

PHOTO CENSUS

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Two Dentzel ostriches look whimsical as they pose for picture taking.

"The Duchess" of Charlotte

Story by Lorrie Harris
Photos by Glenn Harris

A "Duchess" lives near here. She resides on the south shore of Lake Ontario. The Genessee River's mouth yawns to her east and the historic town of Charlotte (pronounced Sha-lot), a suburb of Rochester, New York, is to her south.

"The Duchess" is a Dentzel three row menagerie carousel with a step-up platform. The factory plate states that it was built in 1905, but historians say that a carousel sat there in 1886, that was sent back to the factory for repairs around 1905. (The animals are from the 1905 time frame.) Those of us who love the carousel call it "The Duchess."

The chance to write about this carousel means a lot to me because, as a child, I rode it by the hour. Tickets were 10¢ each and the man who owned the carousel, a Mr. McLaughlin, always made sure I got the brass ring at least once.

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An outside row beauty with a patriotic lady holding the flag.

This carousel has fifty-two animals. The list is impressive; 33 horses, one giraffe, lion, goat, tiger, stag, zebra, mule, three rabbits, cats, pigs, and ostriches. Two of the cats carry fish in their mouths, the other is holding a bird. The mule and zebra sport bells on their breast straps and one of the horses carries sleigh bells on the back of its saddle. The zebra and the goat have their tongues sticking out. In all, there are 36 jumpers, 16 stationary animals and two chariots. All of the animals have lustrous glass eyes and the horses once had real horse hair tails.

Although the scenery panels and the band organ no longer grace the lower central housing area, the carousel still carries oil paintings above the centerpole. There are 18 cornice panels and another 18 below them. The upper crown, (rounding boards), carries 36 panels, 18 large and 18 small. Four of the cornice panels have information about riding, the brass ring, ride prices and one is the G.A. Dentzel logo panel.

One chariot is painted red with silver trim, the other blue with yellow trim. Animal head fixtures hold brass handles and the sides of the chariots have inlaid glass panels.

You may think this old lady is slow, but you'll find out that the carousel runs a three minute cycle, fourteen revolutions per cycle.

The people who run this lively old machine truly love her and take good care of her. The Palumbos keep the carousel clean and tidy with the brass poles gleaming and in the absence of a real band organ, play taped band organ music. The Palumbos fitted some of the animals with large stuffed toys. At the end of the 1980 season, these toys were given away to the children whose tickets were drawn. It was a lovely way to end the year.

"The Dutchess" has been made a Rochester, New York landmark and someday it will be restored. But, until that time comes, great steps are underway to preserve it.

Where once an amusement park stood, now only a carousel remains. Nothing is more beautiful to me than to hear the band organ music drifting out over the waters around the carousel. Young and old adore the carousel and four generations of my family have known her as a special friend.

Lorrie Harris

Fun Facts

- ★ Some animals are in original paint
- ★ The brass poles are plain, not spiral type.
- ★ The carousel barn is painted yellow
- ★ The mule and zebra have school type bells on their chests
- ★ The middle and inside rows have step-ups instead of stirrups.



Another beautiful, realistic paint job on a tiger that compliments the beauty of the carving.



The lead horse poses with pride.

Configuration of Figures

Outside Row
(all stationary)

- 11 horses
- 1 giraffe
- 1 lion
- 1 goat
- 1 tiger
- 1 stag

16

Middle Row
(all jumpers)

- 10 horses
- 2 ostriches
- 1 zebra
- 2 pigs
- 2 cats
- 1 rabbit

18

Inside Row
(all jumpers)

- 12 horses
- 1 ostrich
- 1 mule
- 1 cat
- 2 rabbits

18

Total; 52 animals, 2 chariots

Motifs of Upper Cornice Panels

1. Dentzel logo
2. Lady
3. Polo players
4. Lady in red
5. Ticket cost (not original)
6. Rider on white horse
7. Rider on bay horse
8. Lady in white with flowers
9. Lady with fancy shawl.
10. Caution sign (not original)
11. Lady with rust colored flowers
12. Lady in dancing dress
13. Lady with fan
14. Brass ring sign (not original)
15. Indian warrior
16. Lady on white horse
17. Dance hall girl
18. Tom Sawyer

Motifs on Lower Cornice Panels

1. Swan on the bank
2. Winter town scene
3. Water wheel
4. Rock formation
5. Trees
6. Winter bridge
7. Fishing boat
8. Swamp.
9. Schooner
10. Swan in swamp
11. Mountain scene
12. Ocean schooner
13. White pinnacle mountain
14. Steamer in rough sea
15. Park scene
16. Falls
17. Girls in row boat
18. Garden archway

INTRODUCTION

In 1948 I went before the ladies of the Watch Hill Improvement Society and innocently asked if they knew who ran our carousel and whether they realized how sad and neglected it was. Little did I know what that question would get me into! I was immediately named a committee of one to look into the problem and to see what could be done to bring the carousel back into suitable condition. The Society members all agreed that the owner of the carousel, the Watch Hill Fire District, wouldn't mind my interest and concern in the least. So off I was sent with the Society's good will and financial blessing.

