

The
Carousel

News & Trader

August 2012
Vol. 28, No. 08
\$5.95

SPECIAL ISSUE:

**The Murphy Brothers II
New Discoveries
And Insights**

New Discoveries and Further Insights The Murphy Brothers II



A glass slide negative of the carousel building at Roger Williams Park, that housed a Murphy carousel, has recently been discovered. The image was taken by Leroy Wilbur Clark (1874-1968), who was a resident of Providence, Rhode Island at the time. This is the earliest image of the carousel building (built in 1896) that we have found. Positive image of the glass slide negative, dated May 5, 1901. William Benjamin Collection photo. *Roger Williams Park is the largest National Register District in Rhode Island and one of the few major 19th century urban parks largely intact. (Cited from the National Register site.) The building presently houses a Chance carousel.*

**By William Benjamin, PhD.
and Barbara Williams**

Special to The Carousel News & Trader

One of our hopes following the publication of our initial research on brothers Timothy and Bartholomew Murphy in the August, 2011 issue of *The Carousel News and Trader* was that it would elicit new information that would further complete their role in early carousel industry history. Thanks to information and comments provided by a number of individuals, we are able to do just that; in addition to correcting and offering additional interpretations for some of our original conclusions.



The Slater Park carousel horses from the cover enlarged.

Roland Hopkins photo



Left - Prancer inscribed with "T. Murphy & Co. The first horse we made. October 16, 1895 H. Dorber". Above - The Murphys' first horse showing the glass bridle jewel. Courtesy of Glynn and Ron Keisler

"After we got the horse home, we began to search for information that might offer some clues as to which carousel it might have come off of. We laid it down on the floor and inserted a small light into the body, looking for old tickets or anything else that we might find. We were surprised to see some writing on the inside of the body, but could not read the writing. Now we were really curious, so we inserted a small telescoping mirror into the body of the horse for a closer look. Since the mirror reversed the letters, I lay down on the floor with a piece of vellum and copied the writing onto the vellum one letter at a time. When I was finished, I was amazed at what I saw. We held the vellum up to a light, the writing no longer reversed, and now we could read the writing!"

The style of the "first Murphy" is similar to prancers found on Slater Park in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The similarity in the carving style of this identified Murphy horse and the Slater horses raises the issue of whether Timothy Murphy was

T. Murphy and Company – The First Horse

Peter Malia, one of our collaborators on the original article, was contacted by Glynn and Ron Keisler shortly after our article was published. Amazingly, the Keislers informed Peter that they own a prancer that has the following written inside, "T. Murphy & Co. The first horse we made. October 16, 1895 H. Dorber". This incredible finding transformed our understanding and timeline for Timothy and Bartholomew Murphy's early career.

The Keislers purchased their prancer at a South Carolina antique auction in November, 1985.

According to Glynn, they originally thought that the horse was made by Loeff. The subsequent discovery that the horse was actually made by Murphy is best described in Glynn's own words.



Romance and non-romance views of the "first Murphy" prancer's saddle and saddle blanket following removal of park paint. Courtesy of Glynn and Ron Keisler



Prancers on the Slater Park carousel in Pawtucket, RI, with features similar to the "first Murphy".

Courtesy of the National Carousel Association, Jean Bennett photos responsible for carving this style while employed by Loeffler or did he duplicate it when he started his own business.

An additional and totally unexpected finding, is that the "first Murphy" is adorned with a glass jewel embossed with the figure of a horse head that is identical to that on a Loeffler stander, Mascot, which was the subject of two previous *The Carousel News and Trader* articles (December, 2008 and

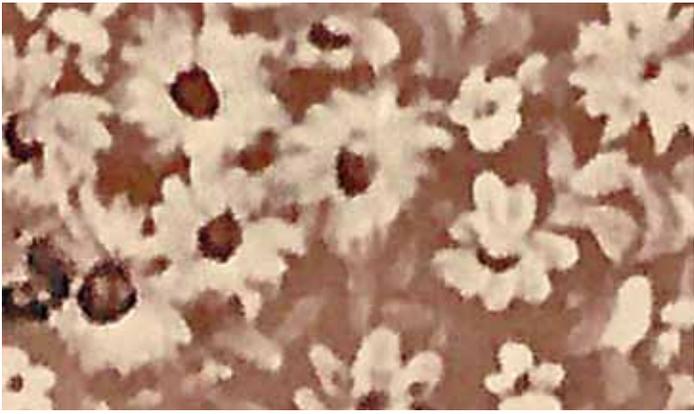


Similar flower designs are used on the saddle of the "first Murphy" (left) and in the example of a Murphy signature panel shown in the original article (right).



