Minot AFB Library Presents:

The "Get to Know Minot" Challenge: a Self-Guided History Tour

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Visit 12 different locations. When you arrive at a stop, turn to that stop's page in this booklet. Compare the historic picture to how it looks now, read the information, and take a picture of yourself or a member of your team at the location to show to the Library Staff. Show the Library Staff all 12 pictures to receive a prize and a drawing slip for each team member.

Optional: Complete all 7 bonus activities and take a picture inside each activity location of yourself or a team member. Show a member of the Library Staff your pictures to receive a second prize and drawing slip for each team member.

List of Tour Stops

#	Address	Additional Location Information	Complete?
1	First Lutheran Church Cemetery, corner of Broadway and 11th Ave NW, next to Minot State University	There is a vehicle gate on the North side, but you can park at the MSU Admin Building lot to the west June - mid-August or in the evening or on weekends without a permit.	
2	15 N Main St	Old Soo Depot	
3	315 3rd St SE	Ward County Courthouse—Park on the other side of 3rd St SE	
4	2 Main St N	Now Taube Museum of Art	
5	515 2nd Ave SW	Minot City Hall	
6	500 University Ave W	Turn on to the parking loop from University Ave. You can park June - mid-Aug or in the evening/on weekends without a permit.	
7	1215 E Burdick Expy	Enter the park at the entrance to the west of the zoo and find the Teddy Roosevelt statue.	
8	10 S Broadway	I Keating Building, 3rd Street side	
9	215 1st St SE	Central Campus	
10	407 3rd St SE	Park in the parking garage and look for the statue of St. Joseph.	
11	501 Lincoln Ave	Large field where Ramstad Middle School used to be	
12	305 Airport Rd	Minot International Airport	

Bonus Activities

#	Location	Activity	Com-plete?
1	1020 S Broadway	Visit the Scandinavian Heritage Park	
2	15 N Main St	Visit the Old Soo Depot Transportation Museum	
3	19 1st St NE	Visit the Railroad Museum	
4	2005 Burdick Expy E ND State Fairgrounds	Visit the Ward County Historical Society Pioneer Village Historical Museum	
5	2 Main St N	Visit the Taube Museum of Art	
6	1219 Burdick Expy E	Visit the Roosevelt Park Zoo	
7	100 34th Ave NE	Visit the Dakota Territory Air Museum	

MAIN STREET, MAGIC CITY HARVEST FESTIVAL, MINOT, N.D.

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1. The Erik Ramstad Gravesite at the 1st Lutheran Cemetery

Erik Ramstad was a Norwegian immigrant who homesteaded in the valley destined to become Minot in 1883. When Jim Hill, the man behind the Great Northern Railway (also known as the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway), chose to have his railroad cross the Mouse (Souris) River on Ramstad's land and decided that the crossing would be the end-of-the-line for the winter of 1886-1887, Ramstad's land suddenly became extremely valuable, and his fortune was made. A town made of tents appeared on the prairie almost overnight, leading the new town to be nicknamed "the Magic City." The town was named after Henry Minot, a friend of Jim Hill's. The "Magic City" nickname was dropped during hard times in the 1890's but re-popularized in 1908.

Erik Ramstad was a founder-member of the First Lutheran Church (originally called the Mouse River Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church) and is buried in this cemetery. See if you can find his gravestone. It is a small one located near a couple of larger Ramstad family stones towards the middle of the cemetery.