That was thirty-two years ago. Now we are at a point of recognition I never even dreamed of in those first days — listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It has been an exciting climb to the top as all the information sent to the National Register in Washington I collected through notices in local newspapers and through personal contact with as many old-timers who grew up around Westerly as I could find. In my research I went back through local town records to 1850, and there was not a whisper about the carousel; not even our fine Westerly Public Library could supply me with new facts.

The National Carousel Association not only encouraged me in my search for information, but has been very kind in acknowledging my success. I must note here the great interest and ability of Mr. William L. Street, Jr. of Westerly; it is he who was responsible for the most recent restoration of the carousel horses. Without him I could never have succeeded in doing for Watch Hill what has been done.

Harriet C. Moore
July, 1980

Another decline in beauty and safety was evident by 1974. With the support of the Watch Hill Improvement Society and the enthusiastic help of many friends, \$7,000 was raised for the restoration of the carousel. Each little horse was curried under the loving care of a local cabinetmaker and painter; each was fitted out with a new saddle and reins of Irish leather and a tail and mane of real horsehair. The installation of a reproduction band organ supplying real merry-go-round music completed the latest restoration.



Edmund Mello photo

PTC 85: from Paragon Park to Carousel Under the Clock

by Francine Townsend — Photos courtesy of Carousel Under the Clock



Part 1: The Sale

The story of Philadelphia Toboggan Company Carousel #85 is as romantic as the antique amusement device itself. Paragon Park, the carousel's original home, was in its heyday a beautiful Victorian amusement park, designed to attract Boston day-trippers traveling to the holiday site by train.

The park and its beach enjoyed many years of popularity as a tourist spot and recreation area.

...tension was high...

But, like everything else, the area fell prey to change. Gradually, it became unkempt and a bit honky-tonk. Then, during the 1940s, Bostonians discovered that this lovely seaside town had much to offer as a place to live, and not just a beautiful place to visit for a holiday. Those who were looking for affordable housing, and willing to sacrifice the benefits of city life so they could capture the pleasure of living on or near the water, looked to Hull as their Eden.

Paragon Park closed forever after the 1984 season. The 10-acre site, sold for condominium development, was stripped of its fondly-remembered rides.

The park's elegant four-row carousel had had a treasured niche in Hull's history ever since it arrived there new from the factory in 1928. Announcement of an impending auction rallied sentimental Hull residents in an effort to keep the magical gem in its home town.

A campaign began, spearheaded by Judy Weirs, a competent fund-raiser and Hull businesswoman. Unfortunately, the Save-the-Carousel committee, although vocal and hard-working, had no financial backing. A few weeks of vigorous fund-raising brought the realization that volunteer efforts alone would not be enough to raise the \$500,000 they figured was needed to save the carousel.

Ms. Weirs then hit upon a plan to put together an alliance of businessmen. Her first contact was local real estate developer Paul Townsend, who had done some renovations and new developments which were highly regarded in the area. Although he was not, by himself, in a position to purchase the carousel, he understood the intrinsic value of the machine and the important part it played in the town's history. He felt as strongly as Judy that it should be saved.

In an unusual business effort, Townsend contacted another businessman with whom he had had previous business relationships, G. Daniel Prigmore, also of Hull. Prigmore, too, was captivated by the historic significance of the carousel, so they joined forces.

Although neither Townsend nor Prigmore had met

Daniel Levin of Levin Properties, it seemed to them that he would have an interest in the carousel for two reasons: he would appreciate as they did the value of the machine, and he had sizable real estate holdings in the area of the former Paragon Park. They decided to approach him with a proposal.

The two Hull businessmen did not actually meet face-to-face with the third partner until 24 hours before the auction, which was scheduled for December 14, 1985.

... to keep the magical carousel intact

By way of a last-minute telephone conference, they agreed in essence that they would have the money available to bid on the carousel at auction. Their negotiations prior to the auction to buy the carousel outright from the former owner were, unfortunately, not fruitful.

Prigmore had been charged with coming to the auction prepared to purchase the machine: with having a letter of credit for a sum of money which had not yet been determined.

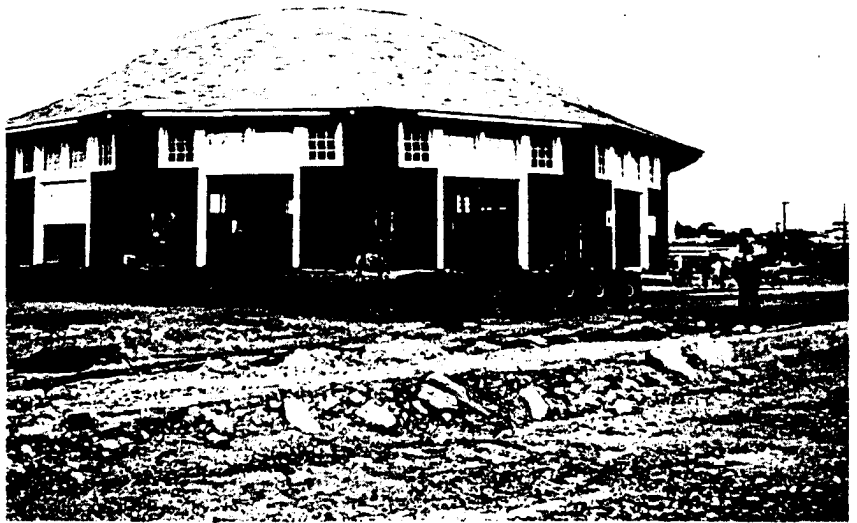
Another telephone conference brought agreement among the three that the carousel was worth \$500,000, and that it would not be reasonable to go over that figure.