June, 2009). The jewel is in a composition mount in the "first Murphy" while it is in a presumed earlier brass mount on Mascot. Our hypothesis is that Timothy Murphy either used the same supplier or took some of the jewels with him after he left the employment of Loeffler.

An additional new finding from the inscription in the "first



Similar flower designs are used on the saddle of the "first Murphy" (left) and in the example of a Murphy signature panel shown in the original article (right).



Identical glass jewels embossed with a horse head adorn the “first Murphy” (left) and Mascot, an early Loeff prancer (right).

Photograph on the left courtesy of Glynn and Ron Keisler. Photograph on the right from the William Benjamin Collection.

Murphy” is that H. Dorber, presumed to be Henry Dorber, partnered with Timothy Murphy by October of 1895.

The first mention of Henry Dorber’s role in the carousel industry is the October 22, 1912 filing of partnership papers with Solomon Stein and Harry Goldstein to form Stein, Goldstein and Dorber (*A Pictorial History of the Carousel*, Frederick Fried, A.S. Barnes and Company, Inc., 1965). Dorber was responsible for manufacturing the carousel frames. According to Fried, Dorber left the company in 1914. The partnership with Stein and Goldstein suggests that Dorber had previous experience manufacturing carousels and it now appears that at least part of that experience was through an association with Timothy Murphy. Henry Dorber’s census records indicate that he was born in 1873. In 1900, he lists his occupation as a machinist and in 1910 as, “manufacturing merry go rounds”. These records are consistent with the idea that he was working with the Murphys during at least part of the period prior to partnering with Stein and Goldstein.

Modified Timeline of the Murphys’ Early Carousel Career

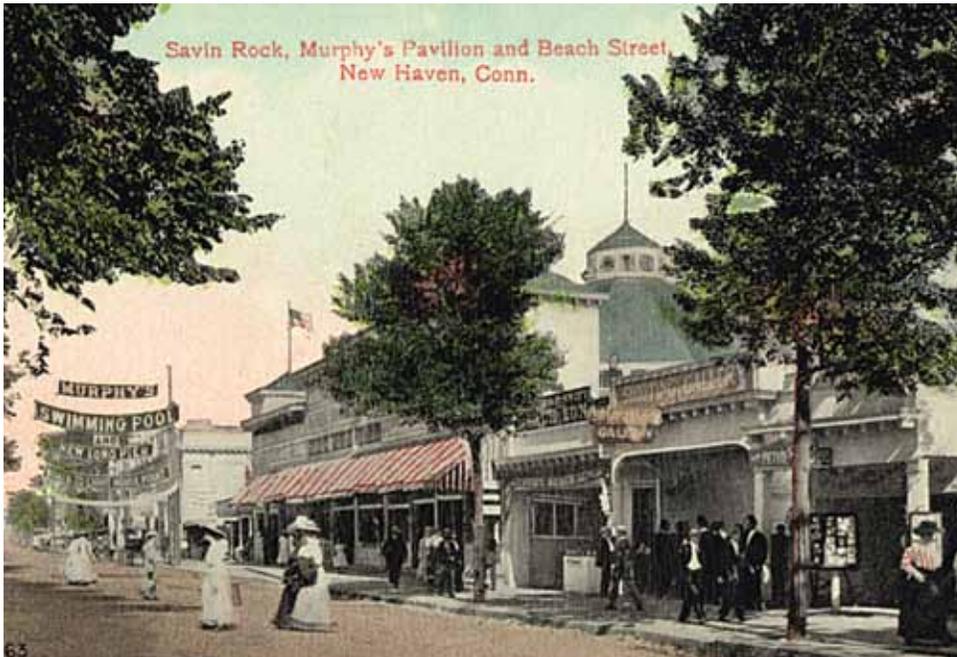
The date inside of the Keisler’s “first Murphy” provides additional insights into the early part of the Murphys’ career in the carousel industry.

