

# Spokane's Looff Carousel

## Education Guide

Second Revision  
April 1, 2004

This document is available on the web at <http://spokanecarousel.org>



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## **Introduction**

Lively, merry band organ music filling the air, bejeweled and brightly painted horses whirling around leaping and falling as they go, smiling children, their hair wind-tossed as they cling hard to their galloping steeds reaching for the elusive gold ring, happy adults filled with nostalgia, reliving fun filled times. These are the sights and sounds of a visit to Spokane's Historic Loeff Carousel!

If you live in or around Spokane or ever have in the last century, you have certainly heard about the carousel, or as earlier generations called it *the merry go round* and very likely you have enjoyed a ride on it. Few, however, really know very much about it except that it is old and has been around here as long as anyone can remember; some will mention something about Nat Park.

The purpose of this lesson is to illustrate how the history of the city of Spokane is in many ways intimately connected to the history of the carousel and hopefully spark an interest in it as an artistic treasure as well as a fun amusement ride.

## **Student Objectives**

1. To trace the connections between the Spokane carousel and the development of the city from the early 1900's to the present.
2. To appreciate the Spokane carousel for the historic and artistic gem that it is.
3. To describe how and why the Spokane carousel came to be on the National Register of Historic Places. Note: The complete documentation for the National Register is attached.
4. To develop a generational empathy i.e. The Child of 1909 enjoyed his/her ride on the carousel in the same way as the child of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **History of the Carousel**

The history of the city of Spokane and the history of the carousel are closely aligned. About the time the city by the falls was first being settled, pioneer businessmen having been attracted to the site as a power source for a sawmill, a young German immigrant by the name of Charles Loeff stepped off a ship in New York harbor. This young man, trained as a furniture maker in his homeland, soon turned his woodcarving talents to the construction of carousels in his spare time. This sideline soon became his full-time enterprise. His business thrived and a few years later he became one of the foremost creators of carousels (and other amusement rides) in the country.

In 1907 while he was in Seattle contracting to build a carousel for that city he was persuaded to venture to eastern Washington where he was hired to build a carousel for Spokane as well.

He contracted to build a carousel for the local trolley company, a subsidiary of the Washington Water Power Company. In the early 1900's, many cities had street car lines in the days before cars became commonplace and to promote ridership on weekends trolley companies build amusement parks. In Spokane, one such park was Natatorium Park, so called because among its attractions was a *natatorium* (actually a rather pretentious name for a swimming pool!) This park was located along the Spokane River in a beautiful wooded area and incidentally at the end of the Boone Street trolley.

In 1909 Loeff completed the construction of the Spokane carousel, reportedly the last one he himself helped carve, and he requested payment from the trolley company. His asking price was \$20,000, a sum the company felt was too high. This dispute over the cost of the carousel resulted in some negotiations between the parties and as a result, Loeff's son-in-law was to become the operator of the carousel as well as the other park concessions on a percentage basis.

Louis Vogel, Loeff's son-in-law, proved to be an able operator and business was so good that in 1929 he was able to purchase the park from the power company for \$100,000. His son Lloyd worked at the park with his father and when Louis died in 1952 he continued park operations for another ten years.

By then the great age of city amusement parks had passed and Nat Park like so many in other cities fell on hard times and had to declare bankruptcy.

In 1962 the park was purchased by the El Katif Shrine for \$75,000. Vogel however, did not include the carousel in the price. Two years later the Shriners decided to reopen the park and retained long time park employee Charles William (Bill) Oliver as its manager.

Oliver had a life long love affair with the carousel. Born in 1913, he had ridden it as a toddler, and as a young boy he earned free rides by retrieving tossed rings from around the carousel floor. As an adult, an electrician by trade, he worked on the park's rides, eventually becoming vice-president and manager.

Lloyd Vogel who was a good friend of Oliver willed the carousel to him when he died in 1964. Lloyd knew that the carousel would be well cared for by Oliver!

The Shrine, however, didn't have any better luck trying to keep the park operating in the black than Vogel. In 1968 the park was sold, the rides were dismantled and sold, the carousel was put in storage and the site became a mobile home park.