A historian at heart, Prigmore had made the decision on his own to be prepared to go over that by an undisclosed sum.

On the day of the auction, tension was high as hopeful buyers converged on the site. The auction proceeded in typical fashion. The outside horses were sold first: the winning bid on the lead horse was \$17,000; the two chariots went for \$40,000 and \$37,000.

As the businessmen added up the prices, they became increasingly aware that the carousel would sell at a price far beyond their \$500,000 limit.

The drama continued to unfold with the Save-the-Carousel group picketing in front of the carousel and the press and major radio and television stations holding interviews both outside the building and inside. Excitement was at fever pitch. There were different factions within the room: a large contingent of Hull residents who wanted desperately to see the carousel remain in their town; antique dealers who appreciated the value of the individual horses but who also understood the romantic concept of keeping the carousel intact; and a civic group from Ohio interested in taking the carousel back to their state as the centerpiece for a shopping mall.



The final bids were tallied.

Townsend and Prigmore realized that by the time 20% was added to the individual bids, their \$500,000 would fall short of the necessary amount. They were also not sure if the price they had calculated included the building. Then Prigmore revealed his more romantic side by saying that he had brought a letter of credit not for the \$500,000 they had earlier decided upon, but for \$600,000, enough to cover the purchase. Townsend and Levin agreed on the spot to go for the additional funds. The auctioneer added his 20% to the prices and the carousel was sold to the three for \$598,800.

The celebrating that took place was a delight to see. The gala event was recorded on video both by major television stations and the new owners of the carousel. The story of the carousel was covered by the national media as well as the local media.

The joy, however, quickly ended when the owners realized that a) they had no insurance on the carousel, b) they had no knowledge of carousels, and c) they would have to move the carousel off the property within 30 days.

Then began the mad scramble to negotiate with the former owner and to prepare to have the building and carousel moved. Prigmore took on the awesome responsibility of moving the eighty-foot wide building from its former site at Paragon Park down the road about a

(Continued on page 16)

quarter of a mile to its new home, a highly visible location opposite the old steamboat dock which is now a commuter boat pier in Hull.

The three partners worked out a very amicable relationship whereby Prigmore was to manage the moving, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of the carousel. Townsend was to handle all of the legal and political negotiations with local and state agencies. And Levin was to operate the carousel for the trio.

It has been a solid partnership brought together by strong motivation and determination to keep the magical carousel intact and to keep its history alive. The preservation of this venerable piece of local history was a very important achievement, not just for its proud owners, but for the Town of Hull and all of its delighted residents.

Part 2: The Momentous Move

Getting the huge, heavy carousel/building complex to its new location was anything but a simple process. The moving problems were two-fold: First, the building enclosing the carousel is a dome structure with twelve sides carried on six arches, weighing an estimated 40 tons. Second, the 40-foot diameter carousel itself is suspended from a central post.

The carousel could not be removed from the building without completely disassembling the machine. It was estimated that over 1,000 man-hours would be needed for disassembly, and at least as many to reassemble it on the new site. To complicate the process further, it was discovered that all of the bolts holding the carousel together were corroded from the salt water environment.

The owner of Paragon Park had originally given the carousel owners thirty days from December 14, 1985 to remove the carousel. He later extended the time to ninety days. Still, the heat was on.

While it would be possible to disassemble the building to get the carousel out, the cost of such a solution made it impractical. Consultation with Robert Gordon, an experienced building mover, resulted in an unusual solution: to move the building intact with the carousel mechanism inside.

This process required constructing a steel framework to span the 80-foot diameter building: a framework strong enough to hold up the weight of the carousel suspended beneath it. The load would be moved on a tractor and two hydraulic dollies.

First, the horses and the interior scenery were removed from the carousel and put into storage for their

protection. The horses were sprayed with a clear epoxy finish. A set of new chrome sleeves for the supports was ordered, so the steeds would be ready for their new home when the move was completed.

The base of each of the building's columns was clamped to 90-foot I-beams which passed over the carousel platform between the uprights. The wooden floor of the building, rotting from its years of use, was removed and disposed of. It was decided to replace it with a concrete floor at the new site for better fire protection.

When the main beams were in place, a set of cross beams was installed with hangers extending down to attach to the base of the carousel to support it.

While this process was going on, plans were prepared for the new site. The proposed location had a four-lane road passing through it, complicated by a 6-inch gas main, a 20-inch sewer main, and a 4-inch water main beneath the proposed carousel location.

