

DEDICATION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE RESTORATION OF PHILADELPHIA TOBOGGAN COMPANY CAROUSEL NO. 6 THE KIT CARSON COUNTY CAROUSEL

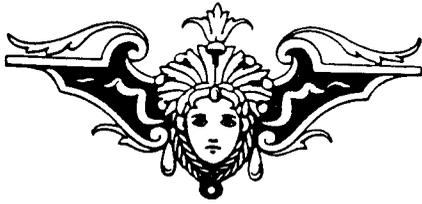
Thursday, August 6, 1981 — Burlington, Colorado

THE HISTORY OF THE CAROUSEL

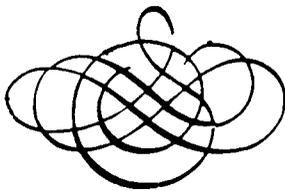
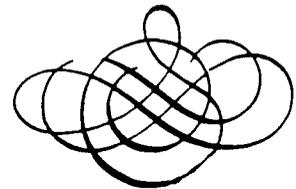
Machine No. 6 was purchased from the Philadelphia Toboggan Co. by Elitch Gardens, an amusement park in Denver, in 1905. It has been told that the then president of Elitch's went to Philadelphia and hand-picked the animals which now comprise the menagerie from those available on the factory shelves. The carousel was operated at Elitch's every summer season until 1928 when it was purchased by Kit Carson County and installed in the fairgrounds in Burlington.

The county commissioners who approved the carousel's purchase, C.J. Buchanan, C.W. Huntley and I.D. Messinger, met with widespread disapproval over the \$1,250, a sum considered an extravagant expenditure in hard times. Huntley and Buchanan chose not to run for re-election in 1928 because of this sentiment.

In 1931, the Great Depression forced Kit Carson County officials to temporarily discontinue holding the annual fair. The fairgrounds and the carousel were neglected. Cornstalks and hay for feed, made available to local farmers through a government assistance program, were stored in the carousel building and other available spaces on the unused fairgrounds. Mice, snakes and pigeons infested the building and piles of waste accumulated. In 1937 the county fair was finally resumed. The old feed was removed from the buildings and burned. The carousel was scrubbed with soapy water, re-varnished and operated once again. According to Harley Rhoades, the commissioner who was perhaps the most responsible for resuming the fair, the carousel was such a mess that there was much sentiment for burning it up with the old cornstalks! The mice, of course, devastated the band organ, so western and popular music was played on phonographs or tape machines for several generations of fairgoers — about 45 years. Stories differ, but there may have been one year during World War II and one year when fair officials gave into the carnival concessionaires' screams of "unfair", as the price of riding the carousel undercut the carnival rides, when the machine was not used.



A pre-dedication dinner was served last Thursday to honored guests. It was hosted by the Kit Carson County Carousel Association. Left to right are Toby Friemel, Kay and Ray Daniels and Eve Friemel. They prepared the pig for the guests. Dale Crist slaughtered the hog, which was donated by Don Bishop.



Entertainment for the dedication ceremonies was provided by the Hope Messengers. Left to right are pianist Valde Adolf, Denis Stehleckner, Bruce Boyd, Loren Lambert and Will Adolf. Dalwon Scheel is also a member of the group.

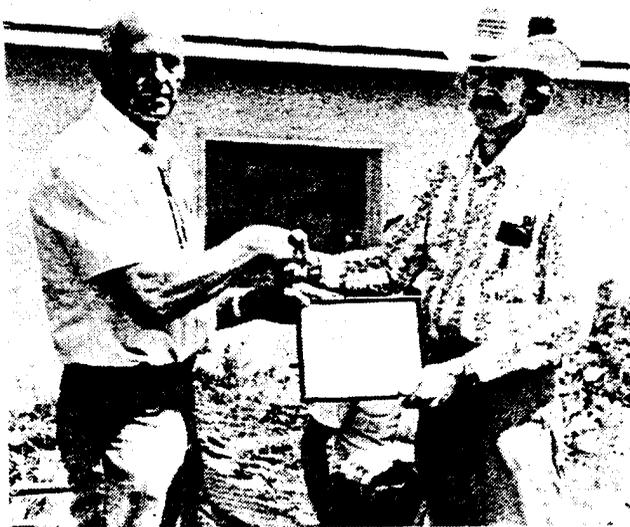


THE RESTORATION

In 1975, a committee of county citizens was formed to develop a project and join with the rest of the nation in the celebration of our Bicentennial. The committee chose restoration of the county's old carousel as a project. Art Reblitz of Colorado Springs was contracted to restore the old band organ, which after the many years of disuse, was literally a "basket case". It was returned, fully restored, just in time for the county fair in 1976.

Grant money and donations were sought to continue the project. John Pogzeba, an art conservator from Denver, was contacted regarding restoration of the 45 oil paintings. Although the Bicentennial was over, the project continued, as did the committee now called the Kit Carson County Carousel Association. In 1977 the oil paintings were restored by Mr. Pogzeba and Will Morton VIII. Mr. Morton was given a contract in the spring of 1979 to restore the original paint to animals and four chariots and the outer rim. This project was completed 1½ years later. Discovered during the restoration was a great amount of the original gold leaf and painted decoration, making this a priceless treasure among America's carousels.

Research, which is expected to lead to the reconstruction of portions that are suspected to be missing, is continuing.



County Commissioner Ted Wickham, left, as he presented a plaque of appreciation to Will Morton VIII. Will was given a contract in the spring of 1979 to restore the original paint on the animals and four chariots.



John Hayek, president of the National Carousel Association, as he presented a special plaque to Bob McClelland during the dedication ceremonies. Hayek stated they "were delighted with the carousel. It is truly a masterpiece," he said.



A certificate of appreciation was given to Art Reblitz, who restored the old band organ, by Bob McClelland. It was fully restored, just in time for the Kit Carson County Fair in 1976.



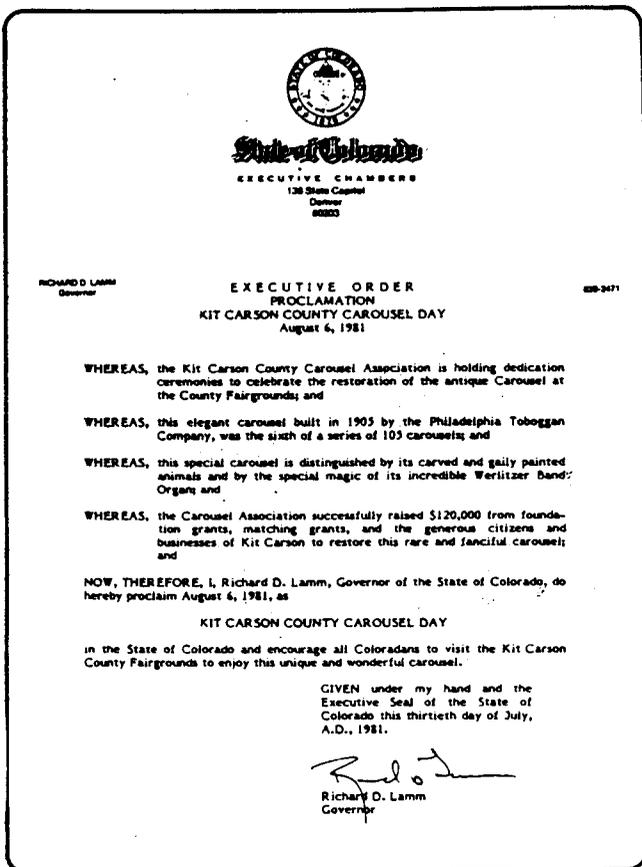
Chairman of the Kit Carson County Carousel Committee Bob McClelland as he announced to the crowd at the dedication ceremonies that Governor Richard Lamm had proclaimed last week as "Kit Carson County Carousel Week" throughout Colorado. MaryJo Downey, who McClelland said was most instrumental in getting the project completed, is to your right. "In fact," Bob said, "she was our ramrod. She was terrific."



