

ST. ANTHONY FALLS HERITAGE ZONE

**NORTH HERITAGE TRAIL EXPANSION
PHASE II PROJECT**

Diverse Stories and Potential Sites for Interpretation

Sponsors and Partners

St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board (SAFHB)
St. Anthony West Neighborhood Organization (STAWNO)
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB)
Minnesota Historical Society (MHS)

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CONTENTS

1.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW: NORTH HERITAGE TRAIL EXPANSION	4
2.0 SUMMARY	5
3.0 STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS	7
4.0 RESULTS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INPUT GATHERINGS	8
4.1 Community Gathering Attendees offer Input and Ideas.....	8
4.2 Leaders of Stakeholder Groups Share Personal History and Related Projects.....	11
4.3 Guide Team is Created to Make Recommendations.....	11
5.0 PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS	13
5.1 The Canoe Ferry run by Hazainyakewin	13
5.2 Nicollet Island / Wita Waste	15
5.3 Pioneers Monument in B.F. Nelson Park.....	16
6.0 HISTORY AND STORIES FOR SITE INTERPRETATION	
6.1 Ten Good Opportunities to Expand History for the North Heritage Zone.....	22
6.2 Expanded History and Stories for the South Heritage Zone.....	25
7.0 CONCLUSION and NEXT STEP RECOMMENDATIONS	26
8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY	30

Appendices (see separate attached documents)

Appendix A: Inclusionary Stories of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone by T’Keyah Adams

Appendix B: Research Review of Upper St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone, By Crystal Boyd, LLC

Appendix C: Survey for Community Engagement Participants

Appendix D: History of the Pioneers Monument in Minneapolis

Appendix E: Chart of Pioneer Statue Recommendations

Appendix F: Recommended History/Stories

Acknowledgements

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PROJECT OVERVIEW: NORTH HERITAGE TRAIL EXPANSION

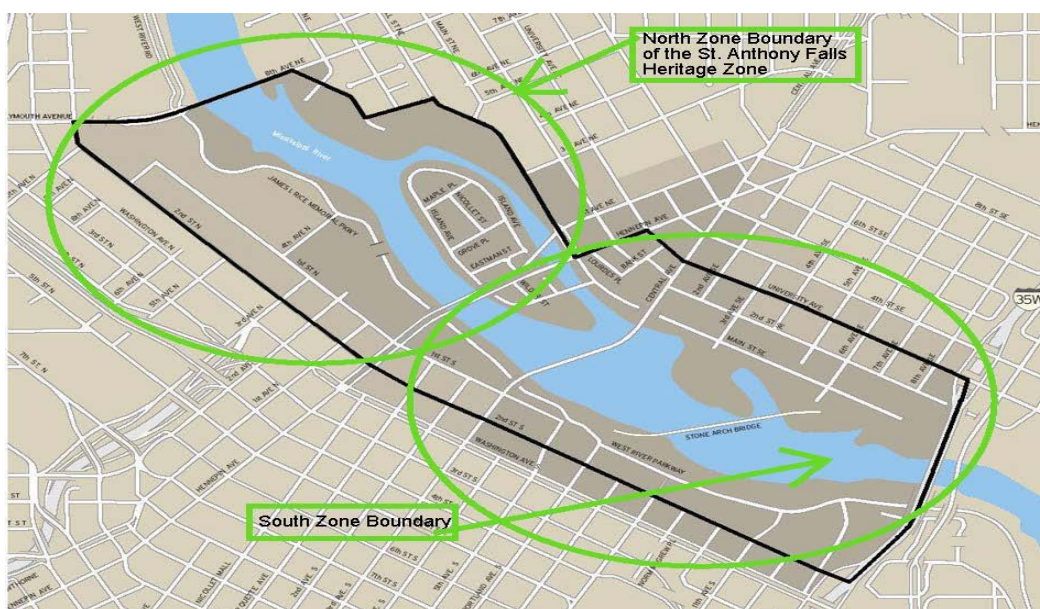


North Heritage Trail Expansion

This is the second funding from the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board with a focus on the North Heritage Trail. Phase I of this work was research gathered by T'Keyah Adams and presented in her report: Inclusionary Stories of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone (Appendix A). The second funding for this North Heritage Trail Expansion (NHTe) Project was requested for 2023 to share the history with community stakeholders and seek feedback, stories, and ideas for interpretation.

What is the North Heritage Trail?

Pathways between Hennepin Ave Bridge and Plymouth Bridge on both east and west banks of the Mississippi River, including Halls Island, Boom Island, and Nicollet Island on the East Bank. On the West Bank, the trail follows the Mississippi River from the First Bridge Park under the Hennepin Avenue Bridge and goes north to the former mouth of Bassett Creek and the Plymouth Avenue Bridge.



Early in the community input process, community historians and staff from partner organizations concluded that selecting history within two blocks from the North Heritage Zone would help focus the project. A particular time period was not chosen, keeping the project open to a broad span of time periods/story cycles.

NHTE Vision and Goals

The primary goal of Phase II is to propose diverse/inclusive historical content and potential locations for interpretive elements that emphasize underrepresented groups from the early history of Dakota people to today. Phase II work is focused on proposing Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) stories. The larger, expanded vision for the North Heritage Trail is to add diverse stories with creative interpretation to the trails so that visitors understand the full history of the land and people.

To increase understanding of the Dakota, the first people of Minnesota, who have lived here for over 10,000 years, is an essential goal of this expanded history. In addition, Ojibwe/Anishinaabe, the Métis (i.e., mixed Indigenous and French), and African American stories are all part of expanding white settler history interpretation for the St. Anthony Heritage Zone. This focus of working with diverse cultures to gather history and stories had not previously been funded before this project. Expanding the history to tell the truth of events and stories that have occurred close to the Mississippi River, along the Heritage Zone, is now underway.

SUMMARY

With Phase I of the North Heritage Trail Expansion (NHTE) project completed and research history of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) compiled in a report (Appendix A), Phase II was funded with the goal to share historical content/stories with community stakeholders and ask for feedback, ideas, and additional stories. Recommending key historical content and BIPOC stories along the North Heritage Trail, with suggested locations for interpretive markers or art, is the outcome product for Phase II (Appendix F).

To focus this project within two blocks of the North Heritage Zone, a research review was requested, a meeting was held with Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) staff, and conversations with community historians were facilitated. Small group meetings and five gatherings of diverse stakeholders were organized during the summer/fall of 2023. The meetings and input sessions informed the community about the project and invited more BIPOC history and stories. These events also sparked conversations about the themes of community, social justice, and environmental values.

Near the end of the project, a Guide Team of diverse community historians, artists and activists met twice to reflect on the data gathered during the project and then recommended stories and interpretation ideas for the North Heritage Zone. Three top PRIORITY recommendations include places with unique history that need immediate attention: the Canoe Ferry Service, Nicollet Island as a Sacred Site, and the Pioneer Statue.

The Canoe Ferry Service was operated (circa 1850) by a “Dakota Woman,” who is mentioned on the interpretive marker at the First Bridge Park under the Hennepin Avenue Bridge. Documenting Hazainyakewin’s name, along with her larger story (oral history from her descendants) is recommended as a PRIORITY first step.