*Moving day was
finally scheduled...*

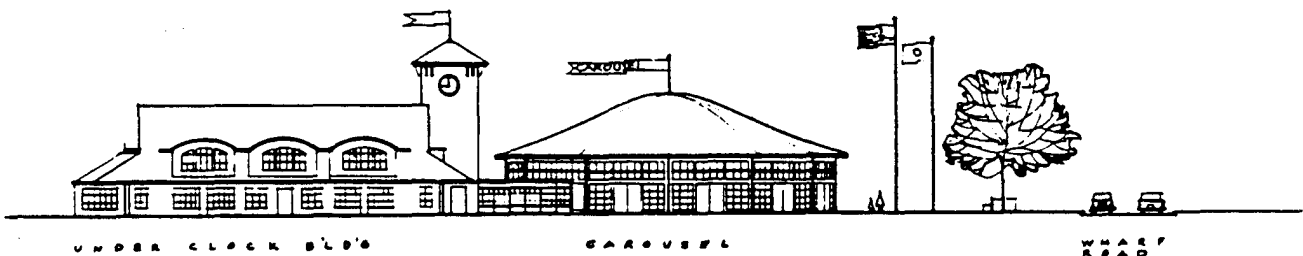
First, with the help of federal, state, and town engineers, (this short road had been originally federally funded) a new road location was laid out. The layout required the removal of power poles that carry telephone lines and the 13,800-volt electric lines serving the town. Additionally, six traffic signals needed to be relocated.

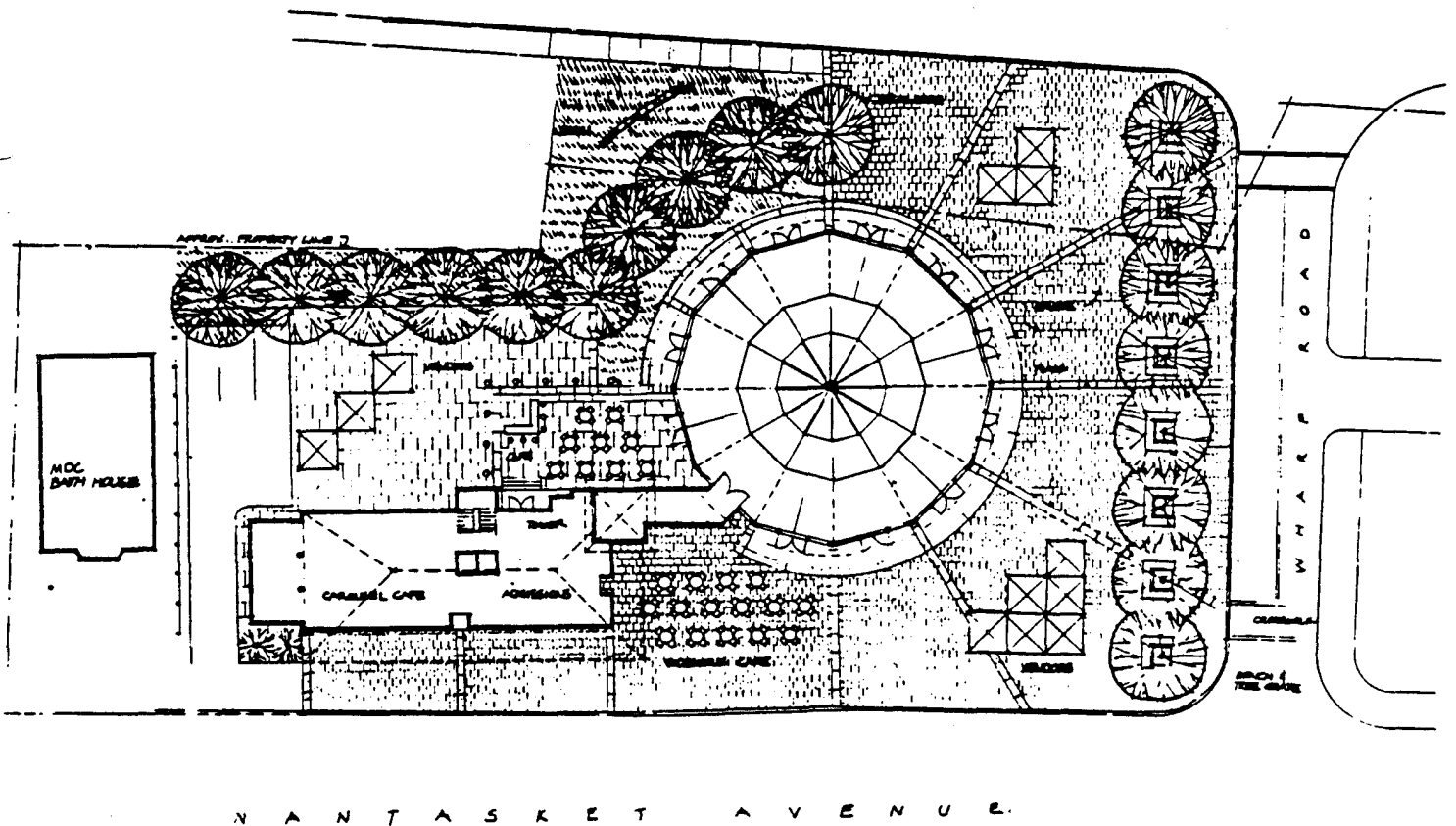
The necessary permits were secured, construction began on the new roadway, and relocation of the utilities began. After a video inspection of the sewer line, it was decided to leave this in place. However, the future building site was modified to be sure no footings were placed over the sewer line.

