

# RETHINKING I-94 COMMUNITY CULTURE AND HISTORY OVERVIEWS

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# **Rethinking I-94 Community Culture and History Overviews**

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# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE AND GOALS

The purpose of the community overviews is to provide historical and cultural background about key groups of stakeholders along the I-94 corridor, as well as information about broader cultural characteristics of the different groups and their history of engagement on transportation and planning issues in the Twin Cities. The goal of providing this information is twofold: to advise the Rethinking I-94 project team in designing an engagement strategy for this historically, socially, and geographically complex corridor and to provide MnDOT staff information to inform their ongoing engagement efforts. Public agency representatives delivering community engagement—and indeed anyone involved in cross-cultural communications—should have a basic understanding of the people with whom they work. Most fundamentally, this should include literacy in key historical events and experiences, significant values, reasons for settlement in a particular area, communication preferences, and common cultural mores. These overviews introduce background materials for selected communities in the corridor, in order to emphasize the need for cultural competency and exemplify the types of information one might seek out to become more effective and equitable in engaging communities.

## APPROACH

Many factors influence an individual and a community’s ability and inclination to engage in transportation planning. Relevant factors include past and present cultural values; history of engagement (including histories of tokenism or exclusion from engagement opportunities); and broader social, economic, and environmental experiences over time. While this report is organized by ethnicity for ease of presentation and consistency with parallel project research efforts, it is important to note that ethnic diversity is distributed throughout the corridor rather than found solely in concentrated pockets. Also, while the histories and cultural characteristics described in the overviews are both research-based and informed by experience, and meant to be as broad and inclusive as possible, they do not represent the experience of every individual. They should, however, provide insight into the types of experiences common within a community. Each overview addresses information like where and when groups first settled, population shifts and waves of immigration, history of civic involvement, significant people and places, and important periods of persecution and triumph.

Some important predictors and descriptors of engagement span communities so are discussed in this introduction. This content includes a primer on demographic (primarily generational) and cultural characteristics, and brief descriptions of migration and transition within the corridor as well as the history of engagement in transportation planning in the U.S.

Culture is “a set of shared and enduring meanings, values, and beliefs that characterize national, ethnic, or other groups and orient their behavior.” (Faure and Rubin 1993)

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS**

Across all overviews, there are characteristics that are applicable across multiple communities that may be relevant to understanding individual and collective values, participation, and decision-making. Again, it is important to note that these characteristics may be helpful in understanding the experiences of communities along I-94 but should not be considered to be applicable to each individual.

### **Demographic Characteristics**

Characteristics of a community can derive from shared demographics, for example based on gender, age, and generation. Of particular relevance to this report is whether an individual's family of origin is an immigrant family (in which at least one of an individual's primary caregivers was born outside the United States, thereby including second-generation immigrants) or third generation or earlier (in which an individual's family has been in the United States since their grandparents' or an earlier generation), has significant bearing on that individual's needs, foci, methods, and preferences in terms of interaction with government agencies. Where it is possible to delineate differences between immigrant and third-generation or earlier families that could inform engagement, the report explores these differences.

A demographic is a specific segment of a population having shared characteristics.



### **Cultural Characteristics**

Culture varies within and among societies in a number of respects. This report informs engagement planning and implementation, so intercultural differences in communication are particularly important to highlight. For example, one respect in which cultures differ is their orientation toward individualism or collectivism. Individualistic cultures tend toward low context communication—where one's meaning is stated explicitly—while collectivistic cultures tend toward high context communication—where meaning is contained in nonverbal cues and context (Gudykunst et al. 1996). Because this cultural phenomenon can lead to such significant misunderstandings, it is worthwhile for those planning and conducting engagement to cultivate an awareness of its implications (see Table 1).

Table 1. Common Cultural Characteristics of Individualistic versus Collectivistic Cultures

Individualistic	Collectivistic
View selves as independent	View selves as interdependent
Personal goals take precedence	Group goals and interests take precedence
Value independence, personal achievement, rights, freedom, and equity	Value interdependence, group welfare, group harmony, and equality
Prefer confronting conflict or, secondarily, joint problem solving	Prefer avoiding conflict and instead rely on intermediaries (particularly high-status third parties)
Believe people entitled to own views and interests and that conflict can be beneficial	View confrontational conflict as dangerous to group harmony and a risk to “face” (social reputation)
Low context communication—spoken messages, specificity, clarity, and <i>what</i> is said <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “Yes” means “I agree”</li> <li>– “No” used often</li> <li>– Silence is not valued</li> </ul>	High context communication—unspoken messages in emotional expression, voice level, eye contact, and <i>how</i> something is said <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “Yes” has many meanings, including “I’m listening”</li> <li>– Hesitant to use “no” to save face for both parties</li> <li>– Silence is valued and carries its own meaning; it may not confer agreement</li> </ul>

