

“Abilene in the First Two Decades of the Twentieth Century”

by Deane W. Malott

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“Abilene was the home of Parker's Carnival, a miscellaneous collection of tent shows, each entered thru an elaborate wooden, highly decorated, and lighted front. My Father was a friend of Mr. Parker and always had a season pass, good for "bearer and party." I was allowed to use it on occasion.

I remember one show, ‘The Girl from Abilene,’ a dazzling dancer; a musical show called ‘Sunflower Bells’; animal shows, a miniature scenic play laid in the Swiss Alps. In the center of the horseshoe of shows, was the Merry-go-round and Ferris Wheel. All Abilene turned out when Parker's Carnival opened in Abilene, before taking off on its several-months-long tour. It was at Parker's Carnival that I saw my first movies, a crudely presented, ‘Trip to the Moon’ and ‘The Great Train Robbery,’ in about 1903 or 1904.”

Courtesy of Robert H. Malott