With work going on at both ends, planning started on the route for the big move. Since the width of the building exceeded that of the four-lane road, arrangements had to be made to remove temporarily all street lights and traffic signs on the route.

Moving day was finally scheduled for April 8, 1986.

The final engineering for the new site called for installing a new water pipe to feed the fire-protection sprinkler system, underground electrical and communication lines. A new foundation for the building was designed. None of this work could begin until the new road was open and the existing road closed.





Unsure that the building could be maneuvered precisely over the twelve perimeter footings for the arcade, it was decided to build these after the building was moved but before it was lowered into place. As it would be difficult to work below the carousel itself after the move, it seemed most practical to pour one large footing for the carousel on which would be built stubs to hold each of the support members.

The carousel would not budge.

Work began early on the moving date. Street lights came down, the media showed up, and the truck was attached to the framework holding the building and carousel. In order to get the carousel out of Paragon Park, a temporary roadway had been built out to Nantasket Avenue.

With a roar of its big diesel engine, the truck strove mightily, but succeeded only in digging itself into a hole. The carousel would not budge.

Frantic consultation and puzzled head-scratching prevailed. Hours went by. Soon it would be dark.

Eventually, two tractors were positioned at the back

to give the load a push, and a bulldozer was chained to the truck to pull. Everyone present drew in a long, expectant breath as the hand signal to start the truck was given. Finally, the rig started to move, and, to the cheers of the waiting crowd, the gigantic load trundled out of the park and on to Nantasket Avenue.

The remainder of the move to the final location went without a hitch.

With the bulk of the building poised above the site, footings were excavated, forms set, concrete poured. Elevations were checked and cross-checked. Floor grades were set and site grades established.

Once the building was lowered and the steel frame removed, work could proceed on patching up the building, pouring the floor, and hooking up the utilities. At the same time, the carousel's platform was stripped to bare wood and sanded. All the scenery was given a careful cleaning. The paint was touched up. The interior machinery room, degreased before the move, was ready for rewiring and checking out the mechanism.

Around the building, the site was regraded, retaining walls installed, and sprinkler systems set in place. Sod and flowers provided the finishing touch to the surroundings.

Once security and fire protection were on line in the building, the newly-painted horses were brought from storage. With new leather, new poles, and a new finish, they glowed on the newly-painted floor.

With a Wurlitzer 153 band-organ acquired and installed, the carousel was finally ready for its gala opening celebration on the first day of July, 1986.

The Empire State Carousel

The Empire State Carousel project at Islip, New York, is planning a summer 1988 tour around New York state, showing work in progress, and, according to the ESC newsletter, to "help people learn about the carousel tradition." Tentative plans are for a three-truck procession to Albany, Plattsburgh, Watertown, Ithaca, Rochester, North Tonawanda, Binghamton, New York City, Islip. Hopes are for a tour in 1989 of the completed carousel, which will have on board riding figures of a loon, duck, Canada goose, beaver, and other native animals. Last summer, as part of a partnership between the Carousel Society of the Niagara Frontier and the Empire State Carousel, Inc., Gerry Holzman taught carousel carving at the museum. A repeat is planned for this summer.

New Orleans City Park Carousel

New Orleans, LA: The carousel horses returned from total makeovers at R & F Designs in Bristol CT to debut on Easter Sunday. The carousel and carousel building were both designated as National Register Sites in 1987. The restoration project, which took only six months, included total restoratiion of the horses, plus renovation and painting of the building, a new deck to enhance the view and increase space for parties, full-length mirrors in the center to multiply the images of the spinning carousel, and refurbishing of 20 original center panel paintings and 20 rounding board paintings.

Assignment: Georgia

Resident turns down fortune for the love of a merry-go-round

By Mary Schmich
Chicago Tribune

ATLANTA—Put yourself in Charles Walker's position. You run a theatrical lighting business out of a squat brick building with concrete floors. You live in a two-room apartment upstairs.

Your business is good enough to keep you outfitted in flannel shirts and blue jeans and to let you indulge in your peculiar hobby, fixing up old merry-go-rounds.

From time to time, while you're working on the lights for a high school play or tinkering with your carousel, some real estate agents drop by, sweet lucre jingling in their dreams.

Charles, they say, aren't you ready to sell this land? You're the only one on the block, the only one for several blocks, who hasn't sold. Midtown is the hot neighborhood, Charles, the new Manhattan, the Atlanta of the 21st Century. Sell this paltry third of an acre and you'll become an instant millionaire.

Of course, Charles Walker won't. He has a merry-go-round to rebuild, and he is not going anywhere until it is done. And it doesn't matter what changes are shaking his old neighborhood.

