

## The Broadway Bruder

Bruce Pier

The events of early September 1913 made moot whether the previous summer at Salisbury Beach had been a good one or not. On September 9th, the good citizens of Cushing, Massachusetts, watched in horror as the formerly thriving amusements and businesses along Salisbury Beach went up in flames. Among the fire's casualties was the Culver Flying Horses, a steam-powered carousel owned by the Culver and Batdorf families. The carousel, like most of the seaside amusement district, was a total loss.

It wasn't long, however, until plans were begun to rebuild the popular seaside resort. Although the fierce New England winter prevented any major construction from being done, the Culver and Batdorf families used that time to visit Coney Island, where they hoped to buy a carousel to replace the one they had lost. They eventually wound up in the carousel works of William F. Mangels where they found a three-abreast stationary horse Charles Loof carousel, which had been

run at Coney Island by Mangels in partnership with a man named Gut. Culver. Batdorf struck a deal, which included the purchase of the carousel, a new steam power plant, and a new Gebruder Bruder Model 107 fair organ (Figure 1). The new owners took advantage of the winter hiatus to have the machine

remodeled after its Coney Island operation. New scenery was installed and the inside two rows of stationary animals were converted to jumpers.

When the weather cleared in the spring of 1914, a new building was built at Salisbury Beach for the carousel. Because the remodeling was still ongoing, the building was used as a dance hall until summer, when the "new" Culver Flying Horses (Figures 2 - 5) made its long-awaited arrival. Installed in time to benefit from the Fourth of July traffic, the new Culver Flying

Horses were an instant success, and was well on its way to becoming a Salisbury Beach institution.

Through the First World War, the Roaring Twenties, and into the Great Depression, the carousel and its Bruder organ provided joy to young and old alike. Notwithstanding its universal appeal, 1933 found the carousel up for sale as part of the liquidation of the assets of the Culver and Batdorf families. A gentleman purchased the Culver Flying Horses by

the name of Samuel Rogers, who renamed the carousel after the street on which it was located. That was only one of many changes Rogers made to the "Broadway Flying Horses." He also modernized the machine by scrapping the steam power plant and replacing it with a 15 horsepower Westinghouse single-phase electric motor.



Figure 1. The Broadway Bruder Model 107, formerly on the Flying Horses Carousel at Salisbury Beach Park.  
Photo: Dan Slack Archives.



Figure 2. A "general view" of Salisbury Beach amusement park showing the Flying Horses Carousel in the foreground.  
Photo: Rick Ciliberto.

*... struck a deal, which included the purchase of the carousel, a new steam power plant, and a new Gebruder Bruder Model 107 fair organ*

The Gebruder Bruder model 107 had its repertoire expanded through music from the B.A.B. Organ Company of New York City. Included in the repertoire were marches, waltzes, operatic overtures, popular songs of the day (including one book of radio show theme songs) and, interestingly, a copy of the Marseillaise. The Bruder apparently held its own until sometime in the 1940's, as indicated by the newest music that was purchased for it. A functioning

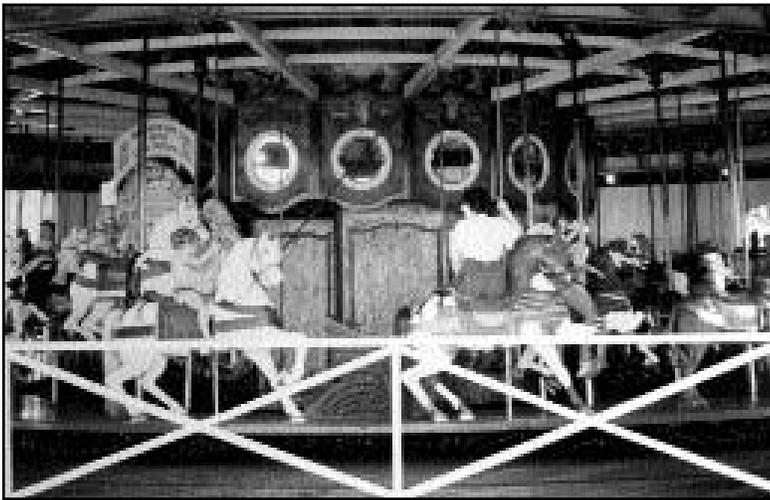


Figure 3. A closer look at the Flying Horses Carousel—the Bruder Model 107 can be seen on the left of the photo. Photo: Dan Slack Archives.

