Twitter Thread by Marina Amaral



Marina Amaral
@marinamaral2

During the late 19th century and the early 20th century freak shows were at their height of popularity; the period 1840s through to the 1940s saw the organized for-profit exhibition of people with physical, mental or behavioral disabilities.



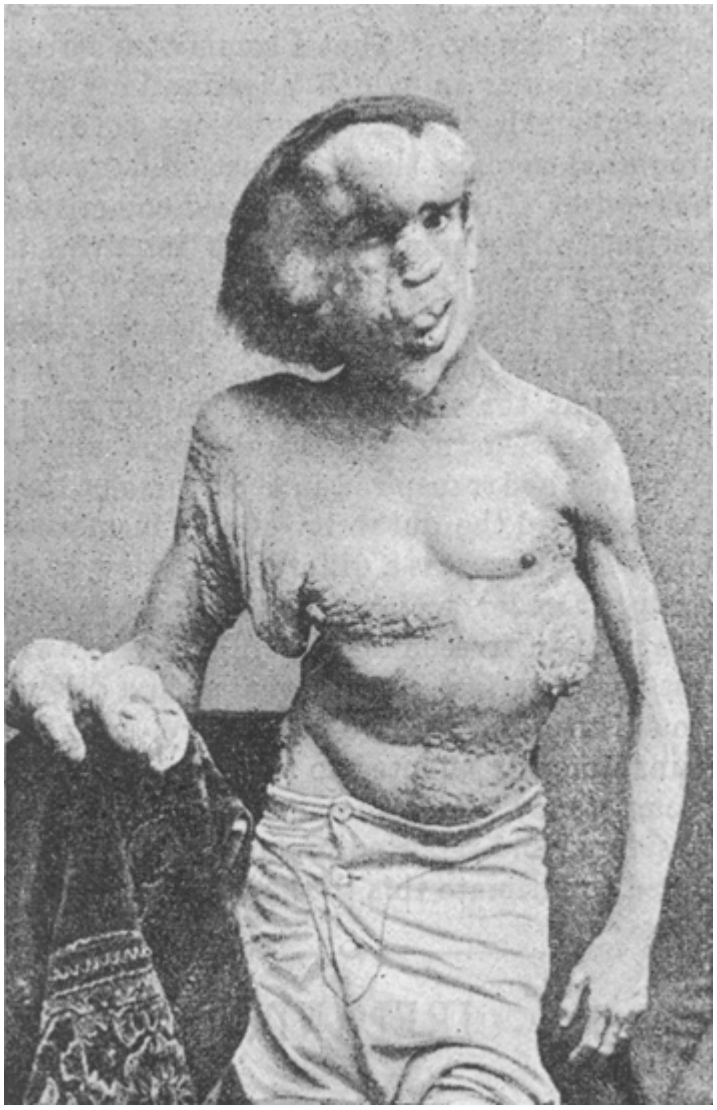
The Jaramillo sisters Natalia (b. 1889) and Aurora (b. 1896) were from Albuquerque, New Mexico.



Stephan Bibrowsky (1890-1932), known as Lionel the Lion-Faced Man (due to a rare condition called hypertrichosis).



“Ladies and gentlemen … I would like to introduce Mr. Joseph Merrick, the Elephant Man. Before doing so I ask you please to prepare yourselves—Brace yourselves up to witness one who is probably the most remarkable human being ever to draw the breath of life.”



Lazarus and Joannes were Italian conjoined twins who toured Europe during the 17th century.



Miss Rosina ended her shows with the following statements: “In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, I may say that as this is my means of getting a living, you will kindly recommend your friends to see my show.”



Josephine Myrtle Corbin had two separate pelvises side by side from the waist down, as a result of her body axis splitting as it developed.



Ella Harper: “I am called the camel girl because my knees turn backward. (...) I have traveled considerably in the show business for the past four years and now, this is 1886 and I intend to quit the show business and go to school and fit myself for another occupation."

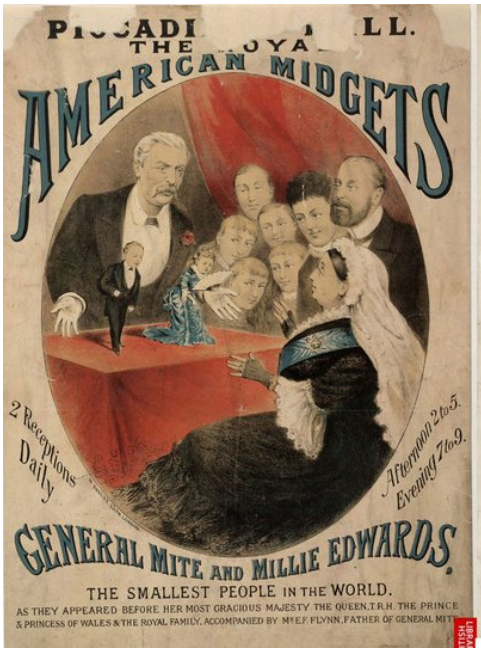


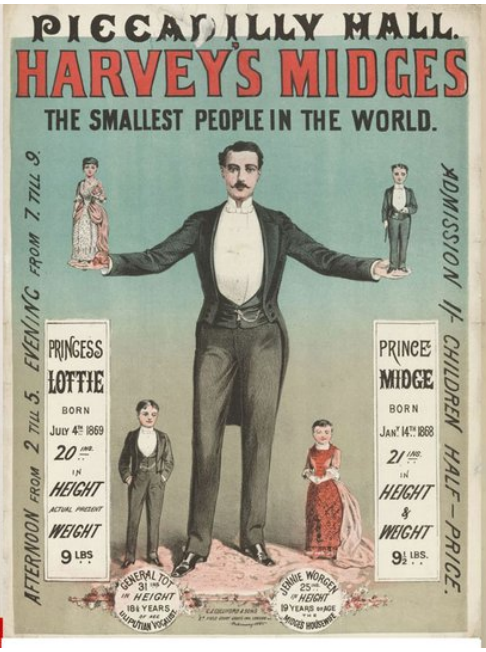
Changing attitudes about physical differences led to the decline of the freak show as a form of entertainment towards the end of the 19th century. Laws were passed restricting them.

Though movies and television played a big part in the decline of the freak show, the rise of disability rights was the true cause of death.

Read more: https://t.co/5pyZBQWIg9

Freakshow posters, 1875.
British Library







"Disability is key to understanding the freak show genre. Disabled people were at the heart of such exhibitions."

https://t.co/m2N6gHdfQZ