Oliver desperately wanted the carousel to remain in Spokane and not be sold off. He negotiated with the city to purchase the carousel and use it in the upcoming world's fair, Expo '74. After much discussion it was decided not to include the carousel in Expo because it was felt that with the numbers of people in attendance the excessive ridership might prove to be too much a strain on the old equipment and wooden animals. Instead a new pavilion structure would be built and used during the fair as a Bavarian restaurant and following the fair it could serve as a permanent home to the carousel. Oliver's efforts to sell the carousel to the city proved difficult. His asking price, \$40,000, seemed too high to some, and various fund raising schemes had only limited success. Oliver was determined, however, that his beloved carousel remain in Spokane. The deal was

finalized when Oliver agreed to extend to the city a \$40,000 interest free loan to be paid over five years.

During this period Oliver was supervising the restoration of the carousel horses, giraffe, tiger and two chariots. Finally on May 8, 1975, Bill Oliver was on hand to ring the bell to start the carousel in motion in its new pavilion in Riverfront Park. His passionate dream fulfilled, a life's work completed, he could rest. Within the week Bill Oliver, the carousel's greatest friend and protector was dead of a heart attack.

Two years later in recognition of its historic and artistic value the Loeff carousel was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In the twenty-five years since Expo the carousel has undergone on-going restorations, modernizations and maintenance. The ridership is far beyond what anyone had imagined. When you realize that the carousel is ninety years and still being used as it was intended to be, it is truly remarkable.

The Spokane carousel today consists of fifty-four horses, one tiger, one giraffe and two chariots on a three abreast machine.

The horses are all jumpers and make six jumps each revolution. The tiger is very rare, one of only three in existence, and the only one on an operating carousel. The 1907 Adolphe Ruth and Sohn band organ sits in the center of the enclosed façade with more than 300 pipes and is the equivalent of a 60-piece band. It recently underwent a complete rebuild.

During the past decade the carousel has been fortunate to have other individuals who value the carousel in much the way that Bill Oliver did. One such person is Betty Largent, resident artist and restorationist. She is able to keep these ancient creatures looking as splendid as the day they were delivered to Nat Park. With continued loving care the Spokane carousel should continue to delight future generations as it has in the past.

### ***Carousel Trivia and Interesting Facts***

1. The carousel was a discovery of the Crusaders during the Middle Ages when they saw horsemen in Asia playing a serious “war game”. The word “carousel” itself means “little war” in Italian.
2. There is strong evidence to suggest that President Eisenhower sanded newly carved horses in preparation for painting. As a young boy, the carousel factory was located across the street from his home in Abilene, Kansas.
3. The expression “head man” originated in the carousel industry, referring to the most talented and experienced wood carver, who was responsible for carving the carousel animal’s head.
4. The carousels in America rotate in a counter clockwise direction, hence the most elaborate decorations and carvings are on the right side. This is the side that customers will see first when they enter the carousel pavilion.
5. Carousels in America had long suffered from neglect and were in danger of totally disappearing before a man named Frederick Fried wrote a book entitled A Pictorial History of the Carousel in 1964. This book single-handedly revived interest in classic carousels as works of art and led to efforts to preserve them.
6. Charles I.D. Loeff’s middle initials were just that! When he entered the United States as an immigrant he was informed he needed a middle name for “I.D.”, hence that became his middle name.
7. Of the 6000 or so carousels in operation during the height of the carousel age in 1930, only about 150 remain today.
8. One of the myths surrounding the carousel was that it was presented to Loeff’s daughter Emma as a wedding present. Actually, Emma was married five years before the carousel was built!

### ***Suggested Teaching Activities***

Provide a brief introduction to the lesson and an overview of what is to be taught. Explain the objectives of the lesson. On a city map, locate the site of the carousel in Riverfront Park and also its original site at the west end of Boone Avenue along the river. Note the close connection to the primary geographic feature of the city, the river. Present the content of the lesson through readings, explanations, brief lecture and discussion. Use the attached National Register Nomination form as a primary historical source.

Have students talk to parents, grandparents and others who may have lived in the Spokane area for many years about their experiences with the carousel.

Find out more about carousels by reading about them in the books listed below.

Arrange for a field trip to the carousel and a presentation by knowledgeable park staff and for a fun ride on the historic machine.

