

## Circus Ownership Chronology

	Percentage Ownership														
	Al Ringling	Otto Ringling	Alf T Ringling	Charles Ringling	John Ringling	Henry Ringling	Richard T Ringling	Edith Ringling	Aubrey Black Ringling Haley	NY Investors	Allied Owners	John Ringling Estate	John Ringling North	Robert Ringling	Feld/ Mattel
1871 Phineas Barnum establishes "P. T. Barnum's Grand Traveling Museum, Menagerie, Caravan & Hippodrome".															
1881 Barnum's show merges with James Bailey's Cooper and Bailey Circus to form the Barnum & Baily Circus.															
1882 John Ringling and 4 of his 6 brothers form the "Ringling Brothers' Classic and Comic Concert Company".															
1884 The Ringlings join with veteran showman Yankee Robinson to form "The Old Yankee Robinson & Ringling Brothers Great Double Shows".															
1884 Yankee Robinson dies and the company is reorganized as "The Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows" with each of <b>the founding 5 brothers each having a 20% share.</b>	20	20	20	20	20										
1903 The Ringling Brothers acquire 50% interest in the Forepaugh-Sells Circus.	20	20	20	20	20										
1907 The Ringling Brothers acquire the Barnum & Baily Circus and the remaining 50% of the Forepaugh-Sells Circus from James Bailey's widow.	20	20	20	20	20										
1911 <b>Otto</b> dies leaving his 20% share of the circus to Henry.	20		20	20	20	20									
1911 The once famous and well-respected Forepaugh-Sells Circus is sold piecemeal.	20		20	20	20	20									

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1916 <b>Al</b> dies and his will specifies his share to be divided in equal parts to the 4 remaining brothers; Henry, Charles, Alf T, and John.			25	25	25	25									
1918 Henry dies and his share (from Otto) is purchased from his widow in equal parts by the 3 remaining brothers; Charles, Alf T, and John.			33.3	33.3	33.3										
1919 <b>Alf T</b> dies leaving his 1/3 share to his son Richard T Ringling.				33.3	33.3		33.3								
1919 Charles and John merge the two remaining circuses to create "The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Show".				33.3	33.3		33.3								
1926 <b>Charles</b> dies leaving his 1/3 share to his widow Edith Conway Ringling.					33.3		33.3	33.3							
1929 The "Combined Show" absorbs the American Circus Corporation, including the Sells-Floto Circus, the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, the John Robinson Circus, the Sparks Circus, and the Al G. Barnes Circus.					33.3		33.3	33.3							
1931 Richard T Ringling dies leaving his 1/3 share to his widow Aubrey Black Ringling.					33.3			33.3	33.3						
1931 Edith and Aubrey form the "Widow's Trust" that then controls 2/3 of the corporation.					33.3			33.3	33.3						

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1932 The Circus issues 1,000 shares and becomes a stock company chartered in Delaware in a settlement with the holders of the note that was used to buy the American Circus Company.					33.3			33.3	33.3						
1932 As part of the settlement, New York Investors acquire 18 shares and Allied Owners acquire 82 shares of the corporation, leaving John with 300 and the Widow's Trust with 600.					30			30	30	18	82				
1936 <b>John Ringling</b> dies and his estate enters probate, with the executors now voting John's 300 shares.								30	30	18	82	30			
1937 The estate buys out the creditors' 100 shares of the Circus for just \$28,000, with 70 going to John Ringling North and 30 to the "Widow's Trust", split evenly with 15 each to Edith and Aubrey.								31.5	31.5			30	7		
1946 The Ca' d'Zan, the Art Museum, the artwork, and the grounds pass to the state of Florida, leaving oil wells, railroads, other assets, and 300 shares of the Circus as residue of the estate.								31.5	31.5			30	7		
1946 In the final stage of probate, the State of Florida agrees to compensate John Ringling North and Leonard Bisco as executors with all residual assets, including 300 shares in the Circus.								31.5	31.5			30	7		

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1946 Biscoe and North settle all claims with the remaining creditors, and retain 300 shares in the Circus.								31.5	31.5			30	7		
1946 John Ringling North splits the net proceeds of the settlement with his partner Leonard Bisco, adding 300 shares to his existing stake of 70 shares in the Circus.								31.5	31.5				37		
1946 The "Widow's Trust" splits up due to fallout from the Hartford Fire. Edith wills her 315 shares to her son Robert E. Ringling.									31.5			37	31.5		
1946 Aubrey sells 175 shares from her stake to Robert for \$243,055.55, giving him a total of 49% of the circus. This places a value of \$13.9 million for the circus (\$183 million in today's dollars).									14			37	49		
1946 Aubrey sells her remaining 140 shares to John Ringling North for \$194,444.45, giving him 51% and control of the corporation. John uses \$100,000 of his and Ida's money and borrows the rest.												51	49		
1967 Feld Entertainment acquires the Circus for \$8 million from John Ringling North and Robert's sons James C Ringling and Charles J Ringling, Sr. (\$61.6 million in today's dollars)															100
1971 Mattel purchases the company for \$50 million (\$317.5 million in today's dollars)															100

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1982 The Felds buy back the company for \$22.8 million. (\$60.8 million in today's dollars)															100
2017 Feld Entertainment closes the Circus and liquidates all assets.															

147 Years of Circus History

**Sources:**

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