



How did we get here? Colonial History of Minnesota

ANTI-INDIGENOUS POLICIES

Ten years after the establishment of the U.S. Indian Agency at Fort Snelling, a wave of anti-Indigenous laws and policies were implemented, starting with the Indian Removal Act. Anti-Indigenous attitudes and violence were occurring prior to 1830, especially during the time of rapid growth in settlement along the Mississippi River by White settlers. Tensions between White settlers, the military, local and federal governments, and the Dakota people grew leading up to the U.S.-Dakota war of 1862.

MAJOR MARKUP

White settlers continued to acquire Indigenous land for development. In 1868, Minnesota sold 94,631 acres to establish the University of Minnesota under the Morrill Act. The federal government paid Indigenous people \$2,309 for the land and later sold it for \$579,430 (worth nearly \$11 million in 2021), a 251x markup.

INDUSTRY VERSUS SANCTITY

The government prioritized the development of mills over the sanctity and spiritual sacredness of the Anthony Falls. In 1857, one of the first canals was constructed along First Street South to improve the water distribution that supported the milling industry. Other dams and tunnel projects were in action to redirect water to mills. By 1916, mills peaked to producing 18.5 million barrels of flour — over 20% of the nation's output. The mills at Anthony Falls were among the first hydropower sources developed in the U.S.

28%

of Minnesota's
Indigenous
population live
in Hennepin and
Ramsey Counties

31%

of the Minnesota
Indigenous
population are
affected by
poverty

4x

greater poverty
and unemployment
rates in the
Indigenous
population
compared to the
White population

69%

high school
graduation rate
within 4 years,
compared to the
national average
of 82%