## **Sources**

Fraley, Tobin. The Great American Carousel, Nina Fraley, 1994

Fried, Frederick. Pictorial History of the Carousel, Vestal Press Ltd, N.Y., 1962

Manns, William. Shank, Peggy. Painted Ponies, Zion International Publishing Co., N.Y. 1986.

Sweeny, Norene M., "The Sparkle of Spokane," The Carousel News & Trader, Nov., 1993, Vol. 9, No. 11.

**National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form**

Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1978 19

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Natatorium Carousel

AND OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Spokane Falls Boulevard - opposite Howard

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY/TOWN

Spokane

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th - Thomas S. Foley

STATE

Washington

VICINITY OF

CODE

COUNTY

Spokane

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
BUILDING(S)	PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
STRUCTURE	BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
City of Spokane

STREET & NUMBER  
N. 221 Wall

CITY/TOWN  
Spokane

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Washington

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE  
REGISTER OF DEEDS  
Spokane County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER  
W1116 Broadway

CITY/TOWN  
Spokane

STATE  
Washington

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE  
1974

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

CITY/TOWN  
Olympia

STATE  
Washington



## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>1968-1975</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

One of the few remaining carousels from the golden age of their design, the gilded and elaborately carved Spokane "merry-go-round" is said to be the last operating carousel designed by Charles I. D. Loeff. Loeff, a Danish wood carver, was the second major designer of carousels in America, creating the first Coney Island "merry-go-round". Loeff was the only maker of carousels who could complete the entire operation alone, both setting the machinery and carving the animals.

The carousel was originally located on the north side of the Spokane River in a privately owned amusement area, the Natatorium Park. The park was a heavily wooded playground of the city until the late 1960's when it was converted to use as a trailer village. The owners for much of that period were the Vogels - daughter, son-in-law and grandson of Charles Loeff.

Spokane is a city centered on a river. Majestic falls and islands provide the focal point for much of the city's early and present life. Facing the big island, Havermale (site of the Great Northern Railway depot), and the Falls, is Spokane Falls Boulevard. When known as Trent (as the eastern portion remains), the street was commonly referred to as "Skid Row". The pawn shops and seedy store fronts of that era have disappeared, replaced by vibrant and active businesses.

Riverfront Park, substituted for the less attractive features of the district and the site of Spokane's Expo '74, occupies some seven blocks of the Boulevard on the north, all the islands and approximately six blocks along the north bank of the River. The park is an integral part of the revitalization of Spokane's business district. With that intent, many of the permanent structures in the park were designed for use after Expo '74. The clock tower of the Great Northern Depot, in the center of the park, was retained for Expo '74 as a reminder of the historic past of Havermale Island, formerly the site of substantial railroading activity. An attractive portion of the design is the rechanneling of the Spokane River to form a lagoon, or fore bay, of water surrounded by concrete. Nine steps terrace from the carousel down to the lagoon.

The carousel's latest home, designed for it in 1973, (replacing the building designed for it by Loeff in 1909), is a single story steel, glass, and concrete structure. An Octagon with a concrete slab foundation, it has five glass walls frontally, with the two solid diagonal plank walls separated by the glass wall facing the lagoon on the south. Entrance and exit are obtained through the east and west glass walls. The glass walls can be opened to permit greater air circulation during warm weather. Steel beams support the pyramidal roof.

Along the interior walls are tiers of benches for spectators. Maintenance facilities and restrooms are located on the solid walls. A clown face is located on the northeast wall to catch the discarded rings from the ring arm, which is located west of the carousel. The original housing was not moved because of complications and difficulties along the proposed path. It was a wood frame structure polygonal in plan with windows set into movable panels, a feature incorporated into the replacement structure.

The 25 ton carousel is a doughnut-shaped polygon with leaping horses surrounding a unique central pavilion which encloses the control mechanism and band organ. Three tiers of diminishing size horses are suspended on brass poles above the pie shaped deck sections and connected to ornamental outer cresting. The sections of deck are 4'7" wide

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at the inside and 7'10" on the outside. The 20 sections have an outside circumference of 156.6' and a diameter of 54' at the crestings.

