This thesis investigates the Stewart Park Carousel, located in Ithaca, New York, and suggests a preliminary preservation plan for its future. Ithaca’s carousel is an increasingly uncommon example of an Allan Herschell Company machine, manufactured in the early 1950’s, which contains 30 original horses made out of cast aluminum. The significance of aluminum-horseted rides has yet to be fully accepted by the carousel preservation community. This project therefore highlights the important role these machines play in the overarching history of merry-go-rounds in America. Additionally, the local history specific to the Stewart Park Carousel is examined and placed within the broader evolutionary context of Stewart Park as a cultural landscape. The historic and contemporary significance of the carousel is then fully established.

Next, this thesis suggests a preservation plan for the ride, which works within rehabilitation frameworks currently being developed for Stewart Park. The necessity of proper community programming is outlined, including the benefits of an interpretive sign and a “horse adoption” fundraising project through The Friends of Stewart Park, a local non-profit. Community education and engagement are thus proposed as a viable preservation strategy. Ultimately this thesis concludes that first steps in preserving the Stewart Park Carousel are both necessary and feasible for the City of Ithaca.