

Wishful Wednesday: The Circus is in Town!

Members of the board discussed and then dropped the matter of dismissing schools for the circus to be here Wednesday, April 25, agreeing to follow the course of previous years, when excuses signed by parents were sufficient to excuse pupils to attend the circus. Pearl Sells, superintendent of janitors, will be stationed at the unloading grounds of the circus and will notify each building when the parade starts. School will then be concluded for the morning, taking up at the regular time in the afternoon.

Will Show Film.
In observance of "Sight Conservation" week the local Council of Jew-

School not to be dismissed for the circus. *Marion Daily Star*, Marion, Ohio, 17 Apr 1923, Vol. XLVII, No. 122, P 12. Used with permission. (Click to enlarge.)

[Broida Family, Springsteen Family](#) (Click for Family Tree)

The circus coming to town generated lots of excitement throughout the centuries, even through the first quarter of the 20th century. In times when the major public entertainments were lecturers, singers, some stage theater, and finally silent movies (until 1927 when 'talkies' were introduced), the circus brought exotic people, titilating costumes, wild animals, and daring acts to even small towns throughout the land. The circus parade through town as the people, equipment, and animals were unloaded was a fabulous advertising gimmick to get the town wishing to attend, and ready to rush in to buy tickets and explore the shows.

We know the appeal of the circus affected our wishful ancestors, with at least two of them- Max Broida/Buster Brodie and Jefferson Springsteen- running off to join the circus when young. Max Broida, AKA Buster Brodie in Hollywood, was likely a performer since he later became an actor; he possibly was a clown as he was very short and very bald, even when young. We do not know what Jefferson Springsteen did as a young man in the circus, however. He was a painter later in life, so perhaps he painted signs, backdrops, etc. Jeff was a good rider as a young man- he delivered mail on horseback through the wilds of early Indiana, so possibly he was a part of the trick riders found in most circuses. It would be great to know

more about what they did in the circus- their stories of those times must have been amazing!

We had ancestors in Marion, Ohio (Beerbowers) in 1923, so they would have possibly been a part of this excitement. Those in rural areas would come into town as well, so the circus was a huge community event. Countless more of our ancestors in other towns enjoyed the circus through the years, whether they had seats at a show, wandered through the aisles of the set up circus, or just watched the parade in town.

Old movies show young boys skipping school to go watch the circus set up, but even those children still sitting at their desks likely had their minds elsewhere- and maybe even their teachers did too! So this 1923 article from the *Marion Daily Star* in Marion, Ohio, gives us a hint at how important circus days were to a town.

Apparently there were requests to close down the school on circus parade day, but the school board thought they would instead follow what had occurred in previous years: parents could write a note to excuse their student to attend the circus. (Can you imagine that in today's world of high-stakes education??) The board was smart though, as students would likely have more interest in geography and biology after seeing an elephant in person with its exotic Indian trainer, or a tiger jumping through hoops of fire. (Good teachers would have taken advantage of this too.) Persons from around the globe would have been part of the circus as well, and learning more about a 'Chinaman' or African pygmy would have been a way to teach students about diversity in a world where little of that existed at that time. (It was probably more of a novelty than diversity training, however.)

Those who didn't have the pennies to attend the circus were not forgotten- the schools would be notified when the parade started, and students would be allowed to attend the parade before continuing their studies in the afternoon.

April 25, 1923, must have been a very exciting day for our wishful ancestors in Marion, Ohio!

Notes, Sources, and References:

1) School not to be dismissed for the circus. *Marion Daily Star*, Marion, Ohio, 17 Apr 1923, Vol. XLVII, No. 122, P 12. Used with permission.

2) Max Broida/Buster Brodie and the circus: The Real Max Broida, AKA Buster Brodie at <http://heritageramblings.net/2015/04/10/the-real-max-broida-aka-buster-brodie/>

<http://heritageramblings.net/2015/04/10/the-real-max-broida-aka-buster-brodie/>

3) Jefferson Springsteen and the circus: There are three parts to the series concerning Jeff's obituary that includes the circus story- see *Wishful Wednesday: Jefferson Springsteen was "Lured by the Sawdust Ring..."* at <http://heritageramblings.net/2014/10/08/wishful-wednesday-jefferson-springsteen-was-lured-by-the-sawdust-ring/> for the first post.

