

A Single Horse Head From Pirates World Helps to Unfold the Mystery

Finding PTC #16 - Tracing the Trail of a Carousel's Demise



A factory photo of PTC #16, (date and location unknown), shows some atypical features for PTC. The rim has a painted art nouveau floral pattern rather than the customary bas-relief trim and rim panels. The horse in the center is draped with garlands of flowers in excess of what is typical for PTC. PTC Archive photo courtesy of Jean Bennett

By Marianne Stevens and Barbara Williams
Special to The Carousel News & Trader

While back, a man called me who said he had a Philadelphia Toboggan Company (PTC) carousel horse head that he wanted to sell. He said that he was an insurance adjuster in Florida who had been hired to survey the damage that had been done by a hurricane at Pirates World in Dania, Florida.

Pirates World was built on a flat area over a mangrove swamp. The hurricane had plowed through the amusement park. He said that when he arrived, they were piling up carousel horse parts and burning them. He asked if he could have a head and neck and was told to take whatever he

wanted – they were going to burn the rest. He took only one head and neck. He wanted \$1,000 for it, which at the time, was way over the market, so I passed. Time went by and he called again. This time the price was \$500, so I bought it.



Later on, I got curious as to what PTC carousel it came from. I had some photos that seemed to match it – PTC #16. I remembered that I had been offered second row horses for \$300 each, which I had turned down some time ago. That didn't seem to bode well for the carousel. It sounded like the owner was trying to part it out. But what had happened

to the outer row? By the time PTC #16 got to Pirates World, there wasn't much left of its original beauty.



PTC #16 at Funland in Topeka, Kansas in 1959. Marianne Stevens Collection photo

Talking with my friend, Barbara Williams, I found that she had done considerable research on PTC #16 after buying a horse from the carousel. Her research followed the carousel in its many moves, finding a downward spiral in its condition, and finally, nothing. Here is her story:

When Marianne and I talk with each other on the telephone, we drift from one carousel topic to another. One subject we always seem to come back to is the missing PTCs - carousels for which there are no known photos and nothing to suggest their fates. We know when they were made and some of their locations, but they are just gone.



The PTC #16 head at home today in New Mexico.

Carousel #16 is on PTC's inventory, published in the 1984 PTC carousel issue of Amusement Park Journal, with three locations, but no dates given – White City, Cleveland; Muncie, Indiana and Puritas Springs Park, Cleveland, Ohio. The carousel isn't on the National Carousel Association's 1970s censuses, so apparently it was gone by then.

Fast forward to 1999 when I bought a Zoller-style PTC horse. The seller in North Carolina sent Marianne's 1995 appraisal of the horse. Maybe she knew what carousel it came from. Marianne said she had deduced it was from PTC #16 and sent pictures of it at its last location, Pirates World in Florida. Sadly, it was in ruins! What had the life of this carousel been like to reduce it to such shambles?

Finding information about the carousel's locations pretty

PTC #16's Locations Time frame

- White City, Cleveland, OH – 1907 - 1909*
- West Side Park, Muncie, IN? – 1909* - ?
- Puritas Springs Park, Cleveland, OH – ? - 1929*
- Unknown – 1929* - 1955
- Joyland, DuPont City, WVA - 1955 - 1958
- Funland, Topeka, KS – 1958 - 1965*
- Pirates World, Dania, FL – 1965* - 1975*

**These dates are logical estimations, but not proven exact.*



"White City", Cleveland, Ohio.

Cleveland's White City looks to be a bustling place in this artist's rendering. The park would only last a few years.
Barbara Williams collection

much tells the story. It was a large park machine that was relocated at least seven times, a victim of wear and tear and eventually outdoor settings. While it is sad that this carousel did not survive, it has been enlightening to discover the additional locations and, thus, we now know much of the story of PTC #16. Marianne and I are pleased to be able to share that with you.



Chariot side - One of the few survivors of PTC #16. Now in the collection of Running Horse Studio.

