

2019

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

HISTORY WALKING TOUR

TWO NEW
STOPS!



MINNESOTA
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



MINNESOTA
STATE FAIR
FOUNDATION

WELCOME TO THE MINNESOTA STATE FAIR.

This History Walking Tour was developed by the Minnesota State Fair Foundation and the Minnesota Historical Society. It's your two-mile guide to some of the State Fair's most historically significant spots.

Complete eight stops and earn a prize!

- Start your tour at any of the 12 stops.
- Use the map on the last page of this brochure to find your way.
- Use the hole punch at each stop to punch out the corresponding number in your brochure.
- Complete 8 or more stops and collect a free prize— PLUS the added bonus of walking approximately two miles!
- To collect your prize, bring your brochure to the Minnesota Historical Society booth in the Education Building, the History & Heritage Center at West End Market, or the MSF Foundation at the J.V. Bailey House.



Streetcar Arch

Installed 1934, reinstalled 2014

Then: It's hard to believe, but horses and mules were once used as a mode of transportation to the State Fair. By the 1890s, a different type of horsepower took over: trains and streetcars. The railway allowed companies such as Royal American Shows to unload a 90-car train filled with midway attractions at the fair. Streetcars brought visitors into the heart of the fairgrounds. In 1934, those tracks were shortened, introducing a new gate entrance and steel arch inscribed with "State Fair" to welcome guests fresh off the streetcar rails. Streetcar transportation remained popular until the '50s when its usage declined with a new mode of public transportation: the bus.

Now: Fair visitors arrive at the fair by bus, car, or bicycle. Although the Royal American Shows train doesn't chug into the State Fair station anymore, a red and yellow train car from a bygone era sits in the West End Market next to the Transit Hub. Another treasure from the old rail days can be seen overhead by the History & Heritage Center: the restored Streetcar Arch.



01

Grandstand

Built 1909

Then: The Grandstand boasts a grand history: it has hosted horse races, train crashes, baseball games, airplane stunt shows and auto races. The first Grandstand was built of wood in 1885, and then replaced by another in 1892. In 1901, thousands of Minnesotans at the Grandstand heard Theodore Roosevelt utter the famous line, "Speak softly and carry a big stick" in the presentation that became known as "The Minnesota Speech." In 1906, the legendary harness-racing horse Dan Patch set a world record: one mile in one minute, 55 seconds. Today's Grandstand with its Roman arches opened in 1909, and in 1937 the ramp was added as part of a Works Progress Administration (WPA) building project.

Now: The Grandstand remains a premier outdoor concert venue that attracts national performers from Bob Dylan to Alabama, the country music band that has performed here a record 19 times. The Grandstand also is home to one of the fair's great shopping hubs with vendors offering everything from eyebrow makeup to dicers, with plenty of peeling and chopping demonstrations to draw crowds of amazed onlookers each year.



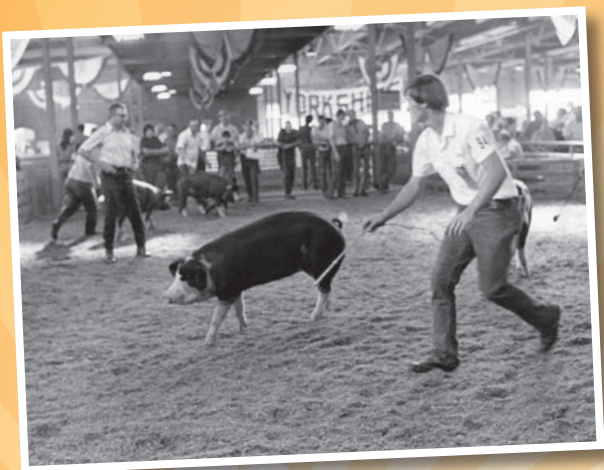
02

Robert A. Christensen Pavilion

Built 1936

Then: The large red-brick Swine Barn was completed in 1936. It was one of more than a dozen structures on the fairgrounds built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a federal program that created jobs for people during the Great Depression of the 1930s. During the WWII years, exhibitions of livestock and poultry were suspended as the government converted all of the animal barns, including the Swine Barn, into a military aircraft propeller manufacturing plant.

Now: Over the past several years, the building has received upgrades of new windows, garage doors, wash racks, and more to improve sanitation and biosecurity. In 2019 the Swine Barn was renamed Robert A. Christensen Pavilion in honor of the late Bob Christensen, founder of Christensen Farms, an innovator and leader in the swine industry. Now, from the tiniest piglets to the largest boar, you can visit them in their new pigpen digs!