People started to gather at the main entrance to the carousel after the dedication

ceremonies. Workers were getting ready to open the sides of the structure so the grand

rides could start.



'Pride' played the biggest part —

CAROUSEL RESTORATION WAS FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE

When Philadelphia Toboggan Co. Machine No. 6 was dedicated at special ceremonies Thursday, Aug. 6, master of ceremonies and Kit Carson County Carousel Association chairman Bob McClelland placed emphasis on the word "pride" when he addressed the throng assembled at Carousel Park.

First, there was the pride shown by a group of people back in 1928, he began, "who wanted a merry-go-round for the kids."

Again, pride entered into it in 1976 when concerned citizens sought to restore their precious carousel and the first work got underway with Art Reblitz of Colorado Springs handling the restoration of the old band organ and John Pogzeba and Will Morton VIII, the 45 oil paintings.

Again, it was a thing of pride from our elected officials — state, local and national — who helped with the program, McClelland continued.

"I have a certain amount of pride in this program," he furthered, "to see the accomplishments of this committee."

But it was the people of Kit Carson County who were 'the backbone of this whole thing', he stressed.

"You made this whole thing possible; it would not have come about without you," he told the crowd, "you, and that old 'nitty gritty' work!"

Project director Jo Downey told of the five-year plan and what went into the restoration of the carousel: the siding, park, concrete, landscaping and actual restoration of the machine itself, including the organ, paintings and animals.

She reminded the crowd of the 1976 fair, when the completely restored Wurlitzer Monster Military Band Organ played for the first time in decades; that it was only one of two in existence and the only one owned publically.

She told of the work, the hours, the money, the planning and the dreams that brought about the restoration, including the "unbelievable strong support" of countless county people, and many, many others.

But, there is still much left to do, she stressed... "you cannot have an art treasure such as this and call it complete."

And so many have helped, including previous carousel committee members Ruth Shulda and Ida Gwynn of Flagler, Marie Greenwood of Stratton, and Norma Pankratz, formerly of Burlington, who was one of the driving forces behind the success of the restoration.

John Hayek, president of the National Carousel Association, honored the people of Kit Carson County with a plaque as a token of "our love, our support and our thanks".

"I'm going to be going home and saying, "If you haven't seen Kit Carson County, you haven't seen carousels!", he began, adding that carousels were not originally made just for children...you just have to look in Kit Carson County to see that.

"Something wonderful did happen here in Burlington," he continued. "They have succeeded with the love shown by you people in Kit Carson County. Because of your work, an old jewel now glitters in your midst."

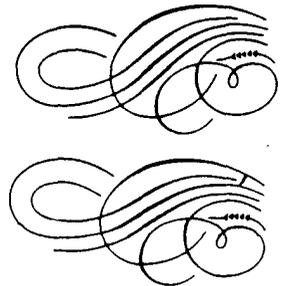
But perhaps the most eloquent words last Thursday were spoken by the man who had labored so long on the actual work of restoring the carousel's beauty, contemporary sculptor and art conservator Will Morton:

"Fifty-three years ago three county commissioners purchased for the people of Kit Carson County the carousel we've come to dedicate today. As we know, that isn't the beginning of the story.

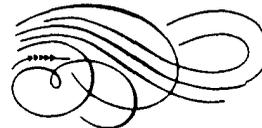
"For 23 years the carousel had been delighting the hearts of young and old in Denver. Much of its history was written at that time, which is recorded in the worn cantles, chipped paint, scars and dents over the hides of the animals and the several missing ears and horns.



Left to right are Mildred Rolow, granddaughter of former commissioner I.D. Messenger, Mrs. Hazel Dutton, daughter of Messenger, and granddaughter Jean Schlichenmayer, and Mary Jo Downey, member of the Kit Carson County Carousel Association. Mary Jo presented all three with plaques in honor of I.D. Messenger, county commissioner in 1928.



Nola Hoppe as she accepted certificate from Mary Jo Downey in memory of her grandfather, C.J. Buchanan, county commissioner in 1928. The daughter of commissioner C.W. Huntly, Mrs. Art Robb of Flagler was unable to attend the ceremonies and her plaque was accepted by Ted Wickham.



"History was being written when in 1920 or so a maintenance worker at Elitch's freshened up the worn trappings with a coat of new paint and another coat of varnish. Recently we've had the uncommon pleasure of pushing back the veil of time. The last coat of paint, which hid, but also protected the remnants of the elaborate decorative painting, was removed to bring the past into the present. The history of P.T.C. No. 6 was continuing to be written.

"Of course, this is only one small part of the recent history. Most of you are familiar with the story of the restoration and the people who have worked so hard and given so much to bring it all about. You are those people.

"Again, the people of Kit Carson County have been writing the history... and no people anywhere could have done it better.

"But a carousel is more than just a machine, more than just a history... it has been called magical by a friend of mine. I think of it as a spiritual dimension — more than just experience, more than just memories, though these are all part of it.

"This is what we dedicate today. We dedicate to future generations the carousel, the history and the other dimensions.

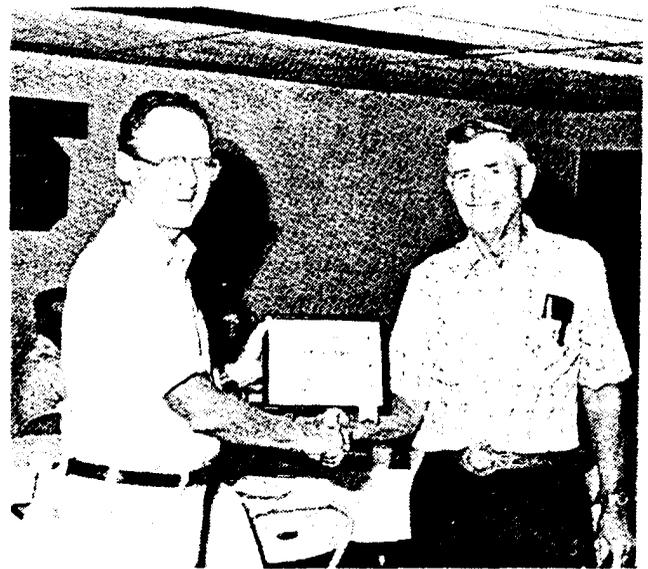
"Today is a wonderful day for us, but this day belongs to Kit Carson County's future generations and their friends and guests who will continue to enjoy the carousel. We are just a part of the continuing history..." "...pleased to be a part, but pleased to pass it along."

Morton was honored with the presentation of a plaque by commissioner Ted Wickham, as were Reblitz — by McClelland — and the direct descendants of the three county commissioners who originally bought the merry-go-round. Downey presented plaques in memory of each of the three men for "making a decision all of us will cherish forever."

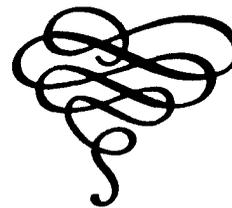
Judi Buol, carousel committee member, accepted on behalf of the hippocampus, a grand champion ribbon for being voted most popular animal on the carousel; members Kathy Blakeslee and Joyce Miller accepted for the armored horse and giraffe, second and third place choices, respectively.

And McClelland, who served so well as emcee of the dedication of the completion of the restoration of Philadelphia Toboggan Co. Carousel No. 6, summed everything up afterward with these final words:

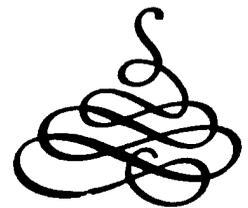
"The greatest thing, to me, was the number of people who were there. That said more than any of the rest of us!"



Don Clamp as he was presented with certificate of appreciation from Bob McClelland. Clamp has taken all of the colored slides and photographs of the carousel for the association. McClelland said, "He never hesitated to help us."



Ray Crouse with his certificate of appreciation from McClelland. Ray designed the cover and dividers of the Carousel Cookbooks as well as doing considerable research on it.





A large crowd waiting patient to take a ride on the carousel. Standing behind the gate is Virgil Stone, who has worked the carousel

longer than anyone else in the county, according to Bob McClelland, who added, "Virgil

treated the treasured merry-go-round well over the years."

