



Uniroyal Giant Tire Urban Legends and Debunked Internet Claims

By historian Steven J. Frey

“It used to be a Ferris wheel”

True. The US Royal Giant Tire Ferris wheel was built by the US Rubber company for the 1964-65 New York World’s Fair. The name of the company was later changed to Uniroyal.

“It was ridden by actor Telly Savalis and the Shah of Iran”

False. The Shah’s visit to the World’s Fair, June 14, 1964, was well documented by the media at that time. A visit to the U.S. Royal Giant Tire was not on the itinerary. There is no evidence that Mr. Savalas he ever visited the fair at all, although his mother represented Greek women at the 1939 World’s Fair.

“Jacqueline, Caroline and John Kennedy, Jr. rode the Ferris wheel”

Partially True. It was widely reported that **Mrs. Kennedy** visited the fair, April 30, 1964, with her sister, nieces and nephews, and **Caroline**. Several newspapers mentioned the Ferris wheel ride, but also reported that John, Jr. was ill, and stayed home that day.

“It was shipped to Allen Park (Detroit), Michigan by train”

False. This rumor was started by a single person being interviewed for a newspaper article at the conclusion of the Giant Tire’s 1994 remodel, citing its proximity to a rail line as ‘evidence’.

According to the Townsend Sign Company (contracted to move and reassemble the Giant Tire), it was shipped via 21 **trucks**. This was also confirmed by former U.S. Rubber employee, Mary Dean, who was responsible for arranging the truck shipments.

“There was an arrow stuck in it”

True. Since 1966, there have been several arrows shot into it as well as several bullet holes.

“There was a homeless family living in it”

False. Police have occasionally chased trespassers away from the site, but there are no reports of any people actually living inside the tire.

“I remember when it broke loose and rolled across the freeway”

False. Nope, you don’t. It never happened. (It is actually impossible.)

For its complete story, pick up your copy of **The Giant Tire: From New York World’s Fair to Detroit Landmark**, by Steven J. Frey, www.GiantTire.info