Another PRIORITY place lifted up as the number one “good opportunity” for interpretation is Wita Waste/Nicollet Island. Because this is a sacred site for the Dakota, there is enthusiasm to create an interpretive site on Wita Waste for Maple Sugaring and other activities.

The Pioneer Monument in B.F. Nelson Park (between Boom and Nicolett Islands) is also identified as a PRIORITY matter in this report. With the Pioneer Statue being repeatedly defaced with red paint after George Floyd’s murder in south Minneapolis, this Statue needs attention and action to avoid further defacement. Data collected from over forty-five attendees at a July 2022 input event and additional comments collected in 2023 reveal that a majority of community members want the Pioneer Statue removed or altered. A Guide Team from diverse backgrounds decided that the recommendation ideas (see Appendix E) be passed on to a Native Advisory Council for discernment and decision making.

A wealth of history (over thirty-five historical or story pieces) was organized by the consultant and sorted by interpretation locations (east/west banks of the Mississippi River, including islands in the North Heritage Zone), then inserted into tables (Appendix F). The Guide Team selected the best history or story items to recommend to the partners and sponsors of this project. These “good opportunities” are discussed at the end of this report.

The concept of **community** surfaces in multiple stories and historical events recommended in this report. This theme could be used to connect stories along the North Heritage Trail. The ideas and stories from the Dakota that connect to “place,” can also create awareness to focus on community in a more expansive sense. The Dakota way of life and the values of “all our relations” would help increase respect for the birds, bees, bugs, animals, fish, trees, and water of the Mississippi River. There is great potential here for educating not only about people who have lived and worked along the North Heritage Trail, but also increasing awareness of the environment and how we are all connected. Supporting our local Native communities to lead, model and share their wisdom and values is of greatest importance at this time.

STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The facilitation consultant worked with the Project Manager from STAWNO to identify stakeholder groups that may have stories or input for this project. To plan for meetings and interactive/participatory gatherings for stakeholder groups, questions, and facilitation processes from the ICA-USA's Technology of Participation (ToP Facilitation Methods) were utilized.

Stakeholder Groups identified for the NHTE project:

- ◆ History Organizations, Museums
- ◆ Native American / Indigenous Perspectives and Projects
- ◆ Cultural Groups and Communities of Faith
- ◆ Community / Neighborhood Associations
- ◆ African American History and Perspectives
- ◆ Art Organizations
- ◆ Environmental Organizations and Outdoor Recreational Groups

Connecting and building relationships with key people was the first step for this project. Emails were sent, and calls made to invite stakeholder groups and diverse leaders to share their input and to collaborate. Not all organizations or leaders responded. Some communicated that they did not have time to participate in this effort at this time. We were told that Indigenous leaders are stretched and that sessions with elders are difficult to organize.

While environmental groups are working on projects in the North Heritage Zone, the focus of this project was social history, BIPOC stories. Environmental history and interpretation ideas that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and other environmental groups would like to add to the trail will need to be integrated within a larger plan for the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone. Immigrant groups were not the focus of outreach for this project, yet stories were welcomed.

Reflecting on the history gathered in Phase I (Appendix A), it is clear there is a wealth of history related to the Mississippi River and the Indigenous people and first settlers of Minneapolis. However, these questions surfaced, "what are the most compelling stories close to the North Heritage Trail Zone to increase understanding of diverse history?" Crystal Boyd was contracted to do a research review and make suggestions for use of the Phase I history (Appendix B).

Boyd recommended that Phase II sponsors/partners help clarify the geographic borders of the North Heritage Zone and choose a time period for the project. Many of the stories and history in the research report (Appendix A), were not within the boundaries of North Heritage Zone, others were in the South Heritage Zone, or the location of the research shared was not mapped. Boyd looked at additional research for examples of more diverse stories located within the North Heritage Zone, and suggested sources for adding recent diverse/BIPOC stories and contemporary history.

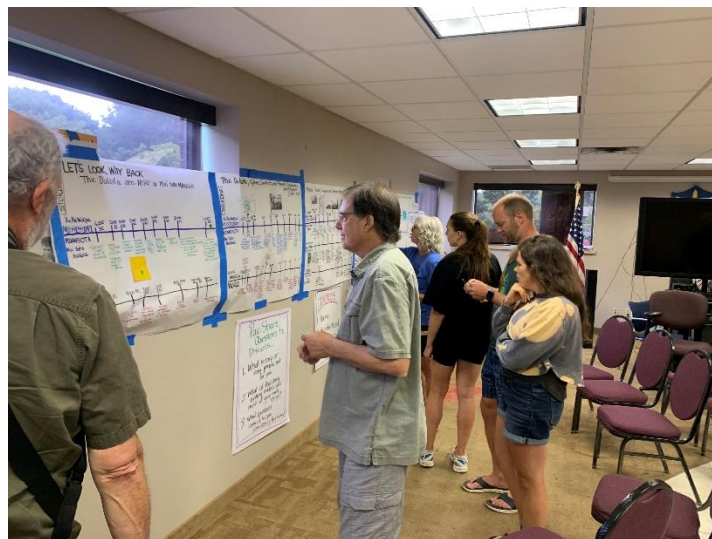
RESULTS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INPUT GATHERINGS

Community Gathering Attendees Offer Input and Ideas

Speakers sharing their personal stories, history timelines, and sample stories were highlighted and shared with stakeholders at five community engagement sessions. Input was shared via group conversations, by comments on post-it notes, flip chart paper, voting dots on a timeline, or in a one-page survey (Appendix C). Over seventy-five people attended five gatherings.

The first stakeholder event included historians and sponsors/ partners. This group reviewed the action plan and project timeline. They provided guidance regarding the questions about the scope and depth of the project. With discussion, the attendees agreed to a geographic boundary for this project being two blocks out from the Heritage Zone boundary. The time period would be open to capture the long, rich history of the Dakota people to present time. Looking at the long history of this area along the river might reveal connections and “timeless” stories that add value for today and for the future.

For the second community gathering, neighborhood organization representatives and residents of the communities that encircle the North Heritage Zone were invited to the Ukrainian Center in NE Minneapolis. Three people who live on Nicollet Island and lead history tours offered new insights. Highlights included the unveiling of a large history timeline on chart paper that visually displayed the River history in the context of Minnesota History, US history, and World History. In addition, a community historian told his North Star story of his ancestors escaping slavery and traveling up to Minnesota on the Mississippi River.



Aug 11, 2023, Ukrainian Center

At the faith and cultural event, community members gathered at the Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church to learn about the project, and then listened to a Métis speaker about his personal history. He shared how the French collaborated with the Indigenous peoples (i.e., fur trading) here in Minnesota. There were more questions for the speaker than new stories offered from participants. When the facilitator asked how many people had taken a Minnesota History class, only a couple people responded in the affirmative. Learning about the early history of French explorers and traders caught the group's attention, and the Selkirk Migration ([French American Heritage Foundation](#), pp. 169-175) was new history for many attendees.



