A black and white photograph of a man in a top hat and suspenders, with a pipe in his mouth. The image is set against a green background that transitions to yellow at the bottom. The word "WHOOSH!" is written in a large, white, stylized font across the bottom of the image, with a white pipe graphic extending from the end of the word.

WHOOSH!

By **ANDREW ERSKINE WHEELER**

Directed by Allison Vincent

With Music by Northern Shores

Jan 29-Feb 22, 2026

history theatre

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Danny Diamond & Brian Miller

February 15, 7 pm



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BELTERS & A BAND**

with Jen Burleigh-Bentz

April 18, 5 pm

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WELCOME



Laura Leffler
Interim Artistic Director

Yes, Andrew Wheeler wrote **WHOOSH!** over five years ago, and it's always been an intimate and beautiful tale, powerfully told. It's always been the story of his own relatives who immigrated to Minnesota. Yet here we find ourselves in early winter 2026 and suddenly immigration is on everyone's

lips. Immigrants are in the news, all over social media, and in the streets. Minnesotans of all backgrounds are coming together in all kinds of spaces and places to stand with our neighbors.

Across the river, the Guthrie Theater has programmed Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. That's a story of corruption and power. All over the Twin Cities this month, Ten Thousand Things is presenting *Men on Boats* by Jaclyn Backhaus. It's a story of the American government claiming things that aren't theirs. And here we find ourselves in early winter 2026 - these stories programmed months and months ago feel prescient. Maybe that's because art arrives at the moment it's needed.

In a recent article, former artistic director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Nataki Garrett Myers mentioned, "Theatre was never meant to be merely reassuring. It was meant to be participatory, unsettling, communal, and alive to the conditions of the world around it."

WHOOSH!, *Macbeth* and *Men on Boats* - and many other plays performing around Minnesota, surely - are alive and speaking to the conditions of now.

As you experience today's performance, I hope you learn more about Minnesota and our shared history. I hope you feel alive in this communal space with your fellow audience members. I hope you reflect on the contradictions, the glory, and the horrors of the Civil War in which the Hickey brothers fought, and the War's aftermath that General Shuman and Michael grapple with. I hope you leave having improved your historical literacy. I hope you take in some joy that helps to buoy you in these times.

Thank you for joining us. Stay safe out there.



Karen Mueller
Managing Director

Happy New Year from History Theatre—and welcome to **WHOOSH!**

We are happy to begin 2026 with this lively,

one-person play, which invites reflection and renewal. **WHOOSH!** takes us to St. Anthony Falls after the Civil War, weaving together history, Irish heritage, labor, and longing, all rooted in a powerful sense of place. Like many of our stories, it reminds us that history is lived, felt, and carried forward by people and communities.

This show illustrates History Theatre's unique mission to make the past feel real, human, and relevant. Thank you for joining us in the theater and being a part of that exchange.

As we start the new year, we thank everyone who contributed to our end-of-year campaign. Your generosity is essential. Tickets alone cannot sustain our work. Your donations support artists, staff, and bold, intimate storytelling.

If you have already given, thank you! Please consider donating — your support truly matters.

Enjoy the show.

WHOOSH!

Written and performed by
ANDREW ERSKINE WHEELER

Directed by
ALLISON VINCENT

With Music by
NORTHERN SHORES

Music Directed by
BRIAN MILLER

Scenic Designer
ERIK PAULSON

Properties Designer
KIRBY MOORE

Costume Designer
MANDI JOHNSON

Lighting Designer
TONY STOERI

Video Designer
BRANT MILLER

Sound Designer
RICHARD GRAHAM

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Manager **Haley Pelissier Walsh***
Assistant Stage Manager **Becca Kravchenko**
Technical Director **Gunther Gullickson**
Master Electrician **Nick Walberg**
Stage Electricians **Nick Fetting, Favour Donbraye, Janea Lorick, Kate Peters,**
..... **Kurt Jung, Ariel Bodnar-Klein, Alan Donahue, Lucas Martin, Kai Yamanishi**
Scenic Supervisor **John Lutz**
Scenic Charge **Erika Soukup**
Carpenters **Jess Hermanson, Phong Mai, Alex Cleberg, Edward Folly**
Open Captioner **Laura Wiebers**
Audio Descriptor **Elana Centor**
ASL Interpreter **James Gardner**



