

LET'S TAKE THIS TIME TO LOOK BACK AT OUR INDUSTRY'S RICH HISTORY AND FUTURE!

THE DEAL DIARIES

SECOND CHAPTER: CAROUSEL

ARE YOU READY TO HOP ON A MERRY-GO-ROUND?



Combat preparation exercise game called the 'little war'

there are some facts in this article that many of us might not be even aware of.

THE ORIGIN:

Today everyone loves a merry-go-round or a carousel. They pack a lot of fun across all ages, and portrays a golden reflection of our memorable childhoods.

The carousel concept has survived the test of time and today we can enjoy watching children having fun on these amazing rides. Let's peep into its history to understand the interesting phase of evolution and moreover,

Oldest predecessor of carousels comes from 6th century Byzantium. People then made rides from baskets that were tied to a pole in the center and that would carry the riders. This ride as we know it, as a merry-go-round has a rich history which dates back to the 1100s. The word carousel actually originated from the Italian word 'garosello' and Spanish word 'carosella' which meant 'little battle'. This was used by crusaders to describe a combat preparation exercise and game played by Turkish and Arabian horsemen in the 12th century. So that's how the story of carousels came into the limelight for the very first time in history.

CAROUSEL CONCEPT ENTERS EUROPE

So, when these crusaders returned to Europe, they took the tradition of the 'little war' with them. One of the main feats performed in the 'carosella' was riding a horse while holding a lance, in order to spear a ring that hung from a tree. Later this tournament gained popularity in France, where it was then finally called 'carousel'.

Furthermore, these merry-go-round equipment were also used in medieval times as a training machine for knights in battle. So these knights would sit on wooden planks arranged in a circle, suspended from a wooden centerpost. As they were spun around, the knights would try to thrust their spears through a small stationary ring that represented the head of their opponent in a jousting match.

From this rather gruesome tradition, merry-go-rounds evolved into elaborate mechanical works of art that bring enjoyment to young and old alike.



EVOLUTION OF THE CAROUSELS INTO AN ENTERTAINMENT CONCEPT:

The story gets even more interesting as in the 1600s, a group of Frenchmen designed a device intended to train young competitors for participation in the carousel tournament. A carved horse was suspended by chains from two arms that were then attached to a central pole. Young noblemen training to compete in the carousel would ride the horse while it was moved up and down on the pole by squires, to simulate riding a horse without risking injury to the valuable horses used in the actual event.

Then almost 100 years later, in the 1700s, small versions of the carousel were created for entertainment. Small carousels were set to the music of a live band and powered by men or animals, became popular entertainment at special events of the court.



Merry-go-round at Deepwater Races - Deepwater, NSW, c. 1910

Michael Dentzel, a German wagon maker, was making carousels as a major occupation. During the winter months, he would carve the elaborate figures of animals, and when the weather was fair, family members would go out into the countryside and run the carousel at special events.

Other artists began crafting carousels during the 18th century in Italy, France and England as well.

CAROUSEL ENTERS A NEW DESTINATION - AMERICA:

Then during the 1800s America was welcoming a large number of European immigrants, who brought with them the artistry of the land and a love for carousel. The first patent for a carousel, called the 'flying horses' was granted in the United States to a Brooklyn business in 1850, though there is evidence that merry-go-rounds actually appeared in the United States at least five years previous to this in Manhattan.

The year 1800s was actually a new beginning for the world. Due to the dawning of industrial revolution during this period it made two things possible: the mass-production of heavy machinery that was needed to create larger amusement devices, and leisure time for workers which allowed them for the first time to relax on a day off. Private parks were created in cities and towns across the United States during that period.



STEAMING AHEAD IN THE 1900s

During the mid-to-late-19th century, the American carousel became markedly different from its European predecessors. The animal power necessary to run the original carousel was replaced by the steam engine. This allowed the contraptions to expand in size and weight. It was with the introduction of steam power that the large, round carousels, built on a wooden platform, were developed. Gustav Dentzel brought one of his family's carousels to America in 1860 and set it up in Philadelphia. Some of America's most famous and elaborate carousels were crafted by his company.

