

## Charles Siegert ( - 6 Sep 1899)

---

*The Evening Star, September 5, 1899, p. 8*

### **Showman in Peril**

#### **Charles Siegert's Narrow Escape From Tiger's Jaws**

Charles Siegert, one of the circus hands attached to the Wallace shows, met with an accident last night which may result in permanent injury. Siegert joined the circus at Bryan, Ohio, eleven weeks ago to take care of the ponies and has been in the habit of making his bed on top of one of the cages in which there is a fine Bengal tiger. Last night he retired as usual after the show, but was awakened shortly after 1 o'clock by the tiger, who was making a meal off his right leg, and who had just about finished stripping the portion within reach of his terrible teeth and claws. It is supposed that Siegert turned over while asleep, and that his leg dropped over the side of the cage in plain view of the beast. The tiger clutched it with his claws, drew it within reach and began upon it with his teeth.

Siegert awoke with a yell that awoke everything within the square and aid was quickly forthcoming in the shape of lighted torches, sharp irons and clubs which were used relentlessly by the keepers to beat the tiger back. The animal had a good hold, however, and did not relinquish his grip until forced to the other side of the cage by the merciless drubbing given him. Siegert was rescued and hurried off to the Emergency Hospital, where his terrible wound was dressed.

It was found that the leg was badly lacerated from the knee down, part of the calf being torn away, exposing the bone. After an examination, it was decided not to amputate the limb at present, the physicians at the hospital hoping to save it.

*The Washington Post, September 5, 1899, p. 2*

### **Torn By A Bengal Tiger**

#### **Circus Employee's Leg Badly Lacerated by the Big Beast Man Had Been Asleep on the Cage -- His Leg Hanging Down, the Animal Seized It With His Teeth -- Taken to Hospital**

Mangled by the claws and teeth of a Bengal tiger, Charles Siegert, one of the employes of the Wallace circus, was rushed to the Emergency Hospital at 1:45 this morning. His left leg from the knee down was terribly lacerated. Part of the calf has been torn away, and at the knee the exposed bone showed indentations of the great teeth of the beast. Muscles, sinews, and flesh hung in ribbons from the great wound. After an examination the surgeons decided that an amputation was not necessary, and they hope to save the unfortunate man's leg. Dr. William P. Carr was summoned to operate on the wounded limb.

Familiarity that breeds contempt is the cause of Siegert's wound. He was sleeping on the top of the cage in which the savage beast was confined. He has nothing to do with the caged animals and is in charge of the ponies of the show. Last night he climbed to the top of the tiger's cage, as he has done many nights before. Going up the closed side and making his bed of blankets above the great striped beast's lair.

Siegert, as he lay on top of the cage, had apparently turned in his sleep and thrown one of his legs too far out. The boot dripped over the side and hung from the knee just in front of the bars that caged the tiger.

The beast appears to have put out one great paw through the bars, and with its long, sharp teeth, clutched Siegert's leg. Siegert felt the horrible grip on his leg, realized what had happened, and as the

tiger pulled his leg into the cage Siegert was dragged over its side. The beast had his calf between its teeth, and Siegert's body caught at the knee of the imprisoned foot and hung full in reach of the tiger. His cries awakened the whole tent, and while men ran to his assistance the other animals roared and growled at the uproar.

Torches were pushed at the tiger; employes who were familiar with similar accidents got clubs and pushed them hard against the tiger's nose. He held on till his own pain caused the grip of his teeth to relax, and the instant they did so Siegert was pulled away. His wounds were hastily dressed and the police notified.

Siegert is from Tolleston, Ind., and joined the circus at Bryan, Ohio, eleven weeks ago. He is by trade a butcher.

*The Evening Star, September 6, 1899, p. 3*

### **Injuries Prove Fatal**

#### **Charles Siegert Succumbs to Wounds Inflicted by Tiger**

When the Wallace circus folded its tents and moved out of Washington early this morning there was left behind a victim of the great Bengal tiger carried by the show. Charles Siegert, the hostler, who was bitten so fiercely late Monday night, died at the Emergency Hospital at 1 o'clock this morning. The claws and teeth of the king of the jungle tore deeply into the flesh and muscle of Siegert's right leg below the knee. At the hospital an effort was made to save the limb, and the wounds were properly stitched and dressed. Yesterday, however, the patient grew worse and it was finally decided that amputation would have to be resorted to. The operation was concluded shortly after 9 o'clock last night. Amputation was made necessary on account of the impossibility of securing adequate circulation in the lower limb, from which a large amount of flesh was missing.

Siegert's death was undoubtedly due to shock. Weakened by the loss of blood he was in no condition to stand the fearful strain upon his nerves, and after a bold fight for life, he succumbed. It will be remembered that he made his bed Monday night upon the roof of the Bengal tiger's cage. In some manner his right leg swung over the edge and dangled in front of the iron bars. Quick as a flash the beast clutched the limb with its claws, and pulling it between two of the standards, sank its fangs deep into the flesh. Siegert's cries aroused the entire circus, but it was fully ten minutes before he was rescued from the position into which he was thrown by the pressure upon his leg. The dead man was 21 years of age, and lived in Tolleston, Ind. He joined the circus eleven weeks ago, and was by trade a butcher. It is said he was the support of a widowed mother.

An effort will be made by the police authorities to communicate with some relatives of the deceased, who are said to live in Tolson, Ind.