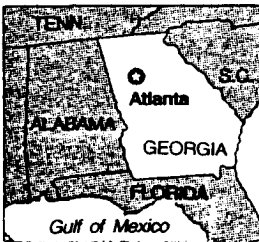
"All these real estate people come around trying to be charming," Walker said one recent afternoon, petting one of the battered wooden carousel horses that populate his crowded studio. "They were becoming a nuisance. Now when they come by, I send them to my lawyer. And I told my lawyer that if I hear anything more about selling this property, he's fired."

Walker is one of those humble heroes who spring up now and then in this age of high-rise progress, a man unafraid to tilt at bulldozers.

Midtown, a mile north of downtown, has long registered the shifts in Atlanta's counterculture.

In the 1930s and '40s, the neighborhood was a bustling Bohemian village frequented by artists and writers, including Margaret Mitchell, who wrote most of "Gone With the Wind" in a two-story Victorian home a block from Walker's studio.

In the 1960s, Midtown became Atlanta's hippie haven.



By the '70s, the area had disintegrated into a wasteland of topless bars and adult book stores. In the '80s, it became the center of Atlanta's gay culture, and small restaurants, theaters and music clubs again flourished.

Walker arrived in Midtown during its hippie phase to work at the Herschel Harrington Scenic and Lighting Studio. He bought the property in 1979 for \$110,000.

Walker deemed the spot perfect for restoring the 1920, four-row carousel that he had discovered in 1969 in a salvage yard. "I saw this stack of horses with big brown eyes," he recalled, "and I fell in love."

Fire had scorched the carousel in its first home, Allentown, Pa. Humidity had rotted the wooden horses in its second home, Tampa, Fla. Now it occupies a concrete building behind Walker's studio where for the last five years, whenever finances permitted, Walker has worked to re-gild the canopy, repaint the horses and fix the wiring. He can't imagine taking apart his work and trying to reassemble it elsewhere.

It was Walker's misfortune, which may turn into a fortune, that no sooner had he parked his carousel than Midtown became Atlanta's corporate frontier.

Where corporations once saw only counterculture blight, they began to see a chance to fashion a neighborhood to their liking.

IBM Corp., for example, last year completed a 50-story tower in the district. Trammell Crow, the huge Dallas developer, bought four blocks of land and plans to cover them with high-rises.

Walker watched as his neighbors scurried to assemble their properties into expensive packages for the new developers. He endured the dirt and jackhammers as Trammell Crow erected a 28-story building across the street.

Still, he stayed—all for the love of the merry-go-round.

The cynics all charge that Walker is really holding out to jack up the price.

It's true that Walker's land, worth perhaps \$1.5 million today, might be worth \$3 million when he finishes the carousel in three or four years. But Walker insists the money doesn't matter, that it even scares him a little.

"We went back and forth with him many times trying to buy that property," said George Johnson, an Atlanta developer. "I finally was convinced he really didn't give a damn about the money. And in my business, that's a real surprise, believe me."

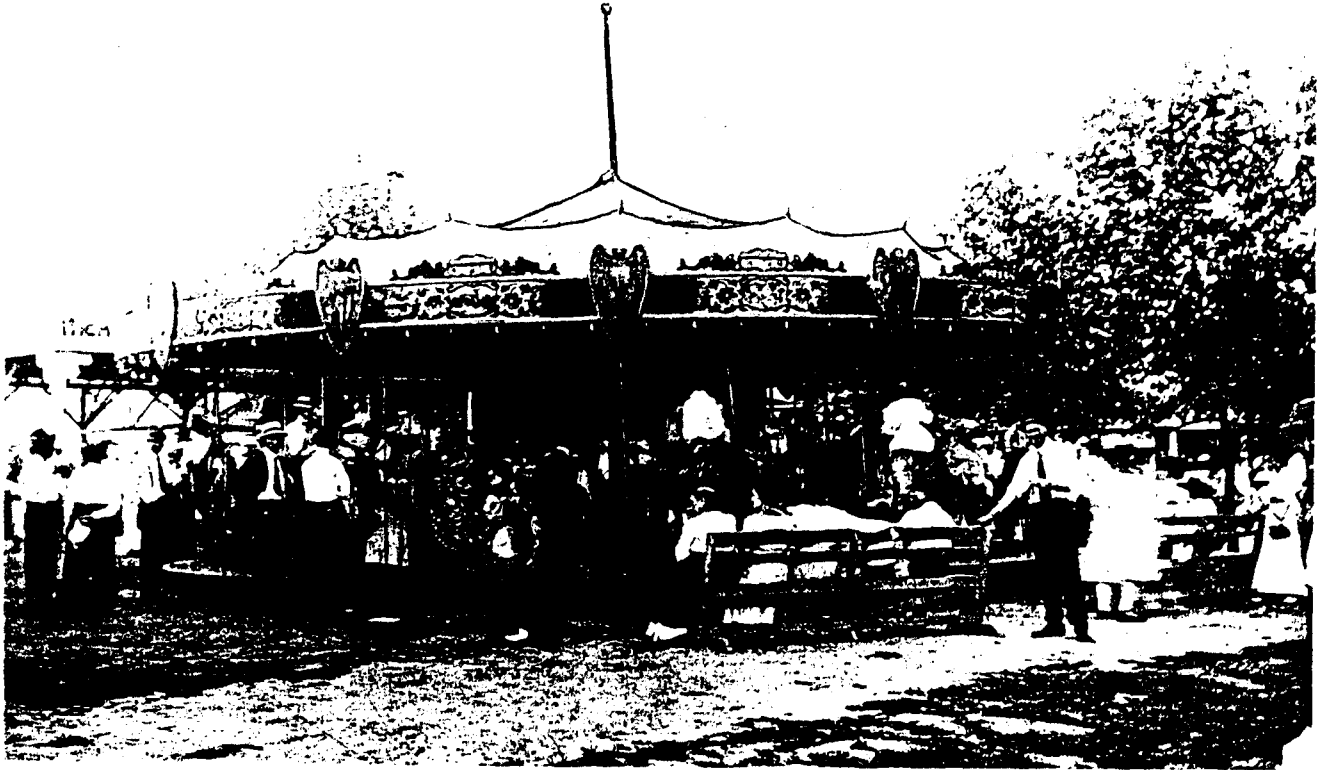
John Decker, a spokesman for Trammell Crow, which owns the rest of Walker's block, agrees. He says that he and Walker are on amiable terms even though the company intends to start high-rise construction next to Walker's studio in a few months.

