

Cottage Cage Material from Robert Miefert

We bring you Picture and Drawings of The John Robinson Circus No. 42 Cottage Cage. Plans, photos and history on these wagons are hard to come by, but according to the records and also mentioned by Leonard Farley – Circus Historian, the majority of these cages were designed by E. Roe or Emil Roettengartner, who also designed Lithographs for The John Robinson Circus.

They were further designed and built for The John Robinson Circus by The George Schmidt Wagon Works of Cincinnati, Ohio, in the 1890's. Circus Historians place the year of construction between 1895 and 1899. They were very unusual as to the "Bay Window" and odd roof construction. Some of the larger cages were from 17 to 20 feet in length. The wood carvings were quite unique and, according to records, were made by imported Italian

John Robinson Circus Cottage Cage Wagon No. 42

DATE: 1900

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'

SCANNED & REVISED:
03/18/04

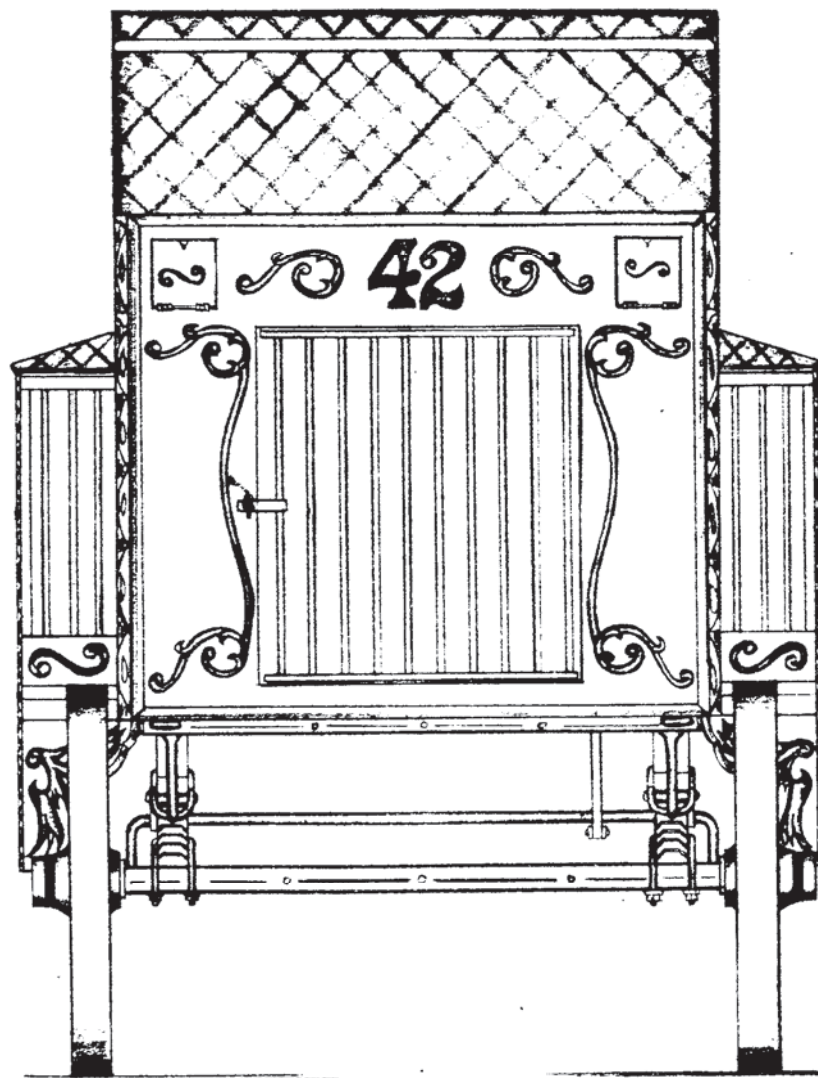
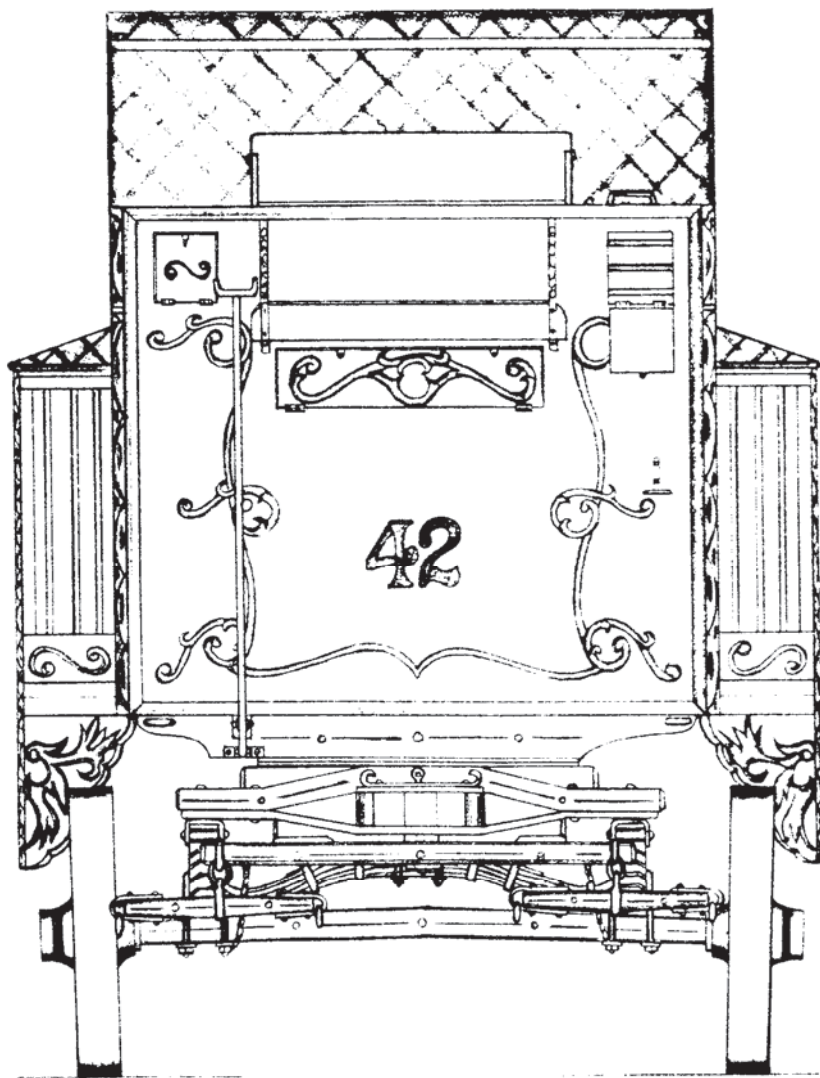
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Circus Model Builders