The 18 tons of machinery are driven by a motor through a series of belts, idler wheels drive wheels, drive shafts and gears. The prime mover consists of a 15 HP, 220 Volt, 3 phase motor. Power is transferred from this motor to the drive assembly through a 28' long by 3 3/4" wide single ply, flat belt to a 3'4" circular spoke idler wheel which runs continually.

The following excerpt from a Spokane Recreation Department brochure describes the operation of the original and still extant machinery. "As the machine is started, the operator pulls the black throttle stick, which transfers the drive belt, from the idler wheel very slowly onto the drive wheel. The drive wheel, which is the same size as the idler wheel now begins to move. The drive wheel is connected to a 4 1/2" x 2" horizontal drive shaft with a 7 1/4" tapered drive gear, with 3" teeth. This gear turns an 18" matching tapered flat gear, which is solidly connected to a 10'9" by 2 1/4" vertical drive shaft, which in turn transfers drive power through a 14" horizontal drive gear. This gear is matched to 10 equal sections of 54" full gear, which are bolted together, equidistant from the center shaft to form a 45' sectional ring gear, around the Carousel, just inside the interior wall panels. This ring gear is fastened to the underside of the 20 sweeps (ribs), which make up the overhead grid of the Carousel."

"The brake assembly is very simple. It consists of a circular (approximate) 20" piece of 4 x 4 shaped to fit the drive wheel and lined with a 1/4" piece of leather to provide braking surface to the wheel. The brake is applied by the operator through a fulcrum and cable assembly which is locked into place on a notched upright 10" tall with teeth corresponding to the plate on the brake lever. There is a spring between the cable end and the solid brake lever which takes up any (excess) pressure if the operator accidentally sticks the plate in the wrong notch. No matter what, the machine cannot stop in less than 2 1/2 revolutions". It usually takes 3 1/2 revolutions to get up speed and 3 1/2 to halt. A top operator should be able to start and stop the machine at the same location. The machine travels at 12 1/2-15 miles per hour, six revolutions per minute. Each outside horse makes 6 leaps per circle, one leap at the brass ring arm.

While there are 54 leaping horses, there are two equidistant positions on the carousel which are stationary. On the Spokane carousel, the stationary positions are filled by two dragon seats, one accompanied by a tiger with a monkey riding behind the saddle, while the other dragon seat is accompanied by a giraffe. The stationary positions are necessary on a Loeff pit carousel because "the driving mechanism (gears) required a split bearing holder, within inches of the jumpers gears, therefore the split bearing ring, must be fastened stationary to the tops of the sweeps." Special machinery enabled the horses to jump. "The floating gear is the flat tapered gear of equal size and shape of its counterpart, which is fastened to the center column in a stationary position. This is the gear that does all of the work for the jumpers. The rods which are connected to the gear, which drives the jumpers, (are) called the crank rods. The crank rods are lined up in

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their respective bays, through two closed bearings connected to the end of the crank rods, by means of a flange in the crank. These cranks are set up according to equal weight distribution (loaded or unloaded) so that there is never any jerking because of more weight on one horse than on another."<sup>2</sup>

A pit 2½' deep is provided under the deck of the Carousel to permit sufficient clearance for the horse shafts on the down stroke.

A baroque masterpiece, the giant carousel has a number of unusual features. Among the more interesting points are the three rows of horses which decrease in size from the outside. Each trio of horses matches colors but otherwise differ. There are trios of white, black, brown, tan, yellow and palomino.

While most of Loeff's horses were gentle, jolly creatures, those of the Spokane carousel are dashing fiery steeds that appear to race around the room. Each animal has details that proclaim its individuality. They are adorned with brightly colored flowers, parrots, animal heads, cupids, gamebirds, bedrolls and clusters of fruit. But Loeff's attention to detail was such that each horse has the same number of shoe nails and teeth.

The horses, tiger, giraffe and the two dragon seats with pairs of dragons, were carved from single blocks of laminated New England Chinese elm and balsam. Loeff used a knife and a hot iron to gouge the wood; constant reheating of the iron was required. Loeff used real horse tails and all saddles, etc., were individually crafted by master leather workers as if for living animals. Eyes and harness jewels are handcut German glass.

