

2022

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

HISTORY WALKING TOUR

5 NEW
STOPS!



MINNESOTA
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



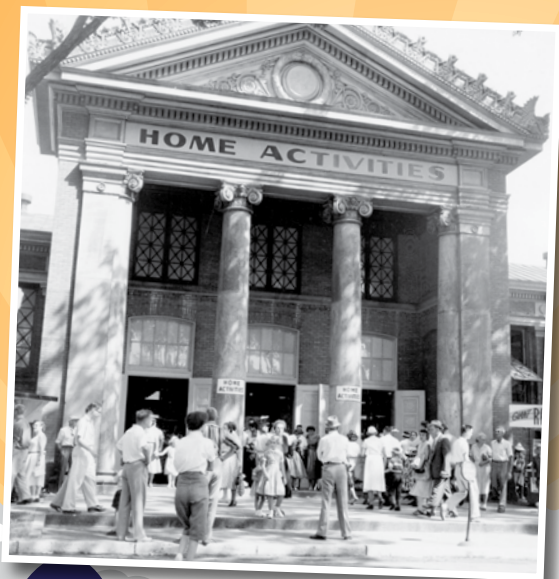
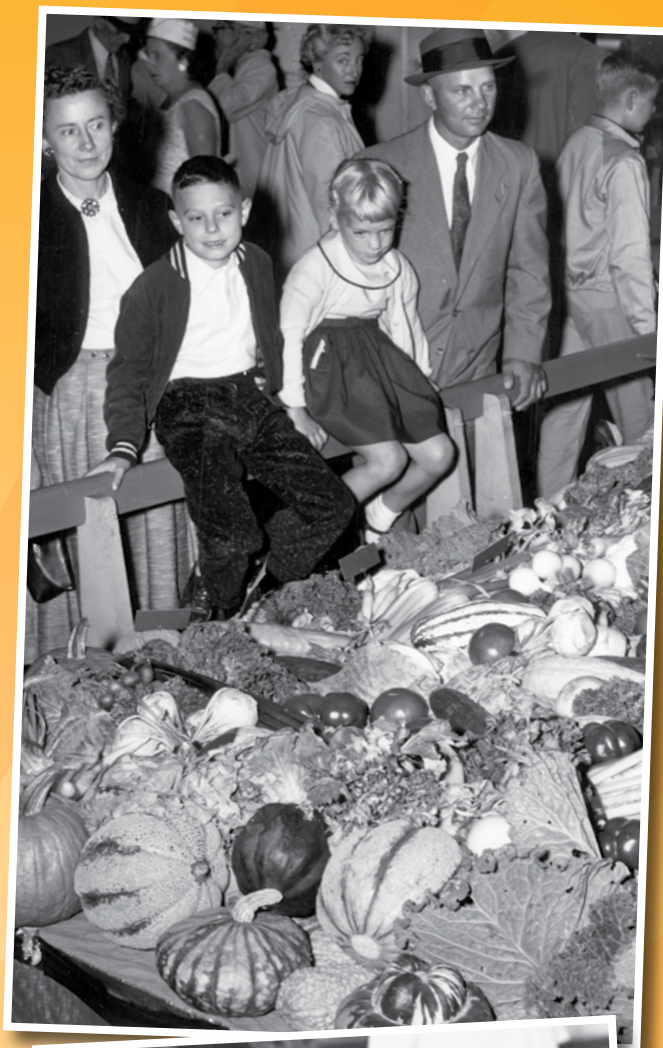
MINNESOTA
STATE FAIR
FOUNDATION

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 eight 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 History & Heritage Center at West End Market or the MSF Foundation at the J.V. Bailey House.

