie He thought it was wonderful.

Rooney:

Richard Flint: What did you do as a 12-year-old to amuse yourself on the show, when you weren't working? Was there any time for that?

Ed Rooney: Well, there was other kids there, and we'd run around, like Floyd Nelson. The Nelson Flying act was there, and there's Floyd Nelson, and we used to run around together.

[00:08:00]

Richard Flint: Were there any special baseball teams, or anything?

Ed Rooney: Oh, no.

Richard Flint: Nothing like that.

Ed Rooney: No. No. It wasn't until after you got into the big show.

Richard Flint: The big show.

Ed Rooney: Yeah, but I never played much baseball. I wasn't good at it.

Jennie Well, besides, during trapeze you couldn't-

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: I couldn't take a chance on my hands.

Jennie ... take a chance on hurting your feet. He did get ... Your hands, I mean ... He did get his
Rooney: little finger broken in softball.

Ed Rooney: Yeah, this one here, it won't close.

Jennie And he worked with it.

Rooney:

[00:08:30]

Ed Rooney: And, only got two weeks, and then I worked with that. And if you try to climb a webbing and things, to the rigging, without that little finger, well look, it's pretty hard.

Jennie Well, that Pat [inaudible 00:08:38] thing was threw the ball, didn't he?

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: That's right.

Jennie You've heard ... You know him. He said, "Hey," and it was off in between the tents, and
Rooney: he said, "Hey," and he threw the ball-

Ed Rooney: Did you show him the-

Jennie ... and then Ed put his hand up like this, and the ball just-

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: [crosstalk 00:08:51].

Jennie ... compound double dislocation. Just broke his little finger all to pieces.

Rooney:

Richard Flint: What sort of man was Pat [Valdo 00:08:58] on the show? He was-

[00:09:00]

Ed Rooney: Well, he came as a clown.

Richard Flint: Right.

Jennie He was ideal for that.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: Then he got to be boss clown. And then he got to ...

Richard Flint: Some of these old [inaudible 00:09:14]

Jennie Yeah, this is 36. And the other one I guess is another ...

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: The one's taken in Chicago, and the other was taken in-

Richard Flint: New Haven, I've seen the New Haven.

Ed Rooney: ... New Haven. Right.

[00:09:30]

Richard Flint: You were saying about Pat [Waldo 00:09:29]. He started out and became boss clown.

Ed Rooney: He was boss clown, yes. And then-

Jennie And he hired and fired the performers. That was his job.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: Then they sent him to Europe. Mr. [Grumpett 00:09:39] sent him to Europe for acts. And he came back, and they made him head of the personnel of the show. And of course he used to routine the show, program the show, and all that. And after he was out, after he quit, and was down here, when they went into a new building, when there was a smaller building than they had for the tournament or anything, he used to go on and arrange the tournament and all that, you see.

[00:10:00]

Jennie And if anyone had any complaints ... You asked if everybody got along pretty good. Not
Rooney: always. But if they had any complaints they'd go to Pat [Voldo 00:10:20], then he'd listen to each side, and-

Ed Rooney: Smooth it over.

Jennie Well, right from ... yeah.

Rooney:

Richard Flint: Was he pretty good at that, or ... ?

Jennie He was good. Oh, he was ideal for that job.

Rooney:
[00:10:30]

Richard Flint: Another person that was on the show, a long time, with both of you, was Fred Bradna.

Ed Rooney: Oh, yes.

Richard Flint: What sort of a ... I understand ...

Jennie We went to Cuba with his Circus one time.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: We all went down there. He brought a show down there to Santos Y Artigas and we played in the [Mardi 00:10:48] Theater down there.

Jennie That's the theater that picture was painted.

Rooney:

Richard Flint: Ah, yes. We were trying to [inaudible 00:10:53]. We wanted to show the [time 00:10:53]. Well, Fred Bradna was quite a personality I understand.

Jennie Yes, and so was his wife.

Rooney:

[00:11:00]

Ed Rooney: Ella, yeah.