To learn more about the culture of the Scandinavian immigrants who settled here, check out the Scandinavian Heritage Park near the intersection of Broadway and 11th Ave SW and attend the Norsk Hostfest festival in the fall.
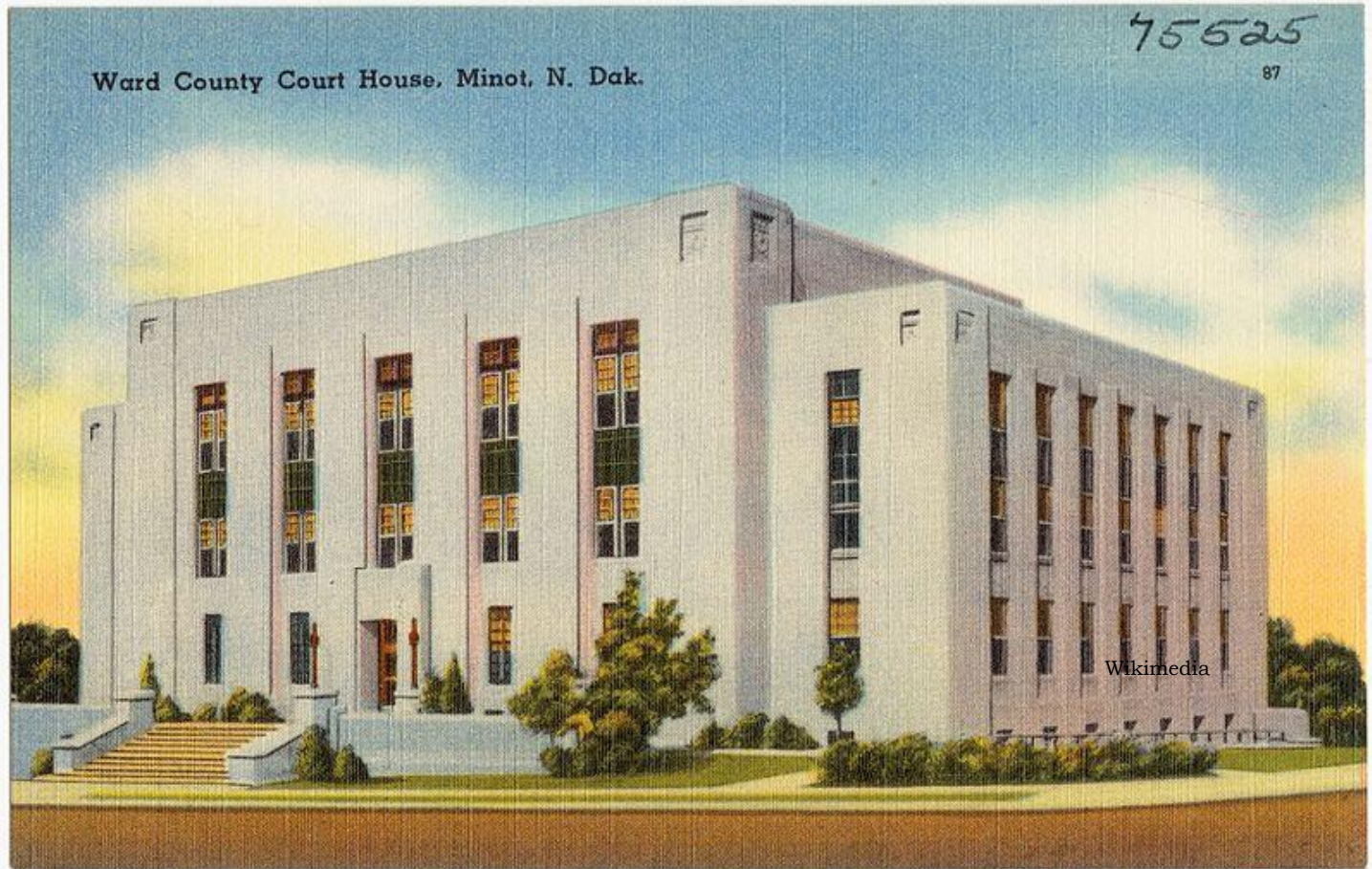
2. The Old Soo Depot

In 1893, a second railroad, the Soo Line, was also built through Minot. The Soo Line was named after Sault Ste Marie (in Michigan and Ontario), which is pronounced "Soo Saint Marie," as the technical name for the railroad was the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railway. The two railways had a fierce rivalry for many years and both are still thriving though under different names. The Great Northern is now a part of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (orange engines), and the Soo Line is now a part of the Canadian Pacific Railroad (red engines).

The mostly empty area between the depot and the river once contained a Great Northern Railway round-house. It was replaced with Gavin Yard to the east of town in 1956. If you are careful and brave (and it hasn't been demolished yet) you can walk above the place where the round-house once existed on the Anne Street Bridge which was built to allow people who lived north of the river to safely walk to the downtown area. Imagine walking over a busy round-house full of sooty steam engines and noise. To get to the Anne Street Bridge, walk north across the tracks to the end of Main Street and then turn right and proceed to the stairs to the bridge.

To learn more, check out the Old Soo Line Transportation Museum that is now housed in the old Soo Line depot and the Railroad Museum, only a block away at 19 1st St. NE.

