

July 10, 1944

2:30 P.M.

SWORN STATEMENT OF OLIVER C. ADDISON

RELATIVE TO FIRE OF JULY 6TH AT RINGLING BROS. CIRCUS

- Q. What is your full name?
- A. Oliver C. Addison.
- Q. Where do you live?
- A. Middlefield, Conn.
- Q. Where are you employed?
- A. At the McGovern Company.
- Q. How long have you been with McGovern's?
- A. Twenty-six years.
- Q. Were you so employed July 5th and 6th of this year?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Were you on the McGovern premises on the afternoon of July 6th?
- A. I was.
- Q. Were you there when the circus was in progress on that afternoon?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. Did you see the fire that day?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. Will you describe what you saw and approximate time and where it was located at the time?
- A. I was working in the afternoon alone, it must have been about twenty of three. I looked out as I usually do, then I walked out to the door to light a cigarette. I stepped out the screen door and I looked across towards the boundary of our lot and beyond that I noticed like a flame going straight out beyond the red wagon and between the red wagon and the big top. My view was obstructed by the shrubbery. What amazed me was this column of fire which was a dark reddish, a deep orange color and it was formed or bounded on each side by a very heavy column of intense black smoke. I was mystified at first, then I realized it was actually a flame of fire. As I stood watching it it increased in height. It was cone shaped and it was directly in front of this wagon.

- A. While watching it the flame moved with the breeze, there was a slight breeze at the time and it increased in height. The breeze bent the flame right over and the top of that flame just pushed the top of or just brushed the top of the tent. The next thing I noticed the whole thing was burning. The curtain I could see hanging down straight around the circus tent. It spread up the sides. When I rushed in and telephoned for emergency fire and police departments. When I came back out it was pretty near gone. What impressed me about it particularly was the color and density of that flame.
- Q. How long did it take the big top to burn?
- A. It went awfully fast.
- Q. You called the fire and police?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Is the big top about the same location this year?
- A. I think this year it was a little nearer because of the victory gardens.

Thank you very much.