September 30, 1910
The Washington Park Zoological Society (WPZS) was formed.

German-American businessmen recognizing the importance of zoos to city development, were instrumental in forming the WPZS.

The Original Objectives of the WPZS:
- To enlarge the Milwaukee zoo.
- To exhibit animals under favorable conditions.
- To foster and encourage zoological research.
- To increase public interest and public knowledge in and of wild animals.
- To secure better protection of animal life by educational methods.
- To attract people from out of town to visit Milwaukee.

1912
The WPZS purchased four polar bears for the zoo. In 1919, two of them became the parents to Zero, the first polar bear to survive birth in captivity.

The weather was approximately 10 degrees below zero, thus his name!

1913
The first large African animal, Yacob (Jacob) the hippopotamus, was purchased.
1915-25

These are some of the animals purchased by the WPZS during this period.

- Bengal Tiger
- Grizzly Bear
- American Bison
- Leopard

1920

Monkey Island opened with four dozen rhesus monkeys donated by the WPZS. It was the first monkey island in the country!

- Monkey Island Town, complete with saloon!
- Annual monkey roundup. (To move them into winter housing.)
1925

With the donation of $12,000, we became the only public zoo in the world to exhibit giraffes!

Nigal and Nykai were Masai giraffes.

1930

During the depression, the WPZS took over the cost of feeding the animals. The WPZS also paid for the building of barless bear dens and sheep mountain.

The old bear dens had bars as far as the eye could see.

In the new barless dens, bears were separated from people by a moat, much like at the Zoo today.

1939

Another first! We became the first zoo in America to exhibit reticulated giraffes. They were named Bumba and Momba.

Reticulated giraffe at Washington Park Zoo.

Reticulated Spots

Masai Spots
WPZS became active in planning and fund-raising for the “new Zoo.”

1940

Significant WPZS animal donations in the ’40s included tigers, a rhino and two hippopotamuses.

Bengal Tiger

Koronga the rhino

Anthony and Cleopatra arrived at the zoo in 1943.

1946

WPZS became active in planning and fund-raising for the “new Zoo.”

Zoo Director George Speidel shows off the model for the new Zoo.
Two new stars, Samson and Sambo, arrive at the zoo thanks to WPZS donations. They arrived at the Washington Park Zoo and in 1959, moved to the new zoo.

The Zoo Director and Zoo Matron welcome the pair with open arms.

There's time for long walks, dressing up and just swinging around.
Above: Samson and Sambo mug it up for the camera.

Right: Samson celebrates a birthday.

Below: Samson looks over his healthy selection of food.

Right: He poses for the camera again.

Samson poses for Terra and shows off his physique.
1953

The Washington Park Zoological Society changes its name to the Zoological Society of Milwaukee County (ZSM).

1956

“Milwaukee Goes on Safari” is a fund-raising event for a $300,000 campaign to purchase animals and equipment for the new Milwaukee County Zoo (MCZ).

The campaign raised $528,000 within months!

And yes, there were animals at the fundraiser.
During construction, visitors were allowed to ride the train around the zoo to see what was being done. The money from the train was used to build exhibits, purchase animals as well as the zoomobile.

1958 The new MCZ construction begins!
1963

The Washington Park Zoo was vacated.

By 1964, 1,500 animals had been purchased through ZSMC donations!

The following photos represent the animals purchased by the ZSM.

Mot Mot

Snow Leopard

Orangutan
1965

The ZSM finances a 16,000-mile trip for Zoo staff to collect 18 Adelie penguins from Antarctica.

Adelie penguin and chick.

1971

The Children’s Zoo became the first project jointly funded by the ZSM and the MCZ.

Another world’s “first” occurred when an Adelie penguin chick “Little America” was born in 1966.
Red kangaroos were hard to acquire in the ’70s; so the ZSM used contacts in Australia to bring three to the Zoo.

1972

The ZSM, with cooperation from the Zoo and Milwaukee Public Schools, began education outreach programs in Milwaukee County.

The Irwin Maier locomotive was donated through the ZSM and was the final addition to the fleet.
1974

Zoo Pride, the volunteer auxiliary of the ZSM, was formed.

In 1975, the 63 charter members volunteered over 1,000 hours. The group has grown to 548 members in 2009, volunteering 35,500 hours!

Zoo Pride volunteers staffed the information booth at the Zoo entrance for their first project.

Today, volunteers help educate the public about endangered animals and the Zoo’s collection...
... create enrichment items for the animals, and welcome Zoo guests at the new Guest Services Kiosk.

1976

Milwaukee County, UW Extension and ZSM create a Zoo Education Department. Three educators offer guided tours and talks to approximately 10,000 students.

1982

The ZSM starts the Adopt an Animal Program to raise money to feed the animals. The program is now called the Sponsor an Animal program and the money is used to support all the animals here at the Zoo.

ZOO PRIDE CELEBRATES ITS 35TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2010!
The first Zoo Ball is held. Zoo Ball is the largest annual fund-raising event for the ZSM, and has raised millions of dollars since its inception.

Outfits match the theme of Zoo Ball and guests open their purse strings to help raise money.

Entertainment is varied and fun is had by all!
Guests wine, dine and dance the night away at Zoo Ball.
1985

The ZSM and MCZ launch the Core Zoo (New, New Zoo) capital campaign. Both organizations raised $12.5 million toward the projects.

The following areas were renovated or built during this campaign:
- Peck Welcome Center
- Herb and Nada Mahler Family Aviary
- Stearns Apes of Africa
- Primates of the World
- Aquatic & Reptile Center
- Wong Family Pheasantry
- Oceans of Fun pool and theater
- Underwater Viewing – Polar Bear
- Wolf Woods
- Education Building
- Raptory Theater
- Dairy Complex
- Petting Ring

1985 ZSM has 20,500 members, making it the largest private support group for any facility in Wisconsin.
The ZSM creates the Conservation Department to work on a species survival plan for bonobos. The department also supports conservation research by Zoo staff in the wild and at the Zoo.

**1989**

Bonobo Research in Wisconsin and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Humboldt Penguin Research in Chile.

Ornate Box Turtle Research in Wisconsin.

Trumpeter Swan Research in Wisconsin.

Grand Cayman Island Blue Iguana Research.

Barley and Brewster, two highly endangered black rhinos, arrive at the Zoo from the wilds of Zimbabwe through ZSM donations.

Barley and baby, Buster.
1989
The ZSM takes on sole fiscal responsibility for the Education Department.

1997
The ZSM Conservation Department creates the Bonobo and Congo Biodiversity Initiative to:
• preserve bonobo habitat
• assess bonobo populations
• build Congolese conservation institutions
• educate Congolese people to conserve, farm, read

The Education Department offers a variety of classes from Turtles to Zoo Vet.
The ZSMC and MCZ begin the $30.5 million New Zoo II capital campaign. The ZSM pledged $14.8 million, but raised more than $15.5 million for the projects.

The following areas were renovated or built during this campaign:
- Animal Health Center & Holz Family Foundation Learning Zone
- Macaque Island
- Holz Family Impala Country
- MillerCoors Giraffe Experience
- Florence Mila Borchert Big Cat Country
- U.S. Bank Gathering Place
- Northwestern Mutual Family Farm
- Stackner Family Animal Encounter
- Lakeview Place Restaurant
- Karen Peck Katz Conservation Education Center

2001

Animal Health Center

Macaque Island

Florence Mila Borchert Big Cat Country

Karen Peck Katz Conservation Education Center