THE CAROUSEL

The Kit Carson Carousel is a 3-abreast, stationary (no jumping horses), menagerie machine. It was manufactured by the Philadelphia Toboggan Co. in 1905. It is Machine No. 6, the first machine made in the second year of the company's organization. (Philadelphia Toboggan Co. is the only one of the many major wooden carousel manufacturers that is still in existence, although they have not made a carousel since the early '40s.)



Taking a ride on that beautiful piece of art the Philadelphia Toboggan Co. Carousel No. 6 at the county fairgrounds

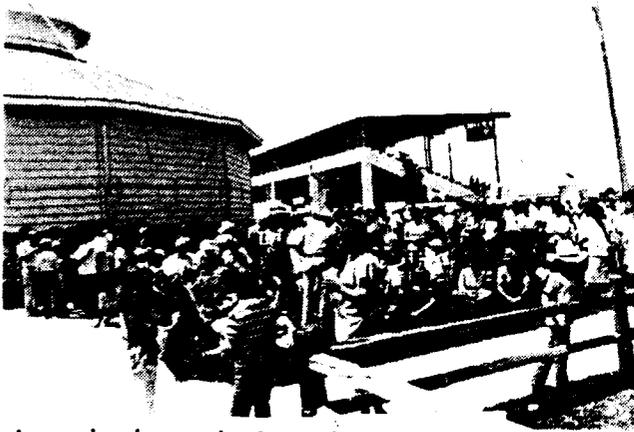
In Burlington last Thursday. The restoration took approximately five years, and is a source of pride for the entire area.

There are 46 hand-carved wooden animals which include a lion, tiger, dog, donkeys, camels, goats, deer, giraffes, a hippocampus, and, of course, many horses. Also included on the 45-foot diameter platform are four chariots, two of which have elaborately carved sides — the others are simply painted to look as though they are carved. Seat backs on the chariots carry painted landscapes. The drive machinery and center of the carousel is enclosed by 45 oil paintings ranging from approximately 2½x3½ feet to 3½x7 feet and depicting a variety of subjects that were popular themes in 1905, quite romantic and well executed. The outer rim is a series of stacked moldings over a lacey pattern of painted, cutout scroll work.

Accompanying the carousel is a 1909 Model 155 Wurlitzer Monster Military Band Organ; very large, very loud, and wonderful to hear.

THE BUILDING

The building which houses the carousel is a 12-sided structure of handsome proportions, that was built in 1928 when the machine was erected on its present site. Some of the materials used in the building were salvaged from early poultry sheds on the fairgrounds. With the 12 large doors lifted, the building becomes completely open, creating a delightful effect with the colorful, whirling carousel inside. In 1976, the building was upgraded with steel siding, a burglar alarm system and landscaping.



A crowd gathers at the Carousel in anticipation of its dedication and the rides that were to follow.



Photos by:
John
Hayek

With the dedication ceremony completed, the side panels are opened, and we were all on our way inside for the first ride!

Editorial Commentary . . .

A TRIBUTE

Although the excitement centering around an important event held in Burlington, Colorado, of August 6, 1981, has diminished with the passing of time, the reason for this celebration has not and folks in Kit Carson County have reason to be proud.

Recent decades, unfortunately have been marked with trouble when it comes to preservation of our historic, artistic and architectural treasures with the rise of the "if-it's-old, get-rid-of-it" mentality, as a result of it much of our links with our past — some carousels included — have been plucked from the face of the earth. Your Editor remembers a time not so many years ago when a splendid movie palace in his hometown, the Toledo Paramount, was being demolished unfortunately at a time when too few tears were being shed. It was being removed, we were told, to make room for a parking lot to serve the patrons of some nearby retail stores, which in recent years have also been disappearing as a result of a changing urban scene.

Last August, Gail Hall, Joy Smith and I made our ways across the Colorado prairie to join local N.C.A. members and the folks of Kit Carson County to celebrate a dedication that culminated the completion of a truly worthy project — the restoration of a carousel, P.T.C. #6. Despite all of the encouragement this delegation received to attend by virtue of advance "rave" reports about this machine, little were any of us prepared to find the exquisite jewel that did await us at the Fairgrounds in Burlington. A combination of the spectacular "skylscapes" to entertain us along the way, the real treat of this unique merry-go-round in a picture-book setting, and a community filled with so much love and pride for "Ole #6" provided us with an experience surely none of us will ever forget. In spite of the euphoria of the day, I could not help but notice how the tone of the day was somewhat muted by some sadness over the theft of four of the carousel figures by intruders some weeks earlier. The loss was noted by the placement of yellow ribbons marking the spaces left by three little ponies and a donkey which were "being held hostage", so to speak, as the result of an act of greed. Considering the responsibility this places on a community, to maintain a treasure such as this, it is a wonder that somewhere back in time that county officials did not opt to rid themselves of the carousel.

There is an encouraging lesson for the rest of us to learn about the Kit Carson County Carousel and the project that lead to its preservation. Whatever pessimism ever starts to take hold when a community considers saving a favorite "backyard" merry-go-round, all they need to do is look to the folks in Eastern Colorado where the total population of the county of barely 7,000 was able to raise all of the needed funds. If they are fortunate, they will find a Mary Jo Downey, a Ted Wickhams and a Bob McClelland in their midst to lead the way.

As Dedication Day rolled along, our little delegation from the Midwest found itself really caught up in the day by the captivating sights and sounds of the setting. Rumor has it that Will Morton's wife, Marlene, was "taking book" that your Editor would either have to be dragged away at day's end "kicking and screaming" into the Morton's van for the return ride westward, or that he face a very long walk back to Denver!

In recent weeks it would appear that Divine Intervention fashioned a miracle as the four missing animals were not only located but returned home to a cheering crowd. The yellow ribbons are gone now, and folks in that Eastern Colorado community are now resting more easily.

If any of you readers just happen to be in the Denver area next summer, is it really worth the drive to Burlington? I think the commentary above puts that question to rest. However, if the decision is made to drive to Burlington, it is advisable to call ahead as the carousel is operated on a limited schedule including fair week. If you can, make it during fair week and you are in for really a treat!

With that, we of the *Merry-Go-Roundup* salute you, the good people of Kit Carson County for your preservation accomplishments, and we also salute your carousel, "Ole P.T.C. #6".

SO THE HORSES MAY RUN AGAIN AT LIGHTHOUSE POINT

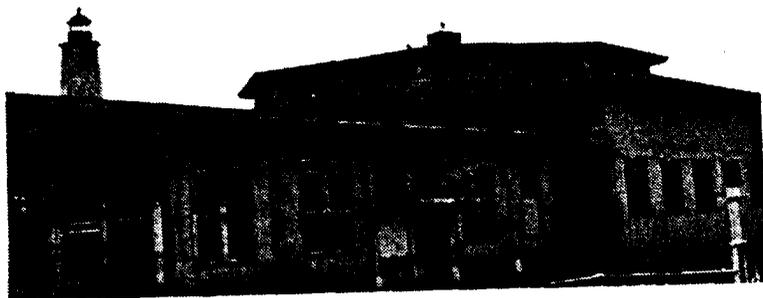
Source Material: Sally Woundy Fecteau (Wallingford, CT)

There is a nice old Murphy/Carmel carousel in the boarded up "roundhouse" on the beach at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven, Connecticut, and N.C.A. members Patty Phelan and Sally Fecteau would give their eyeteeth to see it run again. Not only would they like to see it run again, but they are doing something about it.

Patty had an article appear in the New Haven papers. As a direct result of this Mayor DiLieto promptly appointed a 30-member Save the Carousel Committee to start action to renovate the city-owned landmark. During the summer of 1980, the Friends of the Lighthouse Park Carousel, Inc., a non-profit organization was born to raise the needed funds. When Sally Fecteau, five-months pregnant at the time, was approached to participate, she had to say "Yes" after seeing 12 fruitless years go by, as now something was to be done.