The elaborate floral and shell scroll work of the Carousel cresting and pavilion were also carved by Loeff. Besides the gilt on white surface, some of the most notable features of the Carousel are the mirrors and lights. Along the outer cresting, tilted outward, are heavy etched flat glass mirrors purchased from J. R. Donnelly of Brooklyn. Decorating the upper cresting are 260 beveled mirrors and 20 round circle cresting mirrors; interior cresting contains 20 angel face mirrors and 20 lower cresting mirrors. The pavilion is 45' wide at the center column. Eleven interior wall panels are decorated with hourglass shaped mirrors on the upper two-thirds, with square recessed panels on the lower third. The frieze is decorated with delta-shaped mirrors of three lights each. Similar mirrors decorate the pavilion above the sweeps.

The organ apparatus projects from the pavilion, but is decorated in much the same motif. Surrounding panels have small hour glass mirrors. The tripartite facade of the organ has decorative pilasters capped with feminine protomas. The organ is surmounted by three cartouches, with the central more massive cartouche bearing the legend: CH Loeff/Riverside/R.I. The organ is an 87 key Band Organ which uses paper rolls providing 32 minutes play. Unfortunately, the rolls are relatively rare and the carousel is reduced to only two of ten songs each.

The Spokane Carousel was refurbished prior to the opening of Expo '74. William Oliver, who owned the carousel before selling the machine to the city, donated his time in the

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effort. Following the techniques taught to him by Lloyd Vogel, grandson of Charles Loeff, Mr. Oliver imparted his knowledge to the City Recreation Department. The city has continued in this spirit by designating the winter months as an annual maintenance period for the equipment.

Vastly enjoyed by the city, it is evident that the Carousel shall remain one of its featured attractions. As long as the music plays and the mirrors glitter, Charles Loeff's horses will be ridden, at least in the city of Spokane.

Footnotes: Description

<sup>1</sup>Spokane's Classic Carrousel, Spokane Parks and Recreation Department Pamphlet (Spokane, 1975), p.2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 2-3.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES Built 1909

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles I. D. Loeff

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Spokane Carousel is the product of a lost craft and is representative of one of the few art forms intended solely to amuse - to amuse its designer, its joyous passengers and the perennial spectators. Designed by the greatest of the artists, Charles I. D. Loeff, the Spokane Carousel was his last major project. Today it is the sole operating carousel designed by Loeff. A part of Spokane since its completion in 1909, the Carousel has been an unforgettable experience of many children in the Inland Empire.

Charles Loeff was born in Denmark, May 2, 1852. During his early years he had worked as a wood carver in his home province of Schleswig-Holstein, then part of Denmark. Loeff emigrated to Brooklyn, New York, in August of 1870. Young Loeff took a position in a furniture factory and his inspiration for designing carousels is said to have been the sight of the racing fire engine horses in the busy New York streets.

Charles Loeff had been preceded to America by only one great carousel designer, Gustav Denzel, who had made a few carousels by 1870. But Loeff was destined to design one of the world's most famous carousels, the first to be placed on New York's Coney Island in 1876. The carousel was wildly popular with the public, but was somewhat unlike later carousels; it had no leaping animals, all were stationary; it had but one tier of animals and horses did not predominate among the mounts.

Loeff continued to develop his craft into an art form and he has been described as "the first of America's great carousel carvers."<sup>1</sup> His carousels were huge; that of his home amusement center, Crescent Park at Riverside, Rhode Island (which remained a family operation for many years), had 62 horses and four chariots. His specialty aside from great size were pit carousels (like Spokane's), which permitted his horses to leap. His invention was to avoid patent infringement on other designs.

It was Loeff's carving that was particularly influential. While other carvers might excel in some particular detail, he was undoubtedly "a splendid carver"<sup>2</sup> who was capable, as in his first three carousels, of carving the entire machine. What makes this even more remarkable, is that Loeff was one of the very few carvers who also set the machinery.

Spokane's carousel, arriving in the city in 1909, was a wedding present for Loeff's daughter Emma Vogel. Loeff designed two other wedding carousels, but this was the largest and most elaborate. In 1910, Charles Loeff moved his factory from Rhode Island to Ocean Park, California; his home was in Long Beach. After 1910, Loeff was involved heavily in business ventures and the Spokane Carousel was probably the last carved by him. In 1918, the master craftsman died in Long Beach.

