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Who knows - maybe sometimes they may have just been trying to use up left-over paint! Remember - you, too, can paint over.

Practical ideas to keep in mind when choosing colors: Most prefer a good grade of enamel - in the good old days pigments had to be mixed into a special medium to produce paint. Today's painters use ready-mixed paint. In today's market, painting directly from the can rather than mixing your own is often the answer for the machine that must be touched up frequently. Horses that were painted light colors should be kept a light color and horses that were painted dark colors should be kept dark. This is so that when scratches through the new coat of paint occur, touch up will be less noticeable.

The body colors should be painted first, completely, up to the edges of the saddle and trappings. You may want to shade with an air brush or an aerosol can with a slightly darker color around the saddle, under the neck and chin, under the legs and belly. Let the body color dry thoroughly. Be sure the aerosol paint is compatible with the other paint. In my opinion, the saddle and trapping colors should be applied with brushes. Due to hard use, brushed-on paint is more durable than sprayed paint. After the animals are painted, you may want to put on a clear coat of varnish or polyurethane over the completed animal. Do not get this in the eyes as it will frost them over. White animals should not be coated as they will always yellow with age. White animals always need touching up and it is much easier without an outer clear coat.

If it is necessary to touch up the old paint to preserve the animals as well as improve their appearance instead of stripping them down completely, some measures can be done. If temporary repainting on the animals has to be done, be sure that a surface preparation is used to clean off all the grease and dirt so that the paint will stick and dry. If mildew is a problem, Chlorox bleach sprayed with a hand pumped sprayer and scrubbed with a paint brush will clear up this problem. Be sure to wash all the bleach off with water and let it dry thoroughly. After the animals are dry, apply a surface preparation. Let it dry and paint, if desired. The best rule of thumb is to use common sense. You need to experiment to determine what is best in your case. Try to imagine how the animals were originally painted. Always try to paint animals with believable colors with colorful saddles and trappings. If a project is started, try to determine the time it takes to complete each animal so you can estimate the time it will take to complete the entire machine.

Repaint or touch up the outside row first, then the second row and so on until the machine is completed. By following this arrangement, if time runs out, the machine will not look so bad with some painted or touched up and some not.

If you have special problems like rotten wood, chemical imbalances due to prior stripping, damaged jewels and the like, we have NCA members who can be of help. Contact us for further assistance.

Hopefully, the inside and outside scenery rim has not been repainted. If this is the case, a good cleaning will help to restore the original luster. Restoration may be necessary to the oil paintings. A consultant may need to be brought in. Sometimes, the proper cleaning will make old paint look like new at a fraction of the cost of repainting. When restoration of the original paint is done, the machine's value, historically, is greatedened. There are few carousels in the country with any original paint on the scenery or animals.

For further information contact the National Carousel Association, Conservation Chairman, Charles Walker, 132 Tenth St., Atlanta, Ga. 30309. (404) 892-0065.