03



Sheep & Poultry Barn

Built 1937

Then: The Sheep & Poultry Barn you see today was built in 1937 by members of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), who were part of an employment program implemented by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Great Depression to give work to those who couldn't find any. The work of artists hired by the WPA can still be seen today on the outside of the Sheep & Poultry Barn. But why are only our feathered friends referenced? Because sheep didn't move into the barn until 1953—prior to that they were with the swine, and then horses.

Now: Today, the Sheep & Poultry Barn exhibits not only what the art on the outside celebrates—turkeys, ducks, and chickens—but now sheep, dairy goats, and rabbits, too. These fluffed and feathered creatures continue to delight fairgoers of all ages, who can visit the barn to learn about different breeds of each animal and watch entertaining competitions, from Rooster Crowing, to Dress a Sheep contests. “Shear” brilliance!

04



Agriculture Horticulture Building

Built 1947

Then: Agricultural displays were a mainstay of the fair throughout its history. In 1885, both agriculture and horticulture exhibits were presented in the “Main Building” alongside many other fair exhibits. By 1901, the two were the building’s exclusive occupants. The original Old Main burned to the ground on Nov 10, 1944. In 1947, a new, Art Deco-inspired Agriculture Horticulture Building was constructed on the site and is still used for its original intent. The structure was designed to mirror the style of some earlier State Fair buildings such as the Horse Barn, Sheep & Poultry Barn and the 4-H Building.

Now: The Agriculture Horticulture Building still impresses with its central tower (lit up at night), eight exhibit halls and beautiful central rotunda. Visitors come to see the multitude of flower shows, honey displays and demonstrations, and the traditional fruits and vegetables exhibits, all loved throughout the fair’s history.

05

International Bazaar

Built 1970 as Mexican Village, renamed Bazaar in 1984, razed and rebuilt in 2008

Then: Inspired by a similar attraction at the Los Angeles County Fair, the Mexican Village opened in 1970. It featured Mexican culture, art, and cuisine and the village was instantly popular. It was renamed the Bazaar in 1984 to allow for more diversity in its offerings. The original was razed in 2008 and replaced with the new, much larger complex named the International Bazaar.

Now: Today the International Bazaar features food and products from across the world. Free entertainment and demonstration stages with seating showcase music and art from many cultures. It’s like touring the globe without needing a passport.



06



J. V. Bailey House

Built 1911, restored 2006

Then: The State Fair's green thumbs once "planted themselves" at the J. V. Bailey House. From 1916–2004, greenhouse superintendents and grounds-keepers resided year-round at the 1911 American foursquare-style home. They watched over the greenhouse and took care of the iconic cannas, the beautiful red and yellow flowering tropical plants that can be found by the thousands throughout the fairgrounds. The house is named for J. V. Bailey, founder of Bailey Nurseries, Agricultural Society Superintendent of Horticulture (1912–1932) and State Fair Board Member (1924–1934).

Now: Since 2006, the Bailey House has been home to the Minnesota State Fair Foundation. Founded in 2002, the Foundation raises funds to preserve and improve the historic Minnesota State Fair's buildings, and support the fair's educational programs.

Kidway

Theme area created 1963, moved in 1993 and renamed 1995

Then: Adults have had a carnival area at the fair since 1904. It wasn't until 1963 when Kiddieland was added that children had a place to call their own. Outgrowing their space outside of the main carnival, it moved to Machinery Hill in 1993. In 1995, both areas were revamped and renamed the Mighty Midway and Kidway that showcased 67 independently booked rides, plus games and concessions—a profound departure from anything seen before at the fair.

Now: Today the Kidway is a family-friendly area where children can experience smaller rides geared just for them and parents can enjoy watching the fun.



07

08



Food at the Fair

Since the Beginning of the Fair

Then: In the early days, if you wanted a full meal at the fair, you had to bring your own. The first foods available for purchase included peanuts, watermelon, popcorn and lemonade. Around 1900, churches started pitching tents for sit-down meals, such as roast chicken and gravy, prepared at the homes of church members and transported to the fair. After WWII, fair visitors were introduced to foods from around the world, like falafel and chow mein.

Now: Eating is an all-day activity. Visitors check off their annual must-haves like corn dogs, mini donuts and cheese curds, then try the more adventurous, such as cranberry and wild rice meatballs, and shrimp ceviche. Food on-a-stick has become synonymous with the State Fair, and with good reason. With portable versions of Key lime pie, tacos, walleye or even tater tot hot dish, it's much easier to eat on the go! This year, Sweet Martha's Cookie Jar, one of the fair's most iconic vendors, celebrates its 40th anniversary.