White City, Cleveland, Ohio

White City opened in 1900, 1902 or 1905, depending on which source you reference. Located on Lake Erie, White City was first known as Manhattan Beach. The seasonal amusement park competed with the ever popular Euclid Beach, which was a mile away. Major attractions included the Shoot-the-Chutes water ride, the Scenic Railway roller coaster, Flying Airships, Bostock's Animal Show and a dance hall. In May of 1906, the park burned. It was rebuilt, only to be badly damaged in a fierce storm on July 24, 1907. The park reopened as Cleveland Beach Park, closing permanently in 1909.

West Side Park, Muncie, Indiana

Muncie's West Side Park, which started out with a band stand and refreshments, was built in 1905 by the Indiana Union Traction Company. West Side Park was one of Muncie's showplaces, with crowded trolleys transporting fun-seekers on weekends and holidays to band concerts, an open-air circular roller skating rink, balloon ascensions and the main attraction, the Triple Figure Eight Roller Coaster. Nearby, a "men only" beer garden and fight "emporium" provided an atmosphere for park goers that was in contrast to the "innocent games", namely baseball, played at the park.

In a 1936 article about the redevelopment of West Side Park as a city park, no date is given for when the amuse-

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*Above – Billboard showing the way to Puritas Springs Park.
Below – The fire that closed Puritas Park in 1958.*

Barbara Williams collection

ments shut down. The area was said to be prone to flooding, which limited “later” use of the park. There is no confirmation that PTC #16 was at West Side Park, Muncie’s amusement park, but it would seem likely.

Puritas Springs Park, Cleveland, Ohio

Cleveland’s Puritas Springs Park, a trolley park, opened in 1898. It was named for the artesian well that flowed from the ravine the park was built over. When Cleveland’s Luna Park closed in 1929, its carousel, PTC #35, a 4-row with 68 horses, was brought to Puritas Park, perhaps to replace the 3-row, 38 horse PTC #16.

Puritas’s roller coaster was The Cyclone. A testament to its name, it zipped in and out of the ravine at speeds up to 80 MPH and was known as the fastest coaster in Cleveland.

As was the case with many aging amusement parks, Puritas Springs Park began to fade after World War II. In January of 1946, tragically, the dance hall where a number of rides had been stored for the winter burned. In 1958, due to decline and another fire, the park closed and was sold to land developers. The area is now a residential neighborhood.



HE TOOK HIS BABY TO THE CARNIVAL....



The carnival grounds at the park were packed to near capacity that night in the annual show. Many visitors, including the author, were at the event. The man and woman were seen in the crowd at Joyland Park and their baby was seen in a crowd near the entrance. The man was seen in a crowd near the entrance. The woman was seen in a crowd near the entrance. The baby was seen in a crowd near the entrance.



July 19, 1958

The flowered horse in the PTC Archive photo is seen in this 1958 article from "The Charleston Daily Mail".

Courtesy of Jerry Waters, myvvhome.com/old/joyland

Joyland, DuPont City, West Virginia

Excerpted from *Joyland Park – The Beginning* by local resident, Tom Steele, @ myvvhome.com/old/joyland

"Joyland Park was developed by Johnny Denton who owned Gold Medal Shows, a carnival that toured several states and, I think, another that traveled under his name. The constant setting up and tearing down eventually takes its toll on even the best rides and equipment and it becomes too costly to continue. In Joyland, he must have felt he could extend the life of some of his aging equipment.

By today's standards, the park would be considered small, but at the time, it was quite nice. There were usually six or more full-size rides, including the bumper cars, Ferris wheel, Tilt-a-Whirl, octopus, carousel and the Joyland

railroad that nearly encircled the park, and for a while there was even a portable skating rink. There were also numerous kiddie rides including live ponies and a roller coaster that always seemed too large for most kids and too small for most adults.

1950s ad for Joyland Park in "The Charleston Mail".

Courtesy of Jerry Waters, myvvhome.com/old/joyland



This armored horse is seen in Marianne's picture on page 36. "The Charleston Daily Mail, August 5, 1955."

