

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0668303

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAY 5 1978

DATE ENTERED

DEC 12 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Lake Compounce Carousel

AND/OR COMMON

Lake Compounce Carousel

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

W of Southington on
Lake Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Southington

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fifth - Ronald Sarasin

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

Hartford

COUNTY

CODE

03

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☒ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☒ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Julian Norton et als

STREET & NUMBER

Lake Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Bristol

VICINITY OF

CT 06010

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Southington Land Records, Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Southington

Connecticut

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

—EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
—FAIR

—DETERIORATED
—RUINS
—UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
—ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
—MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Lake Compounce is a 2,000 foot long crystal clear lake located in a rural section of the northern part of the Town of Southington, Connecticut, a few feet south of the Bristol town line. On its northern shore is the Lake Compounce Amusement Park. The park is entered by a long, straight drive which gradually descends for half a mile from Lake Avenue to the level of the water. At the foot of this drive is the carousel, across the street from the roller coaster.

The carousel is housed in its own wooden building (Photo 1), dodecagon in shape, with a tall, flared roof rising to a point surmounted by a flag pole. The exterior walls, which are built from narrow, vertical, beaded boards, have fenestration consisting of a horizontal row of glazed windows about three feet high broken by wall sections on a proportion of two to one. Above this band of windows is a second row of lights one pane high. The roof, which has flared eaves supported by brackets, rises in two stages with the change in pitch marked by a molding.

Inside the building, under a complex roof truss system (Photo 2), the carousel on its 45 foot diameter platform has ~~eighteen~~ rows of riding positions (Photo 3). Sixteen rows are made up of horses three abreast (Photo 4). In the remaining two rows two of the horses are displaced by chariots and in one of these rows the remaining animal is a goat. Thus, the total is 49 horses, two chariots, and one goat.

The horses have different appearances and demeanors in part because they are painted various colors and in part because they ^{are} carved in different manners. Some horses are showing their teeth and smiling and are known as "Happy Horses." Others have their manes flying in the wind forward and backward simultaneously. Still others have their heads up with a fiery look as though they were pulling chariots and are said to have Roman noses.

At the edge of the revolving platform and at each riding position are brass poles incised with a helical pattern. Inside the revolving platform, around a wooden center pole, is the Wurlitzer Model No. 153 band organ complete with bass drum and cymbals (Photo 5). Surrounding the organ and power source for the carousel on a circular screen which separates the organ and mechanical apparatus from the revolving platform are landscape pictures known as the "scenery," here depicted with strong Japanese influence (Photo 6). Also of decorative importance is a frieze or valence of pressed metal supported above the perimeter of the revolving platform (Photo 7). It is executed in a classic-inspired design based on the anthemion and is picked out in bronze paint.

The carousel is in a satisfactory state of maintenance and is regularly used as one of the attractions at the amusement park. The land on which the park is situated has been owned by the Norton family since 1684. The amusement park dates from 1846 and is considered to be the nation's oldest amusement park under continuous management. Facilities have been considerably altered and enlarged as required by changing conditions over the years.

MAY 5 1978

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Amusement
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1890/1911

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Looff/Murphy

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The turn-of-the-century carousel at Lake Compounce Amusement Park is significant because it has been maintained in its original condition without alterations or additions, and without removal of any of its features. It is an unspoiled example of the craftsmanship that went into a once widely popular form of entertainment, now rare. The horses, brasses, and scenery appear today as they did originally; nothing has been added; nothing has been taken away.

Its Wurlitzer organ is the model sold as standard for this operation and is an appropriate companion to the carousel itself. The carousel, with its organ housed in the original building constructed for the purpose, is an unusual example of Americana.

Arrival of the carousel at Lake Compounce was announced as a page one news item by the Bristol Press for 15 May 1911. "TEN THOUSAND DOLLAR CAROUSEL ONE OF THE NEW FEATURES" read the headline of the story about the park's opening day for the 1911 summer season. This coverage of the day by the Bristol Press provides a firm date for acquisition of the attraction by Lake Compounce and, in fact, is the only documented information thus far at hand concerning the carousel. Further information and analysis of the machine's background is provided by the knowledge and recollections of the Norton family, long time proprietors of the park, and by William Herbert Long from his forthcoming biography of Charles I.D. Looff (1852-1918), fabricator of carousels.

