

Frank Lee Perley (- 13 Mar 1952)

Perley, Frank L. On Thursday, March 13, 1952, at Orlando, Fla., Frank L. Perley of the Northumberland Apartments, father of Frank G. Perley of Elizabeth, N.J.; brother of Morrison W. Perley. Remains resting at the S.H. Hines Co. Funeral Home, 2901 14th st. n.w., after 12 noon on Sunday, March 16. Services at the above funeral home on Monday, March 17, at 11 a.m. Interment Congressional Cemetery. Please omit flowers.

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Frank L. Perley Dies; Noted Circus Agent And Theater Producer

Frank L. Perley, 95, former circus press agent and theatrical manager and producer, died yesterday in Orlando, Fla.

Mr. Perley worked as a press agent for P.T. Barnum for seven years before Barnum's death and later went into theatrical work, management and production of such famous shows as "When Knighthood Was in Flower," "The Bonnie Briar Bush," "The Sporting Duchess" and "Dockstader's Minstrels."

A native of Erie, Pa., he came to Washington when his father settled here on discharge from the Union Army after the Civil War.

When still in his middle teens, Mr. Perley organized an amateur orchestra and with it managed to pay for his education as a lawyer at the Columbian University, now George Washington University.

Gets Doctor's Warning

A member of the bar here and in Erie, Mr. Perley had worked as a lawyer for only five years, mostly in New York, when his doctor told him that if he wanted to keep his health he would have to get outdoor work.

To comply, he took a job as contracting agent for Batchellor and Doris Great Inter-Ocean Shows.

He soon moved to the W.C. Coup Shows as press agent and then with the Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth and the Ringling Brothers World's Greatest Shows in the early 1880s.

In 1889 and 1890 Mr. Perley traveled abroad with Barnum & Bailey. On their return to the United States, as a reward for his work with them, Barnum & Bailey gave him an interest in and management of their Hall of Babylon show, produced in Boston in 1890.

Barnum's death the following year terminated Mr. Perley's contract, which had been to run for a number of years and included the production of other "spectacles." In 1893 he deserted the circus world for work in the field of dramatic and operatic productions.

Productions Are Successes

As a producer Mr. Perley achieved a high degree of success. Among the famous names of the day who appeared in his productions were Mme. Modjeska, Fannie Davenport, Mrs. John Drew, Agnes Booth, Rose Coghlan, Cora Tanner, Effie Ellsler, Marie Cahill, H.H. Stoddard, William Collier, Robert Hillard, Jerome Sykes, the Alice Nielson Opera Company, Fannie Daniels, the Bostonians and the Chaperons.

Shortly after the Iroquois Theater fire in Chicago in 1908 Mr. Perley retired and has been living in Maine, California and Florida since. During World War I he came out of retirement to work for the Shipping Board here and for a short time thereafter did promotion work for an automobile company.

Surviving are a son, Frank G. Parley of Elizabeth, N.J., and a brother, Morrison W. Perley, 1718 Hobart street N.W.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Monday at Hines funeral home, 2901 Fourteenth street N.W., and burial will follow in Congressional Cemetery.