Sept 6, 2023, Our Lady of Lourdes Church

The final two events centered around artists, one meeting at the All My Relations Gallery at the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) in South Minneapolis, and another input event at the Sculpture Gallery in Northeast Minneapolis. The artists provided new perspectives and creative ideas for telling stories along the North Heritage Trail. In response to the Pioneer Statue and the lack of interpretation at this site, one artist suggested adding other families, BIPOC and immigrant, to the park and have the families talk to each other so that the stories could educate on how and why people came to Minnesota, and what life was like living near the River.



Two Native leaders emerged from the All My Relations meeting on Sept 14, 2023, to join Guide Team.

Community historians and those that attended events did provide additional history/stories during Phase II, however, community members often had more history questions than stories and interpretation ideas. The focus of this work became more about educating and learning about the history and stories gathered in Phase I, than collecting interpretation ideas. However, some discussions did lead to connecting the history and identifying themes.

Leaders of Stakeholder Groups share personal history and related projects

Hosting gatherings for every cultural group was not possible, so individual meetings with key non-profit leaders and community historians occurred to collect input, stories, and historical detail. The Project Manager and the Consultant for this project met with staff at Friends of the Falls, and later collaborated with staff at the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI). Two community historians working on African American History projects provided context and additional detail to stories. Residents of Northeast Minneapolis shared their perspectives during one-to-one conversations.

Making connections with local historians, learning about related projects, and getting to know key people who understand Mississippi River history was a key highlight. Some history shared by community historians happened to be their own personal family stories, going back many generations. Both the Project Manager and the Project Consultant attended multiple Indigenous events and presentations to learn more about Native projects and efforts underway in the Twin Cities area.

Guide Team is created to make recommendations

The Guide Team was created in order to empower a diverse leadership of community members to have conversations and make sense of the data gathered. The Team also helped create and select key recommendations for the Pioneer Statue and pare down the history and stories to propose for the North Heritage Trail.

The Guide Team consisted of nine community representatives with diverse backgrounds and experience, including history writers, artists, storytellers, researchers, consultants, and neighborhood history tour guides. Cultural backgrounds included Indigenous/Dakota, African American, Métis (French and Native heritage), and those of European descent.



Nov 6, 2023, Guide Team Meeting



Guide Team Meeting, Nov 6, 2023 Final Guide Team Meeting, Jan 4, 2024

The Guide Team also heard from Blue Hummingbird Woman about her connection to the North Heritage Trail, and listened to stories about her Grandmother Hazainyakewin, including one that highlighted her skill of fixing the hole in her canoe by using elements from nature that kept the boat afloat. Members agreed that the Canoe Ferry Service was a story to put at the top of the list and recommended that partners and sponsors update and correct the Canoe Ferry Interpretation at First Bridge Park as soon as possible. The Guide Team also learned more about the Pioneers Monument in B.F. Nelson Park and reviewed, organized community data, and created recommendations for changes to the statue.

At the end of this project, a Guide Team met to choose a short list of “good opportunities” for storytelling and interpretation along the North Heritage Trail. Ten story ideas rose to the top of the recommendation list. A variety of inclusive stories were recommended (Appendix F) as topics that have the potential to expand this history and gather more stories.

Examples stories discussed: Develop an interpretive site on Wita Waste/Nicollet Island to create awareness of this sacred place for the Dakota; gather more stories related to the diversity of groups that gather in community at Boom Island Park; create awareness of the first African American community on the west bank near Ĥaĥa Wakpadaŋ /Bassett Creek; educate using early maps with Dakota names in contrast to colonizing maps that renamed places; and educate about the beliefs, values and understanding of “All My Relations,” Mitakuye Oyasin. (See full list of 10 Good Opportunities” as Appendix F for this report)

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The current state of historical interpretation along the North Heritage Trail was evaluated during this project and there are strong stories that stand out, and are identified here as PRIORITY, needing immediate attention due to inaccurate and/or absent historical interpretation.

Major concern was raised by a fifth-generation descendant of the “Dakota Woman,” who is mentioned on the interpretive marker at the First Bridge Park and ran a Canoe Ferry Service. Her name and story needs to be added to respect her legacy and her family. Both community members and the Guide Team highly recommended this issue be rectified.

Additionally, the historical value of Nicollet Island in this North Heritage Trail should not be overlooked, as this is a unique setting and it is time that its beauty and scaredness be acknowledged. The Guide Team ranked this as the number one opportunity: “Creating an interpretive site on Nicollet Island/Wita Waste” (Appendix F). The Pioneers Monument Statue in B.F. Nelson Park is also an urgent concern, an issue raised by many community activists. After repeated defacement and neighbors expressing concern, the message is clear: community members want changes.