Long considers that Looff was a major producer and innovator in the field of carousels. The Looff factory was located in Riverside, Rhode Island, on the site of the present Crescent Amusement Park. Here was manufactured the Lake Compounce Carousel, probably about 1890. Like all carousels of the period, it is a stationary model, that is, the horses did not go up and down.

At the turn of the century came the important innovation of the mechanical arrangement to make the horses go up and down. Tim Murphy, who had worked for Looff, thereupon set himself up in the business of converting stationary carousels, now obsolete, to the moving carousels for which there was a demand. He reworked machines originally made by Looff and others by installing the jumping mechanism and generally remodeling them. The Lake Compounce carousel was purchased from Murphy and shipped from Savin Rock, Connecticut, where Murphy is thought to have had his shop. Murphy also operated a string of carousels up and down the east coast.

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bristol Press, 15 May 1911.

Letter from William Herbert Long to Richard Norton dated 19 June 1977 giving information from Long's forthcoming biography of Charles I.D. Looff.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/4 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 6 7 3 01 0 4 61 1 58 0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David F. Ransom, Consultant

7 August 1977

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

203 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT 06106

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ☒

STATE ☐

LOCAL ☐

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer and Director,
Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE 5/1/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

— DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: William Looff
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/12/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/10/78

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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MAY 5 1978

DATE ENTERED

DEC 12 1978

Lake Compounce Carousel

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

The outer rim of pressed tin on the Lake Compounce carousel and the inner rim mix of decorations and "scenery" are nearly identical to other Murphy remodellings of Looff carousels which have been documented. Moreover, half of the horses are of Looff origin. These are identified as the "Happy Horses," so called because they seem to be smiling in the manner associated with Looff's work. In addition, they have wreaths with leaves at their chests, another Looff characteristic, which strengthens the attribution.

The balance of the horses are a mix of the work of Stein and Goldstein of Coney Island (the fiery steeds with Roman noses and buckles and roses at their chests) and of a carver named Carmel about whom little is known (the horses with manes blowing in both directions -- Photo 8). These horses date from about 1910. The mix and age of the figures is typical of Murphy's remodelling of other early Looff carousels. Some of the horses have their original paint, adding to the authenticity and museum quality of this installation.

In recent years amusement parks have faced increasing competition for patronage. Simultaneously, the value of individual horses from carousels as collectors' items has grown substantially. Individual horses have sold for as much as \$2,000. Such prices present strong temptation to dismantle carousels for profit, but at Lake Compounce continuing family proprietorship has assured the integrity of the carousel.

With all carousels an important part of the attraction is the organ. The Wurlitzer model No. 153 band organ which is at Lake Compounce was regarded as good for its purpose because it was medium size, not so complex as to cause maintenance problems, and loud. Shutters over the source of the sound open and close automatically as called for by the music to provide more or less volume as needed. Date of the organ is not documented. On the one hand, the Norton family has no recollection of a new organ ever being purchased, suggesting that this one may arrived with the carousel in 1911. On the other hand, Wurlitzer is known to have manufactured this model into the 1920's, so it may be later than the carousel itself.

This Looff carousel, modified by Murphy, with its Wurlitzer band organ, and housed in the building originally constructed for its arrival in 1911, is an excellent example of an amusement form as it existed at the turn of the century.

Property

Lake Compounce Carousel

78002865

State

Conn.

Working Number

5.5.78.3044

TECHNICAL

Photos

9

Maps

1

CONTROL

OK 5.8.78

HISTORIAN

Agree w/ Brabham
 Asked question of why not entire complex. They
 will call back 10/17/78.

Accept 10/17/78
 Franklin
 9.27.78

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Eligible - but the
 whole complex should perhaps be
 included.

~~OK~~ / accept
 Brabham
 6.21.78

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

Nomination does ~~not~~ indicate if carousel
 retains an historic power system, however,
 I don't think we should "go round in circles"
 w/ this nomination any further - accept

HAER

Inventory

JK

Review

12/1/78

Jon Jackson

See telephone sheet as to why
 only carousel nominated,

Should be reviewed by

HAER

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

of architectural and historical

significance as intact carousel with early organ - significant
 as a type of building + equipment.