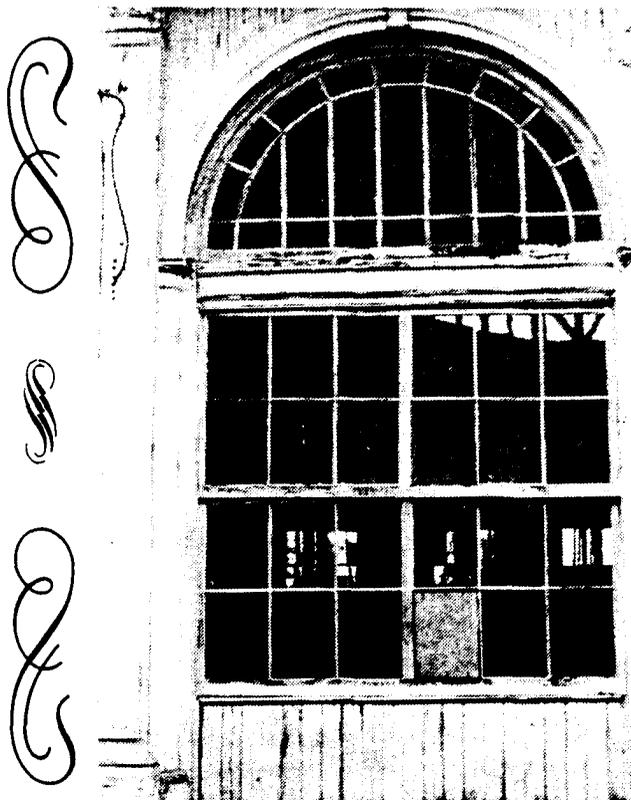
Even the date of the arrival of the merry-go-round at Lighthouse Point Park is uncertain as Savin Rock and White City received all of the amusement park publicity in the old days. During those times, a day at Lighthouse Point was sort of like a day at the beach at Coney Island for many of the local residents who over 30 years ago made the trip there by trolley. To them it was kind of nice to spend the day within earshot of the music of the band organ as the historic merry-go-round whirled to the delight of its riders — a contrast to a now lifeless and eerie place.

Back in 1978, when thieves took 13 horses (since recovered) from the carousel over in Bridgeport, Connecticut, the city whisked all of Lighthouse Park's figures, as well as the develled mirrors (not already stolen) to a safe hiding place and shuttered the building. What the Friends of Lighthouse Park Carousel "inherited" was not only a carousel in need of restoration, but the old "roundhouse" with its huge annex (70 feet by 70 feet!) in which many of the 2,100 panes of glass were not missing, were cracked letting in the feathered fowl of the sea, and vandals necessitating a boarding up exercise and two major cleanups of the "foul" mess around the temporarily-stripped carousel frame. As for the rest of the condition of the pavilion — its roof leaks and the exterior paint is peeling which will require a scraping job before any new coat can be applied.

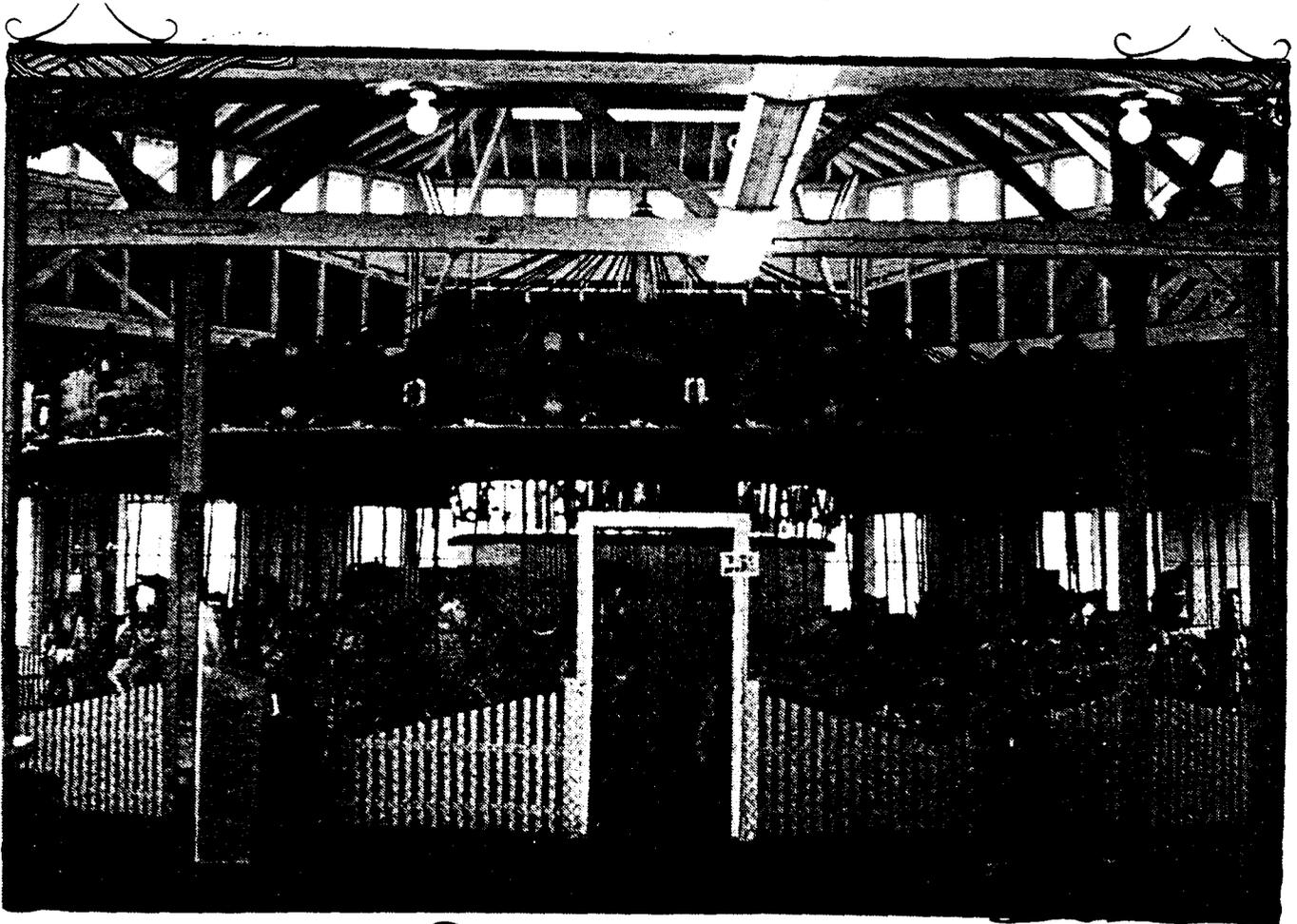


Exterior view of the Roundhouse.
Photo: Courtesy of Sally Fecteau

Historically speaking, little is known about the Murphy/Carmel machines. It was assembled by entrepreneur Timothy Murphy who used 69 horses carved by Charles Carmel. However, the source of the carousel's lone camel remains a mystery. Members of the "Friends" group suspect that the carousel's frame may have been purchased from the Artistic Caroussel Manufacturers of Coney Island sometime between 1912 and 1914. The city purchased the ride from Mr. Murphy in 1928 for \$8,500, and shortly thereafter a Mr. Irving Sharpe repainted the figures and chariots, leaving the scenery and outer rim in their original condition. More information is needed on the arched lighting, the tin rosettes on the sweeps and the Grecian bass relief of tin on the inside of the outer rim.



Broken windows everywhere!
Photo: Courtesy of Sally Fecteau



The Lighthouse Point Park Carousel.
Photo taken in 1974 by John Hayek.

Ballpark estimates put the needed funding at about \$300,000 to put both the machine and its building in tip-top shape. With this knowledge, the "Friends" organization proceeded with their fund-raisers, the first being the sale of T-shirts with the lead horse "Beacon" chosen as their logo. Then came the slide presentations, which continue at local schools, and a naming contest for all of the 69 steeds.