(Markus & Kitayama 1991, Pruitt & Kim 2004, Ohbuchi et al. 1999, Keating et al. 1994, Hall 1976, Triandis 1994, Cohen 1991, Fang 1999, Ting-Toomey 1994, Blackman 1997)

Most relevant to the *Rethinking I-94* project and the communities discussed in this report, the United States has one of the lowest-context cultures (Gudykunst and Kim 1992; Hall 1976), while among the highest-context cultures are Chinese, Japanese, South Korean, Taiwanese, Native American, African American, and Latino (Elliott, Scott, Jensen, and McDonough 1982; Gudykunst and Kim 1992; Hall 1976; Lustig and Koester 1999). In short, the dominant cultural communication paradigm among U.S. institutions may in many respects be quite opposite to that of each of the diverse communities along the I-94 corridor, necessitating intentional efforts toward cultural awareness.

## MIGRATION AND TRANSITION

In St. Paul, immigrants of all ethnic backgrounds typically initially settled near the Lower Landing at the bend in the Mississippi River (Holmquist 1981:76). This area was home to an impressive 19 different ethnic groups in the 1920s (Holmquist 1981:82). As incomes increased, immigrants were able to move away from the downtown commercial core. For example, the Mexican community moved primarily to the West Side of St. Paul (Holmquist 1981:102). Several immigrant groups also transitioned into the University Avenue (present-day Rondo and Frogtown) neighborhood as they gained prosperity (Frogtown Neighborhood Association 2016). Similarly, in Minneapolis, immigrants of varying ethnic backgrounds settled in St. Anthony (later known as Northeast Minneapolis) and also downtown Minneapolis, before economic mobility allowed them to move away from these areas (Holmquist 1981). For example, the African American community moved to Seven Corners and then later to the North Side, and the Irish community moved to South Minneapolis (Holmquist 1981:78, 148).

## **HISTORY OF ENGAGEMENT**

Since European settlement of the North American continent, public sphere decision making has been the domain of men of European descent, largely for their benefit. Limited historical periods offered greater opportunities for involvement and self-determination to women and to some minority groups, but informal social systems as well as formal legislation excluded most other groups from effective participation in governance until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Each community overview discusses significant periods of involvement or disenfranchisement—and influencing factors—specific to each community.

Specific to transportation planning, “Post-World War II surface transportation policies were not favorable to minority and low-income communities” (Sanchez 2003). By the Civil Rights era, leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. cited transportation system planning as “a genuine civil rights issue—and a valid one” (Washington 1986). Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, “slum clearance” and “urban renewal” projects nationwide—including in the Twin Cities—led to large-scale displacement of minority communities (Sanchez 2003). Through the 1970s and 1980s, equity considerations remained absent from federal transportation policy. It was not until the 1990s that transportation policy began to account for social effects to minority communities, through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Executive Order on Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, and Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). ISTEA required public participation in transportation planning, and its successor TEA-21 strengthened these requirements and raised the bar for agencies’ responsiveness to minority communities (Sanchez 2003).

# AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES

American Indian cultures are some of the most collectivistic cultures, in contrast to the United States as a whole, which has one of the most individualist cultures. Individualistic cultures tend toward low context communication—where one’s meaning is stated explicitly—while collectivistic cultures tend toward high context communication—where meaning is contained in nonverbal cues and context. Table 1 above compares common cultural characteristics of collectivistic and individualistic cultures. While this serves as a useful guideline in understanding a culture’s general approach to communication, an individual’s communication style may be influenced by a variety of factors, including age, gender, and their tribe(s) of origin.

## PRECONTACT AND CONTACT PERIOD

For thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans, ancestors of the Siouan people, including the Missouri, Otoe, Ioway, and Dakota, were living in the land that would later become known as Minnesota. From approximately 10,000-12,000 years ago to 500 CE, Native people lived in mobile, compact bands of hunter-gatherers. By the fifth century CE, they adapted to climatic and environmental changes by settling into more densely populated villages in which they practiced corn-based horticulture in addition to harvesting wild rice and hunting bison, subsistence patterns that continued into the late 1900s (Dobbs 1989, Wedel 1986, Anfinson 1989, Gibbon 2012). In the mid-1800s, the westward expansion of

Chippewa and Ojibwe are terms that are often used interchangeably.