3. The Ward County Courthouse

Ward County Court House, Minot, N. Dak.

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Minot became the county seat of Ward County after a notorious election in 1888. A group from Minot set up a phony town to allow transient railroad workers to vote. In the end, 143 ballots were not counted as they were deemed illegal, but Minot won the county seat without them. Burlington, the other contender, was also bypassed by the Great Northern Railroad, allegedly because of a feud between a Burlington wife and a railroad surveyor's wife, but the Soo Line runs through both towns.

In the 1880's and 1890's, Ward County managed to swallow several of its neighbors, becoming the largest county in North Dakota (larger than Delaware, Vermont, and Rhode Island put together) and earning the nickname "Imperial Ward." By 1908, the "swallowed" Mountrail, Renville, and Burke counties wanted to separate from Ward County which they accomplished through a series of special elections and court cases in 1909-1910, but none of the new counties wanted Kenmare to be their county seat, so the "gooseneck" of Ward County was created to keep Kenmare in the same county as Minot, dashing Kenmare's county seat hopes.

The current courthouse building was completed in 1930. The first (originally located in Burlington) Ward County Courthouse can be visited at the Pioneer Village Historical Museum by the fairgrounds in Minot.

4. The Jacobson Block

Digital Minot

Martin Jacobson was a farmer/rancher turned "hardware man" and businessman. He built the "Jacobson block" at the corner of Central Avenue and North Main Street. The block housed the Jacobson Hardware Store and later also the Union National Bank, a barber shop, a Turkish bath, and, on the third floor, the Jacobson Opera House. Jacobson sold the hardware store to Peter Fugelso and D. R. Jacobsen (no relation) in 1907 and later sold the Opera House as well. The Jacobsons built a beautiful house at 304 S Main St. It was later used as a dormitory for Trinity Hospital nursing students and then became the Thomas Funeral Home from 1945 to the present.

The Opera House was home to vaudeville acts, plays, and musical performances by both local and outside talents from January 1903 until a devastating fire in July 1923. While the fire damaged the entire building, the damage to the Opera House was bad enough that it was not rebuilt, and the building today still lacks the original third floor.

One of the notable acts at the Jacobson Opera House was the Harry St. Clair Players featuring Boris Karloff who was later to become world-famous for playing the role of the Frankenstein monster in the 1931 movie, "Frankenstein." Karloff lived and performed in Minot for a little over a year. When Karloff appeared on the TV show "This is Your Life" in 1957, he was presented with a life membership to the Minot Chamber of Commerce.

Today, the Jacobson block is home of the Taube Museum of Art.

5. Minot City Hall

Pictured is the Minot City Hall from 1905 until the current City Hall was built. The old City Hall was situated on 1st Ave SW near the intersection with 1st St SW and contained the city government, fire department, and police station.

Politics in Minot in the early part of the twentieth century were very contentious. For instance:

