

## Franklin Park Conservatory

An urban legend surrounds the origins of the Conservatory at Franklin Park in Columbus, Ohio. In 1893, Chicago hosted the World's Fair, known as the Columbian Exposition. After the fair was over some of the buildings were sold off and relocated. For many years it was believed that the existing Conservatory was one of these.

In 1974, Carol Reed and Ronald Traub researched this question and found that, as the corner stone states, the Conservatory was built in 1895 by architect J. M. Freese. As grand as the building is, it was not transplanted from the Chicago Fair. Frank Snyder, park engineer at the time, did make a trip to Chicago after the Fair was over and was probably influenced by the Fair's Horticulture Building. Reed and Traub also point out that the time was right for an impressive structure like the Conservatory to be built in Columbus. City fathers were trying to lure conventioners and business to Columbus. A publication called "Columbus as a Convention City", written in the early 20th century, lists all the reasons one might want to come to Columbus and includes photographs of attractions such as the lake at Franklin Park. The second impetus to build such a structure was probably to mark the centennial anniversary of the settling of Columbus in 1897, known as the Franklinton Centennial.

One hundred years later, the Conservatory again became the focal point of a celebration, Ameriflora, this time commemorating the quincentennial of the founding of America in 1492. To this day, city planners are still trying to make Columbus attractive to prospective residents and businesses with sports arenas and outdoor spaces by the riverfront; pastimes of the 20th century.

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