When the drilling starts, Walker may have to accept his fate as a rich man. He admits that the neighborhood he has grown so attached to—the one with hardware stores, dime stores, little restaurants, theaters—hardly exists anymore.

"It's like a merry-go-round," he said, standing in the late afternoon sun outside his studio as Trammell Crow's new marble high-rise casts a shadow on the street. "You could divide it all up, sell the horses, sell the parts and make a lot of money. But money's not the point—because if you do that you lose the merry-go-round."

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PRESERVATION



This Herschell-Spillman, 3-abreast, portable menagerie carousel was photographed at Lakeside Park in Flint, Michigan sometime between 1913 and 1916. Since this photo was taken, the scenery panels have been repainted (by the owner's sister when the carousel moved to Crystal in 1938), the animals have been repainted approximately four times and wheels have inexplicably been added to the Punch and Judy carriage.

Photo courtesy of Mr and Mrs Ernest Reaume, Seffner, Florida

The Crystal Carousel

by

Val Berryman

Nearly doomed to the oblivion of dismantling that has been the fate of too many merry-go-rounds, the carousel from Crystal, Michigan has found a new home at The Museum at Michigan State University. This vestige of America's past has been donated to the Museum by its owners: Robert Brundage, James Steere and William Seiter of Crystal and Edmond Kimmel of Grand Ledge, Michigan.

The owners had many purchase offers from dealers, collectors and out-of-state museums including one antique dealer who thought it would be a good idea to cut the animals in half and sell them as restaurant wall decorations. However, the owners felt strongly that the carousel should remain intact and in the mid-Michigan area. They refused the offers of money in favor of donating the carousel to an institution that would guarantee its preservation for the enjoyment of Michigan residents and visitors.

The carousel, a three-abreast, portable menagerie, was built by Herschell-Spillman Company of North Tonawanda, New York. MSU Museum staff members are still doing research in an attempt to determine an accurate date for the carousel. Evidence points to a date between 1910 and 1916. The carousel spent its early years at Lakeside Park in Flint, Michigan and was then

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Continued from page 3

moved by its owner, Dr. James Stuart, into a building on the edge of Crystal Lake in Crystal, Michigan around 1938. From 1935 until 1970, it was owned and cared for by three generations of the Schroll family. "Pop" Schroll, the eldest, carefully repainted the animals over the years and kept the machinery in excellent condition.

When Brundage, Kimmel, Seiter and Steere purchased the carousel and the land on which it stood in 1970, they continued the tradition of providing a safe and enjoyable place of amusement for residents and summer vacationers. However, vandalism, theft, an aging building and the difficulties of finding responsible people to run and service the carousel eventually prompted the owners to consider disposing of it. Members of the MSU Museum's Folk Art Division had "discovered" the carousel a few years earlier and were keeping an eye on it in hopes of acquiring it for the Museum.

Negotiations toward moving the carousel to Michigan State University moved along slowly until January, 1979 when a heavy snowfall in Crystal caused the roof of the pavilion to collapse on top of the carousel. The iron center pole and the guy rods supported the roof, preventing any significant damage to the machine. One broken sweep, some slightly damaged scenery panels, a badly torn canvas top and a chipped ear on a horse were the main casualties. The scenery panels, cornice, animals, chariot and tub were removed and stored away.

When the donation was assured in May, 1979, members of the museum staff and volunteers left for Crystal to begin the operation of removing the collapsed roof from the carousel. With the help of a reprint on an old Herschell-Spillman sales brochure, they eventually determined the correct sequence for disassembling a carousel. At that point, they had not yet learned of the existence of the National Carousel Association or of the nearby availability of NCA member John Hayek. They completed the disassembly and moving of the carousel in slightly less than a month (according to the old brochure, it should have taken only five or six hours).

