



# John Kistler of Minneapolis Discusses the Long History Behind his Hometown

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The twin cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis are the most populated in the state of Minnesota and have a rich history that reaches centuries into the past. Residents like John Kistler work to preserve the original charm and historical aspects of their hometowns, and he shares insight into how Minneapolis came to be what it is today.

[John Kistler of Minnesota](#) has long chronicled the colorful past and the events that secured Minneapolis' place in American geography, history, and industry. Hundreds of years old, the city has passed into the ownership of numerous people and spans time before America was ever a country.

"Minneapolis is so much more than half of the Twin Cities," [says John Kistler of Minnesota](#). "It has a rich history that begins when the area was claimed by the French nearly a hundred years before the American revolution, making it one of the oldest cities in the country."

The city of Minneapolis is built on both sides of the Mississippi River just west of St. Paul and only a few miles from the Canadian border. The area that eventually became half of the twin cities remained wild until the first stirrings of civilization took hold in the late 17th century. It was then that French explorers first discovered the land, most notably a priest who'd accompanied sailors on their journey to the New World.

Here, the priest stumbled on the Mississippi River's only waterfall and named it Saint Anthony Falls after his patron saint. Later, Spanish troops laid claim to the area before it went back to the French and then over to the revolutionaries during their struggle. It was only officially negotiated into a final sale to the Americans in the Louisiana Purchase, which came from Napoleon Bonaparte.

"Even after the American purchased the land, it remained largely undeveloped until Fort Snelling was built in the early 1800s," [says John Kistler](#) of Minnesota.

Fort Snelling extended the United States' jurisdiction over the area and helped to ease concerns over British troops attempting to reclaim the area. Large groups of American troops were shipped into Fort Snelling who used local resources to create food and supplies. They looked to the surrounding land for means to create roads, vegetable gardens, wheat and hay fields, and grazing fields where they raised cattle. Three years after the Fort was constructed, the men of the area built a lumber mill and a grist mill on the river's falls to keep the fort consistently stocked with supplies.

"As the soldiers cultivated the land for Fort Snelling, they truly began civilized life in the area, which would later become the Minneapolis and St. Paul districts," says John Kistler.

A few decades after Fort Snelling was built, President Millard Fillmore opened the area up to more settlers who began bringing culture and diversity to the area. The settlers kept coming and bestowed the name Minneapolis on the developed land, or the "city of Waters." Families from across the country and around the world have thrived in Minneapolis ever since and have made it home to some of the nation's most distinguished businesses and institutions.

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