(nomination not reviewed by us)

L. S. Boner

11/22/78

Accept

12/10/78

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up

Federal Register Entry

2-6-79

Send-back

Re-submit

Entered

DEC 12 1978

INT:2106-74



Photo 1



Photo 2

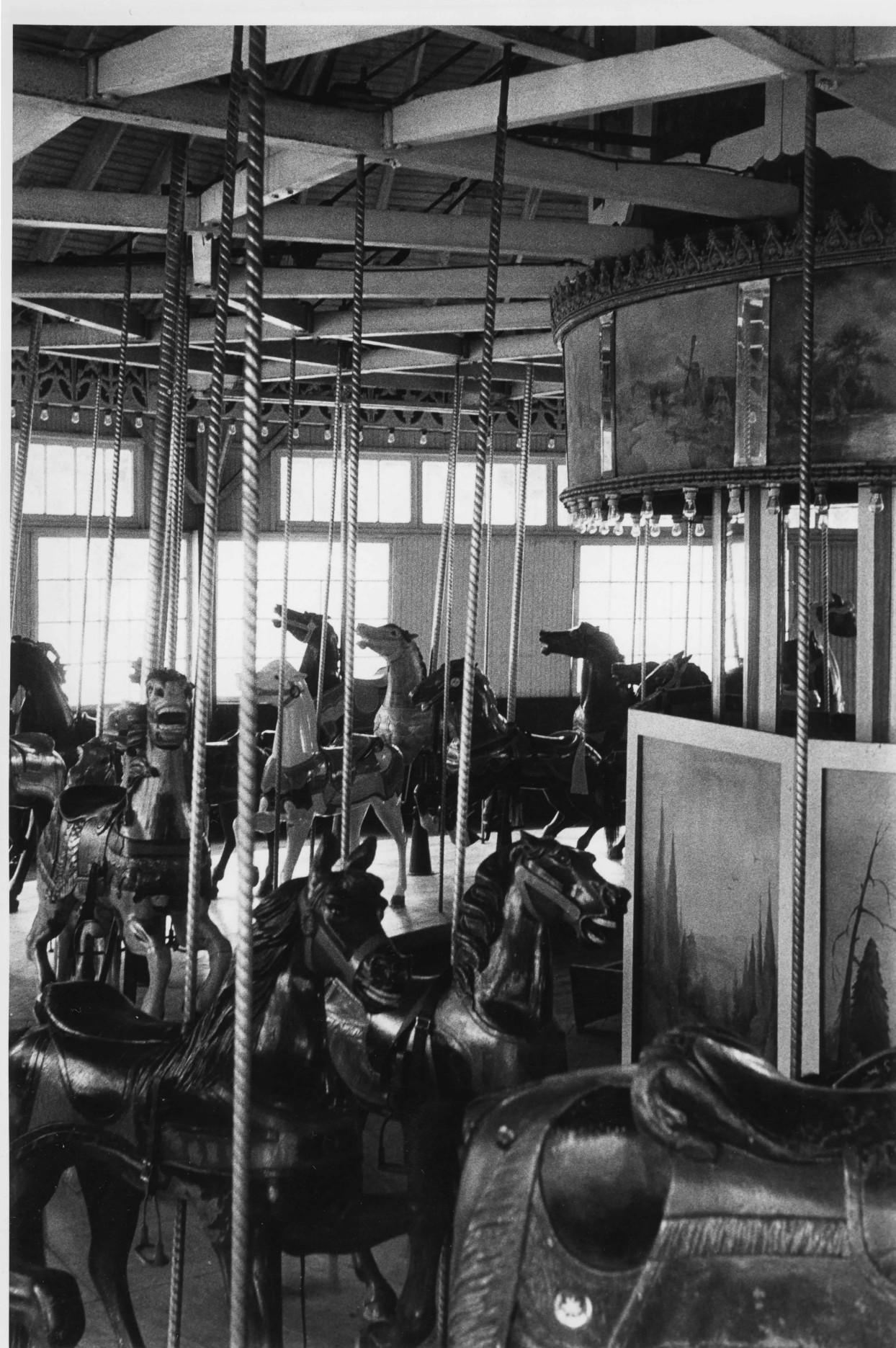


Photo 3

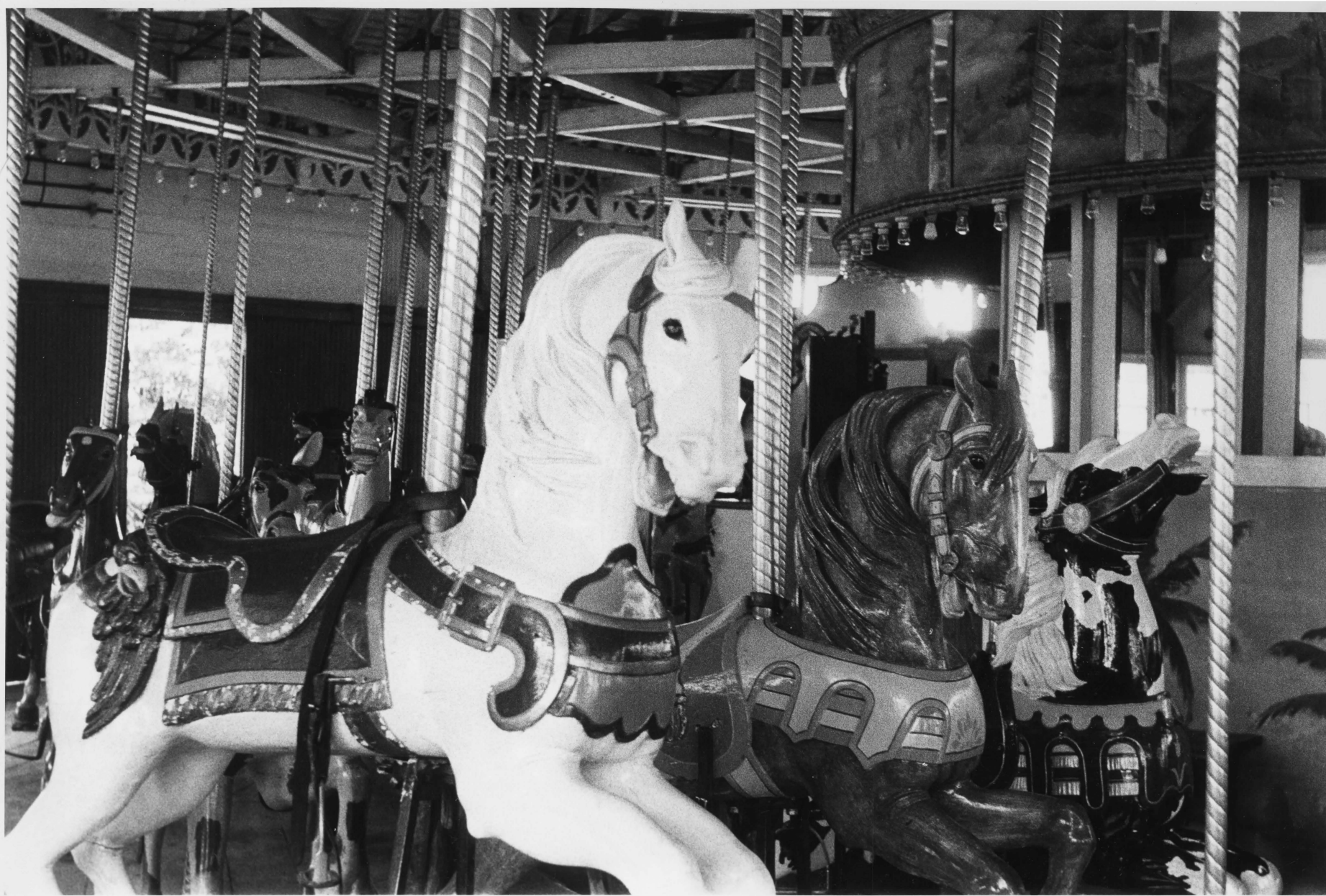


Photo 4

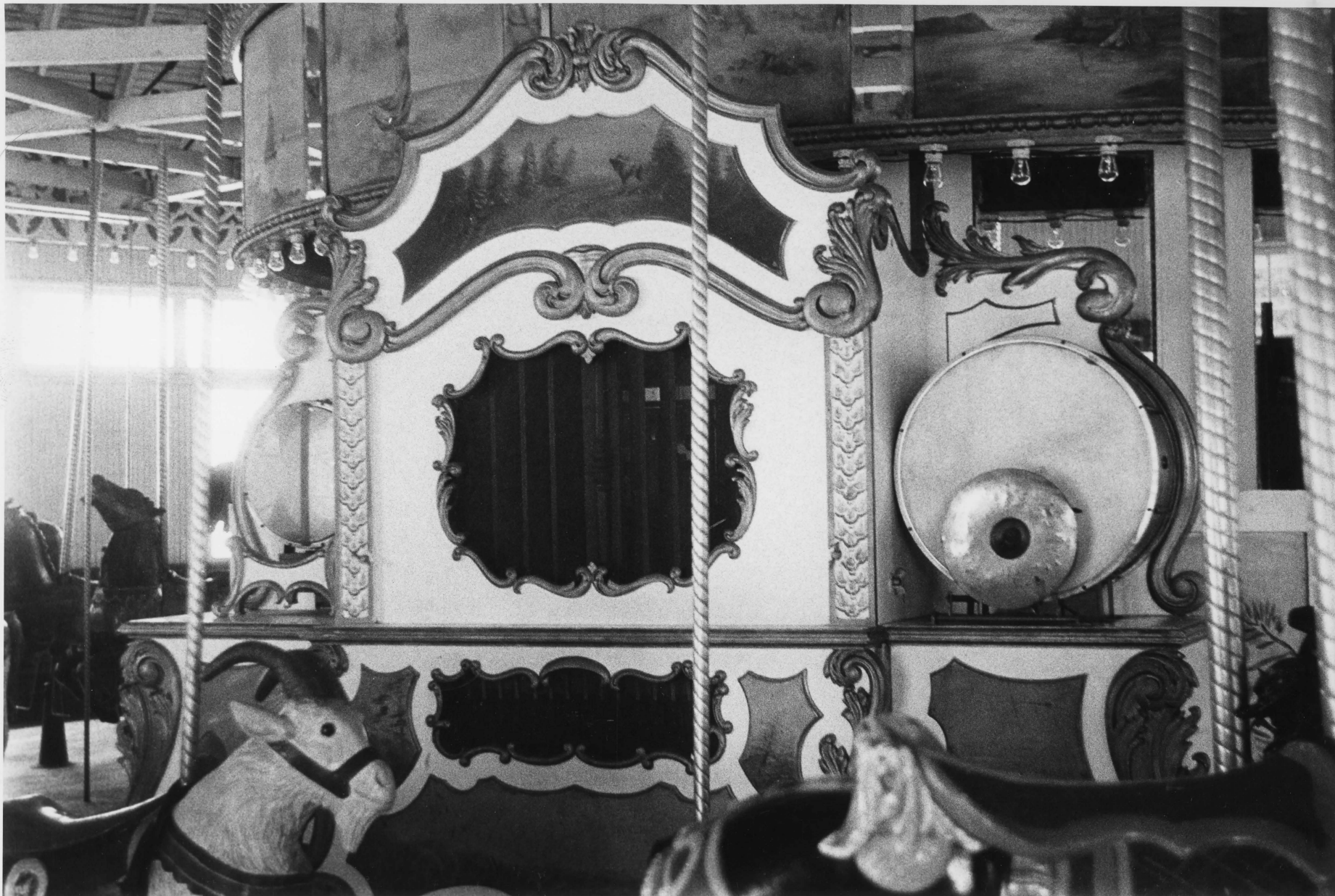


Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



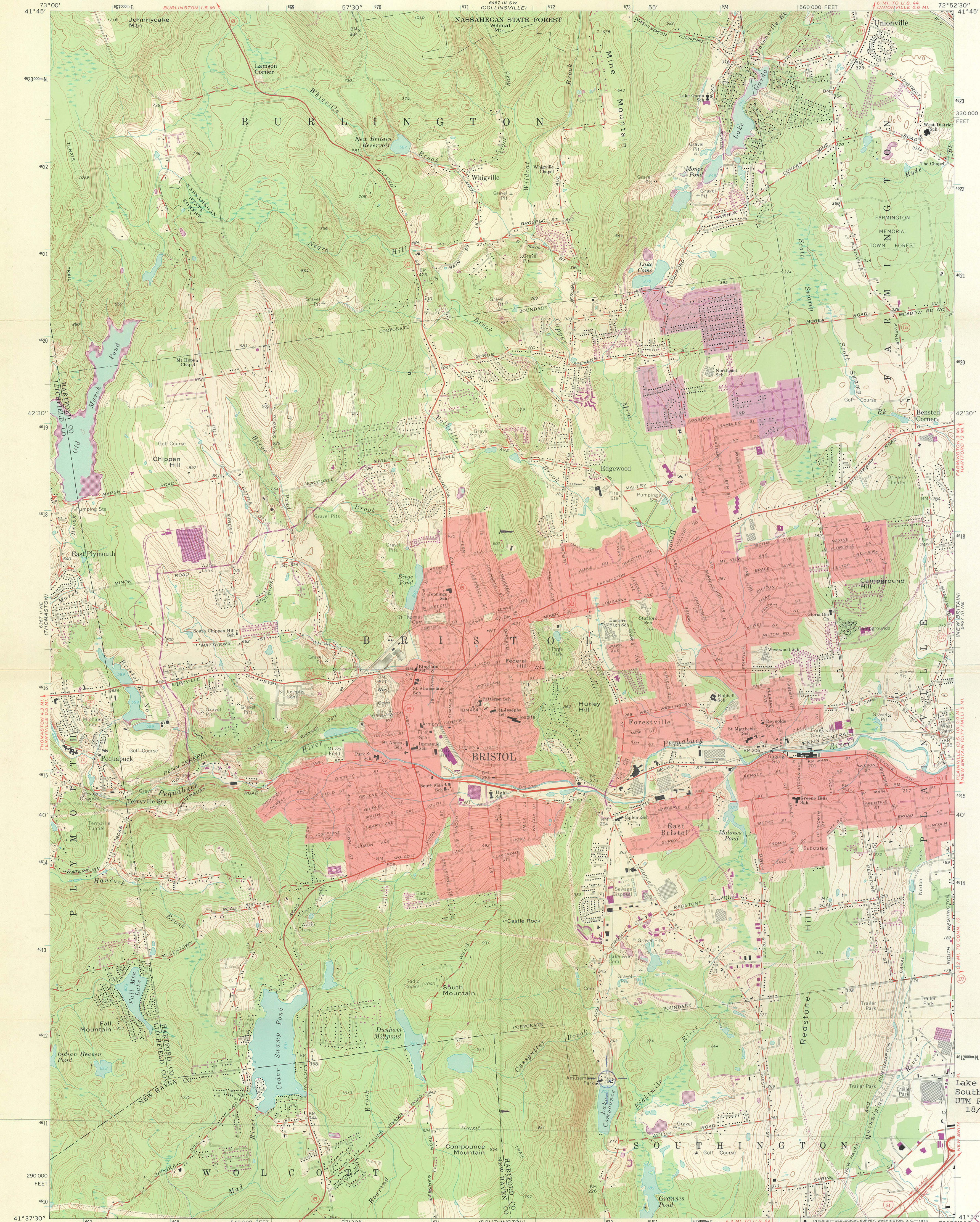
Photo 8



Photo 9

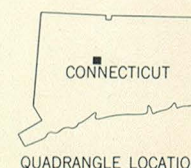