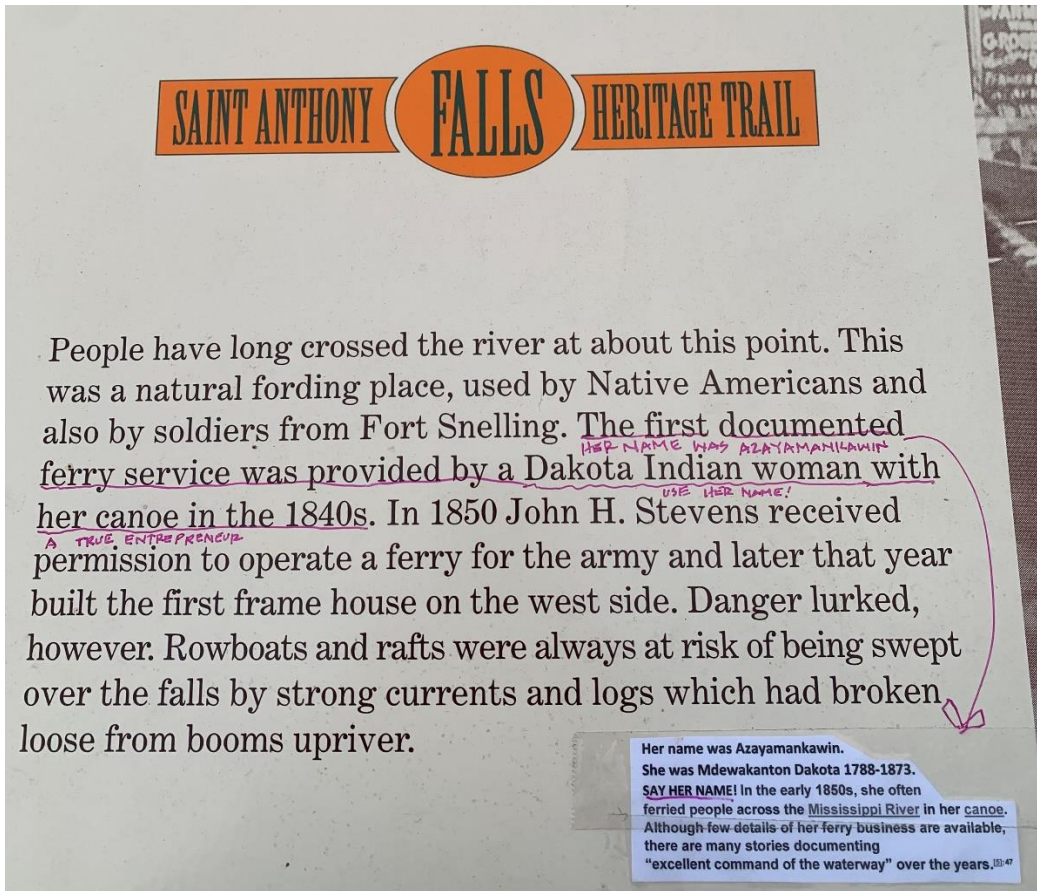
The Canoe Ferry run by Hazainyakewin

A St. Paul business entrepreneur, Blue Hummingbird Woman, attended the community gathering organized for this project at All My Relations gallery. She introduced herself as the great, great, great, great granddaughter of Hazainyakewin, the “Dakota Woman,” who ran the canoe ferry business from West bank (under the Hennepin Avenue Bridge) to East Bank near Nicollet Island.

An interpretive marker at the First Bridge Park under the Hennepin Avenue Bridge refers to a “Dakota Woman” who ran a Canoe Ferry Service in the 1840’s to mid-1850’s. Blue Hummingbird Woman clarified that this is her Grandmother. Then she shared the correct spelling of her Grandmother’s name, writing it large on a sheet of paper. The translation for Hazainyakewin is “Woman who runs to pick berries.” She was also known as “Old Bets or Betsey,” names given to her by soldiers at Fort Snelling. (Appendix A, pp 31-33)

The family has tried to share her story and get name recognition and something named after her in Minneapolis without success. An announcement for her Ferry Service was printed in 1850 in the *Pioneer* newspaper in St. Paul, and the announcement was signed by “Old Betsey.” Her family confirms that their Grandmother also ran her Ferry Service up the Mississippi River in the North Heritage Zone near Wita Waste/Nicollet Island.

Different spellings of Hazainyakewin's given name, a variety of Canoe Ferry locations, and articles written by white settlers and researchers create a complex and perhaps, inaccurate picture. It is time to listen to what the family has to say so her story can be updated and corrected. With family input, oral history can be added by a QR code and an interpretive art installment should be considered just north of the Bridge along the trail.



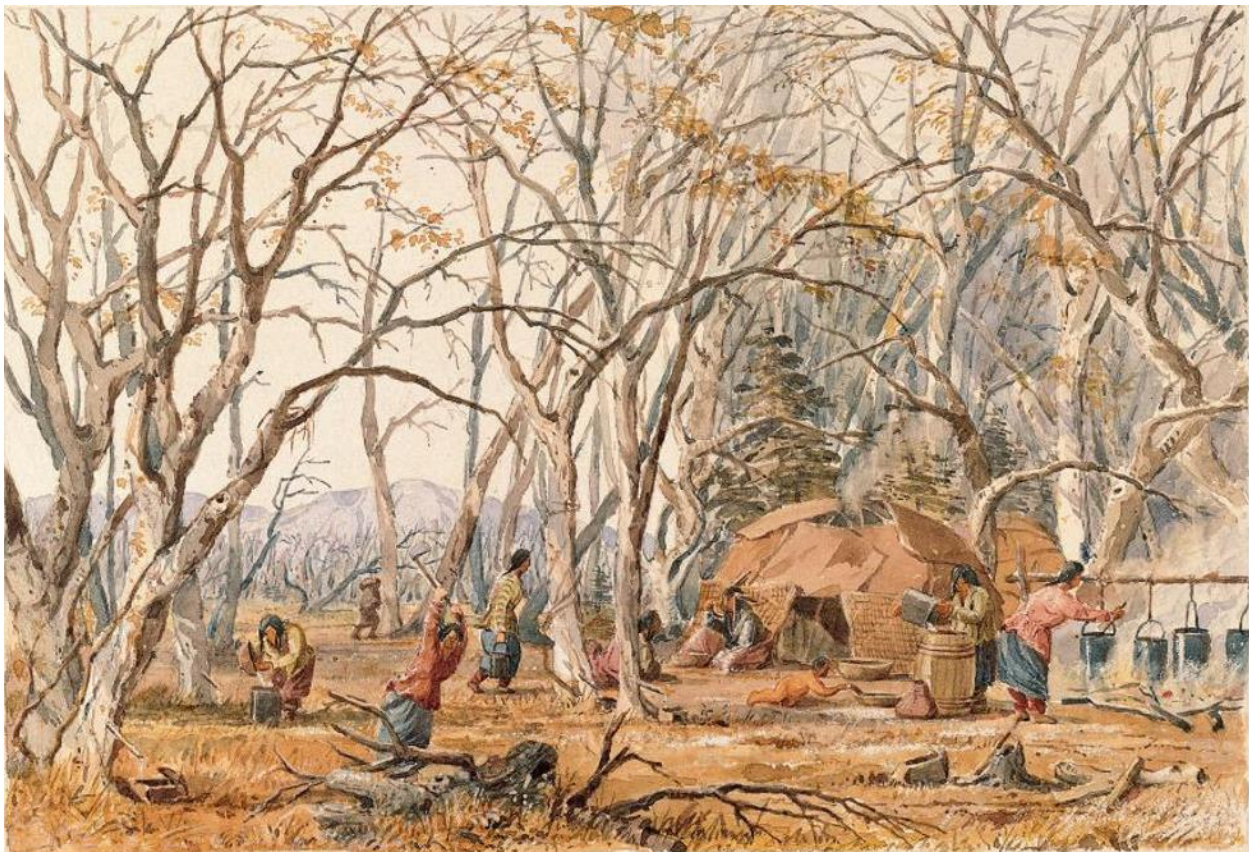
Interpretive Marker at First Bridge Park (with corrective additions)

Nicollet Island / Wita Waste, the Beautiful Island on the Mississippi

A significant concept was raised by one Indigenous member of the Guide Team when she made the point that discussion of history should not only rely on historical data, but stories that enlighten and teach the resilient values of culture. These beliefs and values can be honored and brought to the present and future.

One strong value that the Indigenous cultures executed successfully was “collaboration” as a community to share limited resources. The Indigenous culture of “collaboration” is a value to be celebrated. In the 1820’s-1850’s prior to removal of maple trees on the island, Dakota women gathered for maple sugaring. This community gathering is documented by Seth Eastman’s painting of the island.

The island, being in close proximity to water was also a sacred place for women to give birth. Settlers also choose the island for births as documented in a news article in the Minneapolis Spokesman about Mother Nelson, a Black midwife, who operated at this location in the early 1900’s (Appendix A).



Indian Sugar Camp, 1849-1855, Seth Eastman Watercolor

<https://collections.artsmia.org/art/36167/indian-sugar-camp-seth-eastman>

Pioneers Monument in B.F. Nelson Park

The Pioneers Monument is located in B.F. Nelson Park, adjacent to Marshall Avenue in Northeast Minneapolis (part of the North Heritage Zone). B.F. Nelson Park is between Boom Island and Nicolett Island. The Monument was commissioned in 1936 and created by John K. Daniels of fourteen tons of granite. Placed downtown in Pioneers Square, the purpose of this statue was to lift up the history of white family settlers and laborers and to discourage strikes by workers.