The carousel is now in storage in East Lansing while the Museum is engaged in a fund-raising campaign for a new building which will house the carousel. At the same time, the restoration of the carousel is being carried out by members of the "Brass Ring Society," a group of volunteer students, professors and community members working under the direction of the MSU Museum curators. Careful test stripping through five successive layers of paint is revealing the original paint layer with its beautiful striping and decorative scrollwork. The animals will be resored to their original colors and designs. A future report will cover the progress of the restoration.

The Crystal Carousel is the only public carousel now in Michigan that has spent virtually all of its life there. Anyone having photographs of the carousel or information on its history is requested to contact Mr. Val Berryman, Curator of Historical Artifacts, The Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 48824.



Determining the original colors is a time-consuming process but one that will ensure an historically accurate restoration. Successive layers of paint are scraped off with scalpels and numbered consecutively until bare wood is reached. This row of small rectangles, each showing a different layer of paint, exposes the history of repainting of that particular animal. When the original paint layer is determined, a larger area is scraped away to reveal shading, striping and decoration.



The carousel was at Lakeside Park from approximately 1913 until 1937. The 10c ticket was used sometime between 1938 and 1970 at Crystal, Michigan. The 25c ticket was also used at Crystal by the last owners who created the name RELE by using the last letter of each of their surnames.

Photo courtesy of the Michigan State University Museum

All photos courtesy of MSU Museum



This fourteen-sided building was erected by a local carpenter when the carousel was moved to Crystal, Michigan in 1938. He set a telephone pole in the ground at the point where he wanted the center of the building and used it for support for the framework. When the building was completed he removed the pole and the building remained standing.



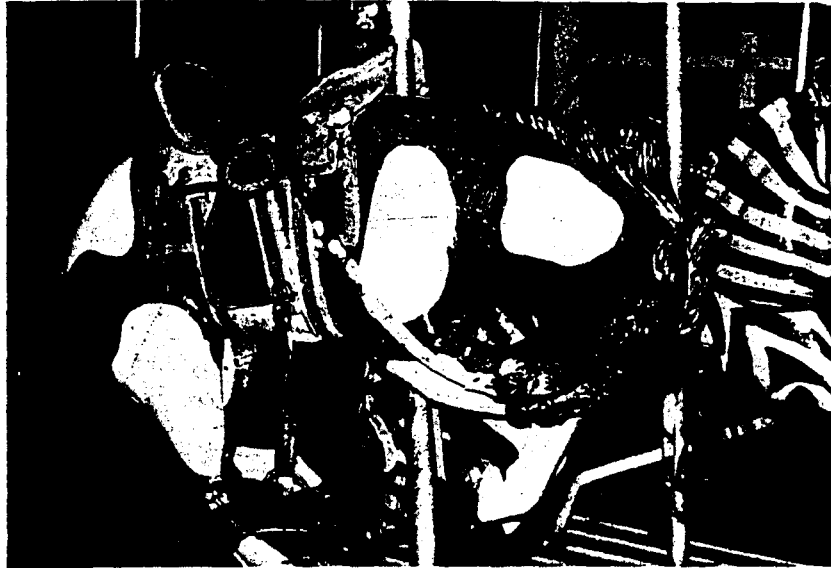
The animals had been stored in a barn for safekeeping during the winter. This little piggy seems to be fighting his transfer to the truck that will transport him to the MSU Museum.



The ticket booth is a unique structure with a wooden lattice work top, a sheet metal bottom and a brass rail around the center. The rail matches the one on the Lovers' Tub on the carousel.



A disheartening sight greeted staff members of the Michigan State University Museum when they arrived in Crystal May 18, 1979 to begin disassembly of the carousel. The roof had collapsed under a heavy snowfall in January. The iron center pole of the carousel bore most of the weight and prevented extensive damage.



The bucking bronco was stolen from the carousel in the Fall of 1978 before it was donated to Michigan State University. It has not been recovered. Anyone having information about this animal is requested to contact the National Carousel Association or Val Roy Berryman, Curator, Michigan State University Museum, East Lansing, Michigan, 48824, phone (517) 355-2370.

Photo below left, courtesy of John Hayek



Left- Val Berryman, right, checks paint scraping job by volunteer worker. Center- After the roof was propped up and cut away from the carousel, disassembly began. With the help of a reprint of a Herschell-Spillman sales brochure, the proper sequence was determined. Terry Shaffer, Assistant Curator at the MSU Museum is on the ladder removing the gear assembly and center sweep hub while his father, Boyd, assists. Right- Claire Fitzgerald, a Graduate Assistant at the museum, has used a surgical scalpel to uncover original paint colors, striping and scrollwork on the saddle and blanket. When the colors and designs have been recorded by photography, drawings and matching paint charts, the animals will be stripped to the bare wood with heat guns and will then be repainted as they were originally.



Photo taken of flag draped horse when the carousel was still at Crystal, Michigan.

The horses are now in storage at the Museum, awaiting restoration.