Richard Flint: They said he had quite a vocabulary as far as ...

Jennie Cussing you mean.

Rooney:

Richard Flint: Yeah. Was that ...

Jennie It wasn't always nice. All of us use to work the Shrine Circuses in the winter, those big shows like Cleveland and all the coliseums and big shows. Well, all of us we'd meet the Shriner's wives and they'd ask us to their homes at night after the show for lunch and all. Bradna was sometimes just a little bit offensive, but they stood for him. They thought he was cute.

[00:11:30]

Richard Flint: They were victims.

Jennie Ella his wife had ... This is a little ... I see I get to talking to myself. Well anyway, in one of these homes, she always use to ask for something, food or something to take. She had an accent, foreign. It was so good, it was so good. We were at the one of these [inditrite 00:12:02] and one of these wives gave her this big jar of pickles. She was out in the vestibule, we were all getting ready to leave, and she dropped this vinegar and pickles and everything out on that floor. She was always doing something like that.

[00:12:00]

Richard Flint: You mentioned the tournament several times. What was this now?

Ed Rooney: Well, that was the ultimate show. When they came in, they would run the show.

Richard Flint: What I know is a spec-

Jennie Call it spectacle.

Rooney:
[00:12:30]

Richard Flint: Spec, right, right. How did they ... Tournaments an old term for the spec.

Ed Rooney: Well, that's what they called it.

Richard Flint: Well, that's what it was called.

Ed Rooney: It was called a tournament.

Richard Flint: What about some of the big productions of-

Ed Rooney: Now, now with the show they had three or four tournaments forayed around there you see. I don't know what it's for unless to kill time, but the other [members 00:12:49] are big ones, because the band used to go first down there. They had all the trombones and all that stuff and they'd go around, then the show would go on and be that and [timber 00:13:00] 00:12:59] races. That was the finish. Then, of course, we had a concert with the show.

Richard Flint: What was the concert like in ever ... ?

Ed Rooney: Well, the concert was knife throwing, sharp shooting ...

Richard Flint: Wild west ...

Ed Rooney: Well, that was a type that they had ... that they used to have comedians and song and dance people and everything first. Then they brought in ... What was their name? Cy Compton and his Wild West. He was there for years.

[00:13:30]

Jennie Then there were girls who had a specialty in vaudeville away from the circus. Like sisters
Rooney: there were and they'd be in the concert.

Richard Flint: Of course, you took part in some of the old spectacles, The Queen of Sheba, and Cleopatra, and so on.

Ed Rooney: She wasn't the greatest one. I was in Cinderella, the best one they ever had. She was Cinderella. There's pictures of the thing.

Richard Flint: I hadn't always saw the Cinderella when it played the [inaudible 00:13:56].

[00:14:00]

Jennie Yeah. I was also the princess in the Days of Old. That was a spectacle, in Days of Old.
Rooney:

Richard Flint: Who were these spectacles like? Who produced them? How were they put together?

Ed Rooney: [Bardige 00:14:08], Mr. [Bardige 00:14:11], he and his wife. He was dance. He'd put on big shows away from there, away from the circus too. They produced the thing on the showbiz spectacle.

[00:14:30]

Richard Flint: How was this stage it was on [crosstalk 00:14:33]?

Ed Rooney: They build a stage with the cast under the ... behind it.

Jennie Rooney: They'd take part of the back side of the big top and it would be the stage. They'd lose those seats, they'd have to. That's where they started those acting.

Ed Rooney: [00:15:00] Not only would they Forepaugh Sells show, they had the firehouse. You see they'd have this building catch on fire, and their engines run out, and all of that kind of stuff. A regular their firehouse. See you would [beg them 00:15:04] be a building burn me up [crosstalk 00:15:04].

Richard Flint: This would be a clown gag.

Ed Rooney: It wasn't a clown gag. It was a spectacle like. Of course, they had comedy in it. They had these dwarfs jump out of the windows and catch them in a blanket and all that kind of stuff. The whole thing was these firemen running to put the fire out.