The statue was moved to Northeast Minneapolis in 1961 and placed in a residential neighborhood. In 2010, the Pioneer Monument was moved again into B.F. Nelson Park. There is no interpretation with the statue, which has the word “Pioneers” carved out in large capital letters below the settler family (father, mother, child, an additional man with a rifle, and a plow). The bas relief on the reverse depicts Father Hennepin, accepting a pipe from a Native man and he holds a cross to symbolize Christianity, proselytizing to the group of Native men.



Community members gathering to offer feedback on the Pioneers Monument, July 2022

The history of the Pioneer Monument in Northeast Minneapolis is explained in more detail in Appendix D. Research by University of North Dakota Professor, Cynthia Prescott, is another resource to better understand this practice of funding and placing pioneer monuments in communities across the U.S. (Over 180 pioneer statues across the country.) Prescott’s website <http://pioneermonuments.net/> has additional examples of pioneer monuments, and she has published a book entitled Pioneer Mother Monuments.

Awareness of the historic inaccuracy and pain that monuments cause became more pronounced after George Floyd was killed in south Minneapolis. The Columbus statue on the grounds of the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul was toppled by Native activists and others. The generic, granite Pioneer Monument in B.F. Nelson Park was overlooked for a while. Then an individual or group of individuals began to deface the Pioneer Monument with red paint. Words included, “No Thanks,” “Decolonize,” and “No more Genocide.” Defacement occurred multiple times, and each time the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board cleaned up the Pioneer Statue. The neighbors took notice, and conversations began.



Multiple times in multiple years the Pioneers Monument has been defaced.

Sally Grans Korsh of STAWNO tried to secure funding to gather community input on the Pioneer Statue in 2020. When funding was denied, a local facilitator designed questions and helped to lead a STAWNO outdoor input event in July 2022. Over forty-five people showed up to respond to specific questions, with over two hundred post-it notes collected. Additional attendees at the community engagement events during 2023 (Phase II of this NHTE project) also added ideas and wrote comments about the Pioneer Monument



July 11, 2022, Input Event



Questions posed and feedback on post its

Here are longer quotes/comments from participants who attended this event who were asked, "What do the images of Pioneer Monument remind you of?"

- This statue reminds me of white supremacy and the resulting "stories" we were told that we call, "history." We need to tell stories that represent other truths.
- I see settler colonialism at work. This is a monument on stolen land, celebrating true thieves! In 2022, we should be able to recognize the injustice of this story.
- This represents the false start of white saviorism. Historical preservation is important but has to be a true story. This monument is a fictional story.
- These images tell mythical stories of peace and inclusive relationships with Indigenous people, when in actuality, it was violent and dishonest. Utter conquest and betrayal. While I could say my ancestors came to the U.S. as good, non-violent people, it is important that we recognize, we bought into these stories and washed our hands of a larger history. My family story (we are White Europeans) has been overly celebrated.

Questioning why pioneer statues were created and placed in communities across the U.S. in the first place, is essential to understanding the complex history of colonialism and white supremacy. While some may see the Pioneers Monument in Northeast Minneapolis as a piece of art or a tribute to their ancestors, community members shared strong feedback that the Pioneers Monument is offensive and retraumatizing to Indigenous people and those of diverse religious and faith backgrounds



Questions and responses



Over 200 post-it notes expressed strong opinions, July 2022

The chart of data with feedback on the Pioneer Statue (Appendix E) highlights six categories of recommendations. Raw data was initially grouped by question/ response by the facilitator, and then the Guide Team placed data in columns and titled each column. During the second gathering of the Guide Team, the titles were crafted into recommendation statements, then statements were ranked as recommendations for next steps.

NHTE Project Guide Team; Sorted Data into Columns & Titled (4.8)

November 6, 2023

What are the recommendations for Pioneers Monument in B.F. Nelson Park?

Remove or Destroy (And 7 requests to keep it as is) (1)	Alter Statue with new title, interpretation(2)	Add to the Park with other statues/art (3)	Educate with diverse stories, perspectives (4)	Native Healing Park (5)	Native Voices, Native Led (6)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get rid of it, take it down (x10) Dump it in River (x2) Destroy, grind into dust (x2) Break granite into pieces, put in container, seed with flowers Make boulders from statue for the Park (2) Break into gravel to create signage of acknowledging broken promises Give statue to an artist to reuse Give back to Pillsbury Family, ask for funds to remove/replace Create a place for unacceptable names & monuments Move to a History Center Keep it in place, reminds us of history, respect the artist (3) Do not destroy; add brief history, informative plaques (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the word "Pioneer" to Immigrants Cover up the backside (2), interpretation for front Add pioneer history, contributions Explore important historical people w/ focused message (2) Dramatically change it, use what you can (2) Have artists rework it so it is welcoming, inclusive (3) Ask Native artists to alter, cover up; new art covers old Don't clean graffiti, add paint! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add new works to provide context, larger picture, correct history (4) Add to story with context, truth telling, indigenous stories (2) NE Mpls Immigrant stories (3) New sculpture honoring Dakota people & culture Collaborate with neighborhood to create art we can be proud of Site has space to expand history w/ art installations Add other monuments, other perspectives (2) Replace statue w/ something that acknowledges harm Pioneers caused Make the Park a MN Historical Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This could be an educational opportunity; What can we learn? (2) I see many diverse, families represented in Park, talking to each other to create awareness, educate Didactic info (2) Truth telling needed; Acknowledge genocide, boarding schools (3) Full history of people and the land Explain that guns were used to take the land and kill Native people A sign itself is not welcoming; folks will not stay to read; contextualization does not work Adding signage to explain problem isn't enough; Fix problems of trauma, injustice, inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make space for a garden with Indigenous Plants Indigenous folks design art, add plants that are meaningful to them. Make part of reparations (7) Create an artistic landscape & sculptures that are inclusive, healing to the community (3) Restorative measures: include land back, healing circles, rituals (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include Native Community in all Phases (3) Indigenous artists and activists have most prominent influence, vote (2) Dakota/Ojibwe elders need to be consulted (2) Commission local indigenous artist(s) to create representation of significance of this land to the Dakota; undo what has been done (2) Change current name of Park to Dakota name (2)

The columns and titles were generated by 7 Guide Team members in a Top Consensus Workshop process. Over 45 people came to BF Nelson Park on July 11, 2022, writing ideas on post-it notes. Additional ideas gathered at 2023 stakeholder events. Specific recommendations for the North Heritage Trail Expansion will come from this data after consensus conversations w/key leaders & Guide Team. Facilitator: Rachel Hefte, CTF, Draw Forth Consulting.

Data from July 2022 Community Input Session, placed in columns and titled by the guide team. (See Appendix E for larger view of Chart)

Prioritized Recommendations for the Pioneers Monument

These recommendations are in order of importance (one through ten); written by small groups of the Guide Team and reviewed and prioritized by the full team.

