

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 Philadelphia Toboggan Company Carousel #6

and or common Elitch Gardens Carousel (1905-28); Kit Carson County Carousel (1928-date)

2. Location

street & number Kit Carson County Fairgrounds _____ not for publication

city, town Burlington _____ vicinity of

state Colorado code 03 county Kit Carson code 063

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input 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 Kit Carson County

street & number P.O. Box 248

city, town Burlington _____ vicinity of state Colorado

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kit Carson County Courthouse

street & number 251 16th Street

city, town Burlington _____ vicinity of state Colorado

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Colorado Inventory of
title Historic Sites (#32/06/0001) has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Ongoing _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Colorado, 1300 Broadway

city, town Denver _____ vicinity of state Colorado 80203

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Summary¹

The Kit Carson County fairgrounds at Burlington, Colo., features the county's fully restored and operating carousel, a 3-row Philadelphia Toboggan Company machine housed in a dodecagonal shelter structure. The carousel has all its 46 original stationary animals and 4 sleighs, all of which rotate in a counterclockwise direction on a platform 45' in diameter. It also retains 45 original paintings on its central core and its 1912 Wurlitzer Monster Military Band Organ.

Shelter

The dodecagonal structure, built specifically to house the carousel and its organ, is a 1-story building, topped by a 12-sided enclosed cupola featuring 12 small windows, each of which contains 3 vertical panes. The original lap-siding has recently been replaced with steel. There are two entrances, one on the east side and one on the west. When the carousel is in operation, shuttered openings on all sides are raised until parallel with the ground and perpendicular to the walls.

Although of interesting construction, the shelter dates from the carousel's move to Burlington in 1928, and is not regarded as contributing to the historic significance of the carousel.

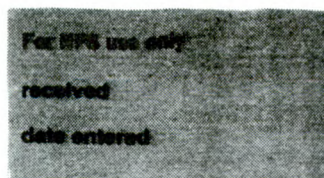
Carousel

The animals featured in the 3-row carousel include sealions, horses with horse-hair tails, antelopes, deer with antlers, goats, giraffes, and camels, as well as a "seahorse," a dog, an Indian pony, a tiger, a zebra, and a lion (the lead animal). Except for the paired animals flanking the sleighs, all others are arranged in sets of three. Within each set the animal on the outside is the largest and most ornately detailed; the middle animal is smaller with less carving; and the inside animal is the smallest and plainest.

No two animals were carved in the same stance or with the same decorations. Secondary carvings adorning the saddles or the animals themselves include full-blown roses, figures of Cupid, a cat with a mouse in its mouth, a cornucopia, and a wooden medallion with the figure of an Arab shiek. A giraffe has a snake twined around its neck and on the neck of a deer is a woodpecker. Behind the saddle of the zebra is a gnome sitting in a shell aiming a spear at the rider's seat.

The texture of the individual animal coats has been faithfully detailed and teeth, tongues, and hooves are carefully carved. Toed animals have their dewclaws and hooved animals are shod. The antlers on the deer are authentic, as are the horses' tails. All figures have glass eyes carefully matched to those of their natural counterparts.

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Two of the sleighs are positioned on the outside of the circle and are very colorful and ornately carved. The two inside sleighs -- like the inside animals -- have less decoration. On the back of each of the sleigh seats is a painting similar in character to those around the central core.

Most of the 45 carnival-type paintings that adorn the central core feature bucolic scenes. Of them, 36 measure 38" x 46" and nine 42" x 65." They are arranged in three tiers around the central core, except above the organ where there are only two tiers. Among the paintings is found a sign advertising the carousel's manufacturer. Originally handpainted on canvas, the paintings were completely restored by early May 1977. Carved and painted wooden valances in a repetitive design top each tier of paintings and embellish the circumference of the superstructure. (Before the carousel's move to Burlington in 1928, there may have been 18 additional paintings around the outside perimeter of the top of the carousel; attempts to verify this fact and to locate the paintings have failed.²)

The central core houses the mechanical driving system, originally steam-operated and belt-driven, but now powered by electricity. This conversion to electrical power is the only alteration that has been made to the carousel. Set into the central core and flanked by the paintings is the Rudolph Wurlitzer Monster Military Band Organ.