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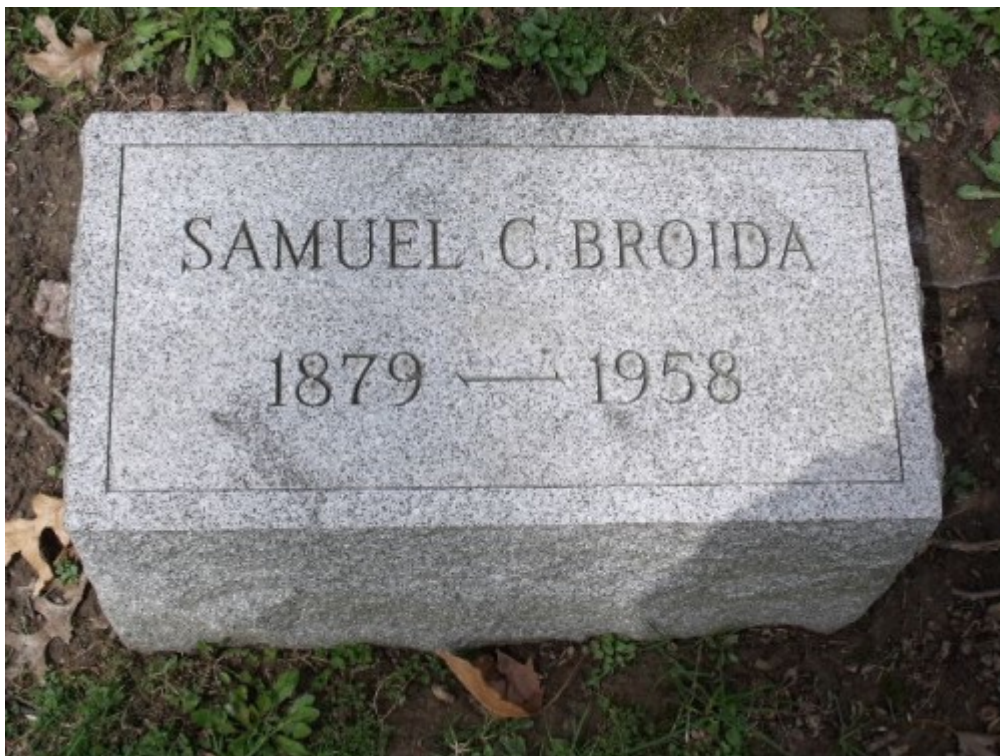
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Tombstone Tuesday: Samuel Charles Broida and Isabel "Bella" Friedberg Broida



Samuel C. Broida headstone in West View Cemetery, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Section B, Lot 55. Image courtesy of a FAG volunteer and posted with permission.

[Broida Family](#) *(Click for Family Tree)*

Samuel Charles Broida was born on 30 March 1879 in Vilna, Lithuania/ Russia, to Morris Karklinsky (?-1893) and Leah Berman Karklinsky (1842-1917). He arrived in the United States somewhere between 1891-1897 per his census records.

Isabel "Bella" Friedberg was born in Russia to unknown parents in June, 1881. Her arrival date in the US varies from 1890-1892 per the censuses.

On 10 Nov 1903, Isabel "Bella" Friedberg and Samuel Charles Broida filed for a marriage license in Pittsburgh, Allegheny, Pennsylvania, which they both also listed as their current residence. Belle did not know the day of the month she was born on when they filled out the paperwork. (Or maybe she was too excited to be able to remember? People did not celebrate birthdays in such a big way back then.) They were married the next day, on 11 Nov 1903.

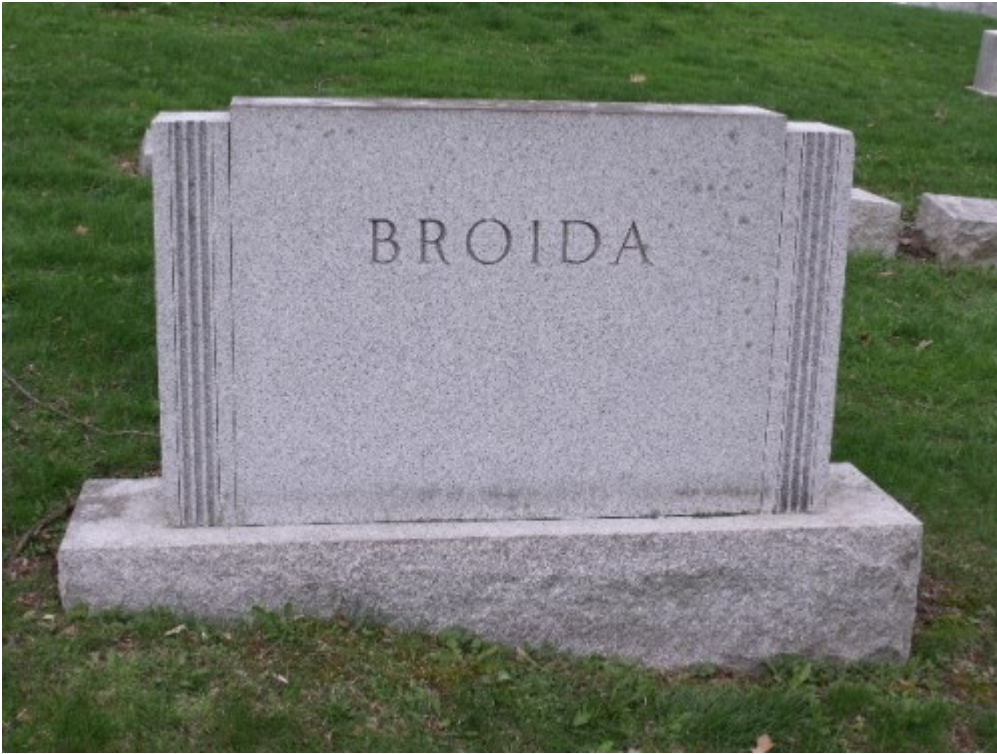
Bella and Samuel had 5 children- 2 girls, 3 boys, born from 1905-1921.