The first two recommendations direct the sponsors and partners to turn the Pioneer Statue recommendations over to Native Leaders to make decisions and direct a project to update B.F. Nelson Park and either remove or alter the Pioneer Statue. Native Leaders can decide whether a healing garden and/or interpretative art would be best for B.F. Nelson Park.

Indigenous Leadership, Perspectives and Decision Making (Columns 5 and 6 of Appendix E)

1. **Trust the Native/ Indigenous Community** with their direction, guidance, and recommendations. (It may change the process completely).
2. **Create an Advisory Committee of Native members** to lead the planning. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board may support this approach as part of their Land Acknowledgement and Reconciliation Plan. A Native group could also be designated and brought together for additional ideas, decision making, and to lead the art and interpretation process.
3. **Healing for All our Relatives.** Focus on the environment and natural world for all (fish, birds, pollinators, earth). What is good for the earth is good for all of us (including the Mississippi River, Water)

Remove or Alter the Pioneer Monument (Columns 1 and 2 of Appendix E)

A clear consensus of what to do with actual Pioneer Statue structure (A large, 14-ton, piece of granite) was not obtained. There are alternatives, and more specific recommendations, a final decision would be for the Native Council to decide (following Recommendations One and Two).

4. **Remove the Pioneer Monument** as a whole or take apart and repurpose/reuse parts of the granite for other art; relocate bas relief (move to another site) to “tell the real story of Father Hennepin.”

OR

5. **Alter/Change the Pioneer Monument** if not possible to remove entire statue; cover up back relief and redo front of statue with additional visuals and interpretation.

Change and Add to the Pioneer Monument
(Column 3 of Appendix E)

The next two recommendations (from columns two and three) focus on altering the Pioneer Statue and adding other art to the Park, to tell the full story and meet other goals.

6. **Change or alter existing Statue** to de-emphasize present piece, add interpretation and emphasize Native stories/BIPOC perspectives.
7. **Add other sculpture or interpretation art pieces** to the area to create inclusive interpretation and stories that heal (full history of the land and the people).

Educate with Diverse Stories and Perspectives
(Column 4 of Appendix E)

The importance of education, interpretation and healing is more specifically spelled out in these recommendations written by the education small group.

8. **We are on Dakota Land. Truth telling is important**, including **the 1837 Treaty** (move west across the Mississippi River, being pushed off the land); **what really happened to Father Hennepin**; genocide with the War of 1862, and the return of Dakota People to Minnesota homeland; are all relevant stories and part of the history that needs to be told.
9. **This Pioneer Monument needs contextualization** (Currently no explanation for the Statue, the history, or a specific story). The settler stories and the history of immigrants that make up the demographics and change in NE Minneapolis are also important here.
10. **Have this park “spark conversations,” between diverse cultural families.** One idea shared by an artist was to have “many families represented in the park (not just a settler family),” talking to each other, telling their stories.” Use this idea for the history of Northeast Minneapolis, with many immigrants and cultures, on the east bank to create awareness and educate!

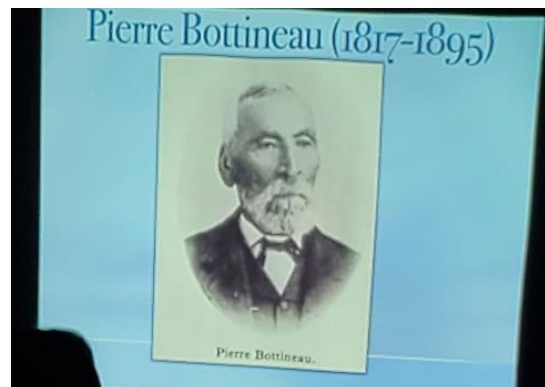
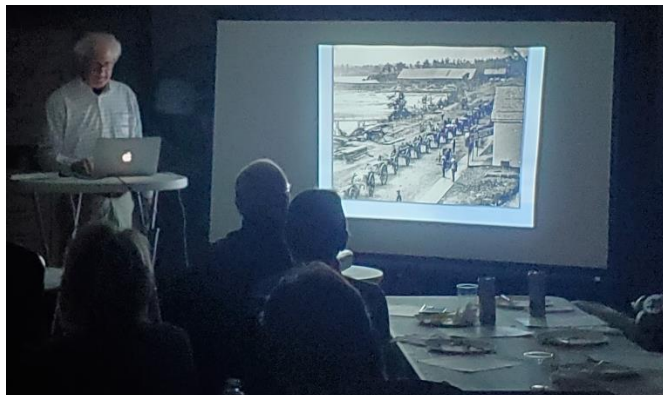
Ten Good Opportunities to Expand History for the North Heritage Zone

The BIPOC history and stories documented in Phase I, with additional history ideas/stories added from Phase II, were organized, and placed in charts by place (East Bank, West Bank, and Islands), creating a five-page document of historical content and stories. (See Appendix F).

Team members ranked their top three historical ideas/stories from this list of over thirty-five possibilities. Then in a modified “ranked choice” process with conversations, a list of ten good opportunities were selected.

Ten History Topics and Sites

1. Wita Waste/Nicollet Island. Educate about Nicollet Island as a sacred Dakota place. Create an interpretive site by planting Maple trees that create a forest to demonstrate maple sugaring; share stories about Dakota women gathering in community and giving birth on the Island. Another interpretation idea is to share the painting by Seth Eastman of Nicollet Island on an interpretive sign, which shows women maple sugaring. This painting could be on the Island or on the West Bank looking across the River at the Island. Fits with Community Theme.
2. African American Abolitionists, Emily and Ralph Grey. This couple lived and worked by the River and organized to get slaves to Minnesota to secure their freedom. They were colleagues of Frederick Douglas and part of the underground railroad. Include their story in the African American Walking Tour APP idea. Ralph Grey’s barbershop and the family home are in the South Heritage Zone for interpretive signage possibilities. Note: The International Leadership Institute, an African American history non-profit, has started an oral history process with descendants of Ralph and Emily Grey. Social Justice theme.
3. Métis History (Indigenous and French). Métis families migrated to the Twin Cities, heading south from North Dakota, then following the Mississippi River down, right along Marshall Ave. The squeaking of Ox Carts could be heard from miles away. The Bottineau family (Métis) lived on Boom Island. Parties with music and food were held at the Bottineau home which was located on Boom Island. Community theme.