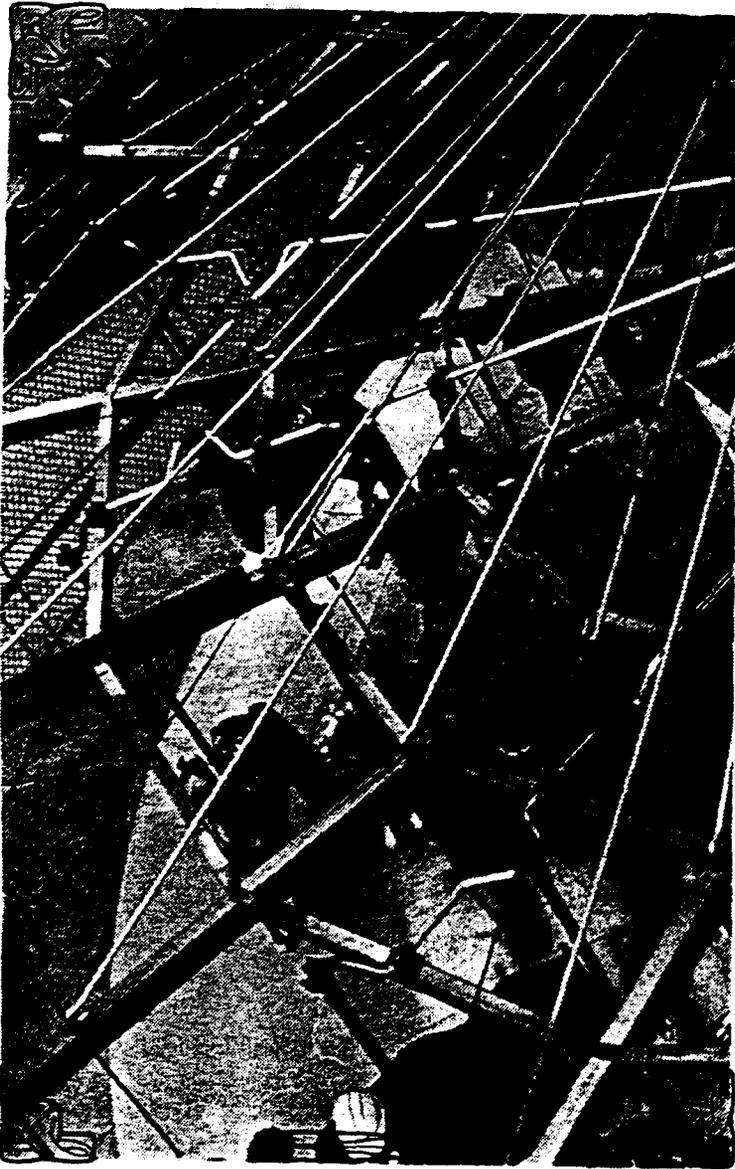
May 9, 1981, was officially proclaimed "Carousel Day" by Mayor DiLieto during which a craft show and sale was held at the carousel featuring a horse-carrying demonstration, tours of the ride, band organs, a raffle, art, mimes, and even a baby parade. Among the pluses of the day was a generous donation from a local glass company to replace all of the broken windows. The event mustered a profit of over \$2,000.

As work continues with the serious business of raising more money, estimates are being made on all the work to be done, and even negotiations are underway to find tenants for the annex.

Any assistance, including photographs relating to the history of the carousel, is most welcome. Donations or information can be sent to Sally Fecteau, 338 Ivy St., Wallingford, CT 06492. end.



Photo: Courtesy of Sally Fecteau



View from overhead as assembly work goes on. © Ann Hinds

A Report From Portland:
CAROL'S CAROUSEL

By Ann Hinds © 1981

Carol's Carousel is a 42-foot Mangels/Ilions portable that has operated to large and enthusiastic crowds at Portland's Washington Park for the past four summers.

This fall, it seemed like a good idea to install the carousel at the Willamette Center, in downtown Portland. This would help with the expense of the restoration work on the Loeff machine, and of interest on P.T.C. #15. It would give a preview of the Loeff operation in that location. And it would be better than having Carol's Carousel sit in storage for another winter.

The week preceding the opening was frantic. Only seven days before the November 13th opening, the centerpole was put into place. Earlier, other components of the machine had been moved into nearby vacant space for refurbishing. The canopy wouldn't fit beneath the skybridge above the open space, so the top of the carousel would be visible, especially from above, where offices, a restaurant, and the skybridge all looked down on the site.

We put gold paint (only a little less expensive than real gold) on the sweep rods, the cranks, and the drop poles. Bright new blue paint covered the sweeps and the centerpole assembly — except for the drive mechanism, which was painted vivid red.

The horses' trappings showed the wear of four summers of hard use, so Carol Perron retouched and brightened them. Workers greased everything that moved, screwed a thousand light bulbs into sockets, and used fine steel wool to give the brass poles a gleam like worn gold. Mark Reed, who had built the band organ, moved it in to place and set the volume precisely to attract riders without disturbing nearby workers. He put on a new Wurlitzer roll, with foot-tapping polkas.

Incredibly, the machine was ready to operate on Friday evening, November 13th. Everyone we knew had been invited and publicity let the rest of the city know we were open for business. Despite warnings of a severe wind and rainstorm scheduled for later that night, volunteers showed up, many in clown costumes, as it has become a fun custom.

It was a wonderful evening, with every horse full of boosters and townspeople, riding and enjoying the color of the clowns, the balloons, and the horses. Some had to be urged to ride, to be told no, they weren't too old. But most needed no second invitation.

We had all kinds of riders. One resident of the local skid row area was attracted by the color and music. He rode, confiding that he'd never ridden a carousel before. His look of bliss was payment for our efforts. As he leaned outward with the spinning motion, feeling the wind in his face, it occurred to us that he could have been the model for a recent painting by a local artist, showing a sourdough who had left his horses to wait alongside while he rode on Carol's Carousel. He had that same lanky look, that same expression of being off in a world of fantasy. pg. 22

CAROL'S CAROUSEL (Cont.) from pg. 21

Helping to install one of the machine's Carmels are wood-carver Terry Causgrove and Tom Burnett, who is called upon to do the major restoration of warped, damaged or ill-fitting parts of the animals for the Looft carousel owned by the Perrons. © Ann Hinds

One of the carousel's staunchest supporters, Ed Chadwick, had given us the use of warehouse space for the first setting-up of Carol's Carousel (after the Perrons moved it out from Pennsylvania) and for the necessary restoration and mechanical work. He came, as he always does, to the opening, to ride and enjoy. But this time he had trouble believing this was the same carousel.

An enthusiastic guest at the opening was Norm Lilly, who represents Portland General Electric Company in the company's assistance with the carousel project: use of their facilities for the restoration, and the carousel location at their headquarters, the Willamette Center.

The Willamette Center's urban setting gives the machine a whole different feel. The area is surrounded with huge glass surfaces that reflect back the color and the lights, magnifying the giddy effect of the ride. Wherever you look, the fantasy is repeated, circling magically, almost infinitely.

