

## Dayton's

**1902, 1913, 1929, 1947, 2017**

In 1881, George Dayton traveled to Worthington, Minnesota from New York to review a troubled investment he had made. After arrival, he further invested in Worthington and did well on those investments. He was then determined to further invest his gains. He chose Minneapolis as the place for expansion. In 1896, Dayton purchased property on Seventh Street for \$165,000, the site where the Westminster Presbyterian Church once stood. It would be another five years, however, before construction would start on his namesake building.



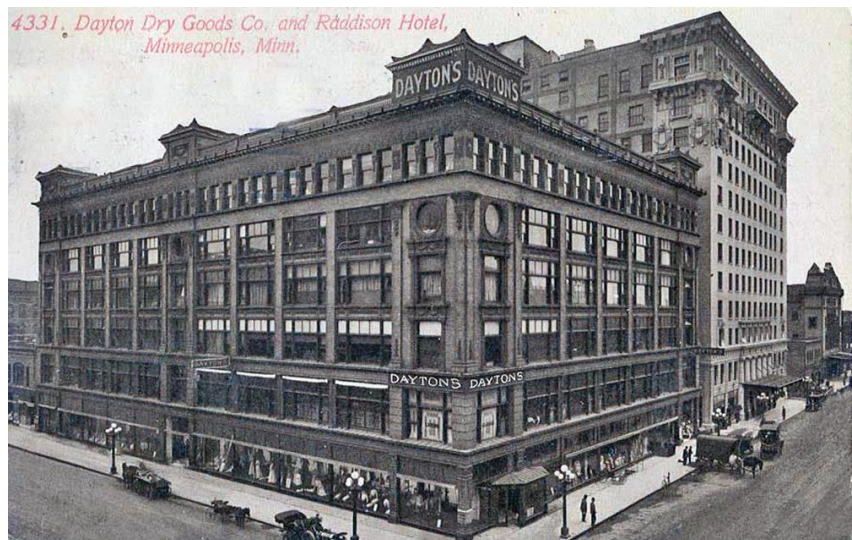
*Hennepin County Library*

Initial plans for the site included a hotel, but as the land was located outside the city's patrol limits, the hotel bar would not be allowed to serve alcohol, a condition that ended that project. In 1901, Dayton hired Charles Sedgwick to prepare plans for a six-story building at Nicollet and Seventh. The resulting building was constructed of brick, iron, plate glass, and terra cotta. It had both passenger and freight elevators, innovative at the time.

Dayton convinced R.S. Goodfellow & Company, the fourth-largest department store in Minneapolis, to become a tenant. In 1902, the store opened in the new building. Before the move, Goodfellow sold his interest in the business to Dayton who then partnered with others. When the building opened, it contained Goodfellow's Dry Goods, a jeweler, a drug store, a furrier, and a Japanese Store.

In 1903, Dayton's bought out the other businesses and changed the name to Dayton's Dry Goods Company. Dayton's began to revolutionize the retail industry in Minneapolis by expanding its offerings through leasing retail

counters and departments to outside companies, such as Mrs. Gertrude Stanton's optical service,



*James Lileks*

Emma Read's drawing supplies, and, in the basement, W.B. Sayre's hardware, china and glassware. In 1904, an art gallery, tea room, smoking room and a banquet facility were opened on the fourth floor.



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With the expansion of a soda counter and candy store in the basement, Dayton decided to take over the entire building. In 1907, Dayton's added the Bargain Basement to the store, offering women's coats, dresses, linen, jewelry, laces and more at a lower price point. In 1911, the business's name was changed to The Dayton Company. By 1929, the business had expanded to include three buildings: the original building from 1902 and additional buildings in 1913 and 1929. The building's size then totaled approximately one million square feet. In 1947, Dayton's added four floors to the existing eight-story building.

With the 1947 addition, Dayton's added the Sky Room with its Waterford chandeliers and piano music for women shoppers and the Oak Grill for men with its dark fireplace and dark paneling. Women were not allowed in the Oak Grill unless accompanied by a male. It was then common for department stores to have in-house restaurants. Shoppers dined on chicken pot pie, turkey club sandwiches, and wild rice soup. The signature item

in the Sky Room was the popover. In the 1970's, the Sky Room was renamed the Skyroom, and a 40-foot salad bar was added with diners able to observe the Nicollet Mall during lunch.

The Dayton's Auditorium featured spring flower shows, fashion shows, and holiday visits with Santa. From 1962 to 1966, Dayton's sponsored teen dances in their 1,500 seat eighth floor auditorium with disc jockey Bill Diehl. Live bands also performed in the auditorium. Dionne Warwick, Simon & Garfunkel, and the Yardbirds all performed at Dayton's. Twiggy, Mary Quant, Angela Cash, and Gerald McCann were featured in fashion shows. Dayton's Oval Room sold the height of fashion.



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In 1962, Dayton's opened its first Target store in Roseville. By 1979, there were eighty Target stores with sales of more than \$1 billion. Dayton's subsequently changed its name to Target

Corporation. By 2015, the department store, now Target, had become a national discount retailer with 1,800 stores.



In 1969, Dayton's merged with Michigan's Hudson's to form the Dayton-Hudson Corporation. Dayton's did well, and sales grew from \$600,000 in 1902 to \$60,000,000 in 1950. Dayton's expanded its presence through shopping centers: Southdale, 1956; Brookdale, 1966; Rosedale, 1969; and Ridgedale, 1974.

As it grew, Dayton's earned a reputation for exceptional customer service and high-quality merchandise. In 1990, Dayton's purchased Marshall Fields, and the Dayton's stores were rebranded as

Marshall Fields in 2002.

In 2006, Marshall Field's was purchased by Macy's with the remaining Marshall Field's stores (including Minneapolis') renamed Macy's. The final day of business for the downtown store was March 19, 2017.

The downtown Minneapolis building was purchased by 601 W Cos. which converted the building into "the Dayton's Project," a mixed-use retail, office, and entertainment complex with elements of the original building restored and with other spaces redesigned for current use. In 2017, construction and demolition began on the site. The Dayton's Project opened in the Spring of 2020, just as the economy was impacted by COVID.

Throughout its history, the Dayton's building has remained an iconic Minneapolis landmark representing historical, commercial, and architectural heritage.