

## Narrator's Notes: HUMBUG ON WHEELS

Phineas Taylor Barnum was a Showman extraordinaire. Above and beyond all else however he was a Businessman. Throughout his adult years he professed an aversion to "manual labor" translated as "working with my hands".

Hence he made his living as a Promoter. With a special talent for Advertising, P.T. - as he is best remembered - was able to "raise a crowd" for almost any event. His schemes were countless and though some backfired, in more than one case leaving him nearly penniless, he never in his eighty-one years abandoned the notion that there is ever an audience for diversion from ordinary existence.

Barnum was sixty years of age when his imagination led him to the Circus world. Prior to that his promotions had encompassed what might be considered more akin to Carnival features. Hoaxes were his early venue until he discovered "the Swedish Nightingale, Jenny Lind" whereupon he became Talent Scout and Agent. His clientele then included such important Persons as himself. The autobiography he wrote and published set a pattern for celebrities to follow. Self-promotion was perhaps Barnum's greatest triumph.

In 1871, Barnum launched what he called his GRAND TRAVELING MUSEUM, MENAGERIE, CARAVAN and CIRCUS. It was at that time the largest Circus in American history.

A year later the name changed to P.T. BARNUM'S TRAVELING WORLD'S FAIR, GREAT ROMAN HIPPODROME and GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. Its proprietor billed it as simply THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH.

The key to Barnum's success as a Circus entrepreneur was his determination to take the show to the people rather than settling in a single location waiting for paying customers to come to him. To this end Barnum exploited the network of Railroad Lines which at that time were shrinking North America. There is a story that Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany employed Barnum's logistics skills for military operations during the First World War.

By 1881, P.T. had entered into collaboration with James A. Bailey and James T. Hutchinson to dominate the Circus world with P.T. BARNUM'S GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH, AND THE GREAT LONDON CIRCUS, SANGER'S ROYAL BRITISH MENAGERIE and THE GRAND INTERNATIONAL ALLIED SHOWS UNITED. Ultimately the name was shortened to BARNUM & LONDON CIRCUS.

Barnum's last foray into the Circus world came in 1888 when he and James Bailey reunited to tour America with BARNUM & BAILEY GREATEST SHOW ON

EARTH. By then he had established his headquarters at Bridgeport, Connecticut and turned his attentions to other endeavors including Municipal Planning and Civic Affairs.

### Scene 1:

Beginning in the 1850's Barnum who had been born at Bethel, Connecticut, sought to develop East Bridgeport in the same State. Despite financial setbacks he persevered in these efforts. He eventually built at least four mansions and is remembered today as Bridgeport's "claim to fame".

William Cameron Coup was a businessman who joined Barnum and a former Circus Clown named Dan Castello in 1871 to form the P.T. BARNUM'S GRAND TRAVELING MUSEUM, MENAGERIE AND CIRCUS. He convinced P.T. of the advantages to be had from taking his spectacles to paying customers in lieu of waiting for these "patrons" as Barnum preferred to think of them to visit his fixed sites in New York City. Coup himself is given credit for being the first Circus-entrepreneur to use Railroads for moving his Shows throughout the country as well as later abandoning the single ring concept of Circus by introducing two Acts occurring simultaneously thus involving