



The Grand Carousel

The large four-abreast carousel was built by George Kremer, who bought the horses for his older Loeff platform from wood-carver Charles Carmel. Carmel was born in Russia in 1865, immigrated to the United States in 1883, and carved carousel figures in his shop in Brooklyn until his death in 1931.

The Knoebels Carousel was built in 1913

at North Beach, Long Island, where it operated with two other machines. Henry Knoebel, the park's founder, purchased the machine in 1941 from Riverside Park in Rahway, New Jersey. Carrying 63 horses and three Loeff chariots, it is one of the largest carousels in the world. It is maintained to the highest possible standards for an operating machine.

Tradition plays an important part in the operation of Knoebels, especially at the carousels. At the Grand Carousel you can still catch the BRASS RING for a free ride. Don't be disappointed if all you catch are steel rings . . . it's still great fun!

The Organs

The Grand Carousel is accompanied by three organs. The largest was manufactured in 1888 by Frati and Company, Berlin, Germany. It was originally a barrel organ, playing a large pinned cylinder like a music box. In the 1920's it was converted to play the more versatile paper roll system, using 61 key Artizan rolls.

The smaller organ on the outside of the carousel was built in 1910 by the German firm of Gebruder Bruder, style 107, and was sold in the USA by the Berni Organ Company, New York. It still plays the original folding cardboard music available only in Europe. This organ and all its music were extensively damaged during the 1972 flood, when it was in the center of the carousel. Both the organ and music have since been restored.

The third organ is located in the center of the carousel. It is a Wilhem Bruder organ, model 79, and was originally with Philadelphia Toboggan Co. carousel #41, at Ross Farms, Pittsburgh, then Wildwood, NJ. In 1977 that carousel was sold at auction, however, the organ moved to Clementon, NJ, with PTC carousel #49. In 1994 that carousel was also broken up and Knoebels bought the organ. Sometime prior to 1957 it was converted to a Wurlitzer 125 duplex roll system. The organ was restored in 1996.

The Kiddieland Carousel

The two-abreast carousel in Kiddieland was carved by the firm of Stein and Goldstein. From their shop in Brooklyn these two men carved carousel figures from 1910 to 1918. This carousel was purchased in 1948 from Croop's Glen Park, Hunlock Creek, PA, by Lawrence Knoebel, a son of the park's founder, Henry Knoebel. Lawrence operated it for three seasons at nearby fairs and carnivals. It was sold in 1950 to Sunset Beach Park, Harvey's Lake, PA. Later it was purchased by George Perluk of Beach Haven, PA. It was purchased by Knoebels and restored for the 1976 season.

The S&G Organ

This organ was originally made by the Bruder Firm of Waldkirch, Germany around 1900. It was converted to play American made pinned cylinders by Wurlitzer and shipped from their factory April 24, 1914 as a style 18C barrel organ, serial number 2865. It was converted to a duplex paper roll system and shipped by Wurlitzer to Wilkes Barre, PA on May 13, 1925. It first appeared at Knoebels in the late 1920's with the park's first carousel, operated by a concessionaire, Joseph Gallagher. It went into storage in the 1930's, where it fell victim to vandals, thieves and countless squirrels and rodents. It's facade became the front of a ticket booth in Kiddieland.

Restoration began in 1983, and on March 7, 1986 the organ played for the first time in 50 years. A set of bells has been added and the original 150 duplex roll frame was restored and returned to the organ, as was the facade. It took its place with the S&G carousel in 1988, following the relocation of the carousel from the Spacewalk site to where it is now, in a permanent building.

Phoenix Organ ~ Wurlitzer 165

This organ was built in 1907 as a style 27 barrel organ by the DeKleist firm of North Tonawanda, New York. It was converted by Wurlitzer in 1914 to play style 165 paper rolls.

The organ was purchased by Knoebels in 1948 from Croop's Glen Park in Hunlock Creek, PA.

This is the most complex of all the Knoebels organs with many extra percussion effects and automatic stops not found on other organs. It plays 12 hours a day, 7 days a week whenever Knoebels is open. The library of 165 rolls for this organ is the most complete for any 165 organ.

C-1 Artizan Organ

This organ was purchased in Tampa, FL in 1992. It was last used at Bell's Amusement Park in Tulsa, OK, to provide music for the large Parker Carousel which operated there from 1981 to 1985. It has an Artizan C-1 front, but the mechanism and pipes are Wurlitzer, and it plays Wurlitzer style 150 rolls.

105 Wurlitzer

On May 13, 1929, Wurlitzer shipped a style 105 band organ, serial number 4170, to Spillman Engineering Company, North Tonawanda, NY. This was to complete a three abreast carousel sold to Camden Park, in Huntington, WV. The carousel and organ remained there until February 8, 1992, when it was auctioned off in Tampa, FL.

Knoebels attended the auction, purchasing several horses and the organ, which hadn't played in years. It was restored in 1995, including new artwork and screenpainting. The 105 Wurlitzer plays the original style 125 paper rolls.

Tangley Calliophone

Model CA-43, this instrument was built by the Tangley Company of Muscatine, Iowa, in the 1920's. It features 43 brass "whistles" playable from a keyboard or automatically from a type "A" paper roll. This is a typical circus calliope, intended more for use on a parade wagon or mid-way than on a carousel.

The Tangley was purchased by Knoebels on February 13, 1988 at the auction of the final remains of Playland Park in San Antonio, Texas. This is the same park which was the original home of the Phoenix Roller Coaster, then known as the Rocket. Of the two Tangleys at the sale, this one was in rougher condition, but was the one used at Playland Park.

The calliope was restored in 1989.

Wurlitzer Caliola

This organ contains 44 wooden flute pipes and is more of a carousel organ than the Tangley. Like the Tangley, it can be played from a keyboard or automatically from a Wurlitzer Caliola roll or an APP roll, used on many Wurlitzer nickelodeons. It is one of only 62 ever made.

Serial number 4111, this instrument was originally shipped, complete with a gasoline engine, to Mercersburg, PA on August 15, 1928.

The Caliola was completely submerged for several days during the 1972 flood, creating a restoration nightmare. Restoration was finally completed February, 1987.

Limonaire Street Organ

This organ was purchased in 1996. It is a Limonaire organ of 35 keys, built around 1920. A Dutch rebuilder supplied another front for it, and it can now be run by electric motor, or by hand with a large wheel, so that it can be pushed through the park and played at will, cord or not! It plays 35 key folding cardboard music, made in Holland.

The Carousel Museum

In 1992, Knoebels opened the Carousel Museum, located near the Tilt-A-Whirl. This unique addition to the park features over 50 carousel figures, scenery panels, chariot sides and other memorabilia from carousels of long ago. Whether you want to spend an afternoon learning about carousel history, or just want to be entertained looking at the past, this free exhibit has something for everyone.

The Brass Ring carousel shop, adjacent to the Museum, sells cassette tapes and CDs of Knoebels' organs.



Want to Know More?

You'll find these resources helpful:

Carousel Organ Association of America (COAA)

<http://www.coaa.us>
email: info@coaa.us

National Carousel Association

<http://www.nca-usa.org>



Carousels and Organs