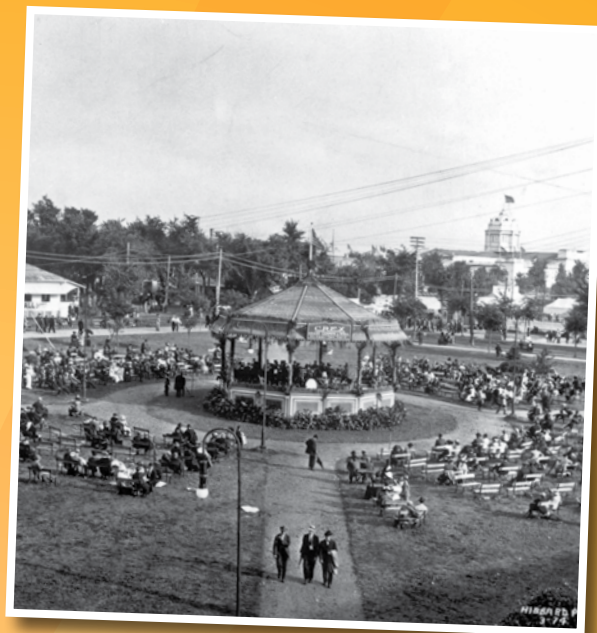


One-Mile Track

Constructed 1885, removed 1939

Then: When the State Fair procured its permanent site in 1885, a one-mile dirt track was built for horse races. Speed barns were built south of the last turn of the track to house racehorses, including the Standardbred stallion, Dan Patch. After the 1939 State Fair, the one-mile track was removed, and the existing half-mile track was replaced.

Now: The Transit Hub and Randall Avenue hug the curve of the racetrack that once was. The West End Market, opened in 2014, is located where the barns were. This same site was also home to the State Fair's Young America Center, also known as the Teen Fair (1964-1974) and then Heritage Square (1975-2013). Visit the History & Heritage Center to view a 1913 map of the State Fairgrounds, including the one-mile track, and learn all about the State Fair's rich history!



Plaza Bandstand

Built in 1910, razed in 1936

Then: In 1910 a Plaza Bandstand was erected east of a berm earth ramp, one year after the current Grandstand was built. For the first seven days of the 1927 fair, John Philip Sousa and his band performed here—and, for the first time ever—played the “Minnesota March,” which he composed at the request of U of M students and alumni. It was razed in 1936, and the following year the current Grandstand Ramp was constructed, flanked by intricate landscaping on both sides.

Now: A stage now resides on the west side of the Grandstand Ramp, and the area is known as Dan Patch Park. Music, cooking, science demonstrations, and more can be seen throughout the 12 days of the fair.

01

02

Horse Barn

Built 1937

Then: The Horse Barn dates back to 1937 and was built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a federal program that created jobs for people during the Great Depression. Typical of WPA architecture, the poured-concrete and steel barn is ornamented with relief sculptures above the windows. The imagery beautifully reflects what takes place inside the building. With 500 stalls, it houses the smallest pony to the largest draft horse.

Now: Visitors are encouraged to stop in to meet and learn about horses. The Horse Barn features the “Aisle of Breeds” and EquiMania!™, an award-winning program that focuses on equine education. Then, go see the horses in competition at the Coliseum and judging arena—all horse shows are free!



Cattle Barn

Built 1920

Then: When planning for the new Cattle Barn, the goal was “not simply a mere cattle barn but a real exposition building,” according to the State Fair board. Six smaller stock barns were removed to make room for the massive steel, cement, and brick structure that was ready for the 1920 State Fair and fully completed in 1921. During fair-time it would hold 1,000 head of cattle. Off-season events included the National Dairy Exposition and auto shows. As part of the World War II war effort, the building was converted to a press and forging shop manufacturing military aircraft propellers. In 1947, the building was reconverted and held cattle once again.

Now: Beef and dairy cattle continue to be exhibited during the fair. The educational Moo Booth offers a place for people to learn about the cattle industry, see the robotic milker in use, and even the opportunity to milk a cow by hand.



03

04



Agriculture Horticulture Building

Built 1947

Then: Agricultural displays have been a mainstay of the fair throughout its history. In 1885, the first year the State Fair was held at the present fairgrounds, agriculture and horticulture exhibits were presented in the “Main Building,” alongside many other fair exhibits. In 1910, the building was used exclusively for agriculture. In 1943, horticulture, agriculture, and bee culture were housed together again. The original Old Main burned to the ground on Nov. 10, 1944. In 1947, the 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 4-H Building.

Now: Celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2022, 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

J.V. Bailey House

Built in 1911, restored 2006

Then: In 1904, a hospital and first aid station was built southeast of the Grandstand. This building remained there until the summer of 1911, when it was moved and extensively remodeled to become the Officers’ Quarters—the fair-time home for members of the State Fair board who lived outside the Twin Cities. From 1916 through 2004, the State Fair’s green thumbs “planted themselves” as this American foursquare style-home became a year-round home to the greenhouse superintendents and groundskeepers. 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. In 2006 the house was 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 501(c)(3). Celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2022, the foundation has provided the State Fair with over \$16 million for preservation and improvements to the fairgrounds and State Fair buildings, and in support of the fair’s educational programs.