Richard Flint: How long would some of these specs such as Cinderella, and so on last?

[00:15:30]

Ed Rooney: We're on and Cinderella would last about 30 minutes.

Richard Flint: There was a whole storyline to it?

Ed Rooney: Oh, yeah.

Jennie Rooney: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richard Flint: Did you have any speaking parts at all?

Jennie Rooney: No.

Ed Rooney: No.

Jennie Rooney: It was pantomime.

Richard Flint: Pantomime.

Ed Rooney: You couldn't hear it.

Jennie Rooney: But it's In Days of Old.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: They didn't have a lot of speakers.

Jennie

Rooney:

[00:16:00]

In Days of Old I had to stand on a platform. Dave Costello would change suits with him and Fred. He rode this horse from one end of the big top. He was the knight. He'd ride on his horse from one end of the big top down to the other end and he'd pass this platform and he'd supposed to rescue me. I was Roslyn or whatever. He'd grab me around the waist and pick me off there on the galloping horse. That was part of In Days of Old, that spectacle ... which was not easy to do. The cowboys do it but it wasn't easy for us.

[00:16:30]

Richard Flint: On some of these pictures, are there any people that you can remember here, or any anecdotes at all, or ... If you see faces, or you have a story connected with them ... ?

Ed Rooney: The Doll family just come on the scene at the end of the day.

Jennie

Have you met the Doll family?

Rooney:

Richard Flint: No, I haven't.

Jennie

They were midgets, so ...

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: They were midgets. [crosstalk 00:16:50].

Jennie

... beautiful. At that time they were young and real pretty, real cute.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: Called them Daisy and Harry. Tiny, she didn't feel like coming to the show.

Jennie

Did Grace die?

Rooney:

[00:17:00]

Ed Rooney: Yes.

Jennie

I thought one of them died.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: She's dead.

Jennie

There were four of them.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: Gracie, Gracie died.

Jennie

The oldest one died. I hear they [crosstalk 00:17:08]. Yeah, you ... yeah, yeah.

Rooney:

Richard Flint: I've seen that they're very painless, very painless. There's Fred Bradna of course, and that's Moira Levin right there. You two can look ... If you look through there, anyone you remember ...

Jennie Did you meet Merle?
 Rooney:
 Richard Flint: I've met him on the show and ...

Jennie He lives here.
 Rooney:
 [00:17:30]
 Richard Flint: Yeah. He'd never remember me, but I've met him at Peacock's. He's coming up to the parade in Milwaukee.

Jennie Oh, is he?
 Rooney:
 Richard Flint: The night [Campory's 00:13:17] gonna lead a band. That's gonna be on television, educational television.

Ed Rooney: There's a picture here of [Junie Levin 00:13:17], and he was Bugs Townsend for years on the show.

Richard Flint: They called him ... He had a nickname didn't he?

Ed Rooney: I know what the boogies used to say a lot, said that [mull-on 00:17:56]. They said that sure gone, says that, that's the husband, but that mull-on, that's sudden death. He used to really lay it on. They used to call him The Whale. Whelan his name was, they called him The Whale. There was Robert [inaudible 00:18:17] and Mr. Sam Gumpits.

[00:18:30]
 Richard Flint: Where are you now? Ah, yes. Now, that's Gumpits.

Ed Rooney: Sam Gumpits.

Richard Flint: Fred [Barium 00:18:37].

Ed Rooney: Fred Barium. This is Charles Ringling and Pat Clyde Ingalls.

Jennie Jack Clyde Ingalls.
 Rooney:
 Ed Rooney: Yeah, Clyde Ingalls. He run the side show for years.

Richard Flint: What sort of a man was he?

Ed Rooney: Well, he was quite a show off.

[00:19:00]
 Jennie He was a big fellow with a big voice, and a big blowhard. You know what that is? That's
 Rooney: when he left.

Richard Flint: Mm-hmm (affirmative), more wind than ...

Jennie But everybody liked him.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: This is the Doll family. That's Harry, and Daisy, and ...