*The Washington Post, September 6, 1899, p. 2*

### **Tiger's Claws Were Fatal**

#### **Circus Employe Charles Siegert Dies in Consequence of Injuries**

Charles Siegert the employe of the Wallace circus, died at the Emergency Hospital at 1 o'clock this morning from the effects of the attack made upon him by a Bengal tiger Monday night. The claws and teeth of the big cat tore and cut the muscles, sinews, and blood vessels of Siegert's right leg below the knee in a horrible manner, and though the surgeons tried to save the limb yesterday afternoon it was seen that this would not be possible. After the wounds made by the tiger had been cleansed, dressed, and stitched up, Siegert was taken to a ward where the tourniquet which bound his knee was removed.

Yesterday the surgeons found that in spite of all their efforts it was impossible to reproduce circulation of the blood in the injured leg below the knee, and last evening it became apparent that an amputation was peremptory.

Siegert's leg was cut off at the knee about 8 o'clock last night, and it was at last hoped that he would survive the operation. The awful experience he went through in the ten minutes he hung in the tiger's teeth, the tremendous nervous shock consequent upon that, and the injuries done him by the beast, followed by the shock of the amputation, proved, however, too much for the young man. He died a few hours after the operation.

Siegert was twenty-one years old, a butcher by trade, and lived at Tolleston, Ind. One of the circus men went to the hospital night to inquire as to Siegert's condition, but he seemed to be only a fellow-employee, and after learning of his friend's serious plight he left to move out with the big show at midnight.

*The Baltimore Sun, September 6, 1899, p. 2*

#### **Tiger's Bite Killed Him**

#### **An Employe Of A Circus Dies In A Washington Hospital**

*[Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.]*

Washington, Sept. 5 -- Charles Siegert, 22 years of age, employed with the Wallace shows, died at the Emergency Hospital at 1 o'clock tonight. His death was due to wounds in his leg inflicted by one of the tigers of the show. Siegert had gone to sleep early Monday morning on top of the cage in which the Bengal tigers are confined. As he lay there his left leg fell against the bars of the cage and attracted the attention of one of the beasts. A second later he was thrown violently to the ground with his leg torn frightfully. The leg was amputated tonight and the strain proved more than he could endure.

*The Washington Post, September 7, 1899, p. 2*

#### **Showman's Relatives Not Known**

Maj. Sylvester received a telegram last night from B.F. Wallace, proprietor of the Wallace circus, which is now in Chester, Pa. Mr. Wallace stated, in answer to a telegram from Washington, that Charles Siegert, the young man who died here yesterday morning from the effects of a tiger's attack upon him, was not well known to the show people, and that no one could be found who knew where was his home. Siegert joined the circus at Bryan, Ohio, on June 22. Telegrams have been sent to Bryan and also to Tolleston, Ind., which Siegert told a Post reporter was his home. Siegert's body is at the city morgue.

*The Washington Post, September 8, 1899, p. 9*

#### **Siegert's Remains Buried**

The remains of Charles Siegert, the employe of the Wallace circus who died from the effects of injuries inflicted upon him by a tiger in Wallace's circus, were buried yesterday afternoon in Congressional Cemetery at the expense of an unknown citizen of Washington whose sympathy was aroused by the sad fate of the young man. Siegert had not died when the circus left Washington and the proprietors did not know that he was likely to die. They first heard of his death when Maj. Sylvester, telegraphed to Mr. Wallace at Chester, Pa., Wednesday night.

*The Evening Star, September 9, 1899, p. 12*

#### **Inquiry Concerning Seigert**

Major Sylvester has received a telegram from Wallace Bros., the circus men, making inquiry about Charles Seigert, who died at the Emergency Hospital recently from the effects of injuries inflicted by one of the circus tigers, Monday night last. The telegram gave instructions that the body be buried at the expense of the showmen. Seigert's remains were buried in Congressional cemetery, Thursday, as stated in yesterday's Star. Undertaker J.W. Lee buried the body by direction of Mr. Robert Cook, of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, whose sympathies had been aroused by the circumstances of the man's death.

It is probable that the police authorities will have the bill sent to Wallace Bros., as they believe the showmen should pay the expense of burial.

*The Washington Post, September 10, 1899, p. 12*

#### **Inquiry from the Showman's Employer**

Maj. Sylvester has received a telegram from B.F. Wallace, the proprietor of the circus, whose employe, Charles Siegert, was killed by a tiger here last week. Mr. Wallace asks that the bill for the interment of Siegert's remains be sent to him. This will probably be done, though the funeral took place some days ago, Robert Cook, who sympathized with the unfortunate stranger, guaranteeing the expense to Undertaker Lee. The Wallace show had left town before Siegert died, and the reports from the Emergency Hospital after the man was injured indicated that he was not in danger of death, and probably would not lose the limb which the tiger had mangled.

*The Washington Post, September 12, 1899, p. 2*

#### **Letter from Siegert's Father**

Charles Siegert, the young man killed by a tiger several days ago, was from La Porte, Ind. A letter has been received from his father, stating that Charles had left home last April, and nothing had since been heard from him, until Maj. Sylvester's telegram to Tolleston, Ind., which was forwarded to Siegert's father in La Porte. Julius G. Siegert, the father, requests that his son's body be properly interred at his expense; but the funeral has already taken place, the expense being borne by Mr. Robert Cook, an insurance man.