WASHBURN A MILL HISTORY
Mill City Museum was built within the ruins of the National Historic Landmark Washburn A Mill, the flagship mill of the Washburn-Crosby Co. (later General Mills), and the largest and most technologically advanced flour mill in the world when it was completed in 1880. Millers at the Washburn A Mill Complex in the 1870s perfected a new process for milling, a revolution that made fine white flour available to the masses for the first time. Soon thereafter Minneapolis became the flour milling capital of the world, a title it held from 1880 to 1930.

WASHBURN A MILL TIMELINE
1866 C. C. Washburn builds the first Washburn Mill
1874 Washburn’s second mill—the Washburn A Mill—opens
1878 Washburn A Mill explodes
1880 Washburn A Mill is rebuilt
1908 Concrete Elevator No. 2 is built
1910 Gold Medal Flour sign is erected
1928 Washburn-Crosby becomes General Mills
1928 Fire destroys the south side of the Washburn A Mill
1956 Washburn A Mill closes
1991 Fire guts the abandoned mill
2003 Mill City Museum opens

WELCOME TO MILL CITY MUSEUM
WHAT TO SEE & DO
• An architecturally stunning National Historic Landmark
• Flour Tower 8-story multimedia elevator show
• Minneapolis in 19 Minutes Flat film by Kevin Kling
• Hands-on Water & Baking Labs
• Rooftop views of the Mississippi River, St. Anthony Falls, and Stone Arch Bridge
• Museum store featuring city history & cooking merchandise
• Bushel & Peck Café by D’Amico

FLOUR TOWER TIME
(assign)

MOIVE TIME
(run every half hour)

SPECIAL TOURS & PROGRAMS
See mnhs.org/events for upcoming schedule & more information
• Indoor & outdoor walking tours
• Baking demonstrations
• Book events
• Family Days
• Live performances

RENTALS
Wedding, corporate, and event rentals: 612-238-4444
Conference room rentals: 612-341-7556

FIND THESE CLUES TO THE BUILDING’S THREE TIME PERIODS:
• Limestone = Rebuilt Washburn A Mill (1880)
• Round concrete columns = Post-fire reconstruction (1928)
• Square columns & glass curtain wall = Mill City Museum (2003)

DID YOU KNOW?
• The Washburn A Mill could produce 2 million pounds of flour each day.
• 109 workers toiled in the A Mill in 1897, most of them in packing and loading.
• During World War II psychologist B.F. Skinner conducted experiments in the mill to teach pigeons to navigate the first “smart” bombs.
• The May 2, 1878, flour dust explosion killed 18 workers and destroyed nearly a third of the city’s flour milling capacity.
• Concrete cylindrical grain elevators like Elevator No. 2 were invented in a nearby Minneapolis suburb.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MNHS MEMBERSHIP
Become a Minnesota Historical Society member and enjoy free admission to all MNHS historic sites & museums! If you’re already paid admission today, stop at the ticket desk and we’ll apply it toward the membership fee.

EXPLORRE OUR FREE PUBLIC SPACES
Mill Commons. The former packing floor of the mill now features the museum store, Bushel & Peck Café by D’Amico, rotating exhibits, and visitor information. Look for the ceiling panel inspired by wheat berries. How many other places can you find wheat images in the museum?

Rail Corridor. The St. Paul and Pacific Boxcar #1320 (1879) is parked on railroad tracks that run right through the mill. Here boxcars were loaded with flour barrels and bags. Look for the art window Between Now and Then, Minnesota at the west end. Step outdoors to the courtyard balcony or the Train Shed.

Train Shed. During the milling heyday, workers unloaded wheat and loaded flour onto railroad cars using the tubes near the ceiling. Look up to see the iconic Gold Medal Flour sign atop Elevator #1. Visit the Mill City Farmers Market on Saturday mornings, May through October. Just outside the doors is an electric motor that once provided extra power for the mill. (1928)

Ruin Courtyard. See map for details.

VISITOR GUIDE
704 South 2nd St.
Minneapolis, MN 55401

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Ruin Courtyard. See map for details.
Minneapolis in 19 Minutes Flat. Take a whirlwind cinematic tour through 400 years of the area’s history starring humorist Kevin Kling. The film plays at the top and bottom of each hour throughout the day. The theater was once the mill’s West Engine House, which supplied extra power for half of the mill.

Cloudy Waters: Dakota Reflections on the River. Hear about the river from the perspectives of Dakota people in this audio installation by artist Mona Smith that interweaves Dakota voices and nature sounds.

Please, no food or drink in the museum gallery.

Water Lab. Get your hands wet and learn how waterpower from St. Anthony Falls drove the flour and lumber mills that made Minneapolis the Mill City.

Minneapolis Riverfront. Explore numerous riverfront attractions including Mill Ruins Park, the Stone Arch Bridge, St. Anthony Falls Visitor Center and Lock and Dam, St. Anthony Falls Heritage Trail, Historic Main Street, Water Power Park, Nicollet Island, and the Guthrie Theater.