Jennie Grace and Tiny.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: ... and Grace and Tiny. This is Chesty.

Richard Flint: Chesty.

Jennie He was the girl [cry 00:19:19].
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: He was quite a guy.

Jennie This Clyde Ingalls was a teaser. He was married once before he formed [inaudible
Rooney: 00:19:25]. His wife was mixing up some hamburger and stuff on a [slog 00:19:30] ...

Ed Rooney: She was cutting up a salad.

[00:19:30]
Jennie ... and she had a little [live 00:19:32], a chopping thing, hatchet, or whatever you call it.
Rooney: He kept sticking his fingers under it. She said, "If you don't get your hand out from there I'll chop your fingers off." He stuck his hand under there and she chopped two of his fingers off.

Ed Rooney: [inaudible 00:19:45] and [inaudible 00:19:48].

Richard Flint: The wire act.

Ed Rooney: Yeah. He lives over in ... the Concellos.

Jennie Miami.
Rooney:
[00:20:00]
Ed Rooney: That's Art and his wife.

Jennie The Wallendas.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: Here's Carolyn and Mark.

Jennie And [inaudible 00:20:10].
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: [inaudible 00:20:10]. That was his brother. I don't know if he's still alive or not.

Richard Flint: Is that Herman?

Jennie Herman? Yeah, Herman. Herman is ...
Rooney:

Ed Rooney: This fellow is here in town. He's in ...

Jennie: So is Herman.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: Herman is still around and or not?

Jennie: I'm sure he is.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: This fellow worked with the Wallendas for years. He was ...

Jennie: Killed.
Rooney:
[00:20:30]
Ed Rooney: [Ians 00:13:17] right ... Yeah, [Ians 00:20:28] right worked out of Van Wezel Theater.

Richard Flint: You mentioned Chesty as being an old clown. Did you work with him before the Ringling Show?

Ed Rooney: No. He came over to the Ringling Show with a hand balancing act.

Jennie: Ed.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: Huh?

Richard Flint: Ed, someone blocks the path of picking up ...

Ed Rooney: He came over with a hand balancing act, then he turned out to be a clown and stayed with the show.

[00:21:00]
Richard Flint: I noticed his makeup goes right down to his chest and all.

Jennie: Is he still working?
Rooney:
Richard Flint: I don't think so.

Ed Rooney: Who, Chesty?

Jennie: Chesty.
Rooney:
Ed Rooney: He's dead.

Speaker 4: Well, that's what I thought.

Ed Rooney: He died of a heart attack.

Speaker 4: Yes, he made it down to here.

Ed Rooney: Yeah?

Richard Flint: That reminds me. One old clown was telling me that if they didn't makeup once behind their neck they'd get fined, and so on. Can you remember any of the fines that you could be fined for on a show?

[00:21:30]

Ed Rooney: No, I didn't know anything about that.

Richard Flint: You never were fined?

Ed Rooney: I never was fined.

Richard Flint: Any other incidents that you can recollect of life on the show?

Ed Rooney: No, I don't think of anything else.

Richard Flint: Can you tell me more about the ariel routine that you rehearsed? Did you rehearse it more than just the first year or ... ?

Ed Rooney: What?

Jennie Rooney: The girls?

Richard Flint: The girls and the ariel-

Ed Rooney: Girls had new girls every year. Not all of them though, but they always had a bunch of new ones. They had to go and rehearse all over again.

Richard Flint: How many years were you directing?

Ed Rooney: Seven years.

Richard Flint: From '31 until '38 then?

Ed Rooney: From '32.

Richard Flint: Thirty two to '39.

[00:22:30]

Jennie Rooney: One of the girls was very afraid to let go and Ed would try to get her to do these tricks of it [inaudible 00:22:31] version. We knew her real well and we liked her real well. She's friends of the twins.

Richard Flint: Hunt twins?

Jennie Rooney: Yeah. Agnes her name was, so she'd ... Agnes then was center, lava face girls and they talked. They talked about it just as if they were my husband. One time she'd come in

[00:23:00] and the other ... Then her down there. Pulled her to get her to let go and all. She came in and she said, "That man to me, that man!" She said. "How can you stand him?" I said, "I just can." She said, "He's a slave driver," and I don't know what else.

Richard Flint: Were you on the Ringling Show when it was closed by the strike in Stanton? How did you get that news that it would be closing?

Ed Rooney: Well, they just closed it back then.

Richard Flint: Then, what did you-

[00:23:30]

Ed Rooney: We stayed there for days until they made up their minds to call it off and come down here. Then they went off to the barn show. It was there they finished out the season. Of course, when we come back the next season the Ringling Show went off again.

Richard Flint: Did you go with the Barnes Show?

Jennie Rooney: No, we came home, but Eddy went out.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: Eddy was out.

Speaker 4: What they did was that they put the Ringling Brothers Circus then Al G. Barnes was so tiny, you couldn't read it.

[00:24:00]

Ed Rooney: Ringling Brothers Circus presents

Richard Flint: Barnum and Bailey's Stupendous New Features

Ed Rooney: LG Brides presents Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey ...

Richard Flint: Brothers, Barnum, and Bailey. Was there any thought that the Ringling Show might not come out again that year ... after the strike closed it?

Ed Rooney: Oh, no.

Richard Flint: No?

Jennie Rooney: No, I don't think so.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: They knew they were gonna come out again.

Richard Flint: You were on the Ringling show in 1918, correct?

Ed Rooney: Yes.

[00:24:30]

Richard Flint: Then the next year, of course, they combined the Barnum and Bailey. I understand there was quite a bit of friction between some of the bosses. Was this at all into the performance?

Ed Rooney: Yeah, it was, but they gave them a job not like ... Micky [Graves 00:24:39] was boss of property man on Barnum's Show. Joe Miller was property man with the Ringling Show. They kept Micky Graves as the boss [canvasman 00:24:56], otherwise the boss property man there. They gave Joe Miller the privilege car.
[00:25:00]

Richard Flint: Was he resentful at all?

Ed Rooney: Oh, no.

Jennie Rooney: No, he made a lot of money on the privilege car. You know what that is?

Richard Flint: I think I do.

Jennie Rooney: They serve lunches, and ...

Ed Rooney: They serve lunches, and

Jennie Rooney: Not the liquor.

Ed Rooney: Not no liquor, but soft drinks.

Jennie Rooney: Soft drinks, and coffee, and big meals. You could get-

Richard Flint: This is called ... I know it as the PIE car.

Jennie Rooney: That's a PIE car.

Richard Flint: How did the name become from privilege to PIE car?

[00:25:30]
Ed Rooney: Well, it's just ... I don't know [crosstalk 00:25:33].

Jennie Rooney: It's like the coffee, salmon, and the dark areas called the greasy spoon.

Speaker 4: Yeah, the grease joint.

Jennie Rooney: The grease joint.

Ed Rooney: Then another one that was around there. He was chief. Jimmy Whelan was the boss [canvas man 00:25:50] on the Ringling Show ... rather than the boss canvas man on the Barnum Show. They made him 24-hour man. Jimmy Whelan stayed as the boss canvas man. That's the way they split up. They had two bosses for every job. The only thing is that Charlie Ringling who was the boss officer on the Ringling show, he wouldn't take another job. Of course, he left showing nothing of ownership.

[00:26:00]

[00:26:30]

Richard Flint: Right. Did he stay with the Wild Show for quite a number of seasons?

Ed Rooney: He stayed there until he died. He didn't last long.

Richard Flint: Did you keep in touch with him at all?

Ed Rooney: No.

Richard Flint: No?

Ed Rooney: No, I didn't keep in touch with him on his own show.

Jennie Rooney: He was a different family.

Richard Flint: Different family.

Ed Rooney: We never were close.

Richard Flint: You said you enjoyed your life on the circus. Would you go back and do it all over again?
[00:27:00] What did you particularly enjoy about the circus? Anything in particular?