In 1908, he had helped Seattle to create the Luna Park amusement grounds. As manager of the park, he suggested to the Washington Water Power Company that a fine carousel similar

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to Luna Park's would be a worthy addition to Natatorium Park in Spokane. For \$20,000 he would create a ride to surpass any on the West Coast.

Natatorium Park had been developed by Washington Water Power Company in 1893, to encourage the use of their cable car lines. Until the 1930's, a large turntable outside the entrance to the park permitted easy excursion trips by trolley. Originally known as Twickenham, the park grew rapidly in the decade and a half prior to 1909, but was still considered a secondary activity to the utility company. Loeff's offer was accepted initially but was rescinded at completion. Loeff then gave the completed carousel to his daughter, Emma, and her husband Louis Vogel as a wedding gift. Vogel, a banker, was in poor health and a more westerly climate had been suggested. An agreement was worked out that the Carousel would be placed at the Natatorium while Vogel ran it for his own profit and the other concessions on a percentage basis for the utility company. With Emma's experience in running the Carousel, combined with Vogel's natural showmanship, both the park as a whole and the Carousel in particular, ran at a considerable profit. Louis and his son, Lloyd Vogel, were entrepreneurs who brought the city everything from balloon ascensions to the big bands of Kay Kayser, and rock star Fats Domino. By 1929, Vogel had purchased the Park; it remained in the family under Lloyd Vogel from 1952 until 1963. The Park closed for a time in the mid-1960's but was reopened briefly in 1967 to 1968. It has been converted to a trailer village - San Souci,

The Carousel was the Natatorium's most popular attraction and it was estimated that 75,000 people boarded the Carousel in each year of the Park's operation. Since its relocation in the Riverfront Park in May 1975, an estimated 100,000 people have ridden its fiery steeds.

The joy of the carousel was unlimited in childhood. It was fraught with the danger that a parent or the operator might think the child too young for an outside horse and a chance at the brass ring. Ticket sales indicate that many an Inland Empire adult wishes to return to those sun-filled days at the Natatorium, picnics, fireworks, and baseball. The memory of all those things is embodied in the dashing horses, the gilt and the flashing mirrors of the Spokane carousel.

Footnotes: Significance

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Fried, A Pictorial History of the Carousel (New York, 1964), p.121.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 119

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Fried, Frederick, A Pictorial History of the Carousel.  
 New York: Bonanza Books, 1964  
 Kalez, Jay, Saga of a Western Town. Spokane: Lawton Printing Inc. 1972  
 Spokane Daily Chronicle  
 Spokesman-Review

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A            
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

B            
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D

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  
 Patsy M. Garrett/Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION  
 Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

STREET & NUMBER  
 W2316 First Avenue

CITY OR TOWN  
 Spokane

DATE

TELEPHONE

STATE  
 Washington

**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 DATE

<b>FOR NPS USE ONLY</b>	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
	DATE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	



STATE OF  
WASHINGTON

Dixy Lee Ray  
Governor

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

7150 Clearwater Lane, Olympia, Washington 98504

206 753 4011

LOU GUZZO

October 4, 1977

City of Spokane  
North 221 Wall  
Spokane, Washington 99201

Dear Gentlemen:

It gives us great pleasure to notify you that the Natatorium Carousel has been selected by the Keeper of the National Register for placement in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Spokane Carousel is the product of a lost craft representing the work of Charles I. D. Loeff, who created the first merry-go-round on New York's Coney Island. Loeff was perhaps the greatest of America's carousel artists, and this is considered to be the last of his Carousels in operation. Boarded by an estimated 75,000 people each year, it is all that remains of the amusements at Natatorium Park, once a Spokane institution.

Congratulations for this honor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne M. Welch".

Jeanne M. Welch, Deputy  
State Historic Preservation  
Officer

wf

cc: Mayor David H. Rodgers  
Mr. Jose Urcia  
Mr. William H. Long

**RECEIVED**

OCT 11 1977

SPOKANE COUNTY  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT