



## Do you remember the Circus coming to town?

# Northville

...IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

by Carleton V. Nellis

### THE CIRCUS

The list of benefits to the people of Northville, of having a railroad, is almost endless.

One, of the lesser importance, was that it made possible for a large circus, which traveled by rail, to come to the village.

Perhaps the first question which comes to mind is: "Why should a large circus want to come to the village?" The possible answers vary. One answer was that one circus which played in Gloversville, had an open date; and, rather than lose a day, they would play in a nearby village. Another conjecture is that the F. J. & G., which had moved them from Fonda to Gloversville; threw in transportation to Northville in a "package deal."

Perhaps we can romanticize that the owner of the circus wanted to honor his friend, "Pear" Van Avery.

In the early years of the Twentieth Century, "Pear" was the only source, east of the Mississippi, of tent poles and stakes. He was, therefore, the business acquaintance and friend of just about every operator of a circus; or any other show

working in a tent. Perhaps this friendship is the most logical reason for a visit to Northville.

Moving the show to Northville freight yards was no problem; and the yards were found very suitable for unloading and reloading. It had well over a mile sidings, most of which were readily accessible to roads along the tracks.

There was only problem in moving the show from the freight yards to the circus grounds at the corner of Union and Fifth Streets, in the village. The elephants would not walk across the Northville Bridge. (Being proud of our old Northville Bridge, until it became awash with the waters of the Sacandaga Reservoir, we stress the fact that elephants have a gephyrophobia for any bridge, not just the Northville Bridge).

The solution to the problem, however, was simple. The animals just waded across the river, above the bridge.

We can envision their keepers, as well as the animals, enjoying a bit of frolicking in the waters of the cool Sacandaga River.

Carlton V. Nellis

John R. Van Arnam of Northville had his own circus and often brought it to his home town.

*We are coming*

**JOHN R. VAN ARNAM'S MINSTRELS**

**30 ALL-WHITE STARS 30**

SWEET SINGERS, NIMBLE DANCERS  
FUNNY COMEDIANS

**BAND & ORCHESTRA**

**STREET PARADE AT NOON**

**SAURDAY, JULY 16TH.**  
Rustic Theatre, Sacandaga  
Reserved Seats at Smith's Fruit Store, Telephone 31-F-2.  
Watch For Announcements.

**OFFICAL ROUTE CARD**

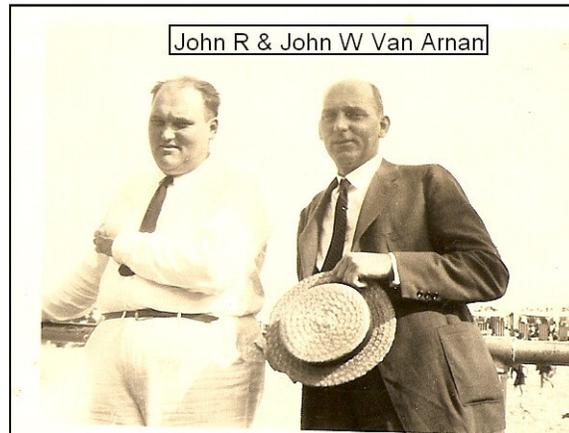
**JOHN R. VAN ARNAM'S MINSTRELS**  
EIGHTH ANNUAL TOUR

DATE	CITY	THEATRE
July 16	Sacandaga, N. Y.	Rustic
18	Johnstown, N. Y.	Smalley's
19	Fort Plain, N. Y.	Smalley's
20	Dolgeville, N. Y.	Strand
21	Old Forge, N. Y.	Brown's
22	Boonville, N. Y.	Opera House
23	Lowville, N. Y.	Opera House
25	Carthage, N. Y.	Opera House
26	Gouverneur, N. Y.	Graylyn
27	Ogdensburg, N. Y.	Strand
28	Potsdam, N. Y.	Rialto
29	Canton, N. Y.	Opera House
30	Massena, N. Y.	Opera House

Carl N. Babcock, Mailman

**PERMANENT ADDRESS**  
218 KENSINGTON ROAD  
SYRACUSE N. Y.

John R & John W Van Arnam



Visit our museum and see more pictures and find out more about the circus that came to Northville.