There were almost two Minots: Minot and North Minot. The citizens of Harrison Township north of the river tried to incorporate into the new town of North Minot in 1909, and the fight over the location of Minot State (see stop 6) was essentially one between North Minot and the rest of Minot.
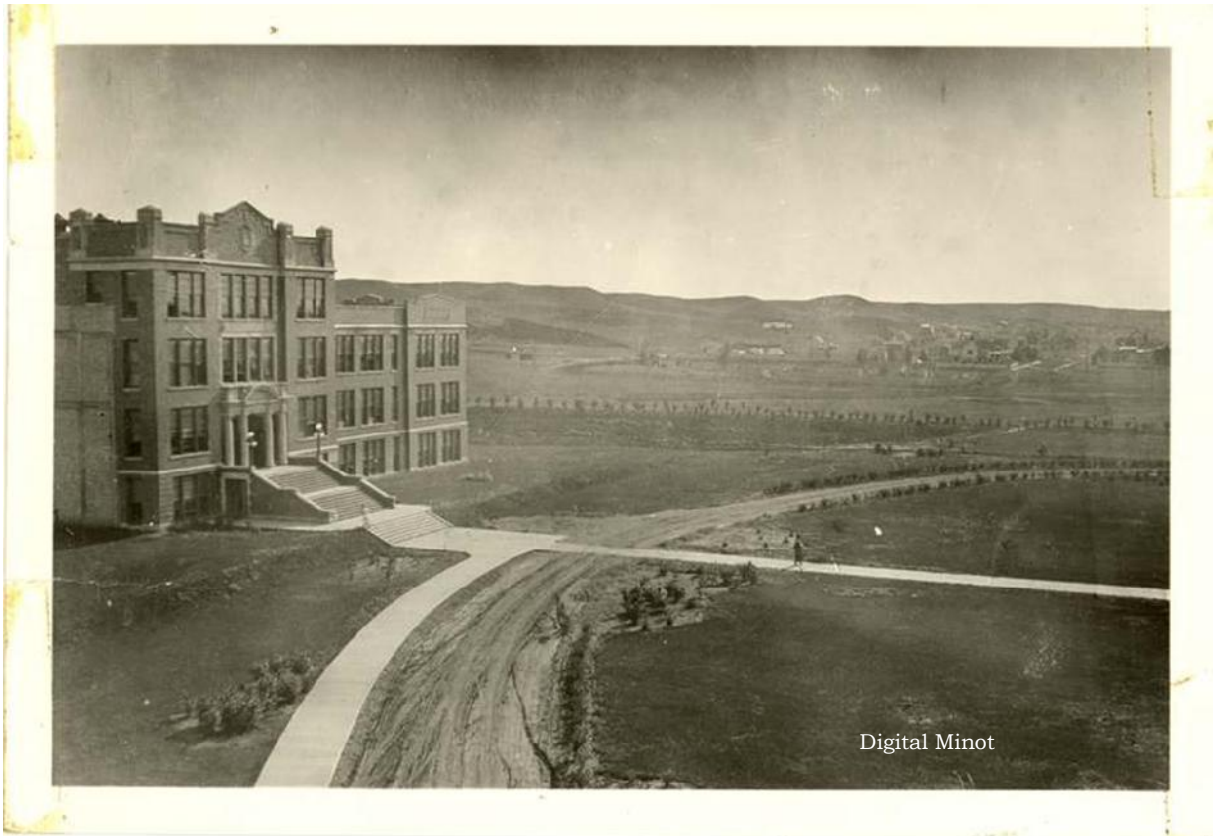
In 1909, the form of government in Minot changed from the council system to the commission system. In the commission system, the president of the commission acted more or less as mayor and the commissioners were elected at large. In 1933, it changed again to a system with a city manager (a professional employee of the city), a mayor (an elected official), and a city council. Traditional mayoral duties were divided between the City Manager and Mayor. This is the basic form of Minot government today though it has undergone various reorganizations and changes.

Minot was the North Dakota headquarters for the socialist party from roughly 1908-1916. One of the major themes of North Dakota history is exploitation by outside interests and the fight against that exploitation. Socialism died out around 1914-1917 for several reason such as: their failure to make the changes people wanted (Minot had a socialist mayor, Arthur LeSueur, briefly, but he resigned both because he was unable to keep his campaign promise to clean up the city and because of problems resulting from the attempt), the association of the party with the IWW* riots in Minot, the party's opposition to World War I, and the birth of something newer and more exciting: the Non-Partisan League. The Non-Partisan League involved people from all parties and tried to make the world fairer for farmers. They made a lasting impact on the state by creating the Bank of North Dakota and the State Mill and Elevator and promoting the flourishing of co-ops and unions before gradually petering out and eventually merging with the Democratic Party.

*IWW stands for Industrial Workers of the World, a labor union.

6. Minot State University's Old Main

Digital Minot

In the early 1900's, it was clear that North Dakota's two "normal schools," or teacher training schools, were not remotely adequate to meet the high demand for teachers, but the State constitution only provided for two normal schools, so the people of Minot started to agitate for the constitution to be amended to allow an additional school, promoting Minot as the ideal location. After some in-fighting by other communities who wanted a normal school, the bill allowing for the creation of Minot Normal School was passed in 1911. More fighting surrounded the location for the new school with multiple people wanting the privilege of donating the land. Eventually, the site on Erik Ramstad's property north of town was chosen and, despite a last minute attempt by outside interests to de-fund the school,* Minot Normal School opened in 1913.

Minot Normal School quickly grew into Minot State Teacher's College. Teaching students gained experience teaching in a real school, Harrison School, later called the Model School. The Model School closed in 1968 and the building, called Model Hall, now houses the math and computer science departments. In World War II, Minot State hosted U.S. Navy V-5 and V-12 pilot training programs. Minot State continued to grow, add new degree programs and buildings, and expand into disciplines beyond teaching, becoming Minot State College upon achieving full college status in 1964 and becoming Minot State University in 1987 after adding graduate programs and attaining full university status.