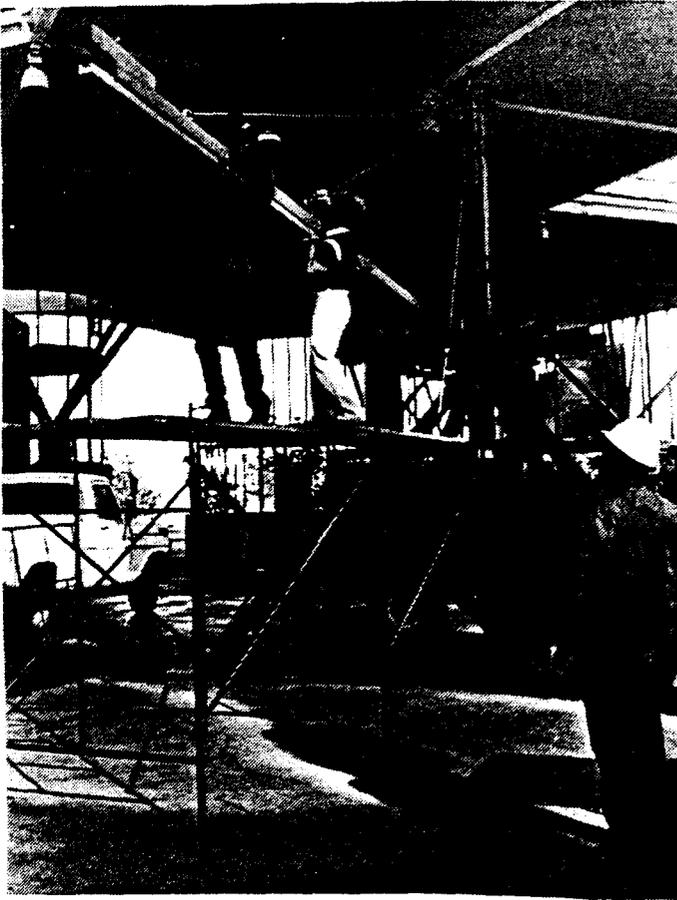
Another visitor to the opening was one of the mounted policemen assigned to patrol the area. His horse stood as still as a carved carousel figure until a bursting balloon startled him. He danced, almost in step to the music, but obviously very upset by what he must have thought was gunfire.

The many pipes of the skybridge and the straight lines of the buildings give the rider on the carousel the feeling of being in the midst of a maelstrom of jackstraws.



The carousel begins to look more complete, as work on the drive mechanism goes on. © Ann Hinds

(Cont.) from pg. 22



Duanne Perron supervises as sons Carl and Brad attach stay rods to first sweep. © Ann Hinds



Mike Wrenn enjoys a ride to a fast polka on the band organ as he buffs a brass pole with steel wool. © Ann Hinds

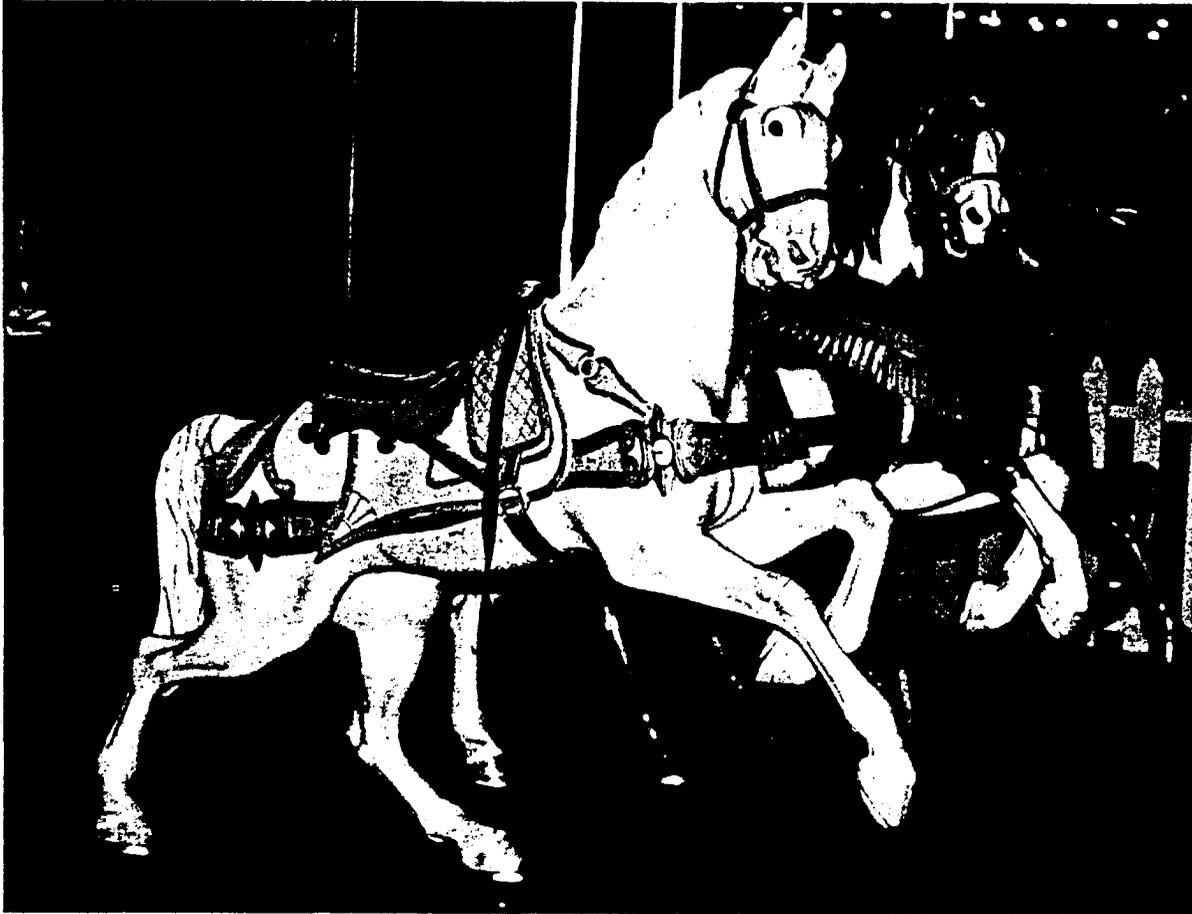


Restorers Kathlene Evans and Shelley Pedersen enjoy the clown party that celebrates the opening of Carol's Carousel at Willamette Center. © Ann Hinds

From the third floor balcony of the Center, you can look almost straight down on the activity, seeing a carousel from an entirely different perspective. The music drifts up gently, lights twinkle, voices are muted, and colors blend into a huge circular crazyquilt.

It's a dream world, a wonderful bonus for those of us who work on and care about the project here. We've almost gotten used to it, and sometimes forget what a unique opportunity we have, to be so involved with one operating carousel, and with the restoration of another. Then something happens like the Friday the 13th opening, and we are amazed and glad all over again for the chance to participate. We hope we can share some of this feeling with you when you come to the NCA Conference, September 17, 18 and 19 here in Portland, to take part in an even bigger, more gala opening, that of the restored Loeff carousel in that same setting. end.





Elegant prancers on the Children's Museum very unique carousel.

Photo courtesy of Gail Hall

THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM'S CAROUSEL

by
Dwight Crandell
Director of Collections

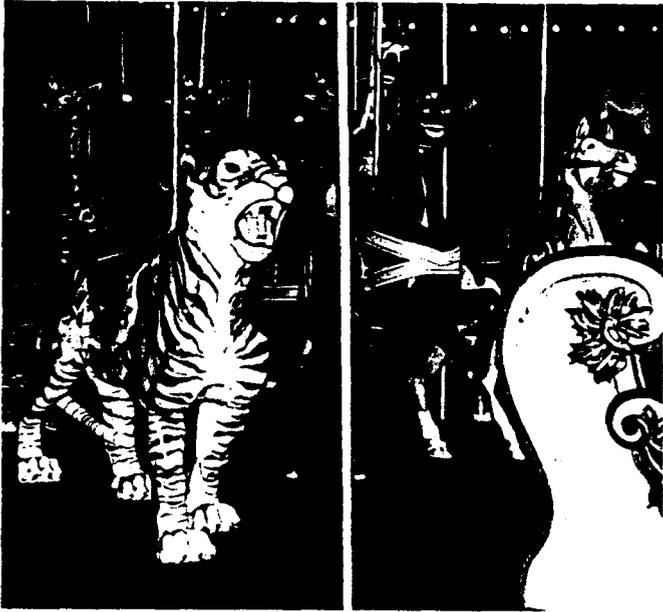
The carousel at The Children's Museum is very closely associated with a carousel which was located in Broad Ripple Park in northern Indianapolis from 1917 to 1956. Forty-one of the 42 animals on The Children's Museum carousel came from the Broad Ripple carousel. The mechanism, scenery and band organ were assembled from other sources.

At Broad Ripple Park . . .