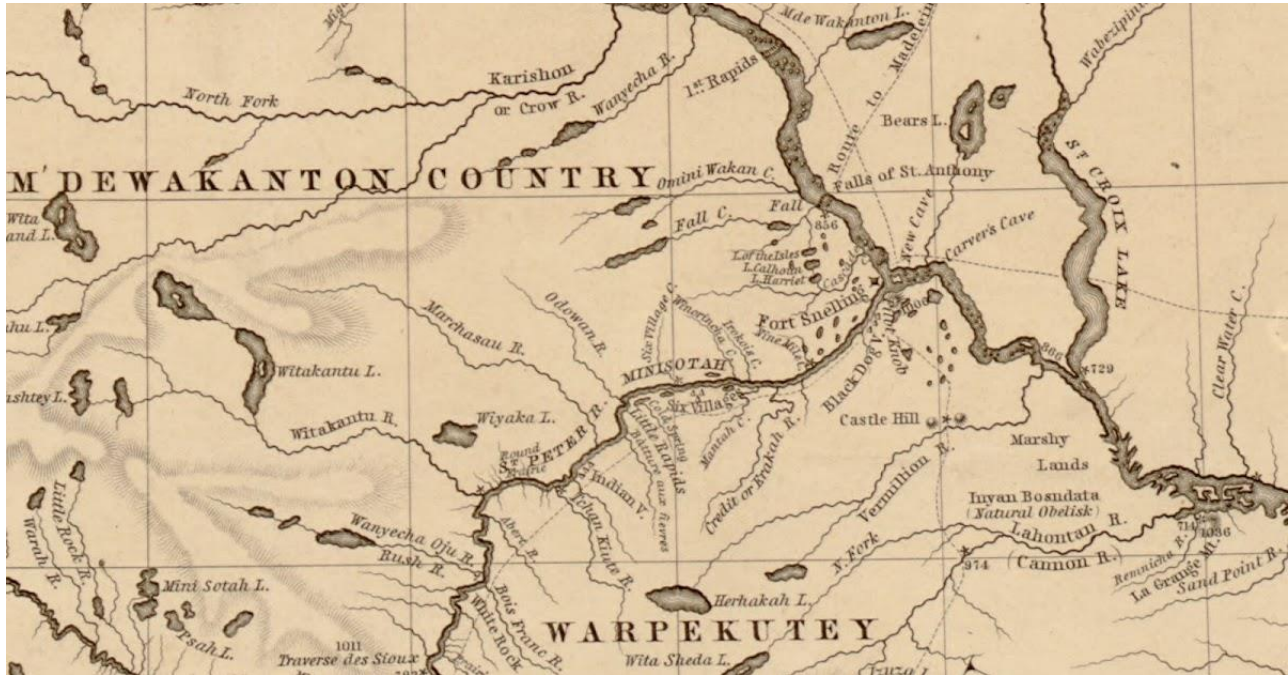
Presentation by Mark Labine on Métis History, showing Ox Carts arriving in Minneapolis.

4. African American workers on Steamboats and as Porters on the Railroads. Railroad station right near the Hennepin Ave. Bridge. Workers stayed at the Serville Hotel. African American workers helped to build Minneapolis with their labor. More research about Black laborers that worked as porters on trains and on steamboats above the Falls needs to be gathered. This history could be shared on the West Bank or as part of a Walking Tour APP that could direct trail walkers/tourists into Minneapolis Near North neighborhood where more Black history stories can be shared. Community of African American workers and entrepreneurs. Labor Theme.
5. African American Community developed on West Bank just west of Ĥaĥa Wakpadaŋ / Bassett Creek during 1860-1870. Important to highlight the first Black community which expanded west and north (Appendix A, p. 14) to become the northside community in Minneapolis. More research is needed to expand this history and find stories. Community Theme.
6. “All my Relations,” Mitakuye Oyasin is a topic of value and importance for Indigenous People. This concept includes the beliefs, values, and understanding of being connected to all beings. We are part of the environment and connected to the River/water. This focus and increased awareness could help shift worldviews to respect and care for the environment. Community Theme. Environmental Theme.



7. Boom Island is a multi-cultural and social justice gathering place for diverse community groups, including families, reunions, social change organizations, celebrations, festivals, and concerts. Boom Island is where diverse community groups have gathered from the Bottineau family in the mid-1800's to more recent history of Northside and Immigrant groups that book their events at picnic shelters on Boom Island. Community and Social Justice themes.
8. Create a place on the East Bank that has multiple families represented. This is an idea by an artist that saw the potential to add families of different cultures to the North Heritage Zone. “I see many families from different cultures, being in a circle, facing each other and talking to each other.” Guide team members stressed that sculptures would have to be of equal height and mass to the Pioneer Monument. As this may be difficult to do,

other discussions led to variations on this theme, and creating this diverse family idea in another location and using technology for people to hear stories. Visual art with audio stories on your phone APP could create an experience of family conversations towards peace and increased understanding. Community Theme.



Joseph Nicollet Map 1836

9. Use Maps to educate about the land and cultural changes. A succession of maps could be displayed that feature the River. First the Joseph Nicollet map in 1836 with Dakota place names, then an early settler map with places renamed, and finally a contemporary Dakota map could be commissioned. Values of place, understanding colonization, and the misuse of the environment could be communicated with maps. Seeing a new updated map using Native names and contemporary features brings the idea of an indigenized Mississippi River to life, past, present, and future.
10. Truth Telling and the 1837 Treaty (marker or creative art on the West bank). This treaty which forced the Dakota peoples to move over the Mississippi River and go west later resulted in the Dakota War of 1862 and the genocide of Dakota people. This history may be retraumatizing to Dakota people today. Indigenous leaders need to be consulted. Perhaps creating awareness and education could occur elsewhere, and not along the Mississippi River, but many descendants of colonizers do not know this history.

Expanded History and Stories for the South Heritage Zone

Some history content in Phase I research was mapped to the South Heritage Trail and these stories need consideration for interpretation. The Friends of the Falls organization is leading up restoration and reinterpretation efforts for St. Anthony Falls, so working in collaboration with this non-profit is of utmost importance. From this research, looking at the mapped history places connecting to Phase I research (Appendix A, pp 38-40), consider these places (and the history and stories connected to each place), for further research and interpretation:

- ◆ The first St. James African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church at 6th Ave. SE and 2nd St., 1863-1874. Follow history of this denomination when church later moved west into south Minneapolis. (Multiple sites, churches burned, arson suspected, racism)
- ◆ Other denominations had first churches in this area, including a Baptist Church and a Unitarian Church which sold their building to the Catholic Church (now Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, a historical site). A church tour could start in the South Heritage Zone and then travel to other church sites in Northeast Minneapolis.
- ◆ Emily and Ralph Grey's home (now the Aveda parking lot) and Ralph Grey's barbershop in the Jarret House Hotel right next to the Mississippi River (Appendix A, p. 12). The Jarret House Hotel "was a place other African American men stayed when they first arrived." Looking at migration periods of Blacks coming up the River and gathering more stories could lead to an enhanced interpretive site.
- ◆ The story of Eliza Winston also connects to the South Heritage Zone. She escaped slavery through help from Emily Grey who got her to a judge at Hennepin County to order her "freedom." Eliza was a slave owned by a prominent family from Tennessee who vacationed along the River and Lake Harriet. Black residents helped to keep her safe after her freedom, and there is more to the story (Lehman, 2024). Winslow House (also a site close to the South Heritage Zone) was cited as part of the story.
- ◆ Star of the North Story shared by Greg McMoore, when his grandfather escaped slavery in Virginia, and came up the Mississippi River to Minnesota and settled in south Minneapolis. Are there more African American freedom stories to be found? Blacks came up the River on steamboats to work in Minnesota. This labor history needs to be added to interpretation of the area.
- ◆ Environmental history and St. Anthony Falls. In the late 1800's, the Falls was almost destroyed. Collaborate with Friends of the Falls organization to tell the people stories

related to changes by the River near the Falls, and how/why Islands got removed. (i.e., Spirit Island as a sacred site was featured in an article in the Star Tribune in 2023)

- ◆ Tell the real story of Father Hennepin traveling to see the Mississippi River and the Falls for the first time. He was “captured” by the Dakota and taken to Lake Mille Lacs to recover from illness. He did not discover the Falls, but he did rename the Falls, and white settlers chose “St. Anthony Falls.” Owamniyomni is the Dakota name for the Falls.