The Monster Military Band Organ, Style 155, was designed for use in large skating rinks, amusement parks, and the like. It measures 6'10-1/2" high, 8'9" wide, and 8'3" deep. It is housed in its original oak cabinet with leaded glass panels at the front, which afford a view of some of the enclosed brass horns. Through the use of music rolls, this 100-key instrument is equivalent to a 12-15-piece band. The organ's 285 pipes include the following: 30 pipes for basses; 22 for accompaniments; 100 for violin, violoncello, stopped and open pipes and "clarionets"; and 72 for piccolos and flutes. The brass section is composed of 51 brass trumpets and 10 brass trombones. In addition to both snare and bass drums the organ also features eight stops: two for piccolo and flutes and one each for "clarionets," trumpets, trombones, stopped basses, open basses, and bass octavo. In the 1930s the carousel building was used for storage, and mice destroyed some of the organ parts; the instrument, however, was restored in 1976.

Footnotes

¹This description of the carousel is an edited version of that appearing in the National Register of Historic Places nomination, prepared by Karen Patterson of the Colorado Historical Society in 1978, and a revised form submitted to the National Register and the History Division in 1983, which was prepared by Jo Downey of the Kit Carson County Carousel Association, in cooperation with Gloria Mills of the Colorado Historical Society.

²Kit Carson County Carousel Association, "Kit Carson County Carousel" (undated pamphlet).

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	X transportation
		invention		other (specify)
				<u>Recreation</u>
				(Carousel)

Specific dates 1905 **Builder Architect** Philadelphia Toboggan
Company

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Summary¹

The Kit Carson County, or Burlington, Carousel is the oldest carousel made by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company extant, in virtually unaltered condition. Its exceptional state of preservation is, in fact, an important element in its significance. It was built in 1905 and was the 6th of some 89 manufactured by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company between 1904 and 1934.² It was built for the Elitches Gardens amusement park in Denver where it remained until 1928, when it was sold to the commissioners of Kit Carson County, a rural county southeast of Denver near the Kansas State line.

The carousels manufactured in Germantown, Pennsylvania, by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company have been highly praised, described, for example, as the "world's finest and most substantially made."³ The company's work, in any case, was among the more artistically elaborate and expensive of the lines of carousels available.

In common, however, with the work of other manufacturers, relatively few, less than 20, Philadelphia Toboggan Company carousels survive.⁴ One, dating from 1922, is housed in the Loeff Hippodrome at the Santa Monica Pier in California, where it replaced an original Loeff; another, the last owned by the Company, is one of the carousels at the Cedar Point Amusement Park, near Sandusky, Ohio. (Both these properties are included elsewhere in this theme study.)

The Rudolph Wurlitzer Monster Military Band Organ, Style 155, installed on the carousel in 1912, while it was at Elitches Gardens, is also of note because it is apparently the only one of its kind remaining in operating condition.

History

The Philadelphia Toboggan Company, which still survives, was founded in 1903 by Henry Auchy, an amusement park manager, and Chester Albright, who ran his family's purse business. The partners wanted to produce the finest in amusements, especially roller coasters, or "toboggans," and carousels. They successfully tapped the wave of interest in amusement parks that followed the opening that year of Luna Park on Coney Island, and remained important producers of "top-of-the-line" carousels until the Great Depression, when the Company stopped building carousels and concentrated on other amusements, including old mills; their old stand-by, roller coasters; and, after World War II, skee ball.⁵

In 1905, the management of Elitches Gardens, a popular amusement center in Denver, selected and ordered the carousel to replace a simpler and smaller one then in use. It operated until 1928, when Elitches decided to replace it with a new and larger model.

It was at this point that the Kit Carson County commissioners purchased the carousel and the organ, moved them to fairgrounds, and built the dodecagonal structure to house them. The commissioners who approved the carousel's purchase met with such widespread disapproval over the \$1,250 price, a sum that was considered extravagant, that they chose not to run for reelection.