The Early Fairs

First County Fair held in 1854;

First Territorial Fair held by the Ag. Society in 1855; First Fair after Statehood held in 1859

Then: Agricultural fairs in the Minnesota Territory began in 1854, flaunting the lush crops, healthy livestock, and bustling society of the region to entice fair visitors to put down roots here in Minnesota. Immigrants from other nations and migrants from other parts of the US flocked to the territory, and eventually Minnesota became a state in 1858. The first fair after statehood was held Oct 5-7, 1859, on 15 acres of land at the corner of Marquette Ave. and 5th Street in what is now downtown Minneapolis. Although the weather was notably rainy and dreary, 4,200 people paid 25 cents to attend and

see the best-grown crops, appreciate the handcrafts created by Minnesotans, and listen to performances by the Great Western Brass Band from St. Paul. Later State Fairs were held at Fort Snelling, Rochester, Kittsondale Driving Park in St. Paul, and Owatonna, until 1885 when it found its permanent home—where you are standing today.

Now: Today, the State Fair boasts the attendance of millions of guests, with a new record set in 2018 at 2,046,533 visiting over the 12 days of the fair! Fairgoers enjoy many of the same things that were fair staples in the mid 1800s—exhibitions of new apples bred in Minnesota, musical acts, and skilled horseback riding. One hundred sixty-five years later, the State Fair remains a celebration of all things Minnesota.

Progress Center

Built 1907

Then: Designed by St. Paul architects and built in just three months, this building originally was used to house poultry and touted as “the largest exhibition building for poultry in the world.”

In 1928, poultry flew the coop and it became the State Exhibits Building. It housed an exhibit from each institution of the state, giving an opportunity for the department heads to explain the functions of their respective offices to citizens. In 1989, the building was renamed Progress Center and held the Oriental Pavilion and later the Wonders of Technology.

Now: In 2006, the Eco Experience exhibit opened in the building, focusing on a host of environmental issues including green technology and renewable energy. The award-winning Eco Experience is a model for similar exhibits throughout North America.