*The attempt to stop construction funds did delay progress. The first classes were held in the armory downtown. When classes moved to the Normal School, there wasn't enough money to buy chairs for all the classrooms, so the first students had to carry their chairs from class to class.

7. Roosevelt Park

Roosevelt Park was called Riverside Park (not to be confused with today's Riverside Park) until it was re-named in honor of Theodore Roosevelt shortly after his death in 1922. The Theodore Roosevelt statue in the park itself was donated by Dr. Henry Waldo Coe, a personal friend of Roosevelt and former Dakota Territories politician. Local school children raised money to pay for the pedestal.

The statue was damaged in the flood of 1969 (more about that at stop #11) but restored and moved to its present location. There was a special Medora musical performance in Minot to raise money to pay for the restoration.

The Roosevelt Park Zoo, the first* (and until 1933, only) zoo in North Dakota, opened in 1920. The iconic Zoological building was built in 1921. It has been used in many different ways, housing a variety of offices, animals, and educational displays. During the 1969 flood, some animals were able to stay in the Zoological building while others were moved to the Burlington Northern stockyards. Zoo employees brought food to the animals in the Zoological building by boat. After the flood, the zoo and park divided into separate entities and rebuilt better than ever. Flood control channelization in the early seventies resulted in a new river channel that split the zoo into two sections which were connected via a bridge. The zoo was again badly damaged in the flood of 2011 but has been rebuilt with a new visitor's center and some new animals.

*There are claims on the Internet that the first zoo in ND was Wahpeton's Chahinkapa Zoo, but although the land for it was purchased in 1903, the Chahinkapa Zoo didn't actually open until 1933.

8. I Keating Building and High Third

Minot Memories

Minot was known as a rough town from the very beginning. Illegal activities centered at first on 1st St SW but were soon moved "out-of-town" to 3rd Street SW between present day Burdick Expressway and the I. Keating Furniture Store.
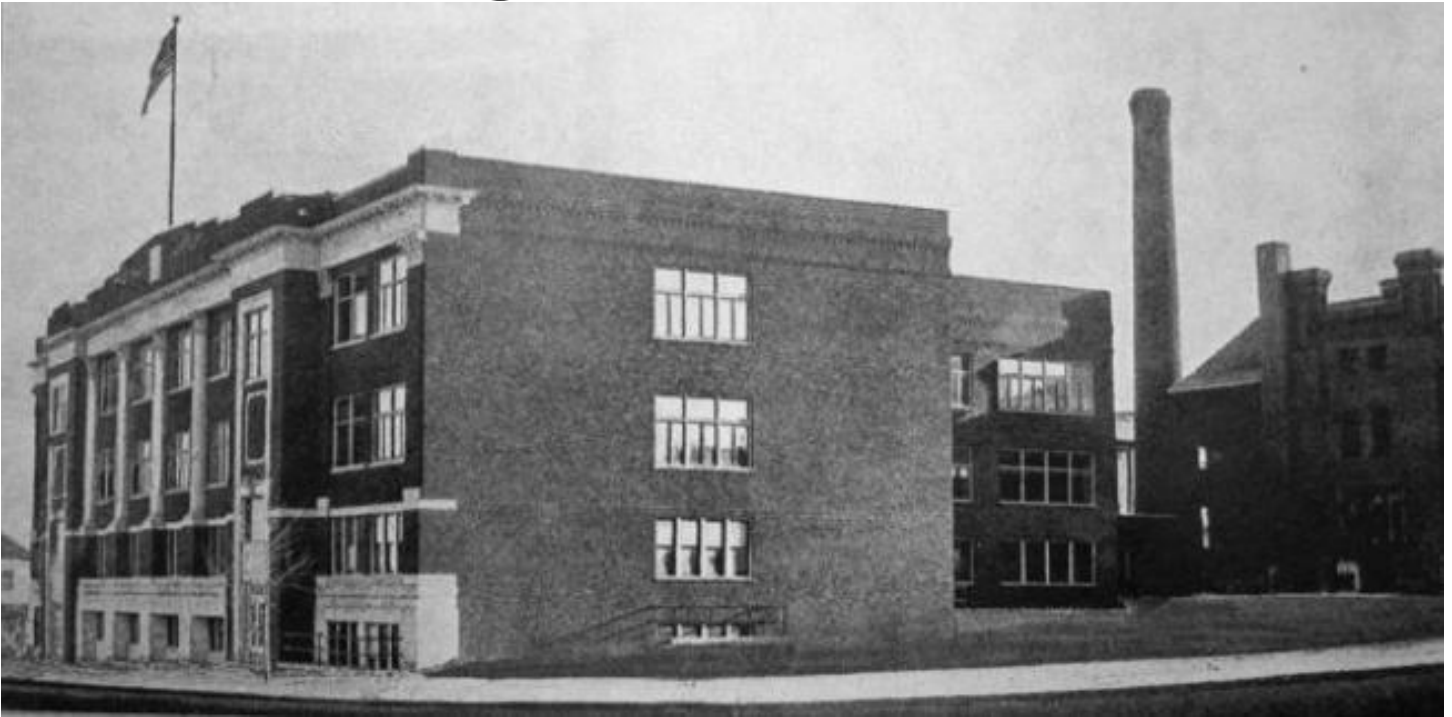
When North Dakota became a State in 1889, it came into the union "dry," alcohol was not allowed, so many State residents started making, importing, selling and consuming it illegally. When all of the US went "dry" during prohibition from 1918-1933, Minot's established illegal activities and proximity and multiple connections to Canada made it an ideal base of operations for high-speed alcohol smugglers who supplied the likes of Al Capone. The Chicago connection helped earn Minot the nickname of "Little Chicago." There are a lot of prohibition era stories, and it can be hard to sort fact from fiction. There have always been rumors about tunnels, but the real tunnels that have been found are steam tunnels that were used by the Minot steam plant to transport steam (in pipes) and workers (and the occasional enterprising delivery boy) around downtown Minot.*

