

## FP-060

### THE ESPLANADE - WEST END

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You are standing at the spot that perhaps provided the best view of the grandeur that was the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition. The 700-foot-long reflecting basin in front of you, built for that fair, added a graceful, architectural structure to an area that before had been open and somewhat chaotic. The three fountains within it provided exciting entertainment, especially at night when they were lit.

The two pylons at this end of the basin were also constructed for the 1936 exposition. Artist Pierre Bourdelle used the fantastical creature from Greek mythology, the Pegasus, as his inspiration for these pylons.

That was appropriate, in part, because the father of Pegasus was Poseidon, the Greek god of the seas. It was also appropriate because Pegasus was the symbol for the Magnolia Oil Company, which had major operations in Dallas during the 1930s. You will find two more Pegasuses in downtown Dallas. One rotates on the roof of the Magnolia Hotel and a second (the original Pegasus) holds court at the Farmers Market.

For many years, the basin's fountains went silent due to cost concerns. The reflecting basin came to life only sporadically. For example, during the 1996 State Fair of Texas, it hosted a Tiger Island exhibit that was enormously popular with fair visitors. Seven real tigers roamed a makeshift island reserve erected in the center of the reflecting basin. Three years later, the basin hosted an Energy Extravaganza, featuring strobe lights and fireworks.

Then in the 2000s, a fund-raising campaign brought the fountains back to life. Now, during the State Fair of Texas and some other special events, 272 jets spray water up to 100 feet into the air to music that ranges from classical to country western to songs reflecting different holidays.

Another tour stop at the opposite end of the reflecting basin will provide additional information about that end of the Esplanade.

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