Previous information from Bartholomew Murphy’s daughter-in-law indicated that Timothy and Bartholomew began working for Charles Loeff in 1886. Fred Fried suggested that Timothy was fired by Loeff after being placed in charge of Loeff’s Crescent Park, Riverside, Rhode Island carousel. It now appears that the latter occurred prior to October, 1895, since, by then, Timothy had partnered with Henry Dorber and was constructing his first carousel(s).

It appears that Timothy was a wood carver early in his career. According to Fried he was Loeff’s carving shop foreman and he lists his profession as “wood carver” in his 1900 Census Record. We don’t know if or how long he carved for Loeff before becoming foreman or if he carved any of his own horses after leaving the employment of Loeff. The inscription

Key Events in Early Murphy Brothers Carousel History

Date	Event
1886	Timothy and Bartholomew begin working for Charles Loeff
1895	Timothy placed in charge of Loeff’s Crescent Park carousel; fired by Loeff
October, 1895	Timothy partners with Henry Dorber; manufactures first horse
May, 1901	Timothy opens carousel at Audubon Park, New Orleans; first of several carousels in Louisiana which are primarily managed by Bartholomew
1902	Timothy installs carousel at White City, Worcester, Massachusetts
1904	Timothy begins 42-year partnership with William Nunley
1906	Murphys begin amusement operations at Savin Rock, West Haven, Connecticut



Scene at Murphy's Hippodrome and Pavilion at Beach St., Savin Rock, CT, with a banner advertising the pool.

Barbara Williams Collection

Proper. Mr. Hartmann has added that there were three distinct amusement sections at Savin Rock – White City, the Grove and Beach Street.

Mr. Hartmann had been told that the Murphys were in the picture seen on page 14. We believe the man sitting backwards (right) may be Timothy Murphy based on the similar appearance to his picture on page 12.

on the “first Murphy” suggests a significant “hands-on” involvement in at least that horse. We have no evidence that Bartholomew had any other role than as a business partner and owner/operator of carousels, the latter primarily in Louisiana.

A timeline of these and subsequent early events is shown in the table on the bottom of page 22. Unfortunately, we have no information about the carousels that were produced from late 1895 to 1900, including the identity of the location of the carousel having the “first Murphy”.

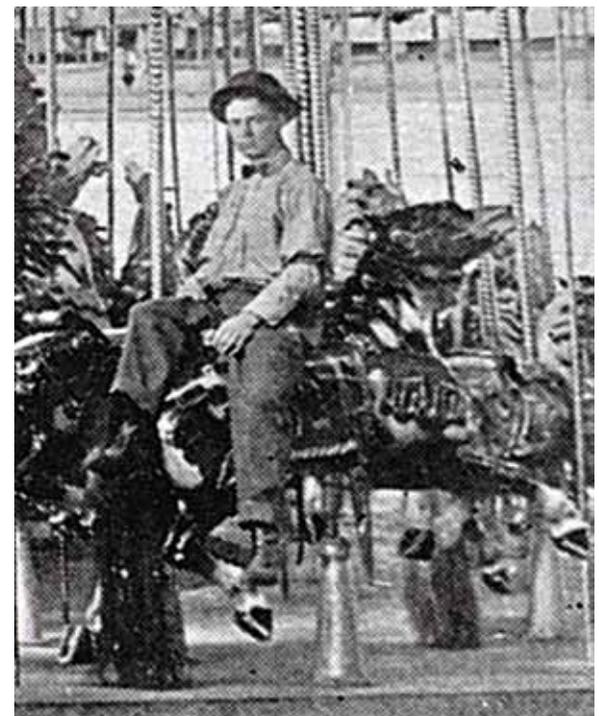
Connecticut Locations and Carousels

In addition to his previous assistance, Harold Hartmann, noted Savin Rock historian who was acquainted with Timothy Murphy, shares further insight. All pages refer to the article in the August, 2011 issue of *The Carousel News & Trader*.