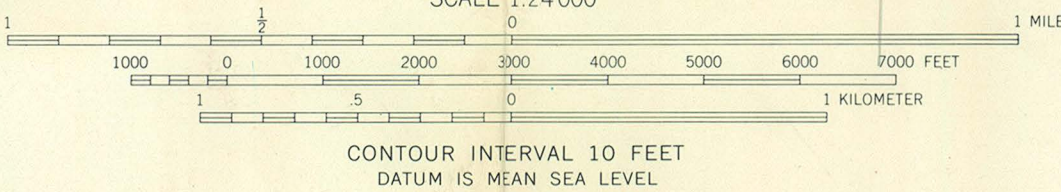
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

BRISTOL QUADRANGLE
CONNECTICUT
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Revised in cooperation with Connecticut Highway Department
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Connecticut Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1943. Revised 1966
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Connecticut coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18,
shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

UTM GRID AND 1972 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



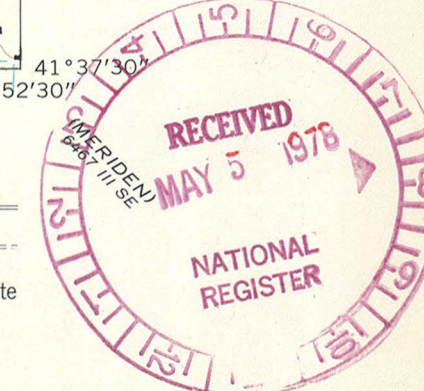
ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

BRISTOL, CONN.
N4137.5—W7252.5/7.5

1966
PHOTOREVISED 1972
AMS 6467 III NW—SERIES V816

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with
Connecticut Highway Department from aerial photographs
taken 1972. This information not field checked
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

Lake Compounce Carousel
Southington, CT
UTM Reference:
18/673010/4611580



TELEPHONE REPORT

OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

PROJECT: *Lake Compounce Carousel*

TO/FROM: *John Kerzan*

DATE: *10/17/28*

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

STAFF MEMBER: *Kerzy*

DIVISION:

REPORT: *Had as rec'd why entire park complex not included?*

John checked w/ Clark Strickland who had been around at time nomination was prepared. Clark said it was staff opinion at that time that not all bldgs of complex were eligible & that Carousel was clearly the historic resource.