Sioux refers to the broader Sioux nation, which is comprised of three main branches: the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota.

the fur trade and a growing European presence, as well as conflict among tribes and between tribes and European immigrants, resulted in the migration of the Ioway and Otoe south and west into Iowa and Nebraska. During this time, the Dakota more permanently settled in southeastern Minnesota, due in part to the establishment of the Ojibwe in northern and central Minnesota, who had migrated to the Upper

Midwest from northeastern North America. The Dakota maintained a strong presence until treaties, war, disease, and forced removal diminished their numbers (Anfinson 2003).

## TREATY ERA & REMOVAL

Following a series of treaties that transferred the vast majority of Dakota land to the U.S. government in the mid 1800s, the government attempted to forcibly remove Dakota populations to reservations in neighboring states. By the early 1860s, the Dakota who remained in Minnesota were facing starvation as a result of decimated lands, disease, and failures on the part of the government to dispense payments promised in the treaties. A group of Dakota warriors waged an attack on government outposts and white

### American Indian Demographics

#### Minnesota

#### 1.0% of total population

- 60% Chippewa
- 11% Sioux

#### Minneapolis and St. Paul

#### 1.2% of total population\*

- 43% Chippewa
- 19% Sioux

*\*Tribes with populations of at least 10% in the Twin Cities*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2014*

#### I-94 Corridor

#### 1.0% of total population

*Source: Zan Associates 2016*

settlers as winter approached, resulting in the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. Following the war, the remaining Dakota in the state were forcibly removed to reservations and prisons in surrounding states and Canada. The removal effort took the form of the internment of 1,600 Dakota who had surrendered, mainly women, children, and the elderly, at Fort Snelling during the winter of 1862-1863. During the winter, the Dakota imprisoned at the camp were beset by disease and assaults from some soldiers and local civilians, and approximately 130-300 perished (MNHS 2016a). That following spring, the remaining Dakota were forcibly removed to western reservations, with some of the men imprisoned at a military prison in Davenport, Iowa, where at least 120 died (MNHS 2016b).

From the 1830s to the 1860s, the Ojibwe had also lost vast amounts of land to U.S. government treaties and encroaching settlement. They were displaced from their ancestral lands in northeastern U.S. and eventually forced to settle on reservations across the Upper Midwest, seven of which are in the central and northern portions of Minnesota (Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Mille Lacs, White Earth, and Red Lake.) During this time, the Ho-Chunk, who resided primarily in their ancestral lands in Wisconsin but had traveled throughout south-central Minnesota for centuries, were also experiencing a series of removals and land losses. Eventually, a number of Ho-Chunk were removed to reservations at Long Prairie and Blue Earth Minnesota, in the 1840s through the 1860s. When their annuities expired, they were forced to cede even more land for income. In the aftermath of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, the Ho-Chunk were exiled from the state along with the Dakota; over 550 died during the removal to South Dakota (MNHS 2016c).

With the new availability of land, settlement of the area around the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers by Euro-American immigrants, as well as other ethnic groups, including African Americans, rapidly commenced. St. Paul was incorporated in 1854 and Minneapolis in 1867, on land containing a number of places of spiritual significance to the Dakota, including Mnirara/Owamniyomni (St. Anthony Falls), Bdote (the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers), Wakan Tipi (at the present day Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary), and Oheyawahi (Pilot Knob in present day Mendota) (Westerman and White 2012).



Dakota Internment Camp at Fort Snelling, c. 1862 (Bromley 1862)

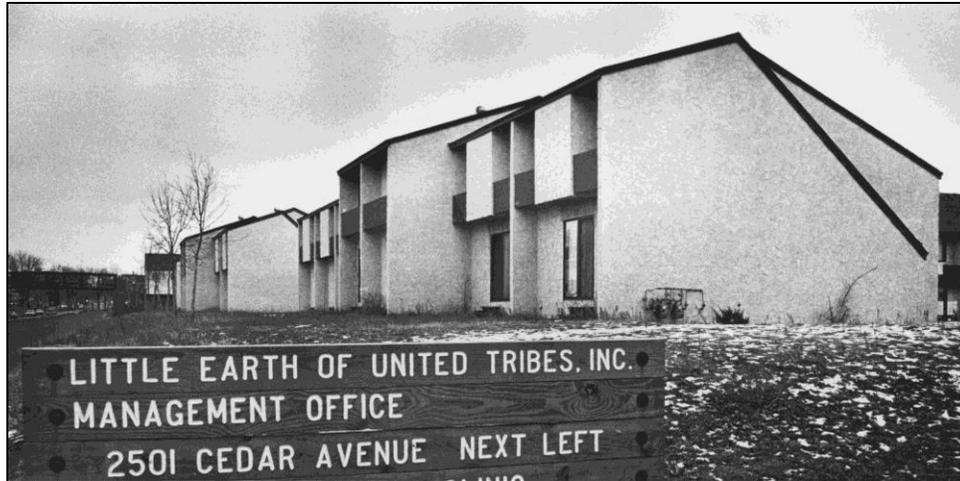
In the 1870s, fewer than 200 Dakota remained in Minnesota, a stark contrast to the over 7,000 who were recorded in the state prior to the 1860s. Those who managed to remain in Minnesota were not able to receive government benefits since they were living outside of the reservations. By 1889, the Dakota population had grown slightly, to 300. In the early 1880s, Episcopal Bishop Henry B. Whipple, who worked for decades among the Dakota, prompted the allocation of government funds for the purchase of lands for the Mdewakanton Dakota at Birch Coulee, in present day Morton, Minnesota. In 1884, Dakota leader Good Thunder utilized this allocation to purchase the land that would become the Lower Sioux Community. In 1886, the government appropriated additional funds for Dakota land purchases at Prairie Island, Prior Lake, and Wabasha (Rubinstein and Woolworth 1981:22). Eventually, these purchases led to the formation of the four federally-recognized Dakota communities within Minnesota: the Lower Sioux Indian Community, Prairie Island Indian Community, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, and Upper Sioux Community.