After national prohibition ended in 1933, beer was legalized in North Dakota. Other alcoholic beverages didn't become legal in ND until 1936. 3rd Street, known as "High Third," continued to be a hot bed of crime, especially prostitution and gambling, until the area was cleaned up and largely demolished in the 1960's.

The I. Keating building was home to Stearns Motors, a company that, among other things, offered car storage and parking services which were popular among visitors to High Third. Exactly how involved Stearns Motors was in the illegal goings on isn't entirely clear but there are numerous stories about hidden rooms and the building's convenient proximity to the railroad tracks.

*Minot's steam tunnels have been filled in, but you can tour similar steam tunnels in Moosejaw, Saskatchewan. They have two separate interactive historical tours, one about prohibition and one about Chinese immigrants.

9. Minot High School

Minot's first school was established here in 1887. Various school buildings existed on the block that now consists entirely of Minot High School's Central Campus, and the Central Campus building itself was built one piece at a time to replace smaller and older buildings. The first building that looked recognizably like Central Campus was the new high school built on the north side of the block in 1919 (pictured above). The west side of the block was added in 1929 when a new junior high was built. The east side was added in 1940. The fact that different parts of today's Central Campus were once separate buildings complicates its internal layout to this day. Minot continued to grow and out-grow its existing school buildings. Junior high students were moved out of the Central Campus building in the late 1950s and early 1960's when the original Erik Ramstad Junior High and Jim Hill Junior High schools were built. The arrival of the baby boomers and the transfer of students from the Model school at Minot State made it clear by the late 1960's that Central Campus was no longer big enough even for just the high school students. Magic City Campus was built next to Jim Hill and the 11th and 12th grades were moved there starting with the 1973-1974 school year. The 10th graders stayed at Central and were joined by the 9th graders who had formerly been included in the junior highs (6th graders later moved from the elementary schools to the middle schools). Minot High School was now one school in two campuses! This arrangement proved to have numerous advantages, so the people of Minot have resisted various attempts to divide Minot High School into separate high schools.

Minot High School is one of the few high schools to have its own original school song. Most school songs use an existing tune with their own words. Minot High's song was composed in 1956 by band director Arvel Graving, replacing the previous school song which used the tune of "Minnesota Rouser."