May at some future time, nominate rest

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE CONNECTICUT

Date Entered DEC 12 1978

Name

Lake Compounce Carousel

Location

Southington vicinity
Hartford County

Also Notified

Honorable Lowell P. Weicker, Jr.
Honorable Abraham A. Ribicoff
Honorable Toby Moffett

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. John W. Shannahan
Director
Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

H32(413)

227 - 4 1989

Mr. John W. Shannahan
Director
Connecticut Historical
Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Mr. Shannahan:

This letter certifies that the Lake Compounce Carousel, located in Southington, Hartford County, Connecticut, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 12, 1978.

If we can provide further information or assistance, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Carol Shull

Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
Interagency Resources Division

Notary, District of Columbia

bcc: Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
413-Reading File

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN 413

FNP:B.Savage:tlg:343-9536:10-02-89

SYS:66(BLS)-CTNotary

file
copy

TLC
10/2/89
Savage
10/2/89

NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

① NAME as it appears on federal register: Lake Compounce Carousel			② OTHER NAMES:			③ date of entry: DEC 12 1978		④ county code: 03	
⑤ LOCATION street & number W of Southington on Lake Ave.		city / town Southington		vicinity of Southington		state CT		county Hartford	
⑦ OWNER <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE <input type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> MUNICIPAL <input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY <input type="checkbox"/> MULTIPLE <input type="checkbox"/> FEDERAL (agency name)		⑧ ADMINISTRATOR:		⑥ NPS REGION: NA					
⑨ EXISTING SURVEYS <input type="checkbox"/> HABS <input type="checkbox"/> HAER <input type="checkbox"/> NHL		⑩ FUNDED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		⑪ CONGRESS. DISTRICT 5th		⑫ SOURCE of NOMINATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> FEDERAL			
⑬ WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES, NAME <input type="checkbox"/> NO		⑭ WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? <input type="checkbox"/> YES, NAME <input type="checkbox"/> NO		⑮ ACREAGE		if state, who prepared form? CT Hist. Comm.			
⑯ CONDITION <input type="checkbox"/> excellent <input type="checkbox"/> good <input type="checkbox"/> fair <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> ruins <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed <input type="checkbox"/> unexcavated <input type="checkbox"/> altered <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered <input type="checkbox"/> reconstructed <input type="checkbox"/> excavated		⑰ original site <input type="checkbox"/> moved <input type="checkbox"/> unknown		⑱ features: INTERIOR <input type="checkbox"/> SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-1 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT INTACT-0 <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN-4 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPLICABLE-7 EXTERIOR <input type="checkbox"/> SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-2 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT INTACT-0 <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN-5 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPLICABLE-8 ENVIRONS <input type="checkbox"/> SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT INTACT-0 <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN-6 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPLICABLE-9					
⑲ ACCESS <input type="checkbox"/> YES-Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> YES-Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No Access <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown		⑳ ADAPTIVE USE <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		㉑ SAVED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES		IS PROPERTY A HISTORIC DISTRICT? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no			
㉒ AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-prehistoric-2 <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-historic-1 <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE-3 <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE-4 <input type="checkbox"/> ART-5		<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING-11 <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT-26 <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION-12 <input type="checkbox"/> HEALTH-27 <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS-9 <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION-10		<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCH.-15 <input type="checkbox"/> LAW-16 <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE-17 <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY-18 <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC-19 <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY-20		<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVT.-21 <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION-22 <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE-23 <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN-24 <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/CULTURAL-30 <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION-25		㉓ CLAIMS: explain 'first' <input type="checkbox"/> 'oldest' <input type="checkbox"/> 'only' <input type="checkbox"/>	
㉔ functions WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT: CURRENTLY:		㉕ dates of initial construction: major alterations: historic events:		㉖ ETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION					
㉗ architectural style(s):		㉘ architect:		㉙ master builder:		㉚ engineer:			
㉛ landscape architect / garden designer:		㉜ interior decorator:		㉝ artist:		㉞ artisan:		㉟ builder/contractor:	
㊱ NAMES give role & date PERSONAL: EVENTS: INSTITUTIONAL:									

㊲ NATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP