

WARDIE - JAY

INTRODUCTION TO

BUILDING A MINIATURE CIRCUS

THE next time you attend a circus note the large number of wagons, tents and railroad cars it uses. You will wonder why so much equipment is required and how they ever figure out what they need and what goes into each piece of equipment. The whole thing seems very complex and you may say to yourself "Gosh, I wouldn't want the job of deciding what goes where and how much of each." But that is exactly what you will have to do in order to plan your miniature circus and it's really very easy.

A real circus built up around the number of acts it has and the size of its menagerie. This determines what wagons are needed to carry the show and in turn decides how many flat cars and stock cars are needed. It also will show how many people are necessary and how many passenger cars are needed to carry them. Then it also gives the owner an idea of how large a cook tent the show needs and how big a horse tent, how big a menagerie tent, side show tent and the dressing room. You see, all these are related and once they decide on their acts and animals it's easy.

Well let's tackle your show. We'll take an imaginary circus and try to figure out what equipment you will need and in this way try to give you an idea of how to go about it. Of course your final show will necessarily depend on how much you, yourself, want and how great your interest is. For example there are circus model fans who now own complete miniature circuses of from 30 to 40 cars. This consists of about 100 wagons or varying types. On the other hand there are fans who have only one or two cars on which they have lavished special care so that each piece is a collector's item. Work from whatever angle you wish.

Let us assume that your show is to be a small railroad one, that is, one which travels by rail and therefore loads all of its equipment on flat cars and its animals in stock cars. We select this type since practically everyone has a model railroad of some type and you can run your circus cars on your layout. We will say that you plan on having a two ring circus. Therefore your tent will be a three pole tent of about 150 ft. wide and 250 ft. long. Reduced to actual $\frac{1}{4}$ " scale this would be $37\frac{1}{2}$ " x $62\frac{1}{2}$ ". Now, you will need one Center Pole Wagon, four or five canvas wagons, two or three stake and chain wagons, four or five plank wagons and three or four baggage wagons. These will carry all of the poles, canvas, seats, seat jacks and stringers, ring sections, stakes, chains and pegs that are required to make up the main tent. Actually more wagons are required but these



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will be enough to give the impression of a complete group for the one tent. To carry these wagons you will need five or six flat cars. You've now got your equipment for this portion of the show. Easy, isn't it?

Next, we'll take the menagerie tent. Let's say that you're going to have two lions, two tigers, two bears, a dozen or so monkeys, two giraffes, four or five seals, a hippopotamus and rhinoceros. This means that you will need nine cage wagons. Besides these you will have maybe twelve elephants, eight camels, twelve zebras and perhaps a pair of buffalo. Mind you, this is all theoretical and given only from the standpoint of helping you in arranging a complete circus. To carry the animals listed above you will require two or three flat cars for the cage wagons and about three stock cars for the elephants, camels, zebras and buffalo. And of course you'll need more wagons for the menagerie tent. This tent will be about 40 ft. x 60 ft. or to $\frac{1}{4}$ " scale, 10" x 15". The menagerie pole and canvas wagon will carry all of the poles for this tent as well as most of the canvas. Two stake and chain wagons will handle the stakes, chains, stanchions, and pegs for the tent and two baggage wagons will carry the other equipment including some of the smaller sections of canvas and such items as water pails, forks, etc. For these wagons you will require another flat car.

Now comes the cook tent. This is a very important part of any circus. It is the first tent up in the morning and the first one down at night. Its size will vary with the number of the personnel in the show but a tent of around 40 ft. x 60 ft., 10" x 15" the same size as the menagerie tent, will be large enough. You will require the same number of wagons for this tent as for the menagerie tent but in addition you will need a commissary wagon and perhaps two additional baggage wagons for supplies and the cooking utensils. So you will need another two flat cars.

The horse tent is next. So far we've got thirty-nine wagons and there will be a few more for the horse tent but we've got to decide first on how many horses we will need. There will have to be the ring horses, oh, about 18 and then we'll need perhaps another 50 draft horses. In all therefore, we'll have 68 horses to house in the horse tent, so we'll make it about 40 ft. x 80 ft. or 10" x 20". This tent will need two menagerie pole and canvas wagons, three or four stake and chain wagons and five or six baggage wagons. One of the baggage wagons will house the tack shop and one will be the blacksmith shop. For these wagons we will need three flat cars and to haul the horses we should have another three stock cars.

If we're going to have a dressing tent we will need another two flat cars to be loaded with six baggage wagons. These will carry the

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props and the costumes for the performance. Aside from these we will need one canvas wagon to carry the canvas and poles for the dressing tent.

Our circus is growing but we've still got a few more wagons to build. You've got to sell tickets for your show and so you'll need at least two ticket wagons. One of these is red for the sale of the general admission tickets and one is yellow for reserved seats. Then you'll want a Calliope for your parades and for circus music, so you'll need one of this wagon. And of course we musn't forget the water wagon. You've got to haul water for the stock and personnel and on a very dry day you may want to wet down the rings and aisles in the main tent to keep down the dust. So build a tank wagon as it's really necessary. Then we musn't forget the generator wagons. These are needed to furnish electric power for lighting of the tents at night. The circus we are describing will need at least two of these. These wagons constitute another flat car load.

Now let's see how many wagons, flat cars and stock cars we will need for the foregoing lineup. There will be 60 wagons, 18 flat cars and 6 stock cars. Don't misunderstand us, you don't necessarily have to have all of this equipment. You can build as many or as few items as you desire. Let your own interest and ambition be your guide, but in any case we know that whether you build only one mantel piece or a complete 40 car train, that you will get the biggest thrill of your life when you behold the completed product. Get on the band wagon and treat yourself to more fun than a barrel full of monkeys!

All of the wagons and the flat and stock cars can be built from the kits listed in our catalog. The tents are not yet ready but they will be available in a short time and we'll keep you posted. Watch our ads. There are many other wagons which also go into the building of a circus and these will be offered to you as soon as time permits.

We wish to state that the foregoing may not be exactly correct insofar as the number of wagons for each unit is concerned, however, we are chiefly interested at this time in getting you started with the wagons which are available. We assure you that new items will be turned out from time to time so that eventually you will be able to obtain kits for practically all of the various types of wagons and other equipment used by circuses. In this connection we will be glad to hear from you and to have your suggestions. Don't hesitate to write to us if you would like any special kind of wagon, etc., or if you have any problems with which we can help you. Our staff is at your disposal and will gladly furnish all information which is in their possession.