On page 13, bottom left, the carousel building was, more specifically, located in what was known as the White City section of Savin

This carousel was housed in the building shown on page 13, at Savin Proper. However, note that the carousel at the top of page 13, also labeled Savin Proper on the post card, is different.

The Lake Compounce, Bristol, CT, carousel was first at Murphys' Hippodrome in Savin Rock. When the Murphys sold the carousel, a portion of the building was used as their workshop where they constructed, and ran for a time, the carousel that is now at Lighthouse Point, East Haven, CT.



Enlargement showing a man who may be Timothy Murphy from the Savin Rock photograph on page 14 of the original article. Courtesy of Fred Dahlinger



The backside of the Beach Street Pavilion showing Murphy's Pool. The roof of the Hippodrome is at the left. Barbara Williams Collection





Folks Gather at an Unknown Carousel On What Looks to be a Warm Summer Day, circa 1900

Barbara Williams Collection Photo



One of the “unknown” style horses with a disproportionate head and neck at Lighthouse Point, East Haven, CT. It has starburst insets. It is not like the style of Murphy’s first horse, perhaps dispelling the thought that this could be a Murphy-made horse. Courtesy of John Caruso

Timothy was known to be a mechanic (Hartmann was surprised to hear he had carved), converting standers to jumpers (we assume this refers to switching to the jumping mechanisms). Horses would be changed at Savin Rock’s White City from season to season. It was not unusual to see a different mix of horses from year to year.

By mid the 1940s, Timothy Murphy’s nephew, John Timothy (Bartholomew’s son), was in the business, working for his uncle. John Timothy installed “a good-sized carousel” in White City in 1946. Mr. Hartmann thinks it is visible in

a YouTube video. As a side note, there is a Savin Rock YouTube video showing an Illions carousel. According to Hartmann, young Tim also had an aluminum kiddie carousel at White City in 1946.



The entrance to Walnut Beach Park, Milford, Connecticut. Courtesy of the Walnut Beach Historical Society

Walnut Beach, Milford, Connecticut

Walnut Beach Park, Milford, Connecticut – In the Book *Sand in Our Shoes*, by the Walnut Beach/Myrtle Beach Historical Society, Max Nowicki, known as the “Organ Man” (CN&T, April, 2012), who resided at Milford, states that there was a Murphy-“Nunnally” carousel at Myrtle Beach (a.k.a. Walnut Beach.) The amusement park was not far from New Haven and Bridgeport, both in Connecticut, where there were Murphy carousel installations.

Walnut Beach had a number of carousels, including PTCs #21 and #71, briefly (CN&T, June 2010), and two carousels that had mixtures of

From what was perhaps the Murphy-Nunley carousel at Walnut Beach, charred remains of Stein & Goldstein horses were given to a local Milford family, had their legs cut off and were made into backyard play equipment.

Courtesy of the Walnut Beach/Myrtle Beach Historical Society





Children in Walnut Beach, Connecticut in 1942 aboard their salvaged original Stein & Goldstein horses.

Courtesy of the Walnut Beach/Myrtle Beach Historical Society

makes of animals. One of those burned in 1945, to be replaced with another. We feel that the carousel at Walnut Beach that burned in 1945 was likely the Murphy-Nunley. At the time of the fire, Murphy and Nunley were one year away from terminating their partnership. This would seem to make it unlikely that they would take on a new installation so close to going their separate ways. The remains of some of the burned horses that are in pictures are Stein & Goldsteins, another indicator that the carousel could have been Murphy's and Nunley's. A number of Stein & Goldstein horses were and are seen on their carousels.



