



Smithsonian Institution

Smithsonian Institution Archives

Proceedings of the Board of Regents Meeting – September 21, 1973

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SMITHSONIAN'S DENTZEL CARROUSEL

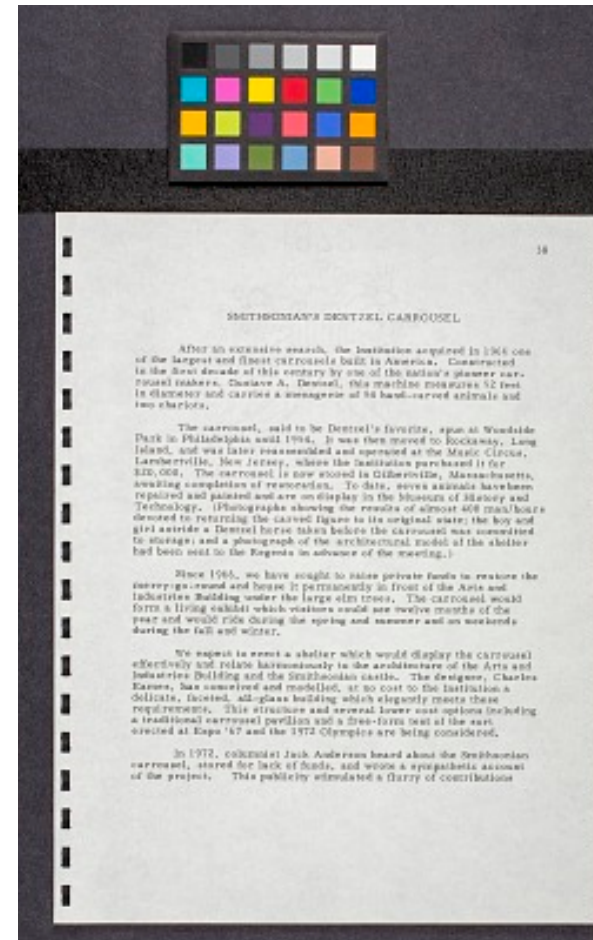
After an extensive search, the Institution acquired in 1966 one of the largest and finest carousels built in America. Constructed in the first decade of this century by one of the nation's pioneer carousel makers, Gustave A. Dentzel, this machine measures 52 feet in diameter and carries a menagerie of 54 hand-carved animals and two chariots.

The carousel, said to be Dentzel's favorite, spun at Woodside Park in Philadelphia until 1954. It was then moved to Rockaway, Long Island, and was later reassembled and operated at the Music Circus, Lambertville, New Jersey, where the Institution purchased it for \$20,000. The carousel is now stored in Gilbertville, Massachusetts, awaiting completion of restoration. To date, seven animals have been repaired and painted and are on display in the Museum of History and Technology. (Photographs showing the results of almost 400 man/hours devoted to returning the carved figure to its original state; the boy and girl astride a Dentzel horse taken before the carousel was committed to storage; and a photograph of the architectural model of the shelter had been sent to the Regents in advance of the meeting.)

Since 1966, we have sought to raise private funds to restore the merry-go-round and house it permanently in front of the Arts and Industries Building under the large elm trees. The carousel would form a living exhibit which visitors could see twelve months of the year and would ride during the spring and summer and on weekends during the fall and winter.

We expect to erect a shelter which would display the carousel effectively and relate harmoniously to the architecture of the Arts and Industries Building and the Smithsonian castle. The designer, Charles Eames, has conceived and modelled, at no cost to the Institution a delicate, faceted, all-glass building which elegantly meets these requirements. This structure and several lower cost options including a traditional carousel pavilion and a free-form tent of the sort erected at Expo '67 and the 1972 Olympics are being considered.

In 1972, columnist Jack Anderson heard about the Smithsonian carousel, stored for lack of funds, and wrote a sympathetic account of the project. This publicity stimulated a flurry of contributions



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