Courtesy of Jerry Waters, myvvhome.com/old/joyland

One ride that was truly memorable was the 150 year-old German-made carousel (PTC #16) Denton brought down from Cleveland for the grand opening on May 21, 1955.

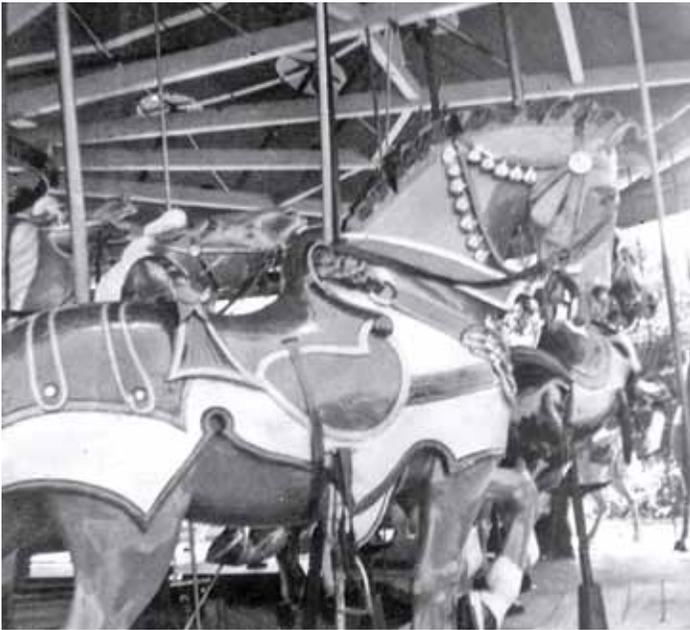
A newspaper account described some of the ride's 36 horses, "...almost as large as a real pony. All of the horses have life-like glass eyes, something you don't see nowadays on Merry-Go-Rounds". (Perhaps in reference to wooden-eyed Herschell horses).

Johnny Denton's decision to use old equipment at Joyland came at a price and the park's reputation eventually suffered. Breakdowns are costly, not only to revenue, but also the image – and possibly even to safety. Ride operators sometimes had to double as mechanics and mechanics as ride operators and the distinction between the two, at times, seemed blurred, giving the park a "dirty" look. Toward the end of Joyland, a child was fatally injured when he stepped into the path of an approaching park train. Coming on top of mounting problems, the accident possibly hastened the parks closing (in 1958)."

Joyland, a 32 acre tract along US 60 at the entrance to DuPont City, outside of Charleston, became the site of DuPont High School.



Joyland Park, DuPont City, West Virginia. Rob Ryan photo, courtesy of Jerry Waters, myvvhome.com/old/joyland



Above and right are armored horses on PTC #16 while at Funland. Photos on this page courtesy of Marianne Stevens

Funland, Topeka, Kansas

Horace G. Frantz opened Funland with just pony rides around 1955. It was located behind the Highland Crest Shopping Center in Topeka. The carousel would have been installed sometime around 1958.

Mr. Frantz wrote to Fred Fried on December 4, 1964: "I found it (the carousel) in a park owned by John Denton outside Charleston, West Virginia. I purchased the ride for its beautiful horses...I put it under canvas as I could not afford to put up the roof after shipping it here.

"The ride is 46 ft. in diameter. It has 38 horses and four chariots. Fourteen of the horses are the large stationary kind and these are on the outside. The last year we operated was 1963 and the ride was in operation until our closing date October 2nd. The horses are all housed inside. The whole ride



Above and right, rare black & white photos of PTC #16 while in Topeka. Marianne Stevens Collection

needs some work done on it to bring it back to its original condition but it is operative as is. The platform and outside scenery need to be repaired or replaced and the ride would need a new top, though I think it should only be sold to someone where it could go under a permanent roof and be fixed up the way it should be. The drive is smooth. It is electric with an Auchy Friction clutch...I will consider any reasonable proposal for the purchase of this ride." The asking price was \$5,210.00