On page 35 of the original article, the caption for the photo of the City Park Carousel, should read "Outer row Loeff stander", not "jumper". Courtesy of Beau Bassich



City's Park's impressive lion. Courtesy of the National Carousel Association. Jean Bennett photo

From Connecticut to Louisiana

Additional study of the carousel on page 13 and the centerfold photo suggests that they are one and the same, seen at the same location and, thus, it is at Savin Rock in Connecticut rather than Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The horse in the centerfold, center right, ended up in storage at the Pontchartrain Beach amusement park in Louisiana (see page 45 and adjacent cutout).

According to Beau Bassich, who has had a long-time association with the City Park, New Orleans carousel when it was the only ride at the park, the figures were stored during the off- seasons at Pontchartrain Beach. The Murphys' Baton Rouge figures were also stored at Pontchartrain. When the City Park carousel was to be set up, figures were pulled from storage regardless of which carousel they were from. But, how the one horse seen at Savin Rock, Connecticut (centerfold, center, also page 45), ended up in Louisiana is not known.



City Park, New Orleans chariot. Courtesy of Beau Bassich



Ribbon-cutting ceremony at the opening of Nunley's Happyland, October 12, 1951. Left to right: A. Holly Patterson, Nassau County Executive; Daniel Wall, mayor of Incorporated Village of Massapequa Park (Long Island); Daniel Wall's wife, Estelle; Mrs. Miriam Nunley, wife of William Nunley; Norman Russell, Nunley's partner in the concrete building at Happyland; Timothy Murphy; an unidentified lawyer, who probably represented Nunley's Happyland; an unidentified banker, probably a local who arranged financing. Information and photo courtesy of Gavin McDonough. (Also appeared on page 16, May 2011 issue of *The Carousel News and Trader*.)



Catching the brass ring on opening day of Nunley's Happyland in Long Island. Timothy Murphy was a special guest at the event. Courtesy of Gavin McDonough

Murphy and Nunley in New York

Previously we emphasized the partnerships of Murphy and Nunley primarily as one of joint owners/managers of carousels at various locations. Could it be that Murphy-Nunley carousels were also built by a Murphy-Nunley partnership that began as early as 1904 (early association date from Gray Tuttle). In an attempt to better understand the business relationship, we decided to examine Nunley's 1910 and 1920 census records and his 1917 draft registration certificate. In his 1910 census record (age 20), he lists his occupation as "carousels". We assume, based on Gray Tuttle's information, that Nunley was working with Murphy at this time. His June 5, 1917 Draft Registration document lists his occupation as "Mechanic for Murley Amusement Company, Cort St., Brooklyn, NY". We previously reported on the Murley Corporation and speculated that it might be a contraction of the Murphy and Nunley names.

Since it seems apparent that Henry Dorber was the frame builder for Murphy and left to work with Stein & Goldstein by 1912, it is possible that this led to an expanded role for the young William Nunley. We don't know when the Murley Amusement Company was founded, but we do know that a different com-

pany, the Rockaway Whirlpool Company, was formed by Murphy and Nunley after it in 1918.

In the 1920 census record, Nunley's occupation is listed as "Amusements, Own Business". By this time, we assume he was involved in multiple businesses, including those with

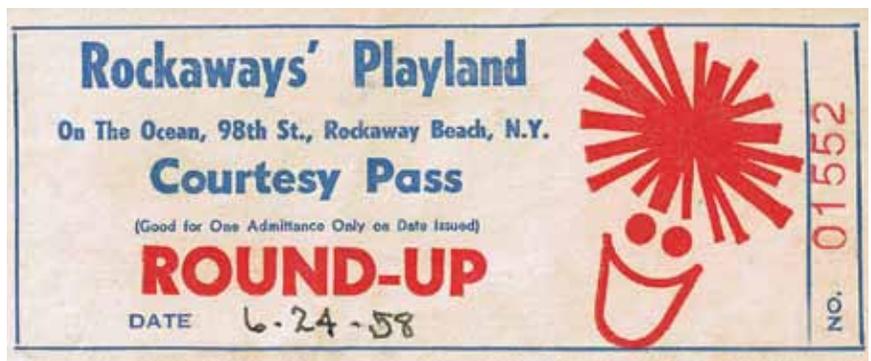
Murphy, some of which he owned outright.