Drawn By
Robert Miefert CMB #919

DRAWING NUMBER

#0174



wood carvers. Some records mention the fact that sixteen of these cages were constructed, but I believe there were several more, based on my research thru local sources. I have photos of ten of them, and am searching for the remainder.

Wagon No. 42 was perhaps the most popular as it was the most photographed and is a True Cottage Cage with Roof and Bay Window to depict the Cottage Design. This cage was 15 feet long and 6 feet wide with 3 compartments with bar partitions. (I have cats in my model as I do not know just what animals were carried in the prototype). All bars were covered by light wood panels with paintings usually showing animals in combat. The panels were left on during parade and as protection to and from the runs and en-route "Over The Rails".

**John Robinson Circus
Cottage Cage Wagon No. 42**

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The models feature spring type under carriages which are built up of sheet lead leaves with a brass main leaf. The wheels are cast aluminum with web sunburst or rosette carved of wood and cemented to the wheel spokes.

The models also feature working brakes of the foot pedal type. Side and end carvings are made by sketching on paper, then cementing this sketch to packra plywood and sawing the outline with a small jig-saw. They are then rounded off and completed using a high speed motor with a flexible shaft and chuck with carving burrs.

As for the color schemes, the actual colors of the various cottage cages is unknown but the photos of the prototypes depict either dark or light coloring. The dark photos could be blue, red, orange or maroon. The light photos could be white, light yellow, light blue and so on.

The cottage cages employed a rather fancy roof and utilized paint impregnated canvas which was decorated to simulate a slate roof of various colors. The model of the No. 42, has a blue roof, white body and under carriage with gold face sunbursts and red stripping. The numbers "42" are gold decals with black borders. The bars and bar doors are made of welding wire and are painted flat black.

MODEL CONSTRUCTION OF YOUR COTTAGE CAGE

The models as built by the writer in 3/4 scale are constructed of "pattern grade" kiln dried white pine. Most of these cages were compartmentalized and as an example No. 42 has three compartments. The front compartment has a bar door on the right side of the wagon and a sliding door between the center and rear compartments. The rear outside bar door was quite large to give a good view of the animals.

All of the cottage cages featured removable side and rear panels over the bars and bar doors. These panels generally were in place during the parades and always in place to and from the runs and while the wagon was on the train. These panels depicted artist's drawings of scenes, animals in combat, and various other artistic renderings.

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