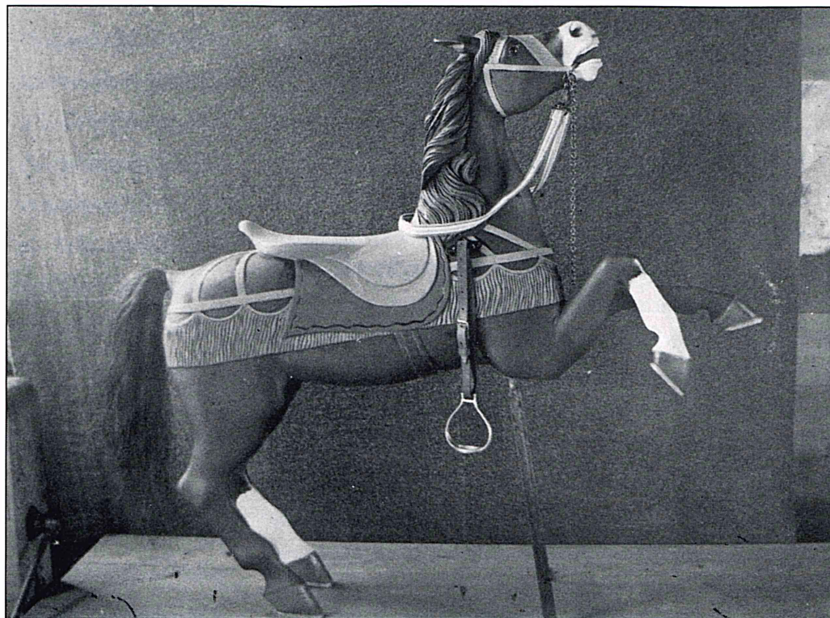


Memories of Gottfried Bungarz

By Robert C. Bungarz



Above: A photograph of a carousel horse found by Robert Bungarz in a box of his family's memorabilia.

According to Fred Fried's A Pictorial History of The Carousel, very little is known about Gottfried Bungarz. There exists a bill of sale of a Bungarz carousel for \$1140 with interest at the rate of six percent per annum, showing that George Kremer of North Beach, L.I., now the site of LaGuardia Airport, was the purchaser.

Before I begin writing about my great-grandfather, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Kenneth Cooper, a buyer for Abraham & Straus, a division of Federated Department Stores where I also worked. Ken, whose hobby is antiques, came to me one day with Fred Fried's book, *A Pictorial History of the Carousel*.

He showed me the brief section relating to Bungarz Carousels and asked if I were related to Gottfried. We talked a while, and he told me that the book was out of print but that he would look for one for me. In time Ken found one, and I was lucky enough to find two more copies, one for each of my children.

As a result of that conversation and of reading the book, I found out about the National Carousel Association and joined it.

The second person who deserves my thanks is Barbara Williams, archivist for the NCA. Barbara wrote to me in January 1996, stating that she had come upon a note I had written in 1986, when renewing my membership, mentioning that I was a great-grandson of Gottfried's. In my note then, I said I hoped to find out more about my great-grandfather and his carousel business. Barbara was encouraging, and we have been writing back and forth ever since.

After I received Barbara's first letter, I delved into what we have called our "Box of Germans." This box contained many photos of my mother's and father's families, school diplomas, confirmation certificates, and other media.

Going through the box item by item brought some measure of sadness. My sister, Evelyn, was nine and I was 11 when our mother died in 1931. Our father died in 1935.

However, the following items made the effort interesting and fun.

- A photograph of a carousel horse on a work bench in a shop. The background is blocked out by what looks like an army blanket clothespinned to a clothesline. There is no writing on the photograph anywhere. We assume it was one of Gottfried's horses.

- Gottfried's obituary, which was published in the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle* on January 4, 1918.

- A photo of my grandfather, Charles H. Bungarz (one of Gottfried's three sons), whom I never knew. Unfortunately, he died in 1893 of pneumonia while bedridden as a result of an accident that happened while he was working on a carousel. My father, Charles A., was three years old, and his brother, Godfried C., was five years old when that happened.

I was very interested in the portion of the obituary that stated, "Mr. Bungarz was the originator of the jumping horse on the merry-go-rounds of the country. He patented the idea of having wooden horse that jumped up and down."

Not having had any prior experience with obtaining patent information, I wrote to the Patent Office in Washington, D.C., in early February. At the same time, I wrote to Barbara Williams, telling her what I had found and what I was doing to obtain a copy of the patent.

