

East Hartford, Conn
July 21, 1944

Arnold, Mrs Claire

I, Mrs. Claire Arnold of #99 Simmons Rd. East Hartford, Connecticut do hereby make the following statement regarding the fire at the Ringling Bros. circus in Hartford, Conn. on July 6, 1944.

I attended the circus in Hartford, Conn. on July 6, 1944 with my two sons, David William Arnold age 4½ yrs. and George E. Arnold age 3½ yrs. and Barbara Talman age 14 yrs. of #45 Larais ave. East Hartford, Conn.

We obtained four seats (4) in the bleachers in the North-East corner near the the animal runway which was at the East end of the main tent.

As I was watching the bicycle act which was just starting my attention was called to a burst of fire which was at top of the bleachers and to the left of the main entrance from where I was sitting. My first thought was a stampede so the children and I stepped aside as we were near the ground and I thought the fire could be put out. As we were standing we noticed the people trying to go out by the exit near the bleachers where we were sitting but they were being beaten back by the keepers because of the lions still in the runway. When we looked at the fire again it was a good half way burned and ropes and timbers seemed to be falling. I then started to leave with the children and the girl that was with me. We went out in single file holding hands tightly through the exit where the animal runway was. It was very difficult due to the fact that the exit was crowded by the runway. At the time we went out I ^{felt} ~~know~~ that the people were struggling to get

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Statement of Mrs. Claire Arnold

over the animal runway. When we got outside of the main tent we walked East across the field and were some distance from the tent when we could see the people that had been burned following us.

Prior to the starting of the show I did notice the circus attendants helping the people over the animal runway and there was a small bridge over the runway about 3 feet wide.

Signed-Claire C. Arnold

Timothy J. McNamee
Detective Sergeant
East Hartford Police Dept.