**A present-day mural of Emily Goodridge Grey’s abolitionist father in York, PA
Both Emily and Ralph Grey have a significant documented history near the
St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone.**

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEP RECOMMENDATIONS

A focus on equity and inclusive stories along the Mississippi River in the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone is the larger vision for history interpretation as we move forward in the 21st century. The interest in stories about lumber mills, flour mills, and the white men who helped to build Minneapolis has declined. Therefore, this project's goal is to expand the history with BIPOC history and stories along the North Heritage Trail.

Phase I research provided clues to significant BIPOC individuals and families that lived and worked along the River. In Phase II, the history and stories of the Dakota were shared with community members related to Nicolett Island, the Canoe Ferry Service and LaCrosse being played at the mouth of Ĥaĥa Wakpadaŋ /Bassett Creek. Another highlight was learning about the history of the early French explorers and traders, and then later, the Métis families (mixed French and Indigenous) migrating south along the River by ox cart to Minneapolis and St. Paul.

To spark more storytelling and ideas for African American History, the story of an escaped slave making it to Minnesota, traveling by steamboat up the Mississippi was shared at community events. The story of Abolitionists, Ralph and Emily Grey, who worked with the underground railroad to get slaves to Minnesota also caught peoples' attention.

The Pioneer Monument, a large barrier to inclusive history along the North Heritage Zone, was also addressed in Phase II. An abundance of data created clear recommendations for removing or altering this Monument and then adding diverse stories, art, or a healing garden to B.F. Nelson Park. The primary recommendation is for Native leaders to consider and decide next steps, and then partners/sponsors of this project can provide the green light and support to move forward with these changes.

Ten good opportunities were highlighted to select history and stories for this work by a diverse Guide Team. (Appendix F). History/story recommendations included creating an interpretive site on Wita Waste/Nicollet Island to recognize and celebrate the Island as a sacred site for the Dakota; sharing Boom Island history and adding recent stories of diverse cultural groups who have gathered at this site; to recommending the creation of a walking tour APP to learn history of African American families who lived or worked near the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone.

The theme that surfaced with the history and stories in the North Heritage Zone was **community**. From the early days when women gathered on Nicollet Island to tap Maple Trees, to young people playing LaCrosse at the mouth of Ĥaĥa Wakpadaŋ /Bassett Creek, to the Bottineau on Boom Island (Métis family hosted music parties), to more recent history of diverse groups gathering on Boom Island. This area supports people to come together in community. Feedback from community members attending input gatherings, marked Community most often on a list of themes. Over the last two hundred years, different cultural groups have gathered by the River in community.

The second most popular theme was the Environment. This was not a focus of Phase II, but understanding the changes to the River and the environment is part of the Mississippi's history and more stories could be collected. People who spend time on or in the Mississippi do have stories. (One person who attended a community event swims regularly in the River, and Halls Island next to the Plymouth Bridge was a site where people gathered to swim in the River from 1900-1920s, before the River became too polluted.)

Challenges

This project started without clear geographic boundaries and an open period. Even when the decision was made to focus on history and stories within two blocks of the Heritage Zone, the project started with a small sample of history and stories. (Phase I research mapped most history in the South Heritage Zone.) At the end of this Phase II, over thirty-five history stories were listed as possibilities. (Appendix F)

History events in Phase I research mostly focused on history in 1800s. Looking at the history of the 1900's would reveal more stories. As the history time period was open (10,000 years ago to the present), meeting with community groups to ask for stories they could share was met with intermittent success. Few people know the River history or the stories of their ancestors, even if they have researched their roots connected to Minnesota. Talking with community historians was more fruitful, and these stakeholders generously shared their research.

BIPOC history was the goal. Looking at Indigenous history (including the Métis) and Black History was a good start, yet waves of immigrants from diverse countries/cultures have settled in Northeast Minneapolis over the years. Stories from these groups would help create a larger historical picture with interest in learning about a diversity of cultures and add to the BIPOC focus of this project.

Connecting and collaborating with Environmental groups and learning about their projects did not occur during this Phase II. These groups understand the environmental history and may know of stories about people who recreate by canoe, kayak, or boat. The environmental history of how the River has changed was of interest to the attendees at community input gatherings. Stories of living or working on the River, and stories about people who are working to clean up and add plants/trees along the river can also enhance the history on the North Heritage Trail. Environmental change and stories need to be integrated with a more comprehensive plan.

Next steps

More work is needed to understand the history along the North Heritage Trail and expand the diversity of stories. Deciding on the theme that connects the most interesting and compelling stories would make the process focused and easier to implement. Expanding the community theme to include "All My Relations" beliefs and values would help connect the community

theme to the environmental theme and support Indigenous groups to lead projects and inspire others. It is clear that a comprehensive plan for the North Heritage Trail is needed to include and coordinate with environmental education efforts.

From the work completed for this Phase II, here are the next recommended steps:

- **Support the gathering of Native leaders to make their recommendations for the Pioneer Monument** structure and then decide what to do to change the B.F. Nelson Park area (a Healing Park was one popular idea). Support collaboration and coordination with MPRB staff and a Native Council to act and make changes.
- **Correct the “Dakota Woman” reference** on the First Bridge interpretive sign. Include Hazainyakewin’s name and key historical detail on signage. Add stories and art pieces.
- **Fund oral history work** that can enhance the history and stories of this Phase II project.
- **Fund a Native Interpretive Site on Wita Waste/Nicollet Island.** This was the number one recommendation from the Guide Teams’ top ten list to begin planning for the interpretive site.
- **Move key recommendations forward from the “Ten Good Opportunities”** list through funding and collaborating with other organizations.
- **Support the creation of a comprehensive plan** for the North Heritage Zone to integrate environmental projects and interpretive plans.
- **Gather more stories.** Choose key historical events or topic(s) first, then bring people together to educate on specific time period or event in history. When people understand the historical context, then they can suggest ideas and offer stories.

Linking the past and present with the inspiration of Mitakuye Oyasin (All My Relations) would connect the community and environmental themes. With inspiring interpretation and art, it is hoped that there will be an increase of local residents and out-of-town visitors touching the river, getting on the river, and learning along this North Heritage Trail. Inspiration to be better relatives to other people/cultures and the environment would lift up this history and change individuals, families, and communities.

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