

# Drollinger's Rides and the Flood of 1993

## VERSION A

### Word-for-Word Transcription

#### from interview with Guy Drollinger by Richard Horwitz

The community knows this as Drollinger's Rides or City Park rides.

My granddad started it in 1952.

His name was Charlie Drollinger—Charlie and Gladys my grandparents.

He brought a train and a merry-go-round into the city park 43 years ago and starting giving rides for a 4th of July celebration and the City said pppllllease don't take the rides out.

Can you run them every weekend instead of storing them down at the fairgrounds? He said sure and one thing led to another and here we are 42 years later. . . .

The flood in 1993 devastated the ride area, ruined all the gears and motors on every ride.

It was a lot of work to get it all working again, and safe again.

I sort of took it on as a personal thing to make sure it would go again.

I have always been really proud of my family owning a carousel and riding children and grandmas and grandpas and mom and dads and I have all my whole life identified.

When my dad started talking about not have after the '93 thing, I thought what are you talking about.

We aren't the Drollingers if we don't have a merry-go-round to run. . . .

Dad had decided to go out of business and there was a sandbar sitting over top the amusement park that was four feet deep.

The river was originally six foot deep over top of the amusement park and then it receded; it left a sandbar right down the middle.

The thought there was not going to be merry-go-round in Iowa City again—well, I knew what the work was like 12 to 14 hours a day seven days a week.

I wasn't sure I was ready to do that yet.

I had to really think about it and give it serious thought.

During the week we hadn't made up our minds, Dad sold off the park, sold the rides individually.

And then I went to the bank and borrowed a bunch of money and talked to each person before they came to pick up the rides and got the exact price he had already agreed to sell it to everybody and just got the whole deal myself and bought the whole business.

It was very nice of all the people because some of them were coming up from Texas and one guy near Cedar Falls and they were aware of the importance of these things, and were just willing to back out of the deal.

They didn't have to do that and there was only one person who did not want to do that and we replaced it and one wanted a profit and we did that and got the train back. . . .

Well, we had to clean up and we removed everything from the lot and scooped up sand with a bobcat and backhoe.

The city brought in gravel and graveled the lot and we put the towers back up and rebuilt everything.

It was a labor of love and as you stand out here with me you can tell that it is real important to the kids. . . .

It is a little place where families can spend time together. . . .

It does tug at your heartstrings even when it doesn't make money, it makes you feel like a million bucks.