10. Trinity and St. Joseph's Hospitals

ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL MINOT N. D. 81 COPYRIGHT LANDSVERK

The first hospital in Minot was the county hospital called "Northwestern Hospital" established in 1896. In 1911, the hospital was leased and later purchased by the Franciscan Sisters of Tiffin, Ohio who changed the name to St. Joseph's Hospital. In 1922, a group of Protestant churches in Minot formed the Trinity Hospital Association, built a second hospital, and launched a professional rivalry that still echoes today. Both hospitals out-grew their original buildings, built new ones, out-grew the new ones, and made additions through decades of busy and ever expanding health service.

St Joseph's hospital changed hands several times in the mid to late 1990's and was eventually purchased by Trinity Health, as Trinity Hospital and its associated medical entities were by then known, in 2001. The old hospital buildings are starting to show their age, so Trinity is building a new hospital campus on the south-west edge of town.

11. Old Ramstad or Lincoln Lake Park

This spot was the location of Lincoln Lake Park (a.k.a. Lincoln Park) which featured a slough* that was used for water recreation (including an aquatic Shakespearean Pageant put on by Minot State in 1916) and ice skating. The park was purchased via eminent domain by the school board and became the location of Erik Ramstad Middle School (called Erik Ramstad Jr. High until 1995) from 1957-2011. Ramstad survived the 1969 flood only to be destroyed when a temporary dike broke during the 2011 flood, and a new Ramstad Middle School was built on top of north hill.

Minot has a long flood history. The Mouse River (also called the Souris River as Souris is French for "mouse") flows from the wet highlands of Saskatchewan, down through North Dakota, and back up into Canada where it flows into the Assiniboine River in Manitoba which itself joins the Red River in Winnipeg before flowing north and terminating in Hudson Bay.

The first properly recorded flood was in 1904 which had a peak flow rate of 12,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) and a 21.9 ft crest, a record that stood until 2011. There was a smaller flood in 1916, four floods in the twenties, and a historic flood in 1969. There were a few smaller floods in the early seventies followed by another big one in 1976 in which the peak flow was recorded at 9,350 cfs though damage was successfully limited through the use of extensive dikes. Flood protection measures were put in place in the 1970s and 1980s including two dams built in Canada, but they could not handle the unprecedented size of the 2011 flood which had a peak flow of 27,400 cfs and a peak stage of 24.37ft. The only known comparable historical flood is that of 1881, but there is no exact data from that flood as it predated stream-gauges and the founding of the city. Flood control remains an area of concern for the people of Minot.

*A slough (pronounced slu) is a shallow pond that tends to dry up during times of drought. Sloughs are also called "prairie potholes."

12-Minot International Airport

The first flying exhibition in Minot was at the Ward County Fair in 1911. In the early days, the fairgrounds were used both for flying exhibitions and as an unofficial airport. The first registered airport in North Dakota was established by Chester Jacobson, a World War I ace pilot, west of Minot, roughly where Minot Sand and Gravel is today. Arguably, the first person to land at the present airport was Billy McCarroll who flew from the fairgrounds to the location of today's airport where he hit a fence and gave up flying. His 1914 landing was ahead of its time as the airport was not built in its present location until 1928. Although the Minot Airport functioned as a port-of-entry with Canada from 1931-1934 and continuously from 1956 on, the Minot Airport didn't officially became the "Minot International Airport" until 1959. Aviation in Minot continued to grow in importance, and Minot produced several significant fliers including Air Force General David C. Jones who became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1978. In addition to the V-programs (see stop 6) Minot was considered as a potential location for an Army Air Base in 1941, but it wasn't until the 1950's that a permanent military addition to the area's aviation resources was made.

Minot Air Force Base was originally built as an Air Defense Command SAGE (Semi-Automatic Ground Environment) project base with the intention that radar units in Saskatchewan, Canada would detect Soviet bombers coming over the arctic, giant computers would calculate their route and routes for interception, and fighter-interceptors would depart Minot AFB to shoot them down, ideally before they reached heavily populated southern Canadian cities. The Air Force made the initial error of announcing that Bismarck would host the new base before realizing that it was too far south, so the base would have to be built near Minot. Some people in Bismarck are still mad about the change. Minot AFB was built on land selected by the Air Force and opened in 1957. In 1961, the base became home to B-52 bombers and construction started on the missile silos. The SAGE mission was moved to Malmstrom in 1963, but its legacy is the giant computer building known as the PRIDE (Professional Results in Daily Effort, an ADC/SAC motto) building.

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Ward County 75 jubilee: Jim Hill to jets. (1961). Minot, ND.

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