46-key Gavioli was obtained and took over the duties until the late 1950s when it, too, “gave up the ghost.”

Members of the Rogers Family operated the Broadway Flying Horses until 1975 when the decision was made to sell it. Local amusement operator Roger Shaheen purchased the business, which included the carousel, two non-functioning organs, a few spare horses, the building, and the land it was on. Mr. Shaheen operated the carousel for the 1976 season and then quietly put it up for sale. The Gavioli was sold to a dealer in mechanical musical instruments, and some of the spare horses were also sold. The carousel preservation movement was still in its infancy in the mid-seventies, and only two serious prospective purchases appeared. One was an antique dealer who had already pre-sold every figure on the machine. The other, California shopping center developer Bryant L. Morris, ultimately won. A crew came in to dismantle the carousel, and soon 63 years of Salisbury Beach history rolled out of town on three semi trailer trucks.



Figure 4. The post office on the left and the carousel on the right await large crowds of customers as depicted on this postcard. Photo: Rick Ciliberto.

possible. Interesting, it was discovered that the back panels were not marked #5172, but rather #5173 (another Model 107?). The pumps, regulator, and pouch board were re-leathered, as were the wind and valve chest. The tubing from the tracker bar manifold to the valve chest was in brass, which was cleaned, polished and re-lacquered. New transit rollers for the klavier were made by a local typewriter repair shop.

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Figure 5. A postcard detailing the Flying Horses Carousel building.

Photo: Rick Ciliberto.



Figure 6. The entrance to Seaport Village in San Diego, CA.  
Photo: Dan Slack archives.

The pipework is of the “fixed” pitch type; that is, there are no tuning slides. It was found to be in very good condition and required only cleaning before being reinstalled in the organ. There are 175 pipes in this particular Model 107, which seems to be typical for this style. There were Model 107s that had more pipes and some that had fewer, but this configuration appears to be average.

The missing drums were replaced with modern ones. Wendel had access to a local collector's Mortier and copied the drum beater actions from it. There were no intact Bruders in the area, so this had to do (one of these days we hope to replace the snare action with a proper Bruder style but for now, the Mortier action does the job).



Figure 7. The Broadway Carousel at Seaport Village. Photo: Author.



Figure 8 (above). Original scenery panels were carefully preserved on the façade. Compare the details of the Broadway Bruder with the panels on the back cover of this issue.

Figure 9 (right). The proscenium reveals this to be a “Columbia” Bruder supplied by the W. F. Mangels Company.  
Photos: Author.



The façade was repainted from instructions from carousel restoration artist/supervisor Tom Layton. The two-tone blue, which was turning to powder as we looked at it, was replaced with a gloss white with brown and yellow trim. The original gold and silver leaf was resealed.

A one-hp 220-volt single-phase motor with a jackshaft now supplies power to the flywheel. This was the first time that the organ has had its own power supply. Up until this point, it got its power from a pulley on the carousel's countershaft, being driven by the big Westinghouse motor. This was ahead of the clutch so, as long as the motor was on, the organ had power.

The organ was reunited with the carousel in October of 1980, booming forth for the first time in almost forty years. Powerful for its size, the organ can be heard all over the western end of Seaport Village. The carousel building is attractive, and showcases the machine very well. However, at some point

in the design process, a decision was made to glass in the building. Other than the two front gates, and a small service door in the back, the building is a “fish bowl,” making for a very “live” building. As a result, it became necessary to replace the cloth panels in the back panel of the organ with solid ones, and to install partial

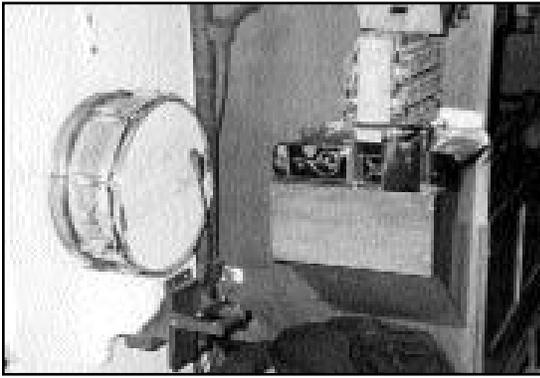


Figure 10. The keyframe with the solenoids installed.  
Photo: Dan Slack archives.

