

THE B. F. NELSON PARK SITE

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

1849 ca. 1855-1870	Town of St. Anthony founded on the east bank of the river Scattered small structures (homes and businesses) on future B. F. Nelson site
1870	St. Anthony branch of the Turnverein (a German-American literary, nationalistic, and athletic group) built a hall at 6 th Avenue NE and Marshall Street NE. Structure burned and was rebuilt in 1874. Sold to the B. F. Nelson Manufacturing Company in 1930, which used it as a settlement house. Demolished sometime before 1952.
1871-ca. 1905	Rollins Sawmill constructed in 1871 at river end of 4 th Avenue NE; sold to Fred Clarke in 1873 and then to Nelson, Tenney and Co. in 1882. Dismantled between 1905 and 1912 and a rag and wastepaper warehouse built on this location by the B. F. Nelson Manufacturing Company.
1880-ca. 1905	Stetson and Clough Brothers steam-powered sawmill built in 1880 along the river at the far downstream end of the site. Sold to Nelson, Tenney and Co. in 1892 and used as their "B" sawmill. Demolished by 1905.
1872-1873	The short-lived Sprague Sawmill established at river end of 5 th Avenue NE.
ca. 1872-1973	Series of structures along the river at 4 th Avenue NE and Main Street. Earliest uses unknown. 1882-1888: Minneapolis Strawboard Company paperbox factory. 1888: Purchased and expanded by B. F. Nelson and Company; products included roofing materials and saturated felt. Eventually, operations grew to encompass the entire block. Production ended and buildings demolished ca. 1973.
1912-1952	B. F. Nelson Mfg Co. constructed a warehouse and paint and roof coating manufacturing buildings south of the Turner Hall, along Marshall Street between 5 th Ave and 6 th Ave NE, replacing residences in that location.
ca. 1973	Acquired by Minnesota Department of Transportation for proposed freeway; buildings on site demolished.
1986	Acquired by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board from MnDoT as surplus property for park use.
1993	Master Plan developed and adopted by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Plan calls for development of the site largely as a passive greenspace, with restoration of prairie, wetland, and riparian slope areas, trails, and environmental and historical interpretive features.
1998-1999 2000	Master Plan reaffirmed through public meeting process Phase I environmental site investigation (background research on site use and history)
2001, 2003-2004	Phase II site investigation (field testing) and preparation of Response Action Plan