The carousel in Broad Ripple Park was brought there by William Hubbs in 1917 to be a part of an amusement park known as White City. The amusement park was owned by the Union Traction Company. In 1922 the park was purchased by the Broad Ripple Amusement Company and the name of the park officially became Broad Ripple Park. A giant roller coaster, baseball diamonds, a football field, cinder track and bath houses were some of the other

features at that time. The carousel was housed in a large enclosed building with many windows and was located by the pool. In 1927 the park was sold to Oscar and Joseph Baur who removed many of the old rides and added new attractions such as the Temple of Mystery, Huffman's Auto Speedway and Dodge 'em Cars. The ownership changed in 1938 to William McCurry who prompted the next significant event in the carousel's history by moving it to the children's playground area and housing it in a domed pavilion without walls or windows. By the time McCurry sold the park to the city of Indianapolis in 1954 the amusement rides had all but disappeared and by 1956 deterioration was such that the domed pavilion collapsed on the carousel, destroying the sweeps and mechanism. The machinery was junked and the city stored the animals in one of its warehouses.

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Great pains were taken to paint the tiger as life-like as possible. The effort was well worth it as the animal's beauty is fully enhanced.

Photo courtesy of Gail Hall.

At The Children's Museum . . .

In the 1960s The Children's Museum acquired two of the Broad Ripple carousel horses for display in its building at 30th and Meridan Streets. Later on, learning of the deteriorating condition of the remainder of the animals, the museum acquired all of them with the exception of three reindeer and put them in storage. Many of the animals had lost legs, ears, heads and some of the bodies had become delaminated.

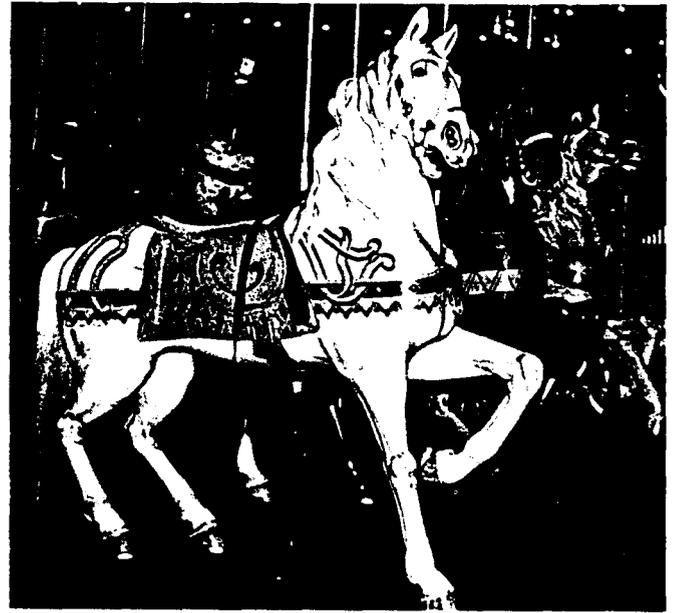
When the museum made the decision to expand into a major new building it was felt that two or three animals would be displayed and the rest would be sold. With that in mind, Mildred Compton, museum executive director, went to the first National Carousel Roundtable at Sandwich, Mass., in the fall of 1973 hoping to find buyers. Instead, she returned to Indianapolis convinced by Marianne Stevens and Dr. and Mrs. Rol Summit that a project to restore the carousel to operation was feasible.

So the museum embarked on the restoration with little knowledge about the original carousel and, for that matter, little knowledge of carousels in general. The new museum building had already begun without plans considering a carousel operation. It was determined the only place to put it was the fifth level, where support columns could be economically eliminated and allow for a 42-foot-diameter carousel.

The Identification Process . . .

Every carousel authority who was consulted identified all of the animals as being Dentzel, but the Broad Ripple carousel operator said it was a Mangels-Illions, because the carousel was purchased from Mangels. This kind of discrepancy between fact and tradition apparently is very common with carousels.

The discrepancy was resolved by Gray Tuttle when he identified scenery and mirrors, characteristic of a Mangels carousel in some old photographs of the Broad Ripple



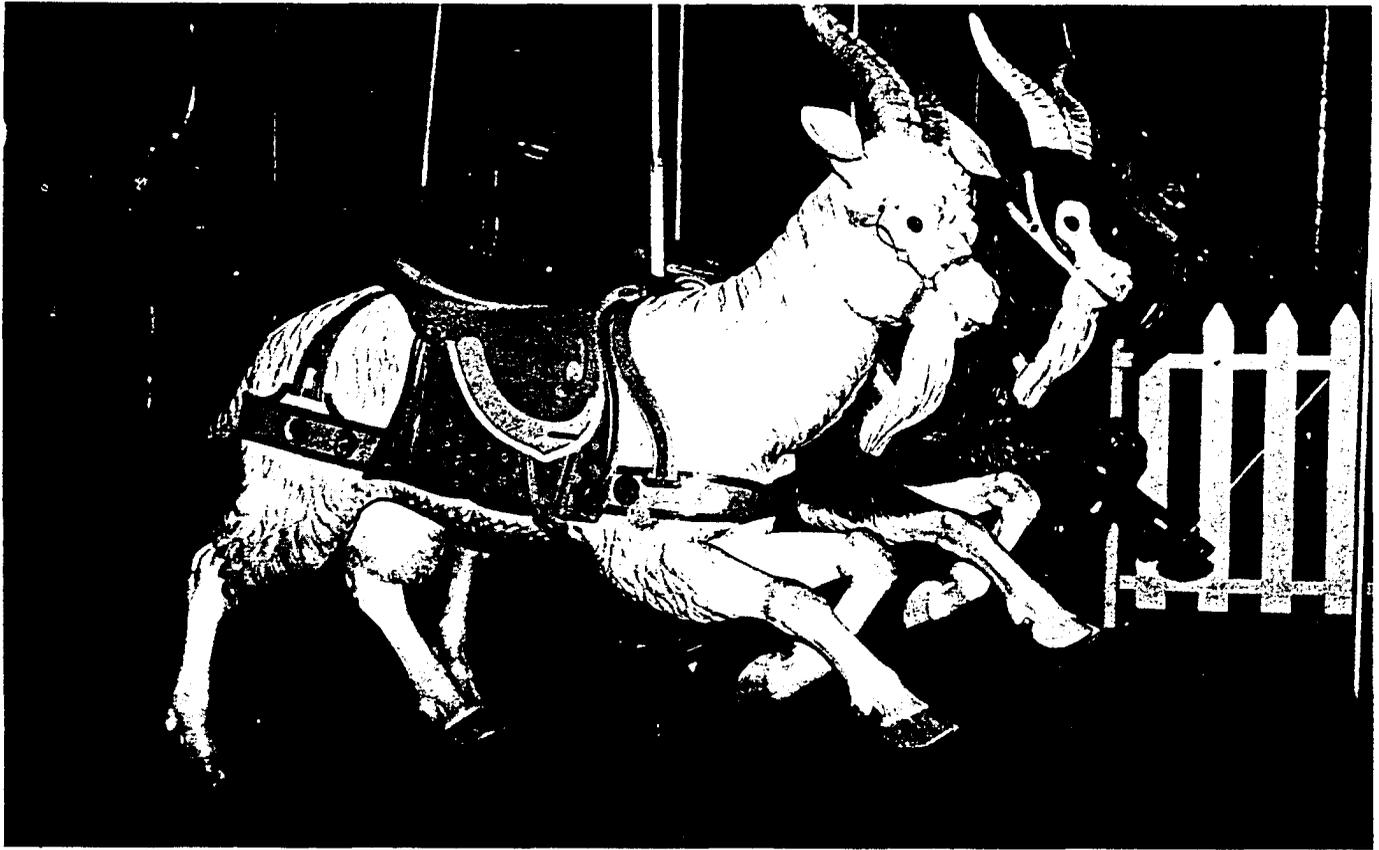
A rare, long, flowing white tail graces this deserving beauty.
Photo courtesy of Gail Hall.

carousel. The photos also showed the Dentzel animals. The number of jumping animals (18) coincided with the usual arrangement on a Mangels-Illions carousel. So the evidence indicated that probably Mangels-Illions earlier had obtained an older Dentzel carousel — probably pre-1900 — and had taken the animals from it and put them on one of their newer mechanisms, moving the whole thing to Indianapolis in 1917. However, when this information was determined, the museum had already received a deserted Mangels-Illions 40-foot mechanism from Gray Tuttle to use in the restricted 5th level space. The carousel mechanism was delivered in November 1975 and the mechanism was erected. Then the staff finished the work and restoration. A whole new platform was constructed with indoor-outdoor carpeting.

