

Nina Pauline Bricker (1913-1989)



Nina Bricker, 1933
Ohio University

Nina Pauline Bricker was born in Cleveland, Ohio on January 13, 1913. She was an only child, the daughter of William Clarence Bricker and Bessie Florence Guyer, of Franklin County, Pennsylvania. William and Bessie were married in 1910 and moved to Cleveland shortly thereafter, where William worked as a conductor for the Pennsylvania Railroad. Their addresses in Cleveland include 9408 Marah Avenue, which was their home around the time of World War I, and 3705 East 103rd Street, where they moved sometime in the 1920s and remained until at least the 1940s.

Nina enrolled at Ohio University in 1933, and appears in the 1933 and 1934 yearbooks as a member of Alpha Delta Pi and the Alliance Francaise, but she is nowhere to be found in 1935, nor is she listed as a member of the senior class of 1936. She did earn dual degrees in mechanical engineering and math, but I do not yet know where or when she graduated. According to the 1940 census, she was living with her parents on 103rd Street in Cleveland, and was attending school at the time. The only other mention I could find of Nina in the 1940s is on a ship's manifest, as a passenger on the SS Brazil from New York to San Juan, disembarking on the 26th of May, 1948. So it appears she had already caught the travel bug.

In June 1951, Nina moved to Phoenix, Arizona. Accompanied by her mother and father, who retired after 41 years as a railroad conductor, they lived at 1645 West Fairmount Avenue. It was at this time that Nina got a job at the Goodyear Aircraft Corp as an electronics engineer. Her work there, much of it classified, included advanced radar systems. Later, after the company rebranded as Goodyear Aerospace in 1963, she worked on missile systems. As late as 1964, she was the only female development engineer in a department of 500 men.

Another of Nina's Goodyear projects was to find a method to develop film without chemical processing, a project that tied in closely with her personal interest in photography. She was a member of both the Phoenix Camera Club, where she served as president in 1960, and the Arizona Camera Club Council, where she also served as president in 1964. In addition, Nina was fluent in Spanish and was a member of Club Panamericano, a local Spanish club.

However, I believe Nina's greatest passion was travel. She would take at least one overseas trip every year. Not only did she always have her color camera in hand, she would also record audio of her travels. She would then give color slide presentations, including the sounds she captured, to audiences in the Phoenix area. I've found mentions of the following presentations in the Arizona Republic and other area newspapers:

- January 1957 – Istanbul and the cities of Greece, presented to the League of Professional and Business Women
- April 1960 – “Yucatan and the Mayan Cities” at the Heard Museum Auditorium
- May 1964 – “The Far East” presented at the Sedona Art Barn
- July 1964 – Egypt, as the headline presenter of the Arizona Camera Club Council annual meeting in Prescott
- February 1965 – Guatemala, as part of the YWCA's “So You Want to Travel” series
- October 1965 – “Ancient and Colonial Guatemala” at the Heard Museum Auditorium
- November 1965 – “The Far East”, as part of the YWCA's “So You Want to Travel” series
- April 1966 – Japan, as part of the YWCA's “So You Want to Travel” series
- January 1969 – “Conqueror's Route” (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran), part of the “So You Want to Travel” series
- April 1971 – Bali, part of the “So You Want to Travel” series

Nina's father passed away in 1961, and her mother in 1967. She continued to live at 1645 W. Fairmount, a home that still stands today. She also continued her work at Goodyear Aerospace as late as 1969. She remained unmarried and had no living close relatives other than her Pennsylvania cousins, whom she likely never met. Nina Bricker died in Phoenix on November 17, 1989. I haven't yet found anything from the final 18 years of her life besides a letter to the editor in 1979, discussing the inefficiencies of new postal service regulations and automated machinery. An engineer to the very end.

Personally, I never met Nina, and until a few years ago had no knowledge of her existence, including the fact that she and my grandfather were first cousins. However, we share many of the same interests and even our careers are similar. I know it's a longshot, but my ongoing holy grail search is to find a collection of her slides and recordings.

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First Row: Lenore Brunton, Dorothy Robbin, Constance Epstein, Dr. Mary T. Noss, Mary Kupir, Catherine Sweeney, Elizabeth Hyre.

Second Row: Flora Gaines, Mary Granger, Ruth Fleck, Grace Thayer, Frank Cohen, Phyllis Haslam, John Euliano.

Third Row: Louis Minder, Ralph McPherson, Walter Madden, Frances Berry, Nina Bricker, Betty Floyd, Mabel Mayle.

above: The Alliance Francaise, Ohio University, 1934. Nina is in the back row, third from the right.

right: Phoenix Camera Club winners. Photo courtesy of The Phoenix Camera Club



Winners in 1957-'58 competition.

Jack Stuler	High points in Black and White
Nina Bricker	High points in color and slide of the year.
Hiro Nomura	Print of the year



1959--1960 OFFICERS

(seated) left to right: Gene Farris, V.P. of Color; Nina Bricker, President; John Nelson, V.P. of B. and W.; Frank Guzman, Secretary.

(standing) left to right: Hazel Ridenour, Henry Ridenour, Delegates-at-large; M. Genevieve Evans, Delegate-at-large; Dorothy O'Rourke, Treasurer.

Photos courtesy of the Phoenix Camera Club



Nina and her mother Bessie Guyer Bricker, on a Phoenix Camera Club outing to Canyon de Chelly, Labor Day weekend, 1963