

Russell Wood talks with Bernie Loveless and Mildred Finlon about running the carousel in Chesapeake Beach Park.

Mrs. Finlon: Harold wouldn't open the Park until the organ got to working on the merry-go-round.

Mr. Wood: No, sir. That was the best thing — that and the gold rings. And I would get a bunch of rings — I'd tell Mr. Donald, "I need some rings." He said, "Russell, you put too many out?"

I said, "No. If there's a crowd, I'll fill the carrier full. If not, I just put so many in and they won't feed so fast."

Mr. Loveless: Now, the gold ring was the one you put in every so often for the free ride; wasn't it?

Mr. Wood: Yes.

Mr. Loveless: How did that work?

Mrs. Finlon: They fell down automatically.

Mr. Wood: Every time they'd pull out a ring, another would feed down to it, see. But I'd work them — depends on the crowd. If it was a big crowd, I'd fill it up, but I'd put in maybe eight or ten gold ones in the load. I've forgotten how many — hell, I guess fifty or a hundred or more.

Somebody said when they'd come over and they didn't have no rings and then somebody would say, "When you going to get rings? How are you getting the rings?" I said, "No, I'm sorry." It wasn't my fault.

Mrs. Finlon: The insurance company made you stop it because they were afraid children would lean over too far and fall off the merry-go-round. The insurance company made them stop it.

Mr. Loveless: These rings fed down an arm and stuck out, and I guess people leaned out too far.

Mr. Wood: Right down in the middle. You just could stick your finger through the ring to pull it out, in the claw right there.

Mrs. Finlon: And if you worked very fast, you could get out two rings.

Mr. Wood: Yes, you could get two. I've seen them reach and get one and then get another one before it got out of reach.

Mr. Loveless: No kidding.

Mr. Wood: Yes, but you had to be quick. You had to meet it. Reach and as you're going to it — not wait until you get to it.

Mrs. Finlon: My boys found out how to get two rings.

Mr. Wood: Yes, I know I had several of them.

Mr. Loveless: How long do you suppose you really worked running that merry-go-round at Chesapeake Beach?

Mr. Wood: I don't know. I don't know to tell you the truth.

Mr. Loveless: It seems like to me I can remember when our kids were first coming along in the late '40's, early '50's don't you think, Mildred? Wasn't the merry-go-round running then?

Mr. Wood: I know it was in '40 or something when I was working.

Mrs. Finlon: My boys — it was running in the '50's, too. In fact, up until the time that the Park closed in '72, the merry-go-round was working.