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• Member, Twin Cities Musicians Union Local 30-73, American Federation of Musicians

Member, United Scenic Artists Local #829

^ Member, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees

U Understudy

SETTING

1881. The Rum River in North Central Minnesota,
Logs being driven downstream to the mills of Saint Anthony Falls

THERE WILL BE ONE 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION

THE CAST

Michael Hickey Andrew Erskine Wheeler
Michael Hickey Understudy Derek Lee Miller

THE MUSICANS

Northern Shores Danny Diamond, Brian Miller



ANDREW ERSKINE
WHEELER



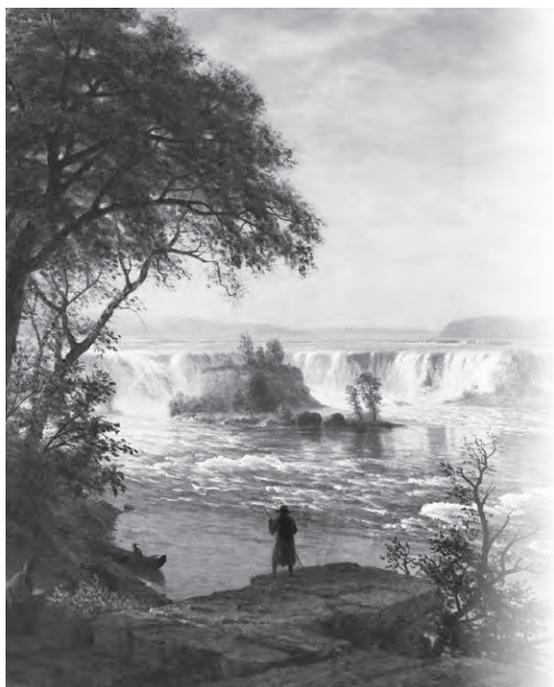
DEREK LEE MILLER U



DANNY DIAMOND



BRIAN MILLER



Land Acknowledgment for WHOOSH!

Owámniyomni (St. Anthony Falls or “turbulent waters”) in Minneapolis is where Dakota people came to for ceremony, and Wíta Wanáǵi (Spirit Island), an island oasis in the mist kicked up from the falling water, to give birth. This was, and continues to be, a place of gathering, a place where the physical and spiritual worlds blend, and where, through Dakota oral history, we must help to preserve and resurrect Native history.



SCAN QR CODE
TO LEARN MORE:
[owamniyomni.org/
about/#the-place](http://owamniyomni.org/about/#the-place)

Albert Bierstadt painted *The Falls of St. Anthony* in 1880, creating an artist's impression of how the falls looked prior to industrialization.

PLAYWRIGHT



In 2004, our artistic director at the Actors' Gang, Tim Robbins, wrote an anti-war play called EMBEDDED. We performed it in LA and at the Public Theatre in NYC. The mood in the country was one of retribution for 9/11, although there were many who opposed the Iraq War; millions marched in the streets across the globe. EMBEDDED was attended by luminaries and activists, with many of our talkbacks led by Amy Goodman of Democracy Now. I met Kurt Vonnegut and Daniel Barrigan. Those were heady times. We thought we would change the world.

The *NY Times* raked Tim over the coals, trashing his play as second-rate agitprop. Bush was reelected. The Iraq War would go on to last 20 years at immeasurable cost in lives and treasure, veterans carrying unspeakable weight and pain, many choosing self-harm as the only means of release. If you ask me if art can change the world, the jaded parts of me would say

unequivocally, "No. If you're reading this, why? Why aren't you in the streets? Burn this playbill in a bonfire. Burn this broken world down..."