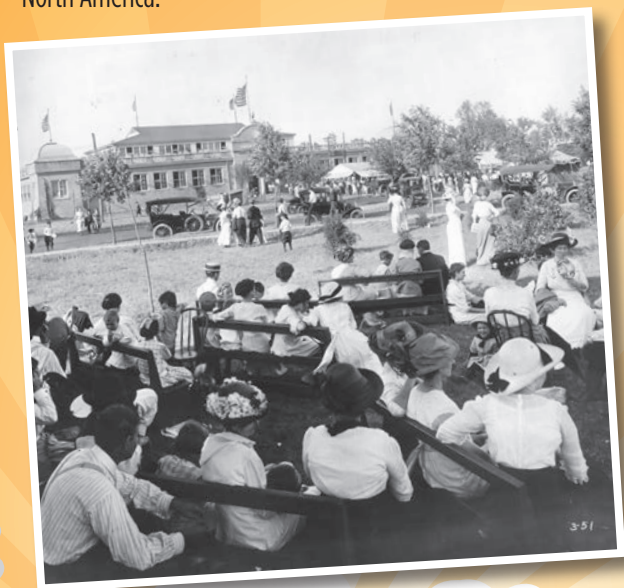


Fine Arts Center

Built 1907

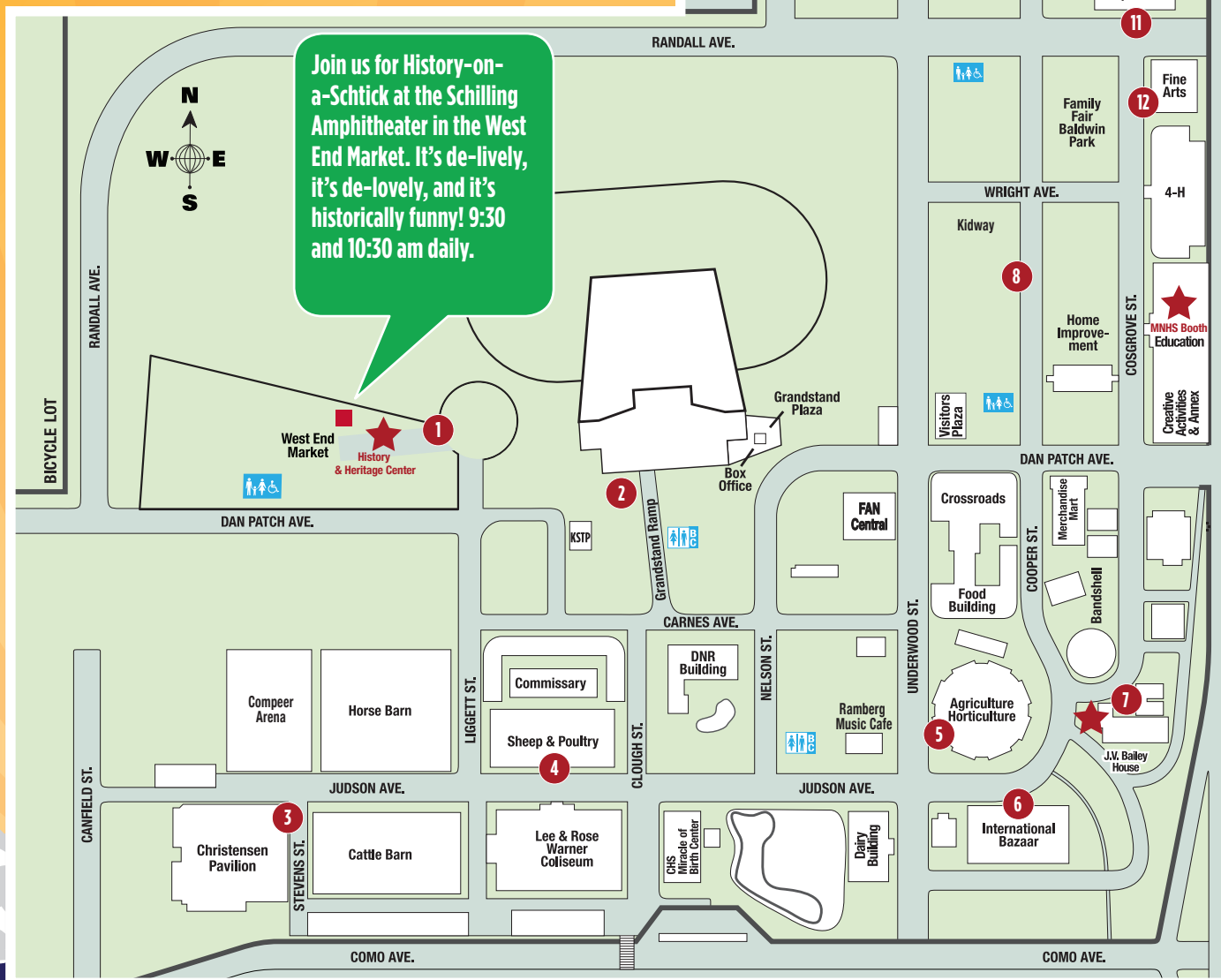
Then: The State Fair has featured fine art since the 1880s. Through the years, visitors have viewed works created by Minnesota artists as well as loaned exhibitions with international masters like Matisse, O’Keefe, and Picasso. In 1980, fine art found a permanent home inside this former Dairy Building, which along with the Progress Center and Grandstand is one of the three oldest buildings on the fairgrounds.

Now: Every year the Fine Arts Center features an exhibition of paintings, sculpture, photography, ceramics, glass, and textiles, all created by Minnesota artists. Only works selected in a juried competition are displayed. Top winners receive monetary awards. Some have even gone on to international acclaim!



MINNESOTA STATE FAIR HISTORY WALKING TOUR MAP

Congratulations. You did it! After completing the tour, remember to pick up your prize at either the Minnesota Historical Society booth, located in the front center aisle of the Education Building, the History & Heritage Center, or the J.V. Bailey House.



History
Walking Tour
Punch Out

01

02

03

04

05

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WANT MORE HISTORY?

History & Heritage Center:
West End Market at the State Fairgrounds

Minnesota State Fair Online Archives:
msffoundation.org

Visit 26 Minnesota Historical Society Sites and Museum:
mnhs.org

\$2 OFF ADMISSION

Good for \$2 off up to four admissions (**up to \$8 value**) to any MNHS historic site or museum. Visit mnhs.org/visit for a full list of sites.

Offer good through June 30, 2020. Coupon not valid for group tours, paid programs, or specially priced exhibits and cannot be combined with other offers.



PROMO CODE: 5996



The Minnesota State Fair Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that preserves and improves State Fair buildings, the fairgrounds, and educational programs.
msffoundation.org

