

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Spencer Park Dentzel Carousel (1919-62)

and or common Riverside Park Dentzel Carousel (1962-date); Logansport Carousel

2. Location

street & number Riverside Park

not for publication

city, town Logansport

vicinity of

state Indiana

code

county Cass

code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: recreation (carousel)

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Wayne Thomas, President, Cass County Carousel Corporation

street & number c/o 1st National Bank of Logansport, 1st National Plaza

city, town Logansport

vicinity of

state Indiana 46947

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. N/A

street & number

city, town

state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title National Carousel Association Census has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date	1919; 1962
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed				

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

### Summary

The Logansport Dentzel carousel occupies a shelter building in the playground area of Riverside Park, one of the city's public parks.<sup>1</sup> The shelter building is a shed of simple multi-sided design and recent construction and is strictly utilitarian; its sides, which are protected with metal bars, are opened during the summer months to provide light and air while the carousel is operating.

The Logansport Dentzel is a stationary 3-abreast carousel of the No. 103 style, described in the Dentzel company catalog (c. 1885), as follows:

Caroussel is built with animals, three abreast, such as lion, goats, deer, giraffe, tiger, and different styles of horses, containing 40 in number, together with four double-seated chariots, of fine design and architecture, handsomely carved, fresco painted and upholstered in plush. The Caroussel is 42 feet in diameter, with sixteen section platform, 40 feet in diameter. All upright rods are encased in brass tubing. All working parts are enclosed by high class oil paintings, mounted upon scroll-worked frames, finely painted. Includes concert organ, with two cylinders of music, also ring board and attachments, also power of steam or electric, as desired.<sup>2</sup>

For the Logansport carousel, the Dentzels supplied a slightly different group of 42 animals (31 horses, three goats, three reindeer, three giraffes, one lion, and a tiger), exactly the same menagerie combination as on the Children's Museum carousel in Indianapolis. All of these animals remain in place on it. The ring dispenser is also in place.

### Additional Data

The origins and date of the carousel's musical equipment are speculative. Most of its other parts have survived rather well. (It is uncertain whether the decorative interior and exterior panels, now obscured, might be restored by removing overlays of paint.)

The Cass County Carousel Association has, however, in the process of restoring the carousel, discovered that dry rot has begun to affect the carousel's animals, some of which have been painted as many as 20 times. If not eventually restored and housed in climate-controlled surroundings, the animals are certain to deteriorate further.

To its credit, the Cass County Carousel Association is striving to raise the funds necessary to complete the carousel's restoration and to build a more suitable shelter for it.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
1600-1699	architecture	education	military	social
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
1800-1899	commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater
X 1900-	communications	industry	politics government	transportation
		invention		X other (specify) recreation

**Specific dates** c. 1900-03 **Builder Architect** Dentzel Carousel Corporation (carousel)

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### Summary

The wooden carousel in Riverside Park in Logansport is one of the three earliest Dentzel menagerie carousels that are virtually intact. Its closest contemporary, coincidentally also in Indiana, in the Children's Museum, in Indianapolis, has been finely restored, but includes a substitute Mangels-Illions mechanism. The Logansport carousel, which is only partially restored, is dated variously between 1900 and 1903, although it may predate 1900. The only extant Dentzel that may be older is that at Meridian, Mississippi, which may date to 1885-89, and is certainly pre-1900.<sup>1</sup>

#### Dentzel Carousels

Although extant carousels by other manufacturers included in this study are of earlier date, these three earliest Dentzels are fine representatives of the mature carousel work by this important manufacturing family. The Dentzels' work has been praised for the artistry of its carving and described as "the finest built." This characterization especially applies to their work up to 1910.<sup>2</sup>

The Dentzels have been credited with giving the carousel industry in America its real start. Gustav A. Dentzel, a young German immigrant, began building carousels in Philadelphia in 1867. Parts of his first American carousel, it appears, were imported from his father, who manufactured carousels in Kreuznach, Germany. The family continued in the business in Philadelphia until 1929.<sup>3</sup>

Of an unknown total number of carousels, certainly upward of a hundred, manufactured by the Dentzel company, some 21 (including the 3 mentioned above) still exist.<sup>4</sup> The integrity of several of the survivors has been marred by replacement of animals with those by other manufacturers. (Two Dentzels [1905-15 and 1921] at Cedar Point, Ohio, are described in a separate nomination of that great amusement park; the Dentzel [1927] at Kennywood Park, in W. Mifflin, Pa., near Pittsburgh, is similarly treated.)