Before leaving LA, Tim pulled me aside and said, "Always be proud of what we did. We were one of the lone voices at the time. And so many people needed to hear us. We were accused of preaching to the choir. But that's why the choir comes. To not feel alone. To gather in rooms and share stories of hope and pain. So they can go out and fight the good fight."

I'm writing this playwright's note for WHOOSH! as our streets of Minneapolis and St. Paul are occupied with masked agents of the government. Will Minnesota endure? Are we witnessing the death of Democracy? I don't know.

I only know there is a kind of alchemy in the heart of Nature that perseveres even after death. After a forest fire, there is something in the pinecones themselves that responds to the flames, that helps the seedlings grow: Death exchanging Life for the debt it owes.

If you are here, I am grateful. I've come to see art and the whelming of world events as kinds of fire; some, brief candles, some, great conflagrations. And we are the pine. I believe in the forest. That it will be green again. And each of us, holding deep within us, the seed.

-Andrew Erskine Wheeler, Playwright

SPECIAL THANKS

Carleton College, Christine Esterl, Charlie Bethel Estate, Leslie Vincent, Minnesota Fringe Festival, Minnesota Historical Society, Mill City Museum, Norcostco, Saint Anthony Falls Heritage Board, University of Minnesota

THE CAST/MUSICIANS/CREATIVE TEAM

THE CAST

ANDREW ERSKINE WHEELER (he/him)

Playwright, Michael Hickey

History Theatre: *All the Way, Great Society, Not For Sale.*

Theater: *Walking Shadow: The Christians, The River;*

Disneyland, CA: *Aladdin's Oasis; Actors' Gang, Los Angeles, Company Member 1997-2015. Touring artist:* Pasadena Playhouse; NYC Public Theatre; Brisbane Arts Festival, Australia; London's Riverside Studios; Madras, New Delhi & Bangalore, India. **Solo shows:** MN Fringe: *Booth's Ghost, Garden of American Heroes. Film/TV:* Andrew's first TV role in 1974 as Honk in Sid & Marty Krofft's *Far Out Space Nuts!*. He appears regularly in film, TV, and commercials; currently in *Hockey Mom's Revenge* on Lifetime. **Favorite role:** The Genie, *Aladdin's Oasis*, Disneyland, Anaheim. 1996. **Awards:** 4 Garland Awards MN Fringe, Charlie Bethel Solo Artist Grant, St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board Grant.

DEREK LEE MILLER (he/him)

Understudy Michael Hickey

History Theatre: Debut. **Theater:** Transatlantic Love

Affair: Red and the Mother Wild, Ballad of the Pale Fisherman, Ash Land, These Old Shoes, 105 Proof; The Miller Conspiracy: Bay Creek, The Banana Wars; The Winding Sheet Outfit: Blood Nocturne, You Are Cordially Invited to the Life and Death of Edward Lear, Årsgång, Marie-Jeanne Valet, Who Defeated La Bete du Gevaudan, Stabby Stab Stab; Sandbox Theatre: War With the Newts, The Mad Trapper of Rat River, Big Money. Other: The Princess in the Clouds, children's book illustrator; We Do What We Must, album of original songs. Training: BFA Theatre, Millikin University. derekleemiller.com

THE MUSICIANS

DANNY DIAMOND (he/him)

Musician, Northern Shores

History Theatre: Debut. **Theater:** Teac Damsa: *Swan Lake/Loch na hEala. Other:* Northern Shores, *Slow Moving Clouds, Mórca, NORTH, What to Bring When We Leave, The Long Road to Glenties. Awards:* Best Production, Irish Theatre Awards, 2017 (*Swan Lake/Loch na hEala*). IG/FB, YouTube: @fiddlediamond. dannydiamond.ie.