## **MODERN ERA**

Despite the challenges of reestablishing communities in Minnesota, the populations of the reservations slowly grew, with the residents adapting innovative ways to respond to a drastically reduced land base while still maintaining traditional skills and activities. A number of families maintained a seasonal pattern of hunting and gathering foods and materials, some of which they would sell for income. A number of American Indian men in Minnesota participated in the Indian Civilian Conservation Corps and the military. Even before they were considered citizens of the United States, 10,000 American Indian men voluntarily enlisted for duty in World War I (Burnstein 1986:33). A large number of Native men also fought in World War II, and many received military honors. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the U.S. government established a number of boarding schools throughout the country as part of an effort to assimilate Native children into Euro-American culture. In many instances, children were removed from their families and forced to attend these schools, often enduring harsh punishments for speaking their native language. Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse was prevalent. This proved an extremely disruptive force to the communities that were re-forming on the reservations.

With the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, which incentivized the relocation of American Indians from their home reservations to urban centers as part of an assimilation effort, a number of American Indians from a variety of tribes resettled in the Twin Cities, and as a result American Indian neighborhoods such as Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis were formed. During this time, American Indians settled in St. Paul as well, though not in the numbers or concentration they did in Minneapolis. This is likely due to both the larger population of Minneapolis and its increased housing and employment infrastructures, although racism and discrimination proved to be barriers to American Indian access to these resources.

By the mid-1900s, a large number of American Indians had been relocated to urban areas, but there was a dearth of resources to aid their resettlement or help address employment, housing, and social service needs. In addition, a variety of punitive and discriminatory legislation against American Indians remained in effect, such as the 1880 Civilization Regulations which outlawed traditional Native religious practices; as well as legislation designed to provoke rapid assimilation, such as the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which imposed a Western government model on traditional tribal leadership structure and increasing authority of the U.S. Secretary of Interior over American Indians.



Little Earth community in Minneapolis (Little Earth of United Tribes 2016a)

In Minneapolis in 1968, a group of approximately 200 American Indians founded the American Indian Movement (AIM) to address discriminatory legislation, American Indian sovereignty and treaty rights, racism, police harassment, unequal access to employment and affordable housing, and cultural preservation. Founders included Dennis Banks, Leech Lake Ojibwe; Russell Means, Oglala Lakota; and Clyde Bellecourt, White Earth Ojibwe. AIM's efforts, which included the founding of a K-12 school and an occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Washington D.C. to protest its policies, were met with backlash and reprisals from the FBI and the CIA. In 1973, AIM members, led by Russell Means, encamped in the Indian community of Wounded Knee in South Dakota, the site of a brutal massacre in 1890 of hundreds of Lakota, mostly the elderly, women, and children, by the U.S. government. A 71-day siege on the AIM members by the government ensued, resulting in the deaths of two American Indians and the arrests of 1,200 people; AIM leaders were later acquitted in Minnesota (MNHS 2016d). AIM continues to be active in the forms of the AIM-Grand Governing Council in Minneapolis and the AIM-International Confederation of Autonomous Chapters in Denver, Colorado. In 1974, the Minneapolis American Indian Center was established as one of the earliest American Indian community centers in the U.S., and continues to provide education and social services today (Minneapolis American Indian Center 2016).

The organized efforts of American Indians to combat the challenges posed by racism and discrimination eventually led to the passage of a variety of legislation that attempted to address past injustices and uphold American Indian sovereignty, including the Indian Civil Rights Act (1968), Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (1975), American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978), Indian Mineral Development Act (1982), Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (1990), Native American Languages Act (1990), Indian Arts and Crafts Act (1990), Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990), Native American Free Exercise of Religion Act (1994), and the Executive Order on Indian Sacred Sites (1996).

