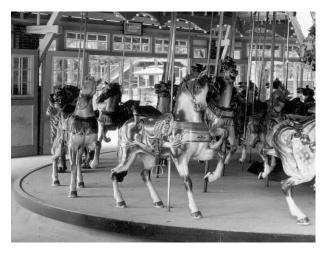# 3 Deciding To Restore the Carousel

The Glen Echo Amusement Park had routinely repainted all the rides every couple of years to protect the wood and metal. The beautiful pin striping that had been the fashion at the turn of the century, visible on cars, sewing machines, and other household objects, gradually went out of style and fewer people were available who could do it. It was cheaper to find someone who could just slap on a coat of paint. The amusement park had a limited number of colors in their palette and they used those colors on all the animals. When the National Park Service acquired the carousel in 1970, the animals were dark brown with muted red, yellow, and green blankets and straps.

The colors on the carousel horses at Glen Echo Park had become dreary over the years.

The 1921 installation photo clearly showed the chest band on the Indian horse.

In 1981 $6000 became available to restore the carousel. Nick Veloz was curator at the time and he knew nothing about carousels. He had been told that the animals had been stripped and repainted in the late 1940s or early 1950s and that there was no original paint on them. However, he was not convinced. Looking closely at the animals, he could see chips and dings, many of them in the saddle area where they revealed the early pin striping decoration. The saddles had been damaged by the brass buckles of the belts that were used at that time to secure kids riding on the carousel.

Nick's background in archeology came in handy along with a little stratigraphy from geology and a side order of curiosity and common sense. He took some paint remover, checked the 1921 installation photograph for the design on the chest band of the Indian horse, and judiciously removed several layers of paint. Some of those layers had decoration, but it did not match the decoration in the photograph. Eventually he saw the designs that matched the ones

Some of the paint layers had decoration, but Nick kept searching until he found the designs shown in the installation photo.