BRIAN MILER (he/him)

Music Director, Musician, Northern Shores

History Theatre: Debut. **Theater:** SteppingStone Theatre: *Get Up Your Irish; Chanhassen Dinner Theatres: Kickin' It Irish. Other:* National Folk Festival, Milwaukee Irish Fest, Goderich Celtic Roots Festival, Inishowen Singing Weekend. **Awards:** American Folkline Center Parson's Fund Award, Irish Echo Community Champion Award. evergreentrad.com. IG: @brrrianmiller

THE CREATIVE TEAM

RICHARD GRAHAM (he/him)

Sound Designer

History Theatre: Debut. **Theater:** Guthrie, Children's

Theatre Company, Park Square, Artistry, Theater Mu, Walking Shadow, Fox & Beggar, Unlabeled, Great Northern Festival/MN Opera. **Other:** Member, Theatrical Sound Designers and Composers Association. **Upcoming:** *Walking Shadow: Feast.* richardgraham.net

MANDI JOHNSON (she/her)

Costume Designer

History Theatre: Debut. **Theater:** Four Humors Theatre: *Terms, Rasputin, Rule of Three; Walking Shadow Theatre Company: Mae West and the Trial of Sex; Transatlantic Love Affair: Red and the Mother Wild, The Privateer; Theatre Pro Rata: The Language Archive, By the Bog of Cats, The Convent of Pleasure. Upcoming:* *Walking Shadow Theatre Company: Perfect Arrangement.*

BECCA KRAVCHENKO (she/her)

Assistant Stage Manager

History Theatre: Debut. **Theater:** Six Points Theater: *Last Yiddish Speaker, Act of God, Just For Us, The Messenger, Torch Song; Skylark Opera Theatre: Christmas Spider; Park Square Theatre: Between Riverside and Crazy, Gin Game, Romeo and Juliet, Rocky Horror Picture Show; Theater Mu: Kung Fu Zombies. Training:* BA Theater Arts, Tech/Design, Augsburg University. **Upcoming:** Six Points Theater: *Vienna, Vienna, Vienna.*

BRANT MILLER (he/him)

Video Designer

History Theatre: *The Buddy Holly Story. Theater:* Four Humors Theater Founder/Company Member; Children's Theatre Company: *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, Charlotte's Web: Lurvy. Awards:* Best Theater for Comedy - Four Humors Theater, *Star Tribune* (2014). **Training:** Theater, UMN.

KIRBY MOORE (he/him)

Properties Designer

History Theatre: *Don't Miss Doris Hines, The Defeat of Jesse James, Teen Idol: The Bobby Vee Story, Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story, Coco's Diary, Courting Harry, Lombardi, Christmas of Swing. Other:* 40+ years of stage, film, and commercial production in Minneapolis, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Grateful to Circa 21st Dinner Playhouse, Rock Island III., Children's Theatre Company for their design internship programs which helped get his start in the professional arts.

ERIK PAULSON

Scenic Designer

History Theatre: *Secret Warriors, Tyrone and Ralph, A Servant's Christmas. Theater:* Park Square Theatre: *The Humans, Holmes/Poirot, The Snow Queen; Theater Mu: Stop Kiss, Hells Canyon, Again; Old Log Theatre: The Play That Goes Wrong, Million Dollar Quartet, Outside Mullingar; Madison Opera: The Turn of the Screw; Great River Shakespeare Festival: A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Fantasticks; The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis: A Comedy of Errors.*



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THE CREATIVE TEAM

TONY STOERI (he/him)

Lighting Designer

History Theatre: Debut. **Theater:** Frank Theatre: *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui, Sanctuary City, Ironbound, Fetal, The Convert, The Cradle Will Rock*; Walking Shadow Theatre Company: *The Trial of Mae West, Witch, The Ugly One, Open, Equivocation, Gabriel, The Sexual Life of Savages*; Trademark Theater: *The Reunion*; Theater Mu: *The Last Firefly*; Indiana Festival Theater: *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Persuasion*; Jewish Theater of Bloomington: *Church and State*; Cardinal Stage: *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*; Storefront Theater of Indianapolis: *Prowess*. **Training:** MFA Lighting Design, Indiana University. **Upcoming:** Frank Theatre: *The Welkin*. tonystoeri.com

ALLISON VINCENT (she/her)

Director

History Theatre: *Hungry Like the Wolf (upcoming), Christmas of Swing*. **Theater-Directing:** Walking Shadow: *FEAST, Mae West and the Trial of Sex, Dark & Stormy: The Physicists, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*; Playwright's Center: *Spukhaus, Yawp*; Fringe: *Daddy Issues, Edith Gets High, WHOOSH!*; The Hive: *Loudly, Clearly Beautifully*; TC Horror Festival: *A Morbid History of Sons and Daughters*; University of Minnesota: *Depth, This Little Piggy Went to Hell*. **Theater-Acting:** *Transatlantic Love Affair, Four Humors, The Illusion*, Playwright's Center, Park

Square, The Jungle, Frank Theater, Mainly Me, Ladybrain, HUGE, Strike, Jon Ferguson, Walking Shadow, Sod House, Black Label Movement, The Winding Sheet Collective, Artistry, Theater Novi Most. **Other:** Teaches at UMN, Augsburg University. **Awards:** 2025-2027 Jungle Emerging Artistic Leadership cohort, MISA Residency, Everwood Farmstead Residency, 2026 Creative Individuals Grant Recipient, UMN Outstanding Alumni Award, 2022 Naked Stages Fellow, Ivey Awards - *Ballad of the Pale Fisherman, Wit*; Golden Lanyard recipient for the MN Fringe - *Daddy Issues, WHOOSH, 5x5, Edith Gets High*. **Training:** BAs, MEd. University of Minnesota. **Upcoming:** (dir) *Walking Shadow: FEAST*, (writing) *Wonderlust Productions: Hidden Herald Season 3*, (acting) *Park Square: The Butler Did It*.

HALEY PELISSIER WALSH* (she/her)

Stage Manager

History Theatre: 21 shows including *Runestone! A Rock Musical, Teen Idol: The Bobby Vee Story, and The Highwaymen*. **Theater:** Playwright's Center, Dark and Stormy Productions, Theater Mu, Illusion Theater, Theater Latté Da, Mixed Blood Theater, Pillsbury House and Theater, Park Square Theatre, Trademark Theater, Six Points Theater. **Dance:** A Dancer's Place Productions, Alternative Motion Project, MN Dance Theater, Collide Theatrical Dance Company. haleynwalsh.com

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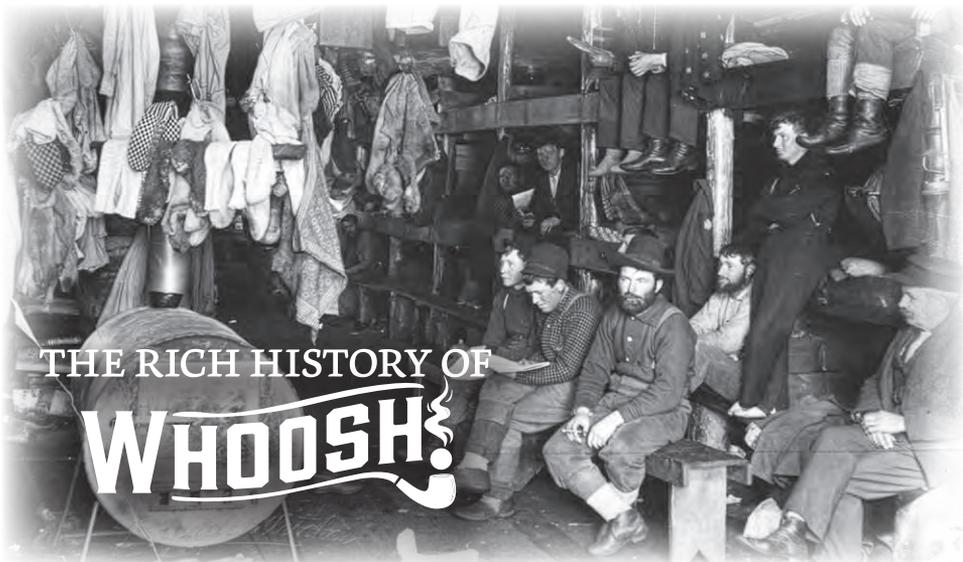
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NORTHEAST MINNESOTA HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

THE RICH HISTORY OF WHOOSH!

St. Louis County, Minnesota bunkhouse, 1899.

The Civil War (1861-1865)

When the Civil War began on April 12, 1861, Minnesota's governor, Alexander Ramsey, was in Washington, D.C. Ramsey immediately promised President Lincoln a regiment of 1,000 volunteer soldiers from Minnesota. These were the first troops offered to fight for the United States during the Civil War. In order to organize and train these raw recruits, the state of Minnesota reopened Fort Snelling to serve as a rendezvous and training center for the volunteer soldiers.

While at the fort, recruits learned the basics of soldiering and spent the majority of their time marching, drilling with their weapons, and standing guard duty. After the draft was instituted in 1863, several large wooden barracks were constructed outside the fort's stone walls to accommodate the large numbers of new soldiers. Fort Snelling served as a mustering-out location for Minnesota units. From 1861-1865 nearly 25,000 soldiers passed through Fort Snelling.

Logging Camps: The Early Years

As immigration to the U.S. increased, the demand for building materials made a parallel ascent. The resulting chain of events started in Maine, with the discovery of white pine's versatility. This species was lightweight so it floated well, much better than the red pine. It was a "soft" wood so it was easy to saw, both on the stump and again at the sawmills. Even with these attributes, white pine was still strong, durable, and had some resistance to rot.

The demand for white pine was insatiable with the ever-expanding populations in Chicago and St. Louis, and all the settlements popping up in the newer territories, Minnesota included. The federal government began to buy land from the American Indians so in turn, lumbermen



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Elias Moses' logging crew on a Rum River log drive.

could buy the land from the government. Once land was in the hands of the lumbermen, logging camps spawned.

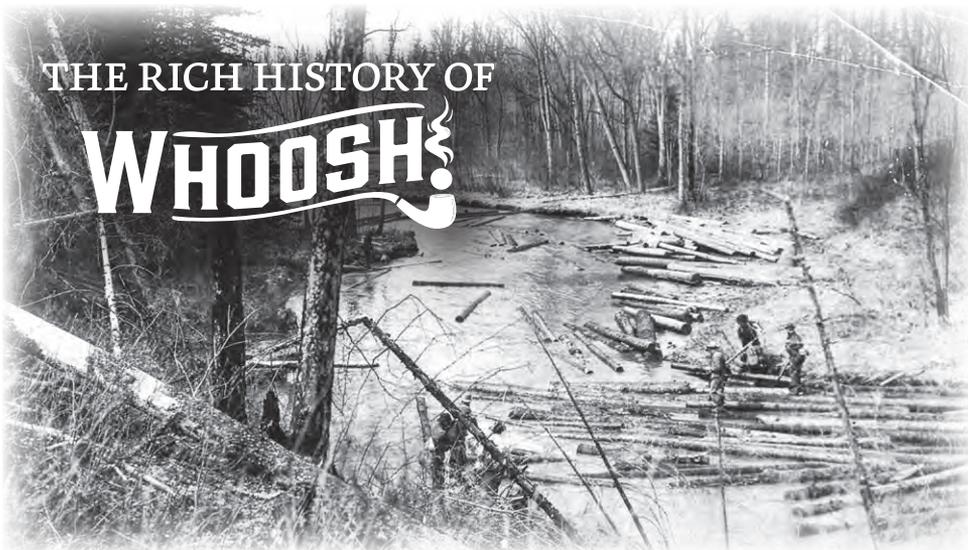
The loggers, often called lumberjacks, worked six days a week, from sunrise to sunset, regardless of the weather conditions. By the 1890s, more than 20,000 men were lumberjacks, with that same number employed by sawmills. This correlated to the peak years of logging, which began a downward descent after 1910.

Irish in Minnesota

Irish immigration had a tremendous impact on the development of 19th century America. The Irish came to America because of famine, oppression, and the lack of opportunity at home. Some were forced to emigrate, but others acted with agency and chose to come to America. Ann Regan writes that the experience of Irish immigrants in Minnesota "defies generalization....they have created stereotypes and broken them, held to traditions and made new ones." (*Irish in Minnesota*)

Irish immigrants began coming to the Minnesota region in the 1820s as soldiers at Fort Snelling and

THE RICH HISTORY OF WHOOSH!



BRIAN MILLER

Log drive on a Minnesota river.



MINNICO'BRIEN WOODIER

Irish-American lumber baron William O'Brien (center)

lumberjacks from Canada. Because of its location on the east bank of the Mississippi River, St. Paul grew quickly through the 1840s and 1850s. Many of the Irish in Minnesota were "two boat" migrants: One boat brought them across the Atlantic from Ireland, and a second to Minnesota. The second leg of the journey would often involve several modes of transportation, but the steamboat was important for the early arrivals in Minnesota.

St. Anthony Falls

Around 12,000 years ago, a huge 200-foot waterfall once stood where St. Paul is today. Minnehaha Falls is astonishing to see, but St. Anthony Falls is where the story ends for this once great waterfall. Now covered by a concrete blanket to ensure that no further erosion can happen, St. Anthony Falls had to go through many stages of maintenance during the mid to late 1800s and this was primarily due to the Eastman Tunnels. These tunnels were constructed to create a trailrace between the islands of Hennepin and Nicollet. The workers noticed that water began leaking through the tunnel and soon it collapsed. The collapse of the tunnel created a whirlpool that started sucking in anything near it.

Owamni-yomni is 'whirlpool' in the Dakota language. Gakaabika is 'severed rock' in the Ojibwe language. Both are the names of the place where the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam currently sits, in the homelands of the Dakota. Haha Wakpa is the name for the Mississippi River in the Dakota language.

Prior to colonial settlement, the Dakota lived along Owamni-yomni /Gakaabika and Ojibwe, Ho-Chunk, and other nations traveled through that place. It was and still is an important and sacred place to Ojibwe, Ho-Chunk, Dakota and Indigenous peoples currently living here. The name St. Anthony came from Father Hennepin who was the first European to name the falls after his favorite patron saint, Athony of Padua.



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Minnesota loggers in the bunkhouse at night.

Photos from Into the Woods: Irish Music and Dance in Logging Minnesota, Celtic Junction by Brian Miller. Other sources: Geological History of St. Anthony Falls, Park Connection; Jumping in Irish in Minnesota, Irish in America; The Civil War, Minnesota Historical Society,

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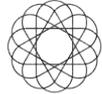
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The Estate of June P. Nelson
Michele Pierce
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The Estate of Dale Gordon
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Pat Faunce
Gary Fischer
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History Theatre entertains, educates, and engages audiences by creating, developing, and producing new and existing works that explore Minnesota's past and the diverse American experience.

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History Theatre sits on the ancestral, traditional and contemporary land of the Dakota people, for whom the land holds historical, spiritual, and political significance. We recognize and honor the Dakota people, ancestors, and descendants, as well as the land itself, and all the sovereign Native nations in Minnesota and beyond. We recognize that this acknowledgement itself is not enough and only serves as a first step towards decolonization.

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