Barbara remembered that Norman D. Anderson had sent Fred Fried two catalogues titled *Amusement Rides and Devices, A Compilation Of United States Patents*. Anderson, of Raleigh, N.C., and a Ferris wheel enthusiast and devotee, was kind enough while researching Ferris wheels at the Patent Office to also include carousel and other amusement park rides in his extensive

compilation. Barbara made copies of Anderson's two compilations, one dated 1989, and an updated one from 1993, and sent them to me. These are fabulous. Anderson's compilations gave me the patent number, classification, title, patentee's name, and city and state of residence. What a help that was.

The Patent Office's delayed response in March offered to search for the patent number for me for \$30 for a 20-year search, or \$60 for searching a total of 40 years of records. The Patent Office also could provide a copy of the patent for \$3 if I supplied the patent number.

Thanks to Barbara's prompt response and Anderson's work, I immediately sent a \$3 check and the patent number; by the end of March I had a copy of Gottfried's patent.

The patent, dated September 15, 1885, is not the Jumping Horse or Galloping Horse we know today. Gottfried's invention caused all the horses on his carousel to rock back and forth, rather than to be stationary.

When inventors began making figures on carousels move, there probably were many variations. I read of at least three others in Fred Fried's book, each different but all with the same idea, of simulating real-life movement.

To go further with that premise, Anderson's compilation (1993) states regarding patent numbers: "Most of the patents issued are utility patents. A design patent is issued to a person who has invented a new, original and ornamental design for an article of manufacture, such as a carousel horse. These patent numbers begin with the letter D."

Gottfried's patent number is not prefaced with the letter, putting it in the utility class. With this in mind, it appears Gottfried's invention was an improvement or variation on Jumping Horses, rather than the invention of the Jumping Horse.

Gottfried's factory was located at Ninth Street and Second Avenue in Brooklyn, and for 25 years he made stages, carriages, and merry-go-rounds there. The only tangible thing I have from that era is my grandfather Charles' shaving mug; it has his name in gold letters (C. Bungarz), and a four-wheeled wagon, minus the horse, painted under



Left: Robert Bungarz' grandfather, Charles H. Bungarz. One of Gottfried's three sons) he died in 1893.

According to a small death notice in a local newspaper, Gottfried Bungarz, "of No. 615 Fifth Avenue, South Brooklyn, who died on Wednesday of pneumonia, was one of the best-known amusement promoters of Coney Island. He was the originator of the jumping horse on the merry-go-rounds. He patented the

his name. The side of the wagon reads, "Steam Wagon Works."

Personal information that I have come upon includes that Gottfried was born in Bonn, Germany, in 1830. He married Sibilla Bertz—or Pertz—who was born in 1836. They had six children, three girls and three boys. I don't know when they emigrated to the United States. Evelyn had Gottfried's name placed on The American Immigrant Wall of Honor when Lee Iacocca headed the committee to restore Ellis Island.

To the best of my knowledge, the Bungarz family remained in Brooklyn. I don't know why, but we were never a close family. The only ones I remember seeing were two cousins, Edwin and John, who were sons of Gottfried's son Herman. My sister and I regularly visited our paternal grandmother, Sophie, until she died. She remarried after Charles' untimely death and had a daughter, also named Sophie.

I remember my father saying that his grandfather (Gottfried) had come to the United States on the same ship as Charles Feltman, who opened

wooden 'galloping' horse and sold thousands throughout the country. He had a factory at Ninth Street and Second Avenue and for 25 years had made stages, carriages, and merry-go-rounds. Mr. Bungarz began his career in the amusement world when Coney Island was in the making." Photos courtesy of R. Bungarz.

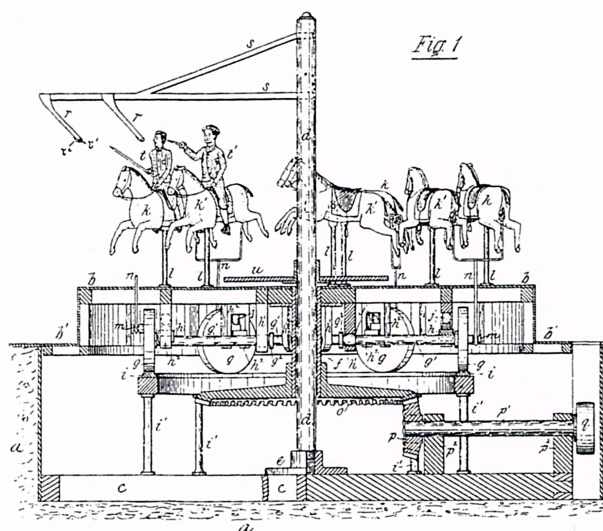
(No Model.)

2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

G. BUNGARZ.
ROUNDAABOUT.

No. 326,474.

Patented Sept. 15, 1885.



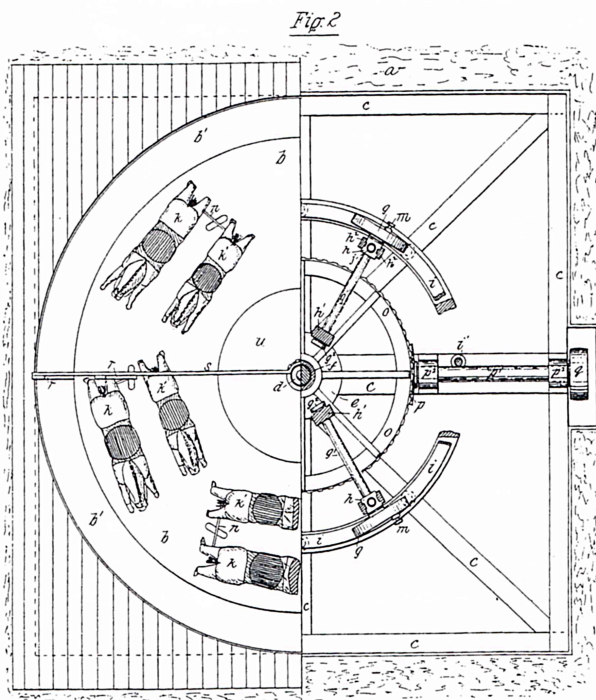
(No Model.)

2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

G. BUNGARZ.
ROUNDAABOUT.

No. 326,474.

Patented Sept. 15, 1885.



and operated Feltman's Ocean Pavilion at Coney Island. The pavilion was originally a hotel, opened in 1874. The carousel housing was on Surf Avenue, and the pavilion ran through to the Boardwalk. At its peak, it consisted of two bars and nine restaurants, the best of which was on the boardwalk. Feltman's carousel was just across Surf Avenue from Luna Park.

Coney Island and carousels were an important part of my life while growing up. My sister and I were born on West 8th Street, of Kingshighway—just three stops from Coney Island on the Sea Beach Line subway. Our mother would take us and usually a group of our friends to the beach. Our group also frequently visited Luna Park, Steeplechase, and Feltman's carousel in the summer.

I will always remember my father taking Evelyn and me to Mr. Stubbmann's carousel on Sunday afternoons. Behind the building housing the carousel was a small hotel named the Hotel Eleanor. Stubbmann's property was just west of what was known then as Dreamland parking space. In the winter, the city would build a low wall of sand or sandbags and flood the parking lot. As soon as it froze, we would ice skate on it.

The only carousel left on Coney Island is the B&B at Surf Avenue and 10th Street. I started my son riding on this one early in his life. On Sundays while babysitting him, I would take him on the McDonald Avenue trolley car to its last stop at Coney, a block or two from the B&B carousel. We would spend an hour or so riding the carousel and then head home. When our daughter was old enough, we went as a family.

In 1992, our son visited from Seattle, bringing our grandson. Our son, his wife, and their oldest daughter visited the New York Aquarium, part of which is now on the old Dreamland parking space. After that, we stopped at the B&B carousel for a few rides, completing our fourth generation of Coney Island carousel riders.

My father's brother, Godfriedt, died as a result of a motorcycle accident in 1919. He was 31 years old. I am both blessed and lucky that at 76, I am still going strong.

[Editor's note: See Gottfried Bungarz' death notice on page 34.]

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

GOTTFRIED BUNGARZ, OF BROOKLYN, NEW YORK.

ROUNABOUT.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 326,474, dated September 15, 1885.

Application filed November 18, 1884. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, GOTTFRIED BUNGARZ, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Brooklyn, county of Kings, State of New York, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Roundabouts, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to that class of amusement appliances known as "merry-go-rounds" or "roundabouts," in which a rotating platform carries various devices, as imitations of animals, &c., to be occupied or ridden by the participants in the amusement; and it has for its object to simplify the construction, to reduce the power required to operate the same, to impart a more natural motion to the moving objects, and to increase the capacity by making all the moving objects available for other sports used in conjunction with such appliances.

To more fully describe the construction and operation of my improved roundabout, I will now refer to the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1, Sheet 1, is a central sectional elevation of my improved roundabout, and Fig. 2, Sheet 2, is a plan view of the same, half in section.

As will be seen from the drawings, a pit is formed in the ground *a*, and the roundabout fixed therein so that the platform *b* or its outside step, *b'*, is level with the surface of the ground. In the bottom of the pit is placed the heavy timber frame *c*, to the center of which is secured the vertical post or shaft *d* by means of its flange *e*. This shaft *d* acts merely as a central guide for the platform *b*, to which is secured the sleeve *f*, made so as to rotate freely on the shaft *d*, said platform being supported by the series of wheels *g*, secured to the radially-arranged shafts *g'*, which fit in bearings *h* and *h'*, secured to the under side of the platform. The wheels *g* rest on the circular track *i*, supported by posts *i'* from the timber frame *c*. To allow for irregularities of fitting, and to insure the rotation of all of the wheels *g*, by frictional contact with the track *i*, the outside bearings, *h*, are preferably made so as to have a slight vertical movement by being fitted in guides *h'*, and springs *j* are placed on the tops of the bearings and the

platform *b* supported thereby, the play of said springs being only sufficient to equalize on all the supporting-wheels the pressure due to the load carried, as the rotation of said wheels is utilized to impart an oscillating motion to the imitation animals *k k'* as they travel around with the platform. To allow for this independent vertical movement of the wheels *g*, the inner journals of the axles *g' g'*, working in the bearings *h' h'*, are made slightly spherical, as shown. The collars *g' g'* hold the axles and wheels in position. This novel feature, by which the objects carried by the platform are caused to imitate the natural movements of the objects or animals represented, is accomplished by pivoting said objects at or near their central parts to standards *l l*, projecting upwardly from the platform *b*, and connecting them at their rear ends to the crank-axes *m m* on the free front sides of the wheels *g g* by means of the connecting-rods *n n*, which pass through openings in the platform. These connecting-rods are bifurcated at their upper ends, and connected to each of the animals *k k'* of the pairs arranged around the platform. When one series or set of animals or objects is carried by the platform, then the connecting-rods *n* will have only one upper connection.

By supporting on the wheels *g g* the platform and load a minimum power is required to operate the roundabout, which power is applied thereto through the medium of the bevel-wheel *o*, secured to the lower end of the sleeve *f*, and the bevel-pinion *p*, meshing therein, secured to the shaft *p'*, fitted in standard-bearings *p'*, and on the end of which is shown a pulley, *q*, to be connected by a belt to the source of power. The driving mechanism is thus out of sight, and, if desired, the motor may be placed underground, or the driving-belt extend from above through an opening to the pulley *q*.

A stationary platform, *b*, is secured to the guide-shaft *d* above the rotating platform for the occupation of attendants and others.

The ring-tilting attachment consists of tubes *r*, in which rings are placed, the lower ring, *r'*, projecting, as shown, from the mouth of the tube, but held in place by a spring, *r''*, until forcibly detached by means of a sword or spear carried by the riders, which allows the

2

326,474

succeeding ring to fall against the spring *r''*. The object of such sport, as now practiced, is, while adding to the amusement of the riders, to give such rider as is lucky or expert enough to catch a ring or the greatest number of rings a free ride. By my arrangement two ring-tubes are secured to the arm *s*, projecting from the central shaft, *d*, and are so located, one within reach of each of the riders of the outside animals, *k*, as *t*, and the other within reach of the rider of the inside animals, *k'*, as *t'*.

The fixed central shaft may also be utilized to support a light awning to protect the apparatus and riders from the weather.

Having now described my invention, what I claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. In a roundabout, the combination, with a rotating platform carrying objects or imitation animals, &c., and a fixed vertical guide-shaft on which the platform rotates, of ring-tilting attachments secured to an arm projecting from the fixed guide shaft and located

above the objects carried by the platform, substantially as set forth.

2. In a roundabout, in combination, the platform *b*, the supporting-wheels *g g*, provided with crank-axes *m m*, the bifurcated connecting-rods *n n*, and the imitation animals *k k'*, pivoted on the standards *l l*, projecting from the platform *b*, substantially as set forth.

3. In a roundabout, in combination, the platform *b*, the supporting-wheels *g g*, provided with crank-axes *m m*, the bifurcated connecting-rods *n n*, the imitation animals *k k'*, pivoted on the standards *l l*, projecting from the platform *b*, the fixed guide-shaft *d*, projecting arm *s*, and ring-tilting attachments *r r*, substantially as set forth.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand at New York, county and State of New York, this 15th day of November, 1884.

GOTTFRIED BUNGARZ.

Witnesses:

ALFRED SHEDLOCK,
H. D. WILLIAMS.

Another notice

honoring Bungarz

read:

"Gottfried Bungarz, one of the best known amusement promoters at Coney Island, died on Wednesday of pneumonia at his home, 615 Fifth Avenue. He began his career when Coney Island was in the infant stage, and at one time was offered half of Coney Island for a few thousand dollars. He was the originator of the galloping carrousel horse, and at one time owned most of the carrouseles on the Island. He was born in Germany 87 years ago, and had lived in Brooklyn for more than 50 years. He is survived by two sons, John and Herman; three daughters, Mrs. Frederick Konemon, Mrs. John La Bahn, and Mrs. Cooner; ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held at his late home yesterday. Interment at Greenwood Cemetery."

NCA Multimedia Shelf

WANTED:

Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters Inc. is seeking original Philadelphia Toboggan Company documents, photos, and sketches or information to complement its extensive archives. Please contact Laura Grauer at PTC Inc., Eight and Maple Sts., Landsdale, PA 19446 or call 215/362-4700 (fax 215/368-9680).

LOST:

During the NCA convention, between the Marriott and Lake Accotink (including the buses, the paths, the Washington National Cathedral and grounds, and the grounds at Lake Accotink)—a silver bracelet, linked diamond and circle shapes with pearls. If you found it, please call C. Hennig at 716/377-6762.

No longer limited to books and videotapes, the "Bookshelf" section of *Merry-Go-Roundup* has been expanded to also include reviews of carousel music and other items of interest to NCA members.

Regarding carousel music, two new compact discs from Marion Roehl Recordings, *Carousel Organ Varieties*, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, are outstanding. Crystal clear and incredibly true to life, they replicate authentic WurliTzer 146A carousel organ music so well (the bells in Vol. 1 are awesome), you can easily fool yourself by turning up the volume.

Take, for example, "Tiger Rag" (Vol. 1). The higher the volume, the better it gets. So good, in fact, that after three weeks of playing and replaying it at least 15 times a day, yours truly still can't get enough of it. Vol. 1 (#1036) has seven ragtime arrangements by Art Reblitz, including "Ragtime Dance," "Rattlesnake Rag" and "Peacherine Rag." Vol. 2 (#1037) features "The Cascades," "Felicity," "Marine's Hymn," "Kiss Me Again," and "St. Louis Tickle."

According to Harvey Roehl, the cover design for each CD, by Jim Weaver, was adapted from a photo by Ed Aswad. The horses in the photo were "sort of stacked up, waiting to be installed on the Johnson City Carousel at the time of the NCA convention here in 1993." The CDs are \$14.95 each. To order yours, or to request a flyer describing other Roehl recordings, call 607/797-9062.

From Oceanside, Calif., comes a new computer screen saver, *Carousel Horses*, featuring images by NCA member Anne Hinds, carousel photographer and past editor of *Roundup*.

A Windows™-based program (3.5" floppy disk), it includes 20 images and special-effects transitions, a wallpaper sequencer, an After Dark module, and can incorporate personal photos. *Carousel Horses* is marketed by Screen Pix, of Oceanside, under the PC HorseShow™ brand, and sold by carousel gift and specialty stores. It may be purchased for \$19.99.

For more information, call 619/721-9695, or write to Screen Pix, P.O. Box 4100, Oceanside, CA 92052.

Bungarz

(From page 19)

G. BUNGARZ, 87, DIES; PIONEER AT CONEY

Inventor of the Jumping Horses
on the Merry-Go-Rounds.

A MANUFACTURER 25 YEARS.

At One Time Owned Most of the
Children's Carrouseles at
Coney Island.

Gottfried Bungarz, 87 years old, of 615 Fifth avenue, South Brooklyn, one of the best known amusement promoters of Coney Island, died on Wednesday of pneumonia. Mr. Bungarz was the originator of the jumping horse on the merry-go-rounds of the country. He patented the idea of having a wooden horse that jumped up and down, and sold thousands of his own manufacture throughout the country. He had a factory at Ninth street and Second avenue, Brooklyn, and for twenty-five years had made stages, carriages and merry-go-rounds.

Mr. Bungarz began his career in the amusement world when Coney Island was in the making, and he at one time owned most of the carrouseles on the island. He often told how, at one time he had been offered nearly one-half of the entire island for a few thousand dollars. Mr. Bungarz formerly lived many years in Flatbush, and four years ago went to make his home with his youngest daughter, Mrs. Horatio H. Cooner, at the Fifth avenue address. He was born in Bonn, Germany, on July 26, 1830, and came here more than fifty years ago.

Mr. Bungarz is survived by two sons, John and Herman Bungarz; three daughters, Mrs. Frederick Konamon, Mrs. John S. La Bahn and Mrs. Cooner; ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. The funeral services will be held tomorrow morning with interment in Greenwood Cemetery.

This article about Gottfried Bungarz appeared in The Brooklyn Daily Eagle on Friday, January 4, 1918.