## RECENT YEARS

At the time of preparing this document, American Indian protests of the crude oil Dakota Access Pipeline are ongoing near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation and the pipeline's proposed crossing under the Missouri River, which tribes' fear would be polluted should the pipeline rupture. The protests have brought together thousands of American Indians representing tribes from all over the country, as well as international attention from international groups such as Amnesty International and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) (Monet 2016). The federal government has recognized the gravity of the issues involved: "this case has highlighted the need for a serious discussion on whether there should be nationwide reform with respect to considering tribes' views on these types of infrastructure projects" (United States Department of Justice 2016). For tribes, the protests represent growing and more organized opposition to a pattern of "fast-track" environmental reviews that risk desecration of sacred sites and harm to natural resources (Honor the Earth 2016).

American Indians who currently reside in the Twin Cities have endured centuries of oppression in the form of predatory treaties, discriminatory legislation, warfare, forced removals and assimilation efforts and racist and discriminatory practices in housing and employment infrastructures. The Native community, particularly within Minneapolis, is diverse, composed of tribal members from across North America. In particular, Dakota, who are native to Minnesota, Ojibwe, who have been in Minnesota for over three centuries, and Ho-Chunk, who have long-standing connections to south-central Minnesota, are well represented.



Traditional dancer at a Pow-Wow (Mabel 2009)

Although the movement of American Indians back into the Twin Cities was largely driven by government incentives to spur assimilation, the formation of urban American Indian communities such as the one centered on Franklin Avenue has fostered opportunities for language and culture preservation and revitalization efforts, as well as enduring community ties. These ties exist both within the urban Native community, and between the community and reservations throughout the state. Little Earth of United Tribes (Little Earth), founded in 1973 in the diverse Phillips neighborhood near the intersection of Franklin Avenue and Cedar Avenue, is the only American Indian preference "Section 8" housing assistance community in the United States, and is home to approximately 1,000 residents, 98% of whom are Native. Little Earth is comprised of four organizations, each with a separate function, including a

residents association, a housing corporation, a neighborhood early learning center, and a housing management corporation, the latter of which enables Little Earth to self-manage all of its properties (Little Earth of United Tribes 2016b).

Despite the difficulties that American Indians in the Twin Cities have faced, and continue to face, there are strong movements within the community to preserve and promote native culture, including language, music, religion, and arts. In addition, the federally-recognized tribes in the state continue to assert their sovereignty through self-determination and an active role in the management and protection of cultural and environmental resources, while also increasingly providing services to tribal members and support for surrounding Native communities. Though the symptoms of poverty and historical trauma manifest within both urban and rural American Indian communities (in the forms of high unemployment, crime rates, and addiction), community-led culture and language revitalization, sustainability programming, holistic health programs, and strong support systems promote hope and healing within many communities.



## HOW did European settlement impact native communities?

After decades of persecution, by the early 1860s, the remaining Dakota in Minnesota faced starvation as a result of decimated lands, disease, and failures on the part of the U.S. government to dispense payments promised in the treaties. Following the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, 1,600 Dakota, mainly women, children, and the elderly, were imprisoned in a concentration camp at Fort Snelling over the winter of 1862-1863, and approximately 130-300 perished. The remaining Dakota were forcibly removed to western reservations.

## WHAT remains important today?

American Indian communities in the Twin Cities are leading movements to preserve and promote native heritage, through culture and language revitalization, sustainability efforts, holistic health programs, and more. Despite ongoing challenges of poverty and historical trauma, native communities have built strong support systems that promote hope and healing.

## WHERE are important places?

St. Paul and Minneapolis were built on indigenous land. Local places significant to Dakota include Mnirara/Owamniyomni (St. Anthony Falls), Bdote (the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers), Wakan Tipi (currently Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary), and Oheyawahi (Pilot Knob in Mendota). For hundreds of years the Ojibwe and Ho-Chunk have traveled through what is now the Twin Cities. The Mississippi River has importance to these tribes for its role in travel as well as its spiritual significance.

