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Traveling by rail allowed touring circuses to bypass the smallest towns and to transport a vast array of props, trained animals, and human performers. (Rail travel had its drawbacks: Jumbo the African Elephant was tragically killed by a locomotive in 1885. An undaunted P. T. Barnum promptly put Jumbo's skeleton on display.) The Sells Brothers Circus, though by no means the largest, employed 500 men and women and logged 13,852 miles on its 1895 tour. Mark Twain's Huck Finn described the circus of this era as "the splendorous sight that ever was."

The great circuses began to disappear with the advent of radio, the cinema, and other competitors for Americans' entertainment dollars early in the 20th century. The Great Depression killed off many of the survivors. The tent show became a rarity. In 1956, the merged Ringling Brothers-Barnum & Bailey Circus folded its Big Top for the last time, and its famed clowns, trapeze artists, and animal acts have since kept to indoor arenas like those in which the first American circuses played.

Head Start's 'Charmed Life'

"The Charmed Life of Head Start" by Peter Skerry, in *The Public Interest* (Fall 1983), 20th & Northampton Sts., Easton, Pa. 18042.

Head Start is that miracle of miracles, a Great Society program that both conservatives and liberals hail as a success. Skerry, a Harvard researcher, explains why.

Born in 1965 as part of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, Head Start aimed to boost the intelligence quotients (I.Q.'s) of poor children through special pre-school education. The results have been, in Skerry's words, "positive but far from overwhelming." Students show short-term gains in I.Q. that seem to fade once they enter public schools.

Besides classes, the program provides hot meals and medical and dental care to some 400,000 preschoolers, as well as job and educational opportunities to their parents. The \$1.05 billion in federal funds that is slated to go to 8,728 Head Start centers in fiscal 1984 will be matched by \$250 million in local donations and volunteer support.

Though the centers are heavily subsidized by Washington, control is in the hands of the community. A typical center has 56 students, as well as a supervisor (and often an "education specialist") who answers to a parents' committee; each center sets its own curriculum and hires its own staff. Teacher salaries are low (\$7,200 to start), and little attempt is made to achieve racial balance at the local level. (Nationally, about half of Head Start students are black, 25 percent white, 15 percent Hispanic.) Unlike most federal social programs, and unlike today's public schools, Head Start centers are free of cumbersome bureaucracy—they are "not just another federal program," but community institutions.

To Skerry, local control and flexibility are the virtues that spur local involvement. Parents *choose* to enroll their children and many volunteer their services as well. Twenty-nine percent of Head Start's paid staff are parents of past or current students. Liberals call this "community participation," Skerry notes, while conservatives call it "self-help."

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All could learn, he contends, from studying the program closely. By concentrating on the needs of children, Head Start avoids the "stigma" of welfare dependency, and it responds to blacks' "unique claims on the American conscience" without relying on racial quotas or other devices. And it is one of the few federal programs that manages to tap the creative energies of the communities it serves.

Tecumseh and His Brother

"Tecumseh, The Shawnee Prophet, and American History: A Reassessment" by R. David Edmunds, in *The Western Historical Quarterly* (July 1983), Utah State Univ., Logan, Utah 84322.

Tecumseh, the famous war chief of the Shawnees, survives in American legend as the "greatest Indian." But according to Edmunds, a Texas Christian University historian, Tecumseh (1768–1813) was, in his day, overshadowed by his younger brother Tenskwatawa, the "Shawnee Prophet."

Born Lalawethika ("Loudmouth"), the prophet-to-be lapsed into alcoholism in his youth, along with many other Indians who encountered the white man in eastern Ohio early in the 19th century. But in 1805, at about age 30, Lalawethika fell into a coma from which he emerged claiming to have returned from the dead, sent by the Master of Life to save his people. He renounced whiskey, white man's food, and metal tools, and took the name Tenskwatawa ("The Open Door"), symbolizing his role as a leader of an Indian spiritual and moral revival.

Shawnee mythology had warned of the arrival of pale-faced invaders sent by the Great Serpent to sow disorder. Tenskwatawa's claim to be the Shawnee savior was inadvertently aided by Indiana's governor, William Henry Harrison (later the ninth U.S. President), who challenged the Prophet to perform a miracle. Tenskwatawa, tipped off to an impending solar eclipse by itinerant astronomers, proceeded to "darken the sun" and thereby gained a wide following among Delawares, Kickapoos, and other Indian tribes in the Great Lakes region.

In 1809, Tenskwatawa opposed but failed to block the Treaty of Fort Wayne (negotiated by chiefs among the Miamis, Delawares, and Potawatomis), which resulted in the U.S. annexation of three million acres of Indian land. Only after the Indians' ill-fated attack, inspired by Tenskwatawa, on Harrison's forces at Tippecanoe in 1811 was the holy man's powerlessness revealed. He soon lost his following and died in Kansas in 1836. Tecumseh, who had served as his brother's spokesman, mobilized Tenskwatawa's religious following in a last attempt to unite the Midwest tribes politically and militarily, says Edmunds. The effort failed; Tecumseh died in battle in 1813.

Why have white Americans immortalized Tecumseh and forgotten his brother? Tecumseh's bravery in battle, explains Edmunds, fit their stereotype of the "noble savage," and his political aims seemed more sensible to white historians than his brother's religious approach. In short, Tecumseh was a "white man's Indian."