

# WEATHER P

**NO MATTER WHAT MINNESOTANS DO**, the weather is part of it. Living in Minnesota means learning to cope with the infamous “invigorating and healthful” climate, the challenging weather extremes, and the perpetual kaleidoscope of seasons. Blizzards and heat waves, floods and droughts, tornadoes and fires regularly crisscross our landscape. Without a doubt, this diverse weather has contributed to Minnesota’s cultural richness while fueling the popular image of the North Star state.

Though winter has captured the nation’s imagination as “The Season” in Minnesota, a major exhibit on *all* of our weather opens at the Minnesota History Center on January 20, 2002. *Weather Permitting* tells the stories of Minnesotans coping with the climate throughout the year and over time—how they’ve dressed for it, played in it, battled it, talked about it, and survived it.

*Weather Permitting* draws upon the Minnesota Historical Society’s collections to present a collage of seasonal celebrations and ordeals, rituals, and memories. Full of environmental settings, artifacts, photographs, multimedia shows, hands-on activities, and special programs for all ages, the exhibit is an exploration of Minnesota weather and history that can be enjoyed in a temperature-controlled climate year around.

*Loris Sofia Gregory is the Minnesota Historical Society exhibits curator for Weather Permitting.*



# ERMITTING

*LORIS SOFIA GREGORY*



Mild weather early in the day turned to rain, snow, and bitter cold on Armistice Day, November 11, 1940. Forty-nine Minnesotans lost their lives, many of them hunters trapped by the sudden blizzard. (*Minneapolis Star-Journal*)



Long before immigrants introduced skating, curling, and hockey to Minnesota, Indians played their own games on the region's frozen lakes and rivers. (Engraving by Seth Eastman, *Ball Play of the Dahcota [Sioux] Indians*, 1850)



Window shoppers dreamed about Hawaii during the season's worst cold snap, 1951 (St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press)

Five-year-old Donna Rae LeClair helped her mom, Mable, scrape ice from the windshield, January 1953 (St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press)





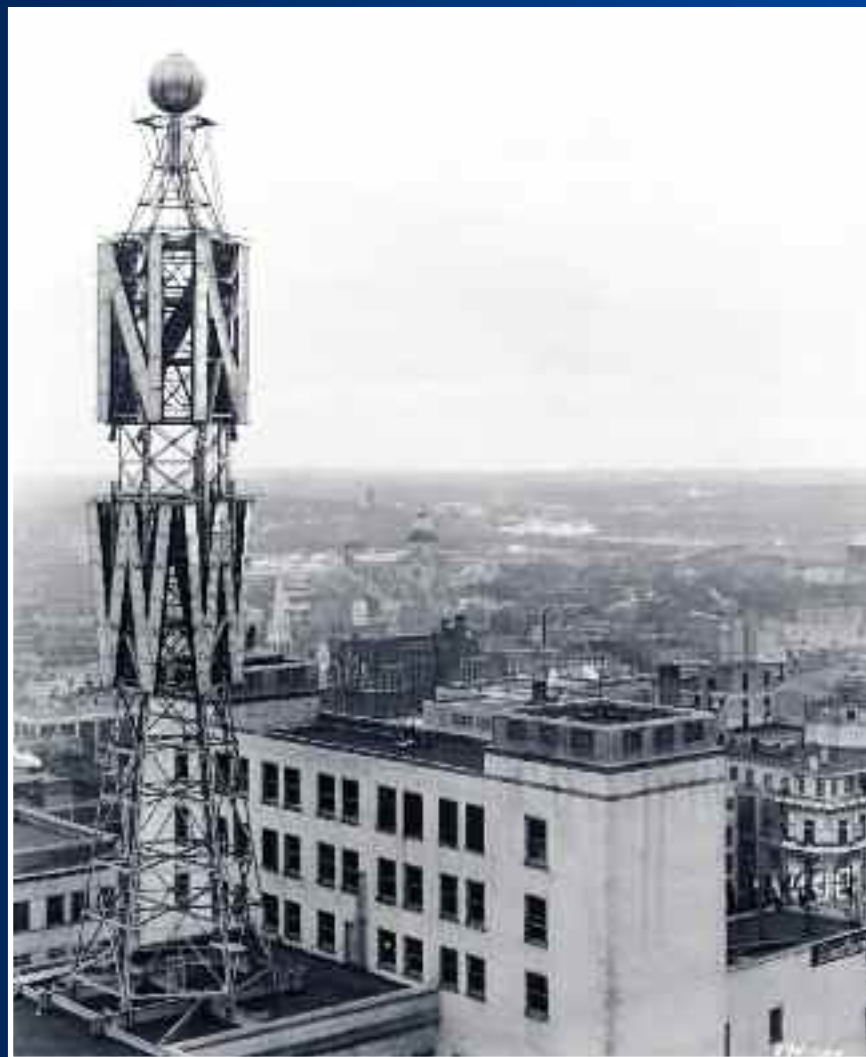
**Above:** Minnesota's maximum wind gust is 110 miles per hour, recorded during a Twin Cities tornado in August 1904. These pedestrians fought the wind on St. Paul's Fourth and Wabasha Streets in April 1948. *(St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press)*

**Left:** A pedestrian braved a downtown Minneapolis sidewalk during the ice storm of January 14, 1952. *(Minneapolis Star-Tribune)*



**Above right:** In spring 1952 the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers caused some of the worst flooding in the state's history. By April 16 some 5,000 residents, including Mr. and Mrs. Todora of St. Paul's Upper Levee neighborhood, had fled their homes.

**Right:** Perched atop Minneapolis's Northwestern National Bank building from 1949 to 1982, the 12-story-high Weatherball was a downtown landmark. The 10-foot plastic sphere changed colors: white forecast snow and lower temperatures, red predicted rising temperatures, green meant no change, and blinking colors were a sure sign of precipitation.



**Right:** This hailstone weighing 5.5 pounds fell in Pipestone on September 17, 1911. Minnesota's largest documented hailstone, found in Claremont in October 1966, unofficially measured 16 inches in circumference.



**Below:** During the summer of 1936, remembered as the year of Minnesota's greatest heat wave, the temperature never dropped below 100 degrees for days on end. Thousands of sweating Minnesotans slept outside to escape the heat. (*St. Paul Daily News*)





**In July 1936 Minnesota towns recorded 13 straight days of 100-degree-plus temperatures and no rain. Holden Norwegian Lutheran Church members near Beardsley prayed for a break in the drought.**





The state's tourist bureau played down Minnesota's undesirable features—frigid winters and hot, mosquito-plagued summers—but the uncensored caption on the back of this July 1918 photograph reads: "Hot tea, hot day, mosquitoes, deer flies, no fish."



By the mid-1800s Minnesota's waters had become a tourist destination. Today, one of every six Minnesotans owns a boat and heads for a lake when it's too hot to do much else. John Banks photographed this couple boating in about 1960.



Positioned at the northernmost end of Tornado Alley, Minnesota ranks 18th nationwide in annual tornados, averaging 18 per year. At 9:20 P.M. on August 21, 1918, a tornado leveled Main Street in southwestern Minnesota's Tyler in two minutes.



In a state where an ice-fishing seminar can attract more than 1,000 people, it has been said that the sport is more popular than bowling and lutefisk potlucks combined. This angler enjoyed his ice-fishing house on one of Minnesota's 11,842 lakes in January 1953. (*Minneapolis Star*)



Armistice Day Blizzard, 1940, in Watkins

*All images are from MHS Collections.* □



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