Ed Rooney: Just living, that's all ... and the money.

Richard Flint: And the money.

Ed Rooney: Yes.

Richard Flint: You considered it good money for the time?

Ed Rooney: It was good money in those days. Of course now you get more money, but ...

Jennie Rooney: I told him we got \$225 was it?

Ed Rooney: Two hundred and fifty.

Jennie Rooney: Two hundred and fifty dollars.

[00:27:30]

Richard Flint: How many expenses would you have on the show?

Jennie Rooney: Well none. You'd have to make them. Because you had your sleeping, and your eating, and ...

Ed Rooney: We paid the porter \$5.00.

Jennie Rooney: The porter on the sleeping car.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: We paid our property man \$15.00.

Jennie And the waiter in the cook house.

Rooney:

Richard Flint: That's per week?

Ed Rooney: Yeah.

[00:28:00]

Richard Flint: On the 4th of July, there were all these special dinners and activities. Can you recollect any that ... or not?

Ed Rooney: Well, there's the [folk rites 00:28:03] and everything. The one thing they had on 4th of July there, they had two midgets that didn't like each other. They weren't midgets but they were dwarfs. They said, "Alright, you can box three rounds on 4th of July and you can settle this thing." They put them out there and they went in. One went out and hit the other. He bounced on his hind end and leapt to his feet and hit the other. And bound they just went up and down like that for three rounds. John Whelan happened to be on the show at the time and he said, "Boy, oh, boy that's the greatest thing. We'll put that in Madison Square Garden. When they were through, they were both whooped and they would never get near each other again and everything was settled.

[00:28:30]

Jennie They had such short legs that they just bounced out and ran.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: Yeah, when he hit him he'd go down on his heinie and would bounce right to his feet hit the other guy.

Jennie Yep, and yet your broadcasting.

Rooney:

[00:29:00]

Richard Flint: Well, I don't know if there's anything else. I've sort of gone over things that I know about and wanted to ask you about. Any other incidents that come to mind?

Ed Rooney: No, no. That's about it.

Richard Flint: What do ... When you get together with other show people, what do you talk about?

Jennie Circus. Ed does, anyway.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: Yeah they talk about the ... Now, you don't talk about the show anymore because it's not under canvas. It's like any indoor circus now. When it plays, it plays in buildings. Just like Evan Morton Show or any of these other shows. Like the Clyde Beatty Cole Show. Of course, Orman is dead now until he did then. He used to go in the winter time and come in here and we'd go up and play Detroit, Cleveland, and Grand Rapids, and St. Paul. In the winter time, the [Shriners 00:30:00].

[00:30:00]

Richard Flint: Have you been to a circus lately?

Ed Rooney: No.

Richard Flint: No?

Ed Rooney: No.

Richard Flint: Would you want to go to one do you think?

Ed Rooney: No. If I did I could go down and see the show down in Venice. Instead, I haven't gone.

Richard Flint: You haven't gone.

Ed Rooney: No.

Richard Flint: Why not? Can I ask?

Ed Rooney: Well, I'm just not interested. Those days are past and gone now. I know most of the acts.

Richard Flint: You've seen them?

[00:30:30]

Jennie: I don't think Ed and I are like most of the retired circus people. It isn't our whole life.

Rooney:

Richard Flint: I found that most people I've spoken with is once they're retired that's it and they don't go back.

Ed Rooney: That's it. They were in that and those were the days and they're past and gone.

Richard Flint: You can't live in the past is what everyone says.

Ed Rooney: The people who live in the past-

Jennie: We don't want to.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: If you live in the past like that and you're always crazy about show biz, then we have people here in town that are like that. They're just wild about show business. Well, it's breaking their heart because they're not in it.

[00:31:00]

Jennie: They won't let go.

Rooney:

Ed Rooney: That's right.

Richard Flint: Well, I thank you. I guess that's more or less covers things unless anything else comes to mind.

Jennie
Rooney:

It was nice talking-