By the 1920 census the family had moved to Burgettstown, Washington Co., Pennsylvania, where Samuel worked as a merchant in dry goods. By 1930 they were back in Pittsburgh, with Samuel listed in the US Federal Census as a proprietor of a drugstore.



Isabella "Bella" Friedberg Broida headstone in West View cemetery, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Section B, Lot 55, Grave 6. Image courtesy of a FAG volunteer and posted with permission.

Bella died 20 January 1945 with Samuel surviving her until 8 November 1958. They are buried together after 41 years of marriage in Westview Cemetery, Pittsburgh, Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in Section B, Lot 55.



Broida marker in West View cemetery, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Section B, Lot 55. Image courtesy of a FAG volunteer and posted with permission.

Notes, Sources, and References:

1. Find A Grave Memorial for Samuel C. Broida
<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=145116718>
2. Find A Grave Memorial for Isabella "Bella" Friedberg Broida
<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=145116635>
3. No plagiarism here- I wrote the bios for the memorials, so am adding them to the blog to help make them easier to find.

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Friday Funny: Ale for the Springsteens?

GEORGE LEYS,
BREWER OF GENUINE
HOME BREWED ALE,
RAYMOND STREET, NEAR JOHNSON,
BROOKLYN.

Having been successfully engaged in the Manufacture of Ale for over 30 years, I will guarantee the Ale I now offer in every respect equal to any brand of Family Ale now in use, and containing only the active properties of Malt and Hops. In five-gallon kegs and upwards.

Price, 25 Cents Per Gallon.

I likewise intend to manufacture a superior article of Bottled Ale, equal to any imported, and at one half the price, being \$1 50 per Dozen, and will allow 50 cents for returned bottles. This article is strongly recommended by Medical men, and in every respect it is calculated to strengthen and invigorate the system of those who are suffering from weakness and general debility.

Orders left at the Store, corner of Fulton and Clinton Streets, or at the Brewery, will be punctually attended to.

1857 Home Brewed Ale advertisement, appendix-no page number, in "Smiths Brooklyn Directory for year ending May 1 1857," via InternetArchive. (Click to enlarge.)

[Springsteen Family](#) *(Click for Family Tree)*

Although the Jefferson and Anna Connor Springsteen family had moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, before the date of this ad, there were likely other brewers in Brooklyn, New York that offered the same beverage when they resided in Brooklyn. Jefferson ran a restaurant at the Fulton Market as well, so he may have stocked this or other ales.

Water was not always safe to drink, even that coming out of city pipes. Children were given beer from very early on to reduce their risk of parasites and infections from local water. "Family ales" would have had a lower alcohol content, but the alcohol and the heating during the brewing process would have killed off much of the disease-inducing microorganisms found in drinking water. Even Puritan children drank beer!

Benjamin Franklin loved beer. In fact, his quote that, "Beer

is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy.” can be found on t-shirts in pubs today. The advertisement notes that the ale listed is “...strongly recommended by Medical men...” and “...calculated to strengthen and invigorate the system...” This ad is persuasion as to what a smart purchase this would be for a family in 1857.

Since the Springsteen family probably was originally from Germany, and Anna Connor from Ireland, plus Jeff had lived in frontier areas, the chances were high that ales/beer were a part of their larder.

See? What’s old is new again- “Craft Brews” in 1857!