In 1931-37, the Depression forced the county's officials to suspend the holding of the county fair, at which the carousel had been displayed and operated. In those years, the fairgrounds were neglected. Cornstalks and hay were stored in the carousel building and elsewhere on the fairgrounds. Vermin infested the carousel building and waste accumulated in it; mice devoured portions of the insides of the band organ.

When annual fairs resumed in 1937, the carousel and its building were cleared of the accumulated debris and cleaned. The carousel was revarnished and put back into operation. Phonographs and tape recorders provided the music for nearly 40 years, during which time the carousel continued to serve the community.

In 1975, a committee of civic-minded Kit Carson County citizens, eager to undertake a project that would be appropriate for the Bicentennial observance, took note of the state of the carousel. They chose to begin its restoration. An expert was retained to restore the band organ, which was accomplished just in time for the 1976 fair.

Grants and donations were sought to continue the work and the committee reconstituted itself as the Kit Carson County Carousel Association. In 1977, the oil paintings were restored by trained conservators. Two years later, restoration of the animals began. The original paint in most instances turned out to be in astonishingly good condition.

Today, the finely restored carousel is the oldest working carousel in Colorado, although it operates infrequently--principally on the last three days of the annual county fair and in the course of fund-raising drives for its restoration.

Recently, the Burlington Carousel has drawn national interest for its historic qualities. Representatives of the Smithsonian Institution have visited the site to document the early vintage of the carousel and organ. The Conservation Committee of the National Carousel Association has endorsed the object as worthy of preservation. Marianne Stevens, president of the American Carousel Society, has described it as "without equal.... absolutely the finest original American carousel left in the world...."⁶

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Footnotes

¹The basis of the historical data included in this statement is the National Register of Historic Places nomination forms referenced in Note 1 of the Description, with the exceptions noted below.

² National Carousel Association, National Carousel Association Census (Los Angeles, Calif.: National Carousel Association, 1983); and Charles J. Jacques, Jr., "The Carousels of the Philadelphia Toboggan Company," Amusement Park Journal, 5, 4 (1984), pp. 36-37.

³Jacques, op. cit., p. 3.

⁴National Carousel Association Census, op. cit. This conclusion is based on a review of all Philadelphia Toboggan Company entries.

⁵These notes on the Company's history are abstracted from Jacques, op. cit., pp. 3-11.

⁶From the text of a letter to Gloria Mills of the Colorado Historical Society, May 18, 1983. The full text is reproduced with this nomination.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 0.5

Quadrangle name Burlington

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	3	7	3	5	3	6	0	4	3	5	4	4	1	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

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H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

The carousel shelter building and the carousel, situated in the eastern portion of the Kit Carson County Fairgrounds, and bounded on the east by the Home Economics Buildings and on the north by the county Rodeo Arena.

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 James H. Charleton, Historian

organization History Division, National Park Service date

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

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

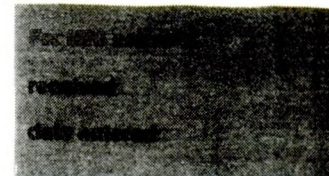
Chief of Registration

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date

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Bibliography

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- "Take a ride on the carousel....," The Burlington Record, LXXXVIII, n.d., p. 2.

27

26

25

Well
4172

Well
4162

BM

4158

Farrview
Cem

PAL

JRT

4171 Burlington

Rodeo
Group

Well

Storage
Bins

Philadelphia Toboggan Company
Carousel #6, Burlington, Colorado
Burlington Quadrangle
UIM References:
13/735 360/4354 410

PACIFIC

4191

West Burlington

4195

4195

4187

Golf Course

Burlington

Well

Well

4197

3

2

Well

4137

Radio Tower
(KNAB)

Sewage
Disposal Pond

4200

4191

Well

4157

4129

10

11

Well

4129

4160

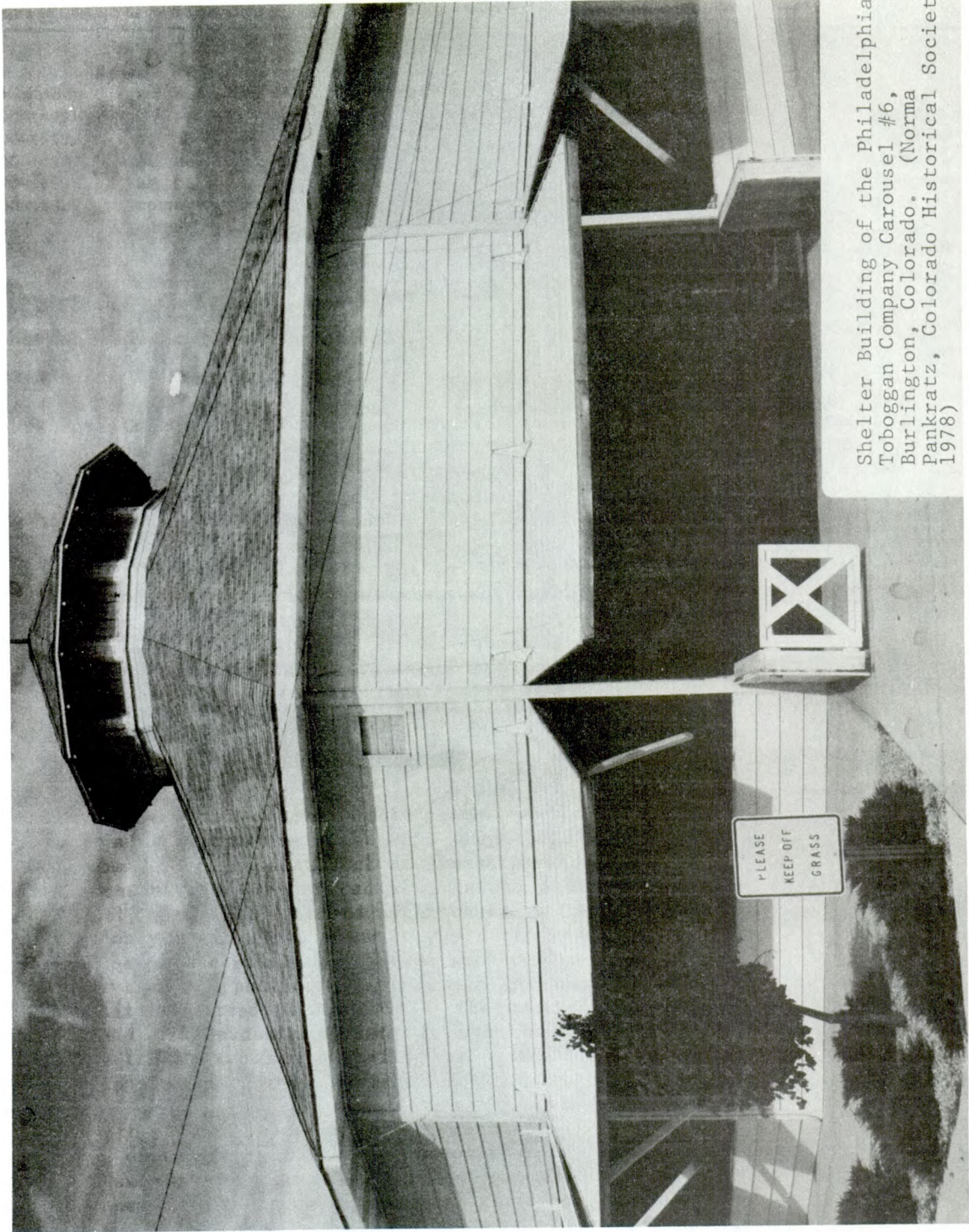
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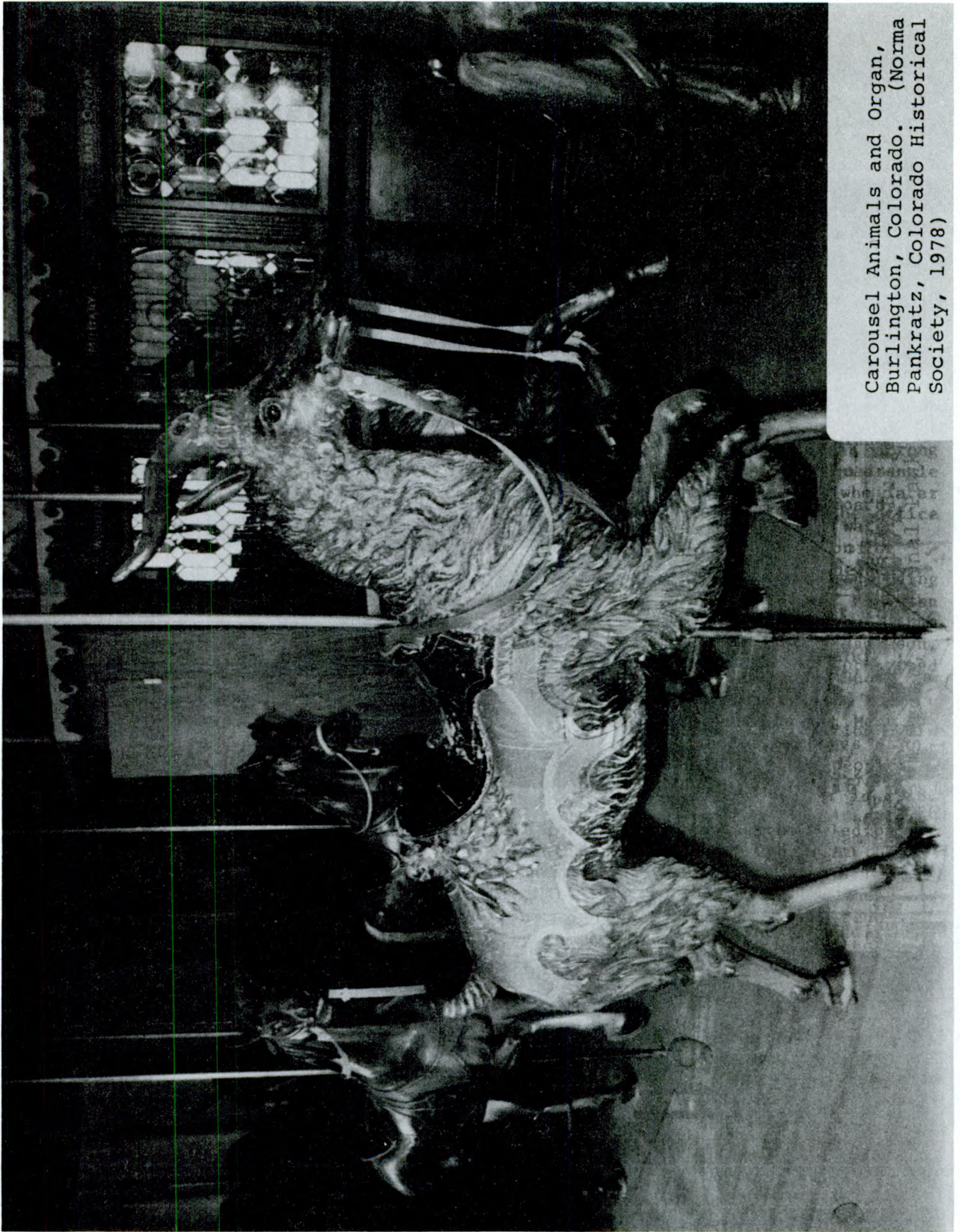