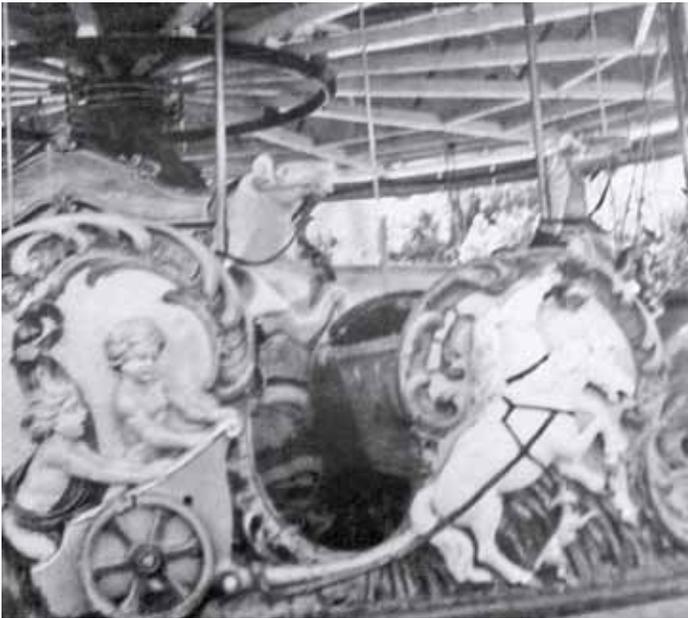
In a follow-up letter (shown next page) of May 31, 1965, to Fred

Right - Horace Frantz's description of the carousel when for sale.

Frederick Fried Archive, Barbara Williams collection

46 ft. Merry-Go-Round: Mfg by Philadelphia Toboggan Co. 1904. The beauty of this ride is the horses, all hand carved each different. Auchy clutch provides smooth drive. Electric 3 phase 15 HP motor. Platforms, scenery, horses need repair but an outstanding attraction for any permanent location. Steel trusses for roof 80 ft. in diameter are included if wanted. Original cost in excess of \$50,000.00. Our sale price \$5,210.00.





The restored chariot side is seen on page 33.

Fried, Frantz writes - "Since writing you last, I have had a chance to look at your book (*A Pictorial History of the Carousel*)...I believe many of the horses on my machine are as fine if not nicer than most you show. These are the outside large horses. The middle row of jumpers are not quite as elaborate and the inner row is the plainest of all...We have not sold the ride as yet and though I would like to sell it as a



A blanket-draped, roached mane stander.

unit, I may just sell the horses to people interested in them, either collectors or people using them for decoration."

According to Jerry Bowles, whose family ran Topeka's Joyland Amusement Park, after Horace Frantz sold out at Funland, he went to work at Disneyworld as a caretaker of the horses.



Horace Frantz's second letter to Fred Fried. Frederick Fried Archive, Barbara Williams collection

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***Pirates World,
Dania, FL,
March '71.
Photo notes
read "all
horses were
replaced with
Herschell
aluminum
except for
inner row."***

**Eric Beheim photo
Marianne Stevens
Collection**

Pirates World, Dania, Florida

In the 1960s, 110 acres of swampland in Dania, Florida, was filled in and became Pirates World. Thirty acres were designated as amusement park space, 30 were for the parking lot, the remainder was set aside for a future shopping center-hotel-recreation site. The intent of the developers, Pirate Ports of Florida, Inc., was to emulate Disneyland and Six Flags. They decided to stay away from the popular western motif, and instead chose pirates as the theme. The park was divided into specific areas, each representing a locale where pirates were notorious. There was the Jamaica area, the New Orleans area, Fort Royale, The Spanish Main, the China Sea and the Barbary Coast.

In 1965, staff was in place to start setting up the rides for

a spring 1966 opening, but rainy weather and delayed deliveries pushed it back to March of 1967. Pirates World's rides were described as "experienced" – in other words, used, coming from different sources:

- **Log Flume** - New York World's Fair (1964-65)
- **Grand National Steeplechase - Steeplechase Ride**, Coney Island, New York
- **Swiss Rope Way** - Von Roll Sky Ride, Legend City, Phoenix, Arizona
- **Mardi Gras Carousel** - Funland, Topeka, Kansas
- **Wild Beetle Race (Wild Mouse)** - Olympic Park, Irvington, New Jersey
- **Flying Crow's Nest** - Lover's Coach Ride, Ocean Playland, Ocean City, Maryland
- **Pirate Shooting Gallery** - Freedomland, New York



In the first 120 to 130 days of operation, Pirates World had 300,000 visitors. In 1969, the park had 600,000 visitors. With a one-price policy of \$3.50 for adults and \$2.50 for children, the park was a popular entertainment center, drawing from Miami and Fort Lauderdale.

Perhaps in anticipation of the 1971 opening of Disneyworld, in 1970 Pirates World in-

Overview of Pirates World. The tracks of Coney Island's famed Steeplechase ride is seen at the far left. PTC 16 is under the red and white striped tent top.

Barbara Williams collection



Metal Herschells surrounding a PTC inner row horse, center, are mounted on stationary poles in place of the standers.

**Eric Beheim photo
Marianne Stevens Collection**

The Pirates World postcard (bottom right) is copyrighted 1967. The standers are still on the carousel along with the simple, sleek blue rounding board trim. Right - The carousel enlarged from the postcard shows the known surviving stander at the far left.

Barbara Williams collection



Pirates World logo figure.

**Credit: State Library and Archives of Florida,
Barbara Williams collection**

The real antique carousel next to the replica antique car ride at Pirates World.

Barbara Williams collection





The deterioration was drastic in a relatively short time as is evident in these two photos.

**Eric Beheim photos
Marianne Stevens Collection**

roduced a new approach towards maintaining popularity of the park. “I am determined to bring to the Gold Coast the biggest names in rock groups and family entertainment”, stated the new entertainment director. Top rock groups appeared, including Country Joe and the Fish, Led Zeppelin, David Bowie, Alice Cooper and the Grateful Dead. With the concerts came crowd control and drug-use issues. The invasion of the hippie culture was not well received by parents seeking a place with family values. Despite heading in a direction from which recovery as a family entertainment

center was not likely, Pirates World continued to have rock concerts through the 1973 season.

Ravaged by the elements and suffering from a loss of revenue, Pirates World went into bankruptcy in 1973, with the rides being offered for sale in Amusement Business in September of that year. Pirates World officially closed in 1975. In 1978, plans for a biblical theme park were underway, but fell apart shortly thereafter. The land was sold and rezoned for residential use.



South Florida Hurricanes

Dania is located in hot, humid south Florida, one mile inland, fifteen miles from Miami and an equal distance from Fort Lauderdale. Like the rest of Florida and surrounding area, it is subject to hurricanes. Between 1965 and 1975, during which time Pirates World had rides, there were ten storms, either hurricanes or notable tropical depressions, that hit hard in the southern part of Florida. Marianne and I were not able to pinpoint which storm ravaged Pirates World. There were several to choose from.

Coincidentally, the horse I bought came with a story that was not unlike Marianne’s account of how she acquired the head and neck of one of the outside row standers. My horse was said to have been rescued from a bulldozer at Pirates World. Marianne and I are of the opinion that it may be the only surviving stander from PTC #16.

Pirates World was flimsy compared to Disneyworld

**Credit: State Library and Archives of Florida,
Barbara Williams collection**



The unrestored stander from PTC #16. The outside rear, lower, detached leg is from a different horse. This horse's hoof right rear would have been flat on the platform.

Jordan Williams photo

Letter – Horace G. Frantz to Fried Fried, December 4, 1964, Fred and Mary Fried Archive, Smithsonian Institute

Letter – Horace G. Frantz to Fred Fried, May 31, 1965, Fred and Mary Fried Archive, Smithsonian Institute

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Pirates World

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Jordan Williams photo