MERRY-GO-ROUND GOES ELECTRIC

At the tail end of the 19th century, carousels were converted to electric power. It was at this time that the fair organ was moved set beside it. Carousels largely fell out of popularity during WWII, when both supplies and labor were devoted to the war effort, rather than entertainment. During this time much of the craftsmanship was lost. But at the dawn of the twentieth century, there were many companies in the business of supplying merry-go-rounds to amusement parks: the famous workshops of Dentzel, Loeff, Illions, Mangels, Herschell and Parker were a few.

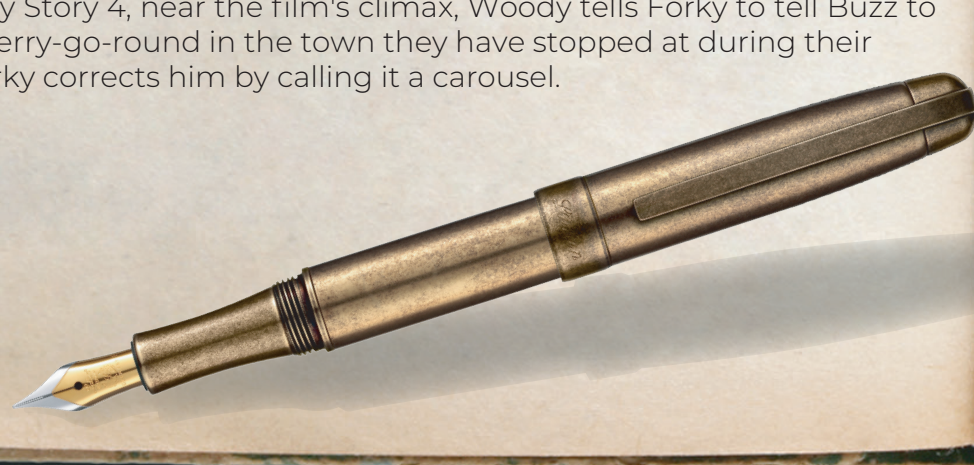


The Dentzel Carousel as it was in 1921

Dedicated enthusiasts who would want to know more about carousels can also visit a history museum located in Sandusky, Ohio. This is a unique museum and is the only place in the world known to solely celebrate the art and history of the merry-go-round.

CAROUSEL VS. MERRY-GO-ROUND

A school of thought believes that carousels have only horses, while a merry-go-round has both horses and other animals, even fictional ones such as dragons and unicorns. Secondly, carousels only display white lights while merry-go-round feature coloured lights. Lastly, the difference is in the direction they spin. In the United Kingdom, they are called merry-go-rounds and run clockwise. In the United States, they are called carousels and run counter-clockwise and the debate goes on. Also in the 2019 Disney film Toy Story 4, near the film's climax, Woody tells Forky to tell Buzz to meet him at the merry-go-round in the town they have stopped at during their road trip, which Forky corrects him by calling it a carousel.



THE WORLD'S LARGEST CAROUSEL



The world's largest carousel

The world's largest indoor carousel is located inside the legendary 'House on the Rock' buildings along Highway 23 south of Spring Green, Wisconsin.

This carousel opened in 1959 and it features 269 animals, 182 chandeliers, and over 20,000 lights. Another interesting fact is that none of these animals out of the 269 were horses. It's also the most expensive and was built at a cost of over \$4.8 million.

FUTURE OF THE CAROUSEL INDUSTRY

The carousel industry has become more engaging and sophisticated. This particular attraction of the amusement industry will continue to be present in the world till it exists and will continue to engage kids, teenagers, adults and the entire family as ever before. Irrespective of the latest advancements such as virtual reality, the carousel industry will continue to entertain the audience.



Merry-go-round in Brighton, UK

At the DEAL show we have witnessed the transformation of these merry-go-rounds over the last 26 years. Today, this concept is omnipresent in malls, communities across the GCC, greater Middle East and also the African region. Moreover, this has proven to be a great revenue spinner for the operators over the years and will continue to be a regular source of income. Carousel concepts will still be an integral part of the whole entertainment fabric due to the expansion of the retail sector that includes large malls, in addition to the creation of new communities and theme parks. We will continue to see creativity infused into merry-go-rounds along with other entertainment concepts that has withstood the test of time.



Merry-go-round in Dubai Marina