## WHY did Native Americans move to the Twin Cities?

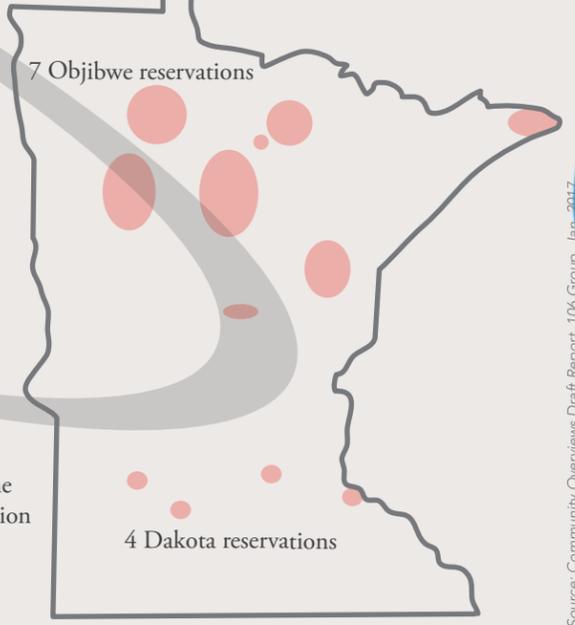
The Indian Relocation Act of 1956 sought to assimilate American Indians by incentivizing relocation from reservations to urban centers such as the Twin Cities. As a result, native communities have developed in neighborhoods such as Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis.

## WHEN did American Indians settle here?

By 10,000-12,000 years ago, American Indians were living in the land that would become known as Minnesota. They lived in mobile bands of hunter-gatherers before settling into villages, in which they practiced corn-based horticulture, harvested wild rice, and hunted bison into the 19th century. The ancestors of the Dakota have lived in this area for thousands of years. The Ojibwe settled in northern and central Minnesota hundreds of years ago, after migrating to the Upper Midwest from Northeastern North America.

## WHO led the American Indian movement?

In 1968, a group of 200 American Indians in Minneapolis founded the American Indian Movement (AIM), a nationwide effort to address discriminatory legislation, sovereignty and treaty rights, police harassment, unequal access to employment and affordable housing, and cultural preservation. The founders included Dennis Banks, Leech Lake Ojibwe; Russell Means, Oglala Lakota; and Clyde Bellecourt, White Earth Ojibwe.



Connections between the Twin Cities and reservation communities are strong.

Source: Community Overviews Draft Report, 106 Group, Jan 2017

# EURO-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

The majority of the population in Minnesota is of Western European descent, as are the majority of Twin Cities residents. This historical overview provides a summary history of Europeans and Euro-Americans in Minnesota, and more specifically, the Twin Cities, followed by a more in-depth overview of the history of the Irish, German, Norwegian, and Swedish communities in Minnesota, the most populous ancestral subgroups of Euro-Americans in the Twin Cities. Also included is a brief overview of more recent immigration trends from Europe.

Most Western European cultures are individualistic. Individualistic cultures tend toward low context communication—where one’s meaning is stated explicitly—while collectivistic cultures tend toward high context communication—where meaning is contained in nonverbal cues and context. Table 1 in the Introduction compares common cultural characteristics of collectivistic and individualistic cultures. While this serves as a useful guideline in understanding a culture’s general approach to communication, an individual’s communication style may be influenced by a variety of factors, including age, gender, country of origin, and when they or their family immigrated to America.

## EARLY SETTLEMENT

The first Europeans in the land that was to become Minnesota were fur traders, Jesuit and Catholic missionaries, and explorers who arrived in the 1600s. They were predominantly French and British, reflecting the nationalities of companies with trade interests in the Great Lakes region. These early Europeans included French traders and explorers Pierre-Charles Le Sueur, who traveled up the Minnesota River in 1700 in search of a site for a trading post; Pierre Esprit Radison and Medard Chouart, who journeyed through south-central Minnesota in the 1660s; and French explorer Daniel Greysolon, Sieur du Luth, who along with the Belgian Roman Catholic priest Father Louis Hennepin, arrived in the Mille Lacs area in 1679 to establish a trading relationship with the Dakota (Anfinson 2003). More missionaries followed, intent on converting the local Dakota and Ojibwe to Christianity. These missionaries included Presbyterian brothers Samuel and Gideon Pond, who settled in what was to become Minneapolis in 1834 (Pond 1986), and Bishop Henry Whipple, the first Episcopal bishop in Minnesota, who arrived in the state in 1859 (MNHS 2016e).

Europeans and Euro-Americans (individuals of European descent born in America) began immigrating to Minnesota in larger numbers in the 1840s and 1850s, as steamboat travel along the upper Mississippi increased and land became available through a series of treaties that drastically divested Native

### Euro-American Demographics

#### Minnesota

**85.2% of total population\***

#### Minneapolis and St. Paul

**63.8% of total population**

- 21.6% German
- 10.5% Irish
- 8.4% Norwegian
- 6.2% Swedish\*\*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2014; U.S. Census Bureau 2015a*

*\*Percentage who identify their race as White, which may also include Middle Eastern and Hispanic*

*\*\*Percentages greater than 5% of the total population are shown*

#### I-94 Corridor

**56% of total population**

*Source: Zan Associates 2016*

communities of their land. By this time, Fort Snelling had been constructed at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. When the Fort was completed in 1824, it was the westernmost outpost of the U.S. military (MNHS 2016f). Three decades later, the surrounding land that comprised parts of the Fort Snelling military reservation was opened to settlement, including the land that was to become the west bank of Minneapolis. Of the early Euro-Americans who immigrated to the Twin Cities area, many were from New England, while smaller numbers came from the Mid-Atlantic and South. They migrated west for a variety of reasons, including better economic opportunities, the chance to own land, religious freedom, and a belief that the West would benefit from their civilizing influence (Rice 1981a). Since their families had lived in the U.S. for several generations, these established Euro-Americans did not represent one ethnic group nor possess cultural characteristics specific to a single European country of origin. Instead, these individuals were the “bearers of a new national culture” – that of America (Rice 1981a).

The city of Minneapolis was initially settled in large part by Euro-Americans from Maine, who were soon joined by other Euro-Americans from the eastern United States, as well as Western European immigrants such as Germans, Irish, Scots, and Scandinavians arriving in the mid to late 1800s. During this time, parts of Northern and Western Europe were plagued by famines, land seizures by the ruling classes, rampant unemployment, and failed revolutions. Anti-Semitic violence in Western Europe, particularly in Germany, also resulted in the mass migration of Jews (Library of Congress 2016). Western European immigrants were in turn followed by Eastern and Southern Europeans arriving in the late 1800s and early 1900s. During this period, Eastern and Southern Europe was experiencing many of the same kinds of pressures that had beset Western Europe only a generation or two earlier, including land seizures, colonization by the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires and accompanying violent conflicts, famines, and ethnic tensions. A significant number of Jews immigrated to the U.S. as part of this wave of immigration as well (Weber 2016).

Early St. Paul had a small but significant French and French-Canadian population, many of whom were Métis (a person of mixed American Indian and Euro-American ancestry). These settlers had moved to St. Paul from Canada and Northern Minnesota to play a role in the trade economy at Fort Snelling (Williams 1876, Foley et al. 2013). While the community did not remain intact after the collapse of the fur trade in the mid-1800s, their presence can still be seen in the city name "Little Canada," which marked the location of one of their former communities (Gitlin 2010). In addition, French fur trapper Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant is credited with being the first European to settle within the city of St. Paul, and for a brief time the city even boasted his name. Despite the fact that a number of the first Europeans in Minnesota were French, the French population in Minnesota would not grow to a significant number in comparison to immigrants from other European countries who arrived in the 1800s. In spite of St. Paul's early French beginnings, its growth followed the same pattern as in Minneapolis, with Euro-Americans from the eastern United States joined by Western European immigrants arriving primarily from Germany, the British Isles, and Scandinavia, followed by Eastern and Southern European immigrants.

## **INDUSTRIAL ERA**

Federal laws such as the Homestead Acts beginning in 1862 further encouraged settlement, increasing the westward migration of new European immigrants and established Euro-Americans into Minnesota. It was at this time that the railroad reached Minnesota, resulting in a significant increase in the settler population (Rice 1981a). The Swedes provided the largest work force for the railroad companies, along with Norwegian, Irish, and German immigrants (Regan 2002). Newly arrived immigrants initially settled in downtown St. Paul by the lower levee and downtown Minneapolis (Taylor 1981). Shortly thereafter, Cedar-Riverside and Northeast Minneapolis became home to large numbers of immigrants, particularly Scandinavians.

While mass migration of European immigrants into Minnesota occurred in the late 1800s and early 1900s, it slowed due to the implementation of restrictive quotas on immigration starting with the Immigration Act of 1917 and the Immigration Act (Johnson-Reed Act) of 1924. The 1917 Act required immigrants over 16 years old to demonstrate reading comprehension, increased the tax on new immigrants, and increased the discretion of immigrant officials to exclude individuals, in addition to barring immigrants from most Asian countries. The 1924 Act specifically restricted Eastern and Southern European immigrants, as well as Asians such as the Japanese who had not previously been restricted, while increasing the quotas for immigrants from the British Isles and Western Europe (Office of the Historian 2016). Subsequent quotas were introduced during the Great Depression and World War II (Gjerde and Qualey 2002).

