

**North Heritage Trail Expansion Project**  
**Gathering BIPOC History and Stories**  
**Neighborhood Stakeholder Gathering**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please share your reactions, ideas, and contacts!**

1. What history time period or event/story stands out for you?
2. What was new or surprising to you?
3. What stories were more difficult to hear/think about?
4. What is missing?
5. What themes seem to be emerging with the history/stories gathered so far? (Pick 2)
  - Community
  - Power
  - Relationships
  - Women and Business
  - Environment (Degradation, Restoration, Ecological Understanding)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. Who do you suggest we contact for stories and ideas for this project? (Share contact info)
7. Other comments and suggestions (use back side of paper if needed)

## Appendix D: History of the Pioneers Monument in Minneapolis

### Compiled History of the “Pioneers Monument”

**1936** – The Pioneers Monument was sculpted by John Karl Daniels. Funding came from John Pillsbury for a cost of \$3,200. The front side depicts three generations (grandfather, father, mother and child), a rifle, and a plow; all images representing the “Pioneers.” The back of the monument is a relief of Father Hennepin accepting a pipe from a native man and he holds a cross to symbolize Christianity and proselytizing to indigenous natives. The original location of the Pioneers Monument was by the US Post Office in downtown Minneapolis. During this timeframe, many monuments were built across the United States, reflecting a desire to raise up workers and honor mothers, according to Dr. Cynthia Prescott of the University of North Dakota (Source: *Constructing Cultural Memory*, go to <http://pioneermonuments.net/>) or her book “Pioneer Mother Monuments”.

**1961** – As part of urban renewal in Minneapolis (10 city blocks were demolished), the Monument was moved to corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Marshall (at that time, the backside was not easily seen by the public). Several severe car accidents happened at that site.

**2010** – The Pioneers Monument was moved across the street to current location at B. F. Nelson Park when STAWNO advocated for environmental cleanup and upgrade to the Park. This occurred with multiple funding sources: St Anthony West Neighborhood Organization (STAWNO), Minneapolis Arts Commission, and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Cost of move, environmental improvements, and parking development was approximately \$125,000. The Pioneers Monument is solid granite and weighs over 15 tons. The Monument becomes a target for graffiti; the Monument is usually defaced on the backside. Minneapolis Park employees need to use chemicals to remove paint each time Monument is defaced.

**2019** – Efforts were made to place signage to explain the historical context of Monument and when it was built. Conversations began to discuss whether to add other art, memorials, or adapt and alter this monument. Ideas so far have included: feature other people/cultures, change the message, get other local artists involved, add to, or retire the Monument. Graffiti continues to occur in 2022.

**2022** – A grant request to engage community was denied, so in conjunction with MPRB, STAWNO is volunteering to gather community input to seek alternatives other than just cleaning up graffiti. Contact [neighbors@stawno.org](mailto:neighbors@stawno.org) This July 11 Community Engagement event is the beginning of the process.

#### **2021:**

**Grant Phase 1 from St Anthony Falls Heritage Board – submitted by St Anthony West Neighborhood Organization (STAWNO) Sally Grans Korsh**

*“Inclusionary Stories of the North Heritage Zone” by T’Keyah Adams*

#### **2023:**

**Grant Phase 2 from St Anthony Falls Heritage Board - STAWNO submitted (SGK) and Northeast Sculpture Org was Fiscal Agent**

*Develop actual content for monuments/markers/other informational kiosk of diverse and unknown BIPOC history of the North Heritage Zone.*

# Pioneers Monument

## B. F. Nelson Park, Minneapolis, MN

from Cythnia Prescott's website at <http://pioneermonuments.net/>

In the early 1930s, Minneapolis, Minnesota, city leaders pursued an elaborate plan to raze a red-light district and construct a new Civic Center inspired by the City Beautiful movement to include a parklike square to be renamed "Pioneer Square." Minneapolis Park Superintendent Theodore Wirth originally envisioned a tall stone shaft topped by a bronze American eagle and surrounded at its base by four bronze figures at its base: a Native man and woman, and a pioneer man and woman.

In contrast, local sculptor John K. Daniels envisioned a granite or bronze design emphasizing White industry and economic development in the Mill City: a 25-foot-tall base representing 2 millstones on top of each other, above which an overshot water wheel would tower. A pioneer and a laborer would stand to either side of the water wheel. At the top of a pedestal would be a young woman representing Minnesota, holding a sheaf of wheat to celebrate the city's flour milling industry.

Those two different views ultimately yielded to a monument that closely resembled other Midwestern pioneer monuments' representations of early settlers. It emphasized a hard-working male Anglo-American settler, supported by a self-sacrificing wife and mother, and accompanied by a frontiersman who might represent other European immigrant groups and perhaps also the laborers that Daniels originally proposed.

On the reverse of the monument is a bas relief that portrays French missionaries/explorers paving the way for White settlement. Like the reliefs forming an honor roll to early explorers and military and political leaders on the central pillar of San Francisco's 1894 *Pioneer Monument* and other early pioneer monuments in the Far West, Daniels' bas relief celebrated the man credited with "discovering" the falls of the Mississippi River. Known to the Dakota as Owámniyomni, among other names, Louis Hennepin renamed the falls after his patron saint. Those falls later provided the power that enabled Minneapolis to grow into the wheat milling capital of the region. Paralleling San Francisco *Pioneer Monument's* *Early Days* bronze grouping, Daniels' relief portrayed a European Catholic missionary interactive with the local Native population. But like other Midwestern works, the Minneapolis monument emphasized friendship, rather than paternalism.

Three decades later, a massive freeway construction project spurred another effort at redevelopment. An apartment tower was constructed on the site of Pioneer Park; the 14-ton granite monument was moved to a "temporary" location in the St. Anthony West neighborhood on a tiny triangle of land beside a split-level home, where it served as a bumper to automobile traffic more than a public monument. After languishing in that location for another forty years, a local neighborhood association raised funds to move the statue across Main Street to the newly created B. F. Nelson Park.

The monument received little public attention in its new permanent location until Black Lives Matter and anti-colonialism protests swept the nation in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd about 5 miles from the monument in May 2020. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board received complaints about the statue. On Thanksgiving morning 2020—a holiday that some have renamed a National Day of Mourning to mark the devastating impact of white colonization on Native peoples—someone splashed the monument with red paint. They spray-painted anti-colonial slogans on the granite monument: "no thanks," "no more genocide," "Decolonize," and "land back."