Further information about Nunley and Murphy has been provided by Gavin McDonough. He indicates that additional Nunley carousel locations were located in Yonkers and Utica in New York.

The Yonkers carousel site is now the Cross-Country shopping Center. We have not been able to learn more information about these carousels.

The Prospect Park, Brooklyn carousel moved from Staten Island to Coney Island before being installed at Prospect Park.

While Timothy Murphy's partnership with William Nunley ended in 1946, Timothy, age 79, pictured in the long coat above, attended the 1951 grand opening of Nunley's Happyland, Bethpage, Long Island, New York, just six months after Nunley's death.



Vintage ticket from Rockaway's Playland. Barbara Williams Collection



Wind-swept mane on a Prospect Park Carmel.
 Courtesy of the National Carousel Association, Jean Bennett photo

One of Canarsie's, Golden City Park's two carousels (one was referred to as Nunley's, one was Murphy's) went to Baldwin; the other was sent to the 1939 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows, Brooklyn, New York.

The Broad Channel carousel building that originally housed a Murphy carousel was later used as a children's playschool. It was blown down by a storm in 1992 and removed.

The Rockaway, Long Island carousel was built by Stein & Goldstein for Nunley in 1914. It opened in 1915. The carousel moved to Playland at Rockaway in 1939. In 1945, it moved again, to the southwest corner of Beach 98 Street and Rockaway Beach Blvd. It remained there until 1959.

Gavin McDonough, who was employed at Nunley's in Baldwin for many years, indicates that Nunley worked with



Saratoga Springs, New York's rare 2-row Illions. The caption for the photograph of the Saratoga Illions on page 23 of the original article should read "second row", not "third row".

Courtesy of John Caruso



Peluso Machine and Iron Works at Coney Island. Ralph and Joe Peluso's machine shop was indispensable, making replacement parts for Coney Island's rides and keeping them operating, according to an interview at The Coney Island History Project/Oral History Archive with John Rea, whose father worked for the company.

Mrs. Nunley at Happyland's Ruth organ on opening day. The organ is now owned by Gavin McDonough.

Courtesy of Gavin McDonough



Barbara Williams Collection

The photograph on page 43, top left, was captioned to read that a chariot in the picture is an Illions. It does not show in that picture, but does in a companion photo, seen here. This is an unknown carousel that is possibly a Murphy.

Additional

In Rockaway's Carousel History on page 26, for the first entry, the Schildt carousel, the date the carousel burned should be 1892, not 1982.



Roland Hopkins photo

Dramatic peek-a-boo mane stander on the Lake Compounce Murphy Brothers carousel in Bridgeport, Connecticut



Nunley-Murphy machine at Myrtle Beach, Summer 1970. From the Aug. 2010 CN&T. Judy and Gray Tuttle Collection photo

According to John Caruso, Willowbrook, the location of the Willowbrook State School that was the later location of the Broad Channel carousel is, more accurately, a neighborhood of Staten Island, New York. (see page 30).

In the August 2010 and April 2012 issues of *The Carousel News and Trader*, Gray Tuttle writes about the Rockaway Beach Murphy-Nunley carousel that he purchased and operated in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Identification of Individuals in Photographs

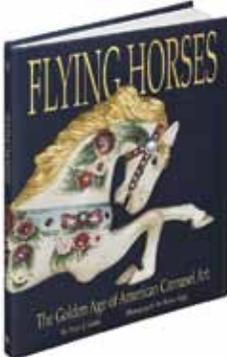
Documentation and opinion should have been presented in the original article. Bartholomew Murphy appears on the left in the photo of the brothers on page 12, according to the Historic New Orleans Collection. The man on the left on pages 13 and 35 is said to be the Murphys' painter, Theodore Graff. Based on appearance, we believe this man is Bartholomew.

Our apologies to Gerry Patrone for misspelling his name on pages 19 and 45.

Contributors

Appreciation to (in ABC order): Jean Bennett, Lourinda Bray, John Caruso, Glynn and Ron Keisler, Peter Malia, Gavin McDonough.

Thanks to Jordan Williams for photo editing services.



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