Notes, Sources, and References:

1. See reference with image.

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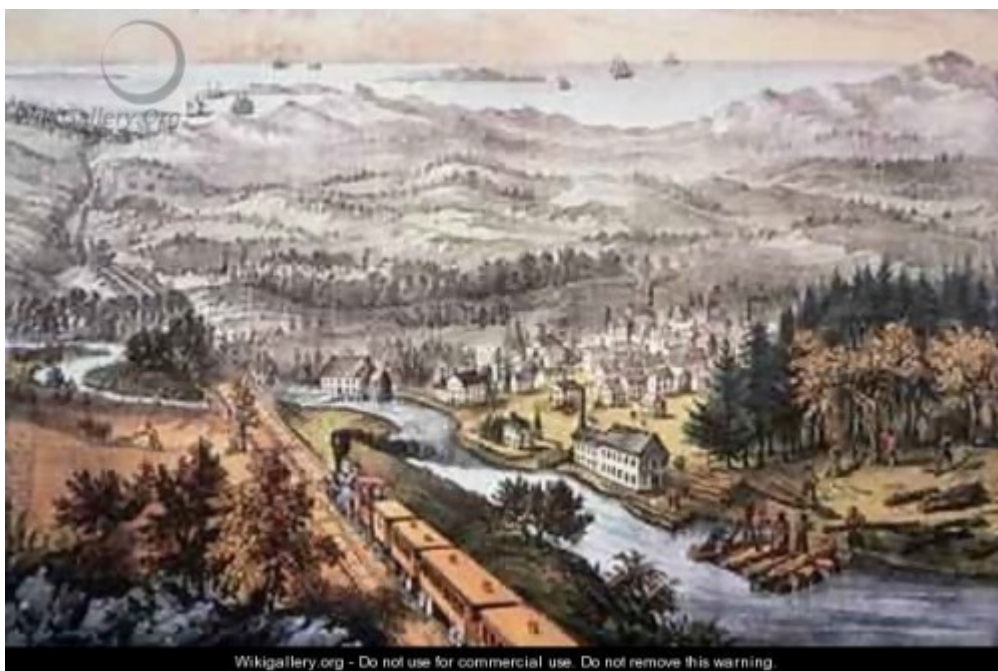
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Travel Tuesday: K.A. Burnell Goes Cross-Country in 1869



"Through to the Pacific" by Frances (Fanny) Flora Palmer for Currier & Ives, printed in 1870, via WikiGallery. Public domain for non-commercial use.

[McMurray Family](#) (Click for Family Tree)

Kingsley Abner "K. A." Burnell was an evangelist- but not of the "tele-" type since he lived from 1824-1905. K. A. had to be there *in person* to minister to his flock, and to add to it. (He did extend his evangelic reach through his writings- more on that in future posts.)

"Travel Tuesday" was not much of a concept back then- you

could not leave Illinois and be in California later that day. Travel took many days, even weeks. If a person wanted to go from the midwest or east to the Pacific Coast, there were three time-consuming, generally unpleasant choices, after taking a train to get to the departure point:

1. Overland, via wagon train to California, which could take from 3-7 months and required crossing deserts and mountains, dealing with hostile Native Americans, diseases such as cholera, diphtheria, mountain fever, pneumonia, etc; 3,000 miles but generally least expensive.
2. Take a ship to Panama in Central America, cross through a jungle with poisonous snakes, insects that carried deadly fevers, etc., then try to get a ship to California once on the Pacific Coast. This route could take from 2-3 months to many more, depending on when one could catch a ship. At about 7,000 miles, it was more expensive than the longer all-ocean route.
3. Take a ship around Cape Horn, at the southern tip of South America. Rough storms and huge waves, frigid weather, lack of fresh food, "more bugs than beans" in food, and 3-8 months on board ship in a very small room would be a part of this choice. At about 15,000 miles, the advantages of the Panama Canal, completed in 1914, are obvious.

A much better option presented itself in 1869.



Promontory Summit, Utah- Completion of the Transcontinental railroad on 10 May 1869, via wikimedia; public domain.

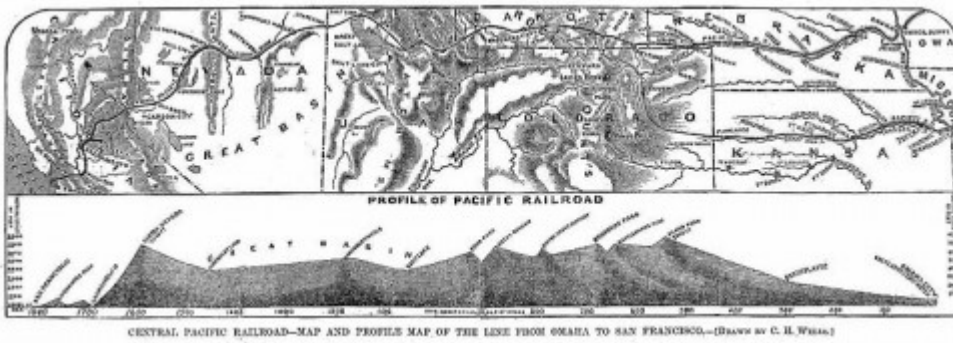
On 10 May 1869, the "Golden Spike" was driven into the rails at Promontory Point, Utah Territory, completing the first transcontinental railway. This limited the overland trip to 1,907 miles from Council Bluffs, Iowa, to San Francisco Bay, California. For an itinerant preacher, who had likely travelled many a railway mile, this must have been a very exciting time- the west was now readily open to his ministry.



Transcontinental railroad poster, 1869, via Wikimedia. Public domain. (Click to enlarge)

Being an adventurous man, deeply committed to his preaching, K.A. of course had to travel the new railroad- he even planned for it as the construction of the railroad progressed. He would have taken a passenger train to Omaha, Nebraska, and then, in less than four days (!), he would arrive in San Francisco, "... avoiding the Dangers of the Sea!" as the poster promises.

The route must have been incredibly beautiful. K.A. most probably felt even closer to his maker as he travelled across the unique lands of the west that he had only seen in engravings in books, or painted and framed on a wall.



Profile of the Pacific Railroad, 1867, via Wikimedia, public domain. (Click to enlarge.)

The railroad opened on 10 May, 1869. K. A. later wrote, in August of 1869, "... I determined to spend this summer in Christian work in Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, and California...", and he did. We know that K.A. was in Aurora, Illinois in April of 1869, then Leavenworth, Kansas on 11 June 1869. He wrote from Salt Lake City, Utah Territory, on 5 July 1869 where he made a ten-day stop to study the Mormon faith. (he was an open-minded man!) San Francisco, California welcomed him by the second week of July, just 2 months after the opening of the railroad.

CHRISTIAN CONVENTION.—At the hall of the Young Men's Christian Association, last night, a goodly audience listened to some remarks from Mr. K. A. Burnell, the lay preacher from Chicago, on "Family Religion, and the Workings of the Young Men's Christian Association." After the remarks, which were eminently practical and forcible, a discussion was held on the points growing out of the subjects presented. An informal and animated debate sprang up, which was participated in by many of those present, and the meeting was declared a profitable one. To-morrow night Mr. Burnell speaks at Oakland, returning to this city on Saturday and holding another meeting that night. His mission appeared to be well defined, and his labors are abundant and useful.

K.A. Burnell spoke at a Christian Convention in San Francisco, CA, 14 Jul 1869. Daily Alta [CA] Vol. 21, No. 7055, Page 1, Column 5, via California Digital Newspaper Collection. (Click to enlarge.)

K.A. returned east after his summer of evangelizing in the west, and was in Cleveland, Ohio on 11 Sep 1869 at the union

prayer meeting at the YMCA in that city. He made "...eight round-trips to California... three trips to Central California, three to the Puget Sound region, and two to the orange groves of the southwest Pacific" before 1888, per the *Biographical and Historical Record of Kane County, Illinois*.

K. A. Burnell and his second wife, Helen M. (Merrill) [Beckett] Burnell eventually made the west their home. By 1901, they were living in the Los Angeles area. K.A. died 7 Sep 1905 in South Pasadena, and Helen followed him on 2 Mar 1933. Their bodies made their last cross-country trip home, likely over some of those same rails, to graves in Aurora, Kane, Illinois.

Notes, Sources, and References:

1. Routes to California: <http://www.nhusd.k12.ca.us/Pioneer/pages/classrooms/FourthGrade/4thGradeGold/pages/Sea.html><http://goldrushofcalifornia.weebly.com/travel-routes.html>
2. Images per citations in captions.
3. "Behind the Scenes: The Artists Who Worked for Currier & Ives"- <http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/8aa/8aa119.htm>
4. *Biographical and Historical Record of Kane County, Illinois*, Beers, Leggett & Co, 1888, p.712.

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Housekeeping- Again



"We Help Mommy" c 1956

Well, the latest automatic update from WordPress broke the blog.

It's REALLY broken.

I'm so sorry.

It's bad timing too.

We are working on fixing it but it looks like it is going to take a bit of research, work, and likely redesign.

Any family out there willing to take on the technical aspects of the blog so I can just research and write??