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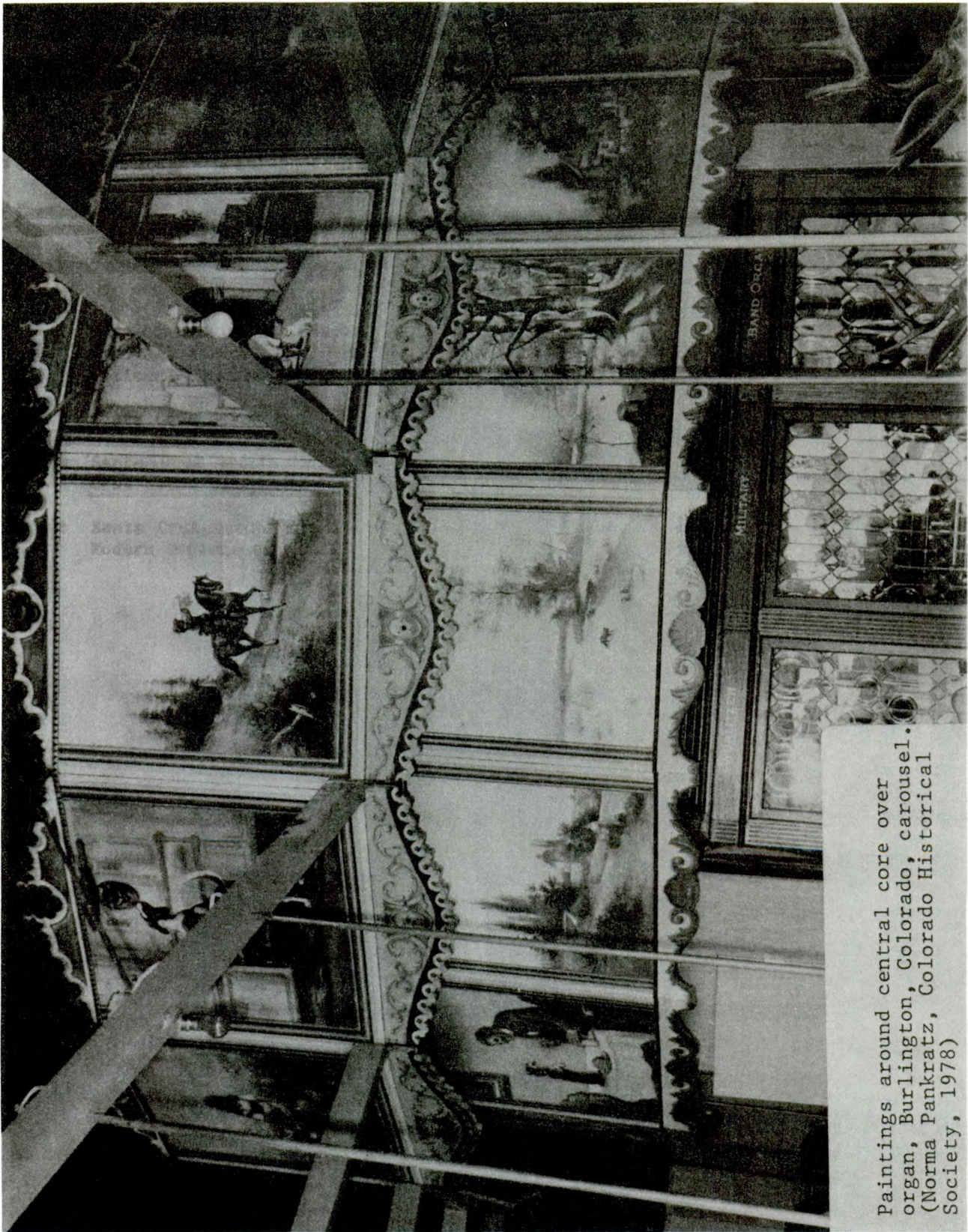
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Shelter Building of the Philadelphia Toboggan Company Carousel #6, Burlington, Colorado. (Norma Pankratz, Colorado Historical Society, 1978)



Carousel Animals and Organ,
Burlington, Colorado. (Norma
Pankratz, Colorado Historical
Society, 1978)



Paintings around central core over organ, Burlington, Colorado, carousel. (Norma Pankratz, Colorado Historical Society, 1978)