

WARD BRAY: "Grandpa used to say, 'Find something you love to do and find a way to get paid for it. That's the way to happiness.'"



Harry Scull Jr./Buffalo News

Ward Bray, grandson of a carousel animal artist and a museum docent, shows off the handcraft in the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum on Sunday.

## Recycling carousel art

BY DENISE JEWELL GEE

NEWS NIAGARA REPORTER

NORTH TONAWANDA — The work of Wallace and Ward Olver has traveled across the country as carousel horses they helped design, paint and carve in the early 1900s for Herschell-Spillman Co. and Allen Herschell Co.

Another side of the father-and-son artists will soon go on public display for the first time at the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum.

Wood carvings, ink drawings and oil paintings done by the two carousel painters on their own time have been restored and assembled for a new museum exhibit that will open May 6.

Both painters helped influence the designs of carousels manufactured locally but were also trained artists who devoted their free time to a life of creating art.

Ward R. Bray, grandson of Ward Olver and a museum docent, believes the exhibit will showcase the lives of two men who found paid work in a field they loved.

"Grandpa used to say, 'Find something you love to do and find a way to get paid for it. That's the way to happiness,'" said Bray, of Williamsville. "He loved the arts."

Bray, his two sons, Michael and Jeffrey; and three other museum workers have spent two years preparing for the exhibit on the Olvers, which will be on display until late October.

Ward Olver started working as a carver and painter of carousel horses alongside his father, Wallace Olver, at the Herschell-Spillman factory in 1902. Like his father, Ward Olver had studied art in Buffalo before taking the carousel job.

When Allan Herschell left his partnership in the Herschell-Spillman Co. to start his own carousel manufacturing company in 1915, Ward Olver followed Herschell there and eventually became carving shop foreman and paint shop foreman.

Wallace Olver, who started his career painting houses and creating murals in the homes of wealthy Buffalo residents, worked as a carousel painter and animal designer for

Herschell-Spillman and later Spillman Engineering until his death in 1934.

But the intricate wooden animals and carousel panels they helped create in the North Tonawanda factories were just work to the two men, Bray said.

"This wasn't art to them, this was work," Bray said of the Olvers' carousel designs. "They never signed any of their work here."

Paintings signed by the Olvers — including several with Western themes favored by Ward Olver — will be displayed in the new exhibit. Some of the artwork is a stark contrast to the fanciful carousel animals the Olvers helped create.

"I think it will interest a broader audience, maybe a different audience, people who aren't necessarily interested in carousels, but do like artwork," said Rae Proefrock, acting director of the Herschell museum.

Several of the Olver paintings had darkened over time from cigar residue and had to be restored for

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**Ward Bray, center, and his sons Jeffrey, left, and Michael shows some of the objects that will be on display in the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum.**

## Exhibit is culmination of more than 2 decades

**CAROUSEL** • from B1

the exhibit. Family members, Bray said, were amazed as the detailed images that emerged.

In one painting, a tavern scene with a flurry of activity in the foreground became more comprehensible after its restoration unveiled a bullet hole in a mirror in the back of the bar, Michael Bray said.

"There's so much more to the paintings now," Michael Bray said.

For the Brays, the new exhibit will be the culmination of more than two decades of family history research that hit home to Ward Bray when he first became a museum member in 1983.

He had grown up across the street from his grandfather and heard the many stories of his grandfather's work in North Tonawanda's carousel factories. But Bray thought those stories had been forgotten outside his family after his grandfather died in 1967.

"I guess I got hooked when I walked into my first membership meeting and everybody knew who my grandfather was," Bray said.

e-mail: [djgee@buffnews.com](mailto:djgee@buffnews.com)

### Lottery Picks /

*Winning numbers for Sunday*

**N.Y. Evening Number:** 487  
**Lucky Sum:** 19  
**N.Y. Midday Number:** 185  
**Lucky Sum:** 14

**Win Four Evening:** 9213  
**Lucky Sum:** 15  
**Win Four Midday:** 7192  
**Lucky Sum:** 19

**Take Five:** 5 20 27 32 34

**Pick 10:**  
 4 5 7 9 15 16 20 24 25 29  
 34 37 41 45 54 57 69 75 76 78

**Penn. Evening Number:** 314  
**Penn. Midday Number:** 442

**Big 4 Evening:** 6012  
**Big 4 Midday:** 9744

*Late numbers for Saturday*

**N.Y. Lotto:** 2 7 18 29 31 49  
**Bonus number:** 19  
**Extra number:** 54

**Take Five:** 1 7 28 29 34

*These numbers are unofficial. For official New York Lottery results go to [buffalo.com/lottery](http://buffalo.com/lottery) or your lottery retailer.*