06



Creative Activities Building

Built 1971

Then: The original building on this site was erected in 1904 to serve as a manufacturer's building. Just a few years later, it was converted to the Woman's Building, housing commercial exhibits for education, culture, art, music, and homemaking activities. It was renamed Home Activities in 1952 as the exhibits appealed to all. The building was razed in 1970 and replaced by the Creative Activities Building.

Now: The Creative Activities Building showcases entries in over 1,200 categories, from needlework and handcrafts to baking and canning. One of the biggest thrills for thousands of Creative Activities competitors is looking to see if their entry has the coveted blue ribbon attached to it. The building also features daily free demonstrations on cooking, woodcarving, weaving, and more. Countless fair visitors have been inspired to take up new-found interests by the exhibits and demonstrations in the building.



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 World War II, menus expanded and fair visitors were introduced to foods from around the world—like falafel and chow mein—along with new foods (including Pronto Pups!) that became State Fair classics.

Now: Eating is an all-day activity and one of the fair's most popular features. At one time, there were over 80 church dining establishments. Today, there are only two: Salem Lutheran and Hamline Church Dining Hall. Hamline celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2022, and is the oldest food concession on the fairgrounds. Hamline Dining Hall's famous ham loaf was first served in 1897, and you can still order it to this day.



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 by international masters including Matisse, O'Keefe, and Picasso. Fine arts displays were featured in various locations around the grounds, including the first and third floors of the Grandstand. In 1980, fine art found a permanent home inside this former Dairy Building, which, along with the Progress Center (1907) and Grandstand (1909), 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!



Baldwin Park

1940

Then: In the early 1900s this block held Machinery Hall, a building filled with farm implements of all sorts; then later held poultry in 1928 and beyond. In 1939 the building was razed, and, in its place, a landscaped area known as Machinery Park was created for people to sit and relax. The 1970s brought in 4-H performances and high school bands. In 1983 it was renamed Baldwin Park, with a stage built for entertainment that expanded to daily, hourly performances by various acts.

Now: Fun and educational components Alphabet Forest and Math On-A-Stick were added in 2010 and 2015, respectively. In 2016, a brand-new bandshell and shaded seating area replaced the original stage, which was built in 1983. The park was named to honor Doug Baldwin, the State Fair's general manager from 1951 through 1962.

09

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Machinery Hill

Coined in 1909

Then: Farm implements have been part of the State Fair since its beginning. In 1907, an additional 40 acres was added to the north end of the fairgrounds principally for farm machinery displays, and the name Machinery Hill was coined in 1909. In its prime, nearly 80 acres of the fairgrounds were used for farm implements and vehicles that gave visitors a glimpse into the future of farming. Countless kids—and kids at heart—were in awe of the giant tractors and combines.

Now: As demographics change, vendors change too. New agricultural and industrial equipment still find a home on Machinery Hill, but on a much smaller scale. Today's farm equipment manufacturers rarely bring their products to public exhibitions, but instead build them to order. The Old Iron Show celebrates antique farm machinery—a nod to what once was. The hill also features the Little Farm Hands exhibit: a fun place for kids to learn about agriculture from the field to the grocery store.



11



Pets at the Fair

Beginning in 1912

Then: In 1912, the State Fair held its first bench show, featuring 56 exhibitors with 95 dogs. But if you wanted to see your favorite pooches, you would have to pay admission. This lasted through 1916, and not until the late 1930s did puppy and (sometimes) cat shows return, held in the Poultry Building. In 1972, dogs moved to the Dog Exhibit building west of the Grandstand. In 1991, the Pet Center on the north end of the fairgrounds opened up to purebred dog breeders exhibitions, commercial displays, veterinary groups, and more.

Now: In 2018, the Pet Pavilions opened west of the former Pet Center. Open-air booths house man's best friend, with different breeds making appearances throughout the fair. Spay and neuter surgeries are performed on canines and felines, while a narrator explains the procedures to onlookers. A neighboring structure is filled with pet-centric items and an outdoor area showcases agility and obedience demonstrations.

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MINNESOTA STATE FAIR HISTORY WALKING TOUR MAP

Congratulations. You did it! After completing the tour, remember to pick up your prize at either the History & Heritage Center at West End Market, or the MSF Foundation at the J.V. Bailey House.



History
Walking Tour
Punch Out

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02

03

04

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WANT MORE HISTORY?

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

Minnesota State Fair
Online Archives:
msffoundation.org

Minnesota Historical Society
online resources and historic
site information:
mnhs.org



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