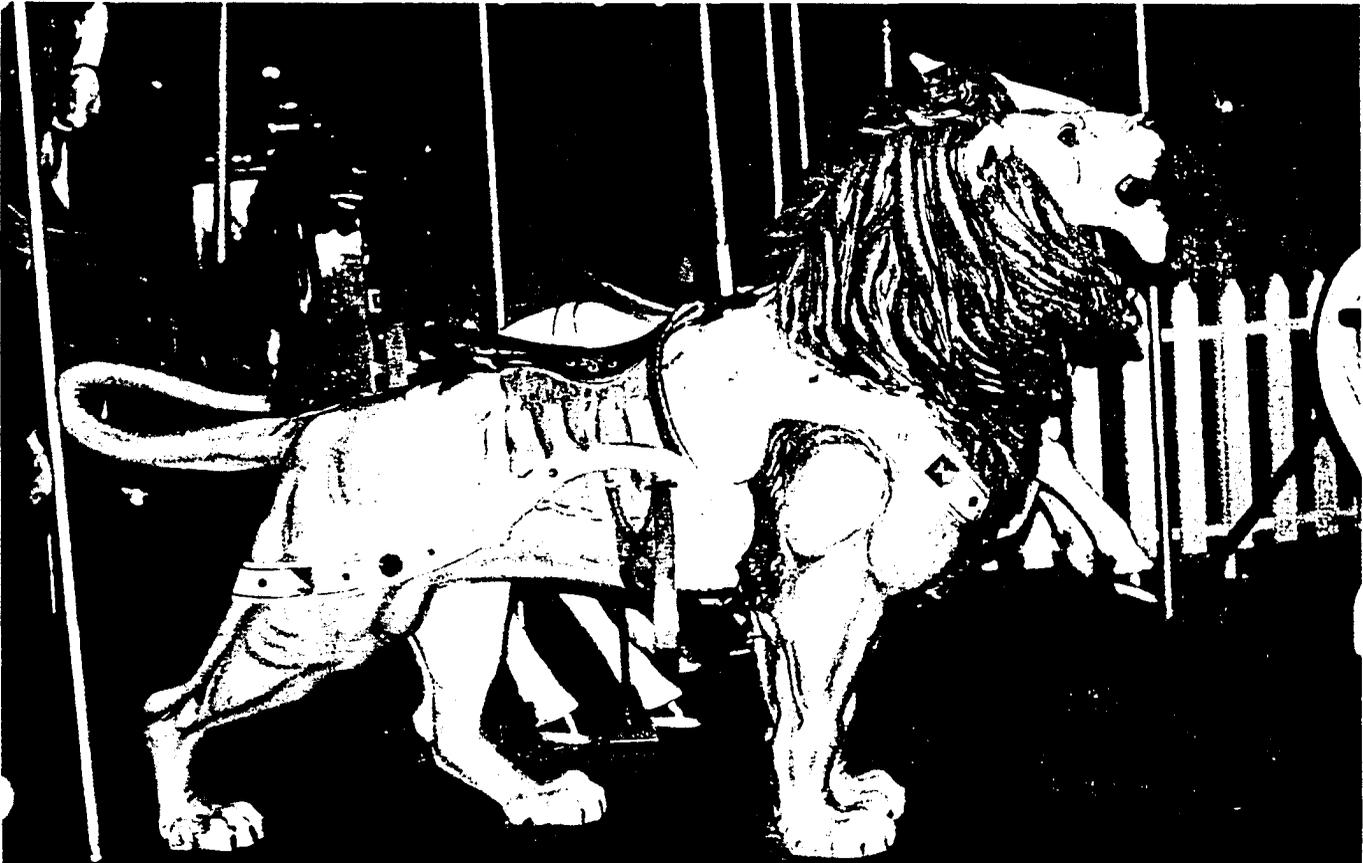
The Assembly . . .

The outside scenery panels were based on other carousel scenes and came from Gray Tuttle with scenes painted by a Pennsylvania artist. The outside mirror frames and the decorative carving above the painted scenes were replicated by Allen and Rita Orre of Phillipsburg, Ohio and International Amusement Devices Co., Dayton, Ohio. The replica frames and carvings arrived at the museum unpainted and a committee accomplished their colorful painting. The mirrors were brought from a local glass company. The interior scenery first used in the carousel in 1976 and 1977 were Dentzel panels because there was not enough time to create authentic looking Mangels-Illions panels in time for the new building's opening. Tuttle was able to find some original Mangels-Illions scenery panels, but their condition did not allow for good restoration. The museum shops fabricated new scenery panels, the Guild painted them and they were installed in early 1978, which completed the look of the original Broad Ripple Park carousel.

continued



A trio of spunky, smiling goats. The outside row goat is slyly sticking his tongue out.
Photo courtesy of Gail Hall.



Tendons, muscles and veins are all distended on the lion. A lovely maiden looks up adoringly at her master.
Photo courtesy of Gail Hall.



Once a stander, this horse was one of several that were converted into jumpers.
Photo courtesy of Gail Hall



A beast of questionable species acts as a saddle blanket on this converted stander.
Photo courtesy of Gail Hall

The animals, however, required even more work. They were restored by Bill and Caroline Von Stein of Cincinnati, Ohio. The Von Steins had been active in museum conservation work but had never restored a carousel animal. They were given freedom to use their artistic judgment in choosing colors and in painting decoration. The museum's only stipulation was for the animals not to have a high-gloss finish and to have a naturalistic look. They visited several horse farms and a zoo in order to be accurate in their portrayal of animal color and combinations. All the work was done in their Cincinnati studio, with the museum transporting animals back and forth. The jewels in the outside row animals – though not original to the Dentzel animals when first made – were put back in as the animals were decorated that way in Broad Ripple Park. Work on the animals was so extensive that it was not until the fall of 1977 that the last of the restored animals was put on the carousel.

The band organ for the carousel was found in San Francisco and brought to Indiana. Apparently it was originally sold to an amusement park in California in 1919. The organ is a model 146B by Wurlitzer and is called the "Special Carousel Organ." It was restored by Carval Stotts of Plainfield, Indiana, a long-time band organ and carousel enthusiast. He practically rebuilt the interior of the organ and it has operated without major problems since 1976.

Continued Refurbishing . . .

Since beginning daily operation, several other changes have been made to make the carousel more durable and reliable. The mechanism belt drive was exchanged for a fluid drive through the services of Kissell Brothers Amusement Rides of Cincinnati, Ohio. They also advised strengthening the platform. The animals are scheduled for refurbishment one at a time, with each animal removed, its scars repaired in the museum's conservation lab, and then returned to the carousel with another being removed. The jumpers get most of the wear and demand more attention.

To improve the life of the cranks, a 150 lb. limit for jumper riders is encouraged. Mechanism maintenance is done on a daily basis.

To improve the "flavor" of the carousel and to provide good crowd control, a pavilion and ticket booth were built. Their design is not a copy of any particular pavilion, but a modification which incorporates features of several pavilions. A future task will be refurbishing the gears and bearings, since the annual riders number approximately 200,000. Part of our plans for this work has been developed with the advice and assistance of Ed Winger of Chance Manufacturing Wichita, Kansas who has always been willing to provide assistance for our maintenance problems. The animals on the carousel are the following: one lion, one tiger, three goats, three giraffes, and three reindeer, and 31 horses of different sizes. All but one of these animals were from the Broad Ripple carousel. A Dentzel horse was obtained from Stu and Tina Gottdenkers, New York City, to complete the needed number of 42 animals.

END