Although other Dentzel carousels might have been included in this study, it has been noted that the company's later work showed the effects of mass manufacture.<sup>5</sup> Even these standardized specimens are now so rare that they might be deemed worthy of consideration. A large percentage, however, of all remaining Dentzel carousels have been repeatedly moved or greatly modified.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Logansport

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	6	5	5	4	3	9	5	4	5	1	2	0	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

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D 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Only the carousel, not including the present temporary shelter building.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title James H. Charleton, Historian

organization History Division, National Park Service date March 1985

street & number 1100 L Street, NW telephone (202) 343-8165

city or town Washington state DC 20013-7127

# 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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National Park Service

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Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>The bulk of this description has been prepared from data included in the following newspaper articles: "Carousel's 44 Animals To Undergo Restoration," Pharos-Tribune (Logansport, Ind.), Sunday, January 23, 1983; Dave Kitchell, "Logansport's Carousel," Pharos-Tribune (Logansport, Ind.), February 19, 1984, pp. 1,8; Deborah Pines, "Carousel's riders feel joy, glory," The Indianapolis Star, Sunday, July 8, 1984 (Spectrum Section), pp. 1,3; and Dawne Slater, "Grabbing brass ring still possible," Kokomo (Ind.) Tribune, Friday, August 31, 1984.

<sup>2</sup>"Catalogue of Caroussels and Organs" (Philadelphia: G.A. Dentzel, c. 1885), unpaginated.

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History of the Logansport Carousel<sup>6</sup>

The Dentzel carousel in Logansport has delighted visitors to this northern Indiana community of 14,000, since 1919. Until 1962, it was in Spencer Park, and was then moved to its present location in Riverside Park.

The Logansport Dentzel has been dated to c. 1900-1903, although it may be as early as 1885-90, inasmuch as Dentzel manufactured mostly stationary animals, such as those on the Logansport carousel, prior to 1890, and afterward made relatively few. From 1903 to 1905 it apparently toured, and then found a home in Fort Wayne, Indiana, from where it was removed to Logansport in 1919.

In Logansport, the carousel served the public in Spencer Park, which was then at the end of a local streetcar line. It operated under the management of a succession of private owners and was moved to Riverside Park by Lawrence Kandler, the last of them, in 1962.

After Kandler's death in 1969, his estate sought to dispose of the carousel, and it remained idle until 1972. In that year, the local Jaycees began a "Save Our Carousel" drive that raised \$15,000 to purchase it. Once this was accomplished, the carousel was turned over to a non-profit corporation, the Cass County Carousel Association, which continues to operate the carousel in Riverside Park during the summer months. The association is using the proceeds from 43,000-odd tickets sold each year to maintain and operate the carousel. The association has also made a valiant, though modest, beginning in its restoration.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>These conclusions are based on a compilation of data that appear in National Carousel Association, National Carousel Association Census (Los Angeles, Calif.: National Carousel Association, March 1983), passim, which were rearranged chronologically for this study and supplemented by data appearing in successive issues of Merry-Go-Roundup, a periodical of the National Carousel Association.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick Fried, "The Dentzel Carousel, Condensed History," Merry-Go-Roundup 8,2, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-5.

<sup>4</sup>National Carousel Association, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup>Fried, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>6</sup>This brief sketch of the carousel's residence in Logansport derives from newspaper articles graciously furnished by Mr. Eric Wolf of the Cass County Carousel Association. They are cited in Footnote 1 of the Description.

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- "Catalogue of Carousels and Organs." Philadelphia: G.A. Dentzel, c. 1885.
- Fried, Frederick. "The Dentzel Carousel, A Condensed History," Merry-Go-Roundup 8,2, pp. 3-8.
- Kitchell, Dave. "Logansport's Carousel," Pharos-Tribune (Logansport, Ind.), February 19, 1984, pp. 1,8.
- Mendelsohn, Ink. "Carousels Caught in Vicious Circle," Smithsonian News Service. May 1981, March 1982. 8 pp. (Press packet.)
- National Carousel Association. National Carousel Association Census. Los Angeles, Calif.: National Carousel Association, March 1983. (Typescript.)
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