



The Empire State Carousel - Fact Sheet

The Empire State Carousel, a unique, handcrafted merry-go-round based entirely on the history and culture of New York State, was gifted to The Farmers' Museum in 2005 from The Board of Directors of The Empire State Carousel Museum. Created over two decades by over 1,000 volunteer carvers, quilters, painters, and woodworkers from across New York State, it features a variety of original carvings, paintings, and quilts, each of which has been specially designed for the carousel.

The carousel will be housed in a newly built pavilion on The Farmers' Museum's Creamery Green that complements the historic environment of the museum. The carousel will fulfill a central part of the museum's educational mission by teaching visitors about New York history through this hands-on, interactive example of contemporary folk art.

Headed by master carver Gerry Holzman, the volunteers carved riding figures and panels, painted the figures and historic murals, restored the carousel mechanism, and raised funds to keep the project going.

About the Empire State Carousel

- **The Empire State Carousel is built on a vintage 1947 36-foot Alan Herschell carousel mechanism.**
- **23 riding animals represent animals indigenous to New York:** Sam Bear, Bucky Beaver, Benny Brook Trout, Becky Bunny, Buttercup Horse, Charlotte Chicken, Clarissa Cow, Denny Deer Mouse, Merry Dog, Daphne Duck, Freddie de Frogge, Grandpa Goat, Alice Horse, Buttercup Horse, Louie Loon, Monty Moose, Sal the Mule, Percy Pig, Prunella Pigge, Reggie Raccoon, Sofia Skunque, Shirley Squirrel, and Willie Wildcat.
- **21 carved portrait panels depict famous New Yorkers:** Susan B. Anthony, Irving Berlin, John Burroughs, Benjamin Cardozo, George & Ira Gershwin, Samuel Gompers, Alexander Hamilton, Helen Hayes, William Johnson, Fiorello LaGuardia, Grandma Moses, William Sidney Mount, Edward R. Murrow, Red Jacket, Jackie Robinson, Eleanor Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, Alfred E. Smith, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Friedrich von Steuben, Harriet Tubman, Walt Whitman, and John Peter Zenger.
- **8 carved folklore panels depict the regions of New York:** Adirondacks represented by Noah Rondeau, Capitol Region represented by Uncle Sam, Catskills represented by John Darling, Central New York represented by Leatherstocking Tales, Long Island represented by Captain William Kidd, New York City represented by Guys & Dolls, Metropolitan New York represented by P.T. Barnum's World, and Western New York represented by Sam Patch, Niagara Daredevil.
- **The carousel's *Mighty & Magnificent Military Band Organ* was custom-made in 1990 by the Stinson Organ Company of Ohio.** The façade of the organ was designed around the theme of New York musicians and features full-round carvings of George M. Cohan, John Philip Sousa, and Irving Berlin.

- **Highlights of the Empire State Carousel animals include:**

Bucky Beaver was the first figure carved for the carousel and represents New York's State mammal. Because beavers are natural woodworkers, Bucky holds a carver's mallet and gouge in his paws.

Louie Loon represents New York's North Country—the Adirondack Mountains. Louie is one of two figures on the carousel carved and donated in memory of carvers who passed away over the course of the carousel's 20-year production.

Merry Dog is named for the dog who served as a constant companion to head carver Holzman as he traveled New York assembling the carvings for the carousel.

Percy Pig was sponsored with pennies donated by children and their families and carries a bag full of pennies in his right trotter, saddlebags, and coin changer.

About Head Carver Gerry Holzman:

Gerry Holzman became a professional woodcarver in 1970 and began restoring carousels in 1976. Holzman has restored over 75 works of art from antique carousels and has created approximately 200 pieces of original carousel carving. In 1984 he became the head carver and executive director of the Empire State Carousel Project.

Holzman has also created work for such diverse clients as Disney, the South Street Seaport, the Penn Club, and the Cunard Lines. A former teacher, Holzman now conducts woodcarving classes, presents workshops for teachers, and gives lectures on cruise lines. He is a speaker for the New York State Humanities Council and writes for a number of regional publications and craft magazines.

About The Farmers' Museum:

As one of the oldest rural life museums in the country, The Farmers' Museum in Cooperstown, New York, provides visitors with a unique opportunity to experience 19th-century rural and village life first-hand through authentic demonstrations and interpretative exhibits. The museum, founded in 1944, comprises a Colonial Revival style stone barn listed on the National Registrar for Historic Places, a recreated historic village circa 1845, and a working farmstead. Through its 19th-century village and farm, the museum preserves important examples of upstate New York architecture, early agricultural tools and equipment, and heritage livestock. The Farmers' Museum's outstanding collection of more than 23,000 items encompasses significant historic objects ranging from butter molds to carriages, hand planes to plows. The museum also presents a broad range of interactive educational programs for school groups, families, and adults that explore and preserve the rich agricultural history of the region, including barnyard activities for children and cheese-making, blacksmithing, and quilt-making workshops for families and adults.

The museum is located on 5775 State Highway 80, Lake Road, in Cooperstown, NY, across the street from Fenimore Art Museum. Museum admission is \$11 for adults, \$9.50 for visitors age 65 and over, and \$5 for children age 7 to 12; children 6 and under and members are admitted free. Reduced price combination admission tickets that include the Fenimore Art Museum and The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum are also available. The museum is open to the public daily from April through October, with special events throughout the year. For museum hours or general information, please call 1-888-547-1450 or visit www.farmersmuseum.org.

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