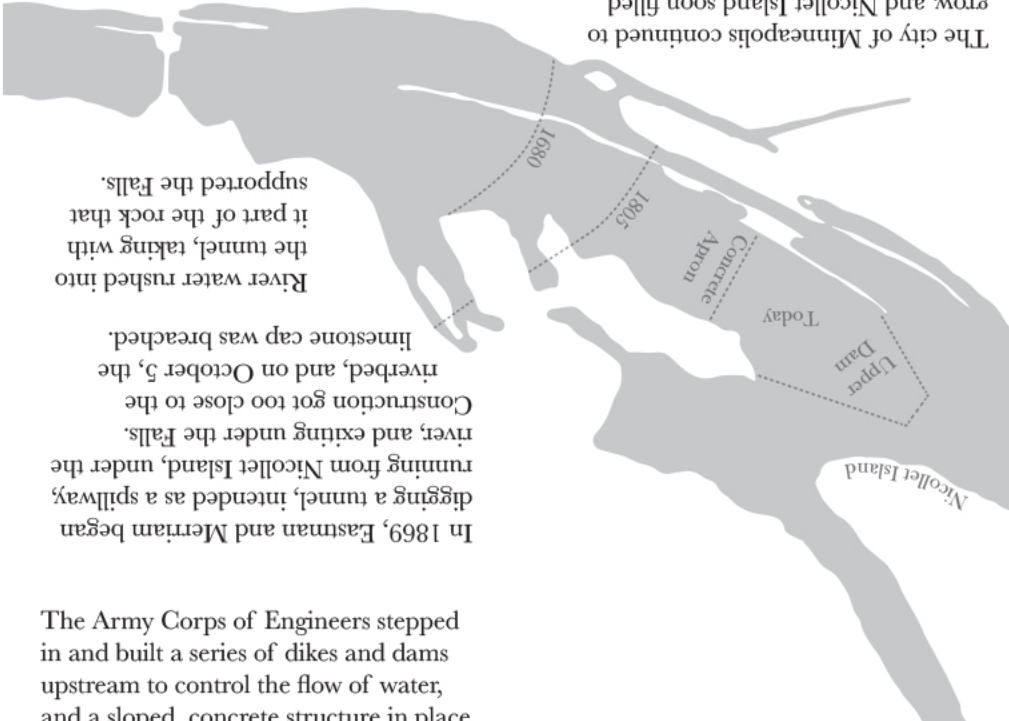




The concrete slope is still there today, along with a dam, that stands in for the original Saint Anthony Falls.



An Abbreviated History of *Saint Anthony Falls*



The Army Corps of Engineers stepped in and built a series of dikes and dams upstream to control the flow of water, and a sloped, concrete structure in place of the natural rock under the Falls.

In 1869, Eastman and Merriam began digging a tunnel, intended as a spillway, running from Nicollet Island, under the river, and exiting under the Falls. Construction got too close to the riverbed, and on October 5, the limestone cap was breached.

River water rushed into the tunnel, taking with it part of the rock that supported the Falls.

Man-made dams and wooden aprons along the riverbank kept the Falls from completely eroding, but the damage was irreversible.

The city of Minneapolis continued to grow, and Nicollet Island soon filled with lumber mills, grist mills, hydro plants, and the homes of their laborers. The beauty of the water remained, but the reverence for the natural area diminished in the pursuit of commerce.

Saint Anthony Falls is a natural drop in the Mississippi River, northeast of downtown Minneapolis. Throughout its history, it has set tribal boundaries, fostered European tourism, and laid the groundwork for modern industry.

In 1858, Minnesota became an official state in the Union, prompting representatives of the Dakota to try to enforce the existing treaties, which had not yet been fulfilled. Instead, a civil war broke out between the Dakota and the Americans.

38 Dakota men were hanged in Mankato, 90 miles south of the Falls, in the largest mass execution in U.S. history. The Dakota people were exiled from the state of Minnesota in 1862.

In 1865, William Eastman and John Merriam purchased Nicollet Island to harness the power of the Falls for their industrial endeavors.

Dakota oral tradition cites Nicollet Island as a site reserved for sacred ceremonies, including childbirth. The sound of the nearby Falls, which carried for nearly 15 miles, could drown out the sounds of a woman in labor, protecting her from neighboring tribes or predators.

In the 17th century, the falls, along with the adjacent Nicollet Island, were an important and sacred site for the native Dakota and Ojibwe tribes - a place of peace.

The first European credited with exploring the Falls was Father Louis Hennepin, a Franciscan Priest. In 1680, he named them after his Catholic protector, Saint Anthony of Padua. Father Hennepin's accounts of this unique and beautiful part of the Mississippi River enticed European explorers and tourists alike. Visitors came from France, England, and Spain to see this natural wonder.

Following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the entirety of the area became American soil. The Dakota signed treaties with the United States to cede their land to the Americans. In 1820, President Thomas Jefferson sent Colonel Josiah Snelling to the area to build a military fort, and settlers soon followed, building private mills to process the abundant lumber and grain of the midwestern territory.