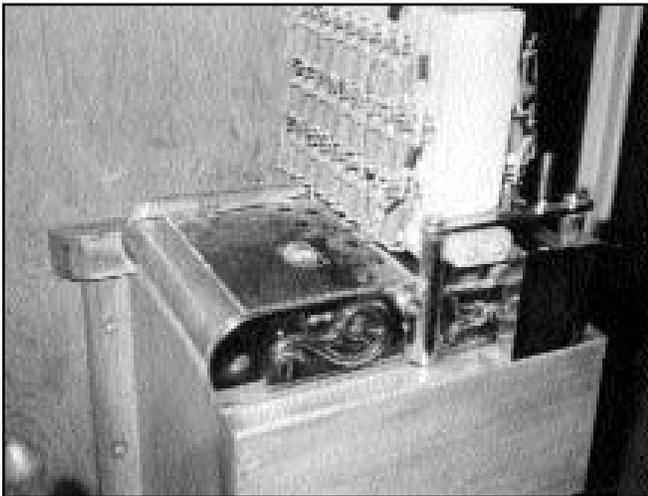


Figure 11. A close-up look at the bank of solenoids laying over the tracker frame.  
Photo: Dan Slack archives.

shutters behind the front screens. A Masonite skirt was built to enclose the bottom pipes. All this work calmed the sound down somewhat, but another problem soon surfaced. The shop owners around the carousel soon tired of listening to it, and demanded that something be done. Thus was born the “music-only-when-the carousel-is actually-in-motion” agreement. While not ideal, it’s better than not being able to use the organ at all.

With the wild swings in humidity in San Diego (which can go from 65% to 10% in 24 hours during a Santa Ana condition), the brass tracker bar tubing became troublesome. It would pop out of the tracker bar manifold creating horrendous ciphers. This was corrected in 1998 when the organ was rebuilt for the second time. The brass was replaced with rubber tubing, solving the problem.

For the first couple of years the original B.A.B. music was used. This was deteriorating rapidly, however, and inquiries were made to several of the European arrangers about obtaining music. The man-

agement was persuaded to try a digital player system, the latest technology at the time. An interface was made that clamped over the tracker bar and a CPU was built (Figures 10 & 11). The music was hand-played into a processor and recorded onto a digital cassette. The system functioned—however, the result sounded like a small theater organ, without the sharp attack of a band organ. Increasing RF interference from the nearby Navy bases ended this experiment. The organ is once again playing book music (Figure 12).

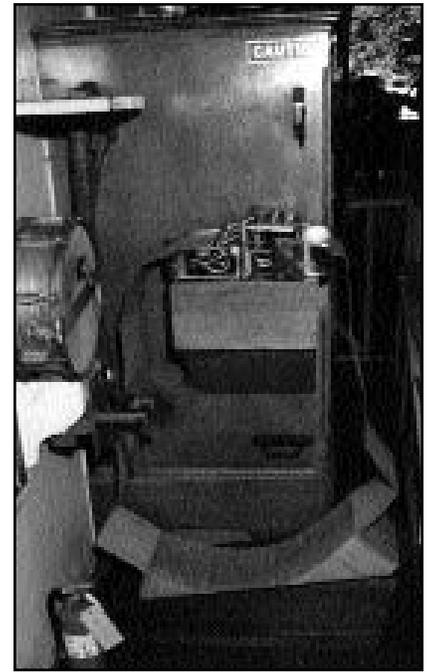


Figure 12. The keyframe with endless book playing on the Broadway Bruder.  
Photo: Author.

At present there is one 93-meter book in use with plans to add more to the repertoire as soon as possible. There is approximately an additional 500 meters of music that, while no longer playable, can be used as patterns for new books. These consist of both B.A.B. and German arrangements.

In this day and age, it is unusual for an organ to still be with the carousel for which it was originally purchased for. It is also one of the few book organs on a working carousel today, giving the public an up-close look at what really makes the *Happiest Music on Earth*.



Figure 13. One last look, on a Sunday afternoon, at Salisbury Beach park and the Flying Horses carousel building.  
Photo: Rick Ciliberto.

Bruce Pier has worked with the Broadway Flying Horses carousel and organ since 1980. He worked previously for the Gooding Amusement Company and also Cedar point in Ohio. Bruce attended a picnic at an early age at Kennywood Park (PA) which sparked his interest in band organs and carousels.