## **MODERN ERA**

By 1930, European immigrants and Euro-Americans comprised the overwhelming majority of the populations of Minneapolis and St. Paul. In Minneapolis, 82% of the nearly half a million residents were Euro-American, and 17% were European immigrants (Schmid 1937). In St. Paul, 81% of the just over one quarter million residents were Euro-American, and 16% were European immigrants (Schmid 1937). Immigrants continued to arrive throughout the 1900s, although at much lower rates than before. For example, Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe arrived in increasing numbers in the early to mid-1900s following the Holocaust (Weber 2016). By 1949, over 20,000 Jews lived in Minneapolis, approximately 60% on the North Side (Berman 2002). The Northeast neighborhood, just across the Mississippi River to the east of the North Side, has traditionally had, and continues to have, a large population of Orthodox Christians and Eastern Catholics of Eastern European descent (St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral 2016, St. Michael's and St. George's Ukrainian Orthodox Church 2010, St. Constantine Ukrainian Catholic Church 2016). By the 1950s, Jewish Minnesotans began moving out to the suburbs and, following race riots on Plymouth Avenue in 1967-1968, much of the remaining Jewish population left the North Side (Berman 2002; Weber 2016). As of 2011, about 6,000 Jews lived in Minneapolis, primarily in South Minneapolis, and about 5,000 Jews lived in St. Paul, primarily in the Highland Park neighborhood (Adler and Deinard 2011; Berman 2002; Peterson 1997).

When European immigrants initially arrived in Minnesota, many attempted to retain their language and culture despite government-implemented assimilation efforts and anti-immigrant bias (Rubinstein 1981b; Johnson 1981). However, subsequent generations have experienced varying degrees of acculturation and retention of their ethnic heritage (Johnson 1981, Regan 1981). Today, the vast majority of Euro-

Americans in Minnesota are several generations removed from their immigrant ancestors (Rubinstein 1981a). Nonetheless, in recent years, promotion of ethnic heritage has increased among many communities through cultural, arts, and social organizations (Gjerde and Qualey 1981, Gjerde and Qualey 2002, Johnson 1981, Regan 1981, Regan 2002, Rice 1981b, Rubinstein 1981b).

## **Germans**

German immigrants were the largest single foreign-born ethnic group in Minnesota from 1860-1905 (Johnson 1981:153). In contrast to other groups, most German immigrants came from urban backgrounds and had relatively high rates of literacy. However, like other European immigrants, they left Germany in search of economic opportunities, and in some cases left for political or religious reasons (Johnson 1981:153). The settlement of Minnesota coincided with peak immigration by Germans seeking farms and employment opportunities in the U.S. (Conzen 2003:19). By 1870, 28% of Hennepin County's immigrants and 37% of Ramsey County's immigrants were German (Johnson 1981:169). Although some German immigrants worked as laborers, they also worked as bankers, grocers, wagonmakers, bar and restaurant owners, merchants, and brewers (Johnson 1981:169). German immigrants founded numerous churches and parochial schools in the late 1800s in the Twin Cities in order to maintain their faith, culture, and language (Johnson 1981:172). Additionally, more than 20 German-language newspapers were published in St. Paul (the most of any Minnesota ethnic community), providing an important link between immigrants and their homeland (Johnson 1981:173). However, the onset of World War I increased the pressure on German immigrants and German Americans to assimilate to prove their allegiance to America (Johnson 1981:172). Identification with and promotion of German heritage declined in the mid-1900s following strong anti-German sentiments in America during World War I and II, but later rebounded as German Americans grew increasingly interested in genealogy and the cultivation of German cultural groups (Conzen 2003:110; Johnson 1981:178).



German immigrant John Strauss, Sr.'s skate shop  
at 165 West Kellogg Street (Conzen 2003:55)

## **Irish**

The potato famine of 1845 to 1852 brought large numbers of Irish to the U.S. Many came to Minnesota in search of job opportunities in the lumber and farming industries (Regan 2002:22). By 1860, Irish immigrants comprised about 20% of the state's immigrant population and one-eighth of Minnesota's total population, second only to the Germans (Regan 2002:16). Irish immigration continued into the late 1800s (Regan 1981:142). While Irish in the Twin Cities initially held positions as laborers and craftsmen, by 1905, a number advanced to more professional positions such as clerical and government workers, and police officers. In Minneapolis, the Irish population initially settled in the downtown area, later moving to South Minneapolis as they gained affluence (Regan 1981:142). In St. Paul, the Irish were dispersed throughout the city, as indicated by the locations of their churches; however, a greater concentration could be found near and in the downtown around 1900. Shortly thereafter, the great wave of Irish immigration ended as pressures to leave their home country declined (Regan 2002:77). By 1930, the population was primarily located in the western parts of St. Paul (Regan 2002:51-52). In the mid-1970s, younger Irish Minnesotans led a revival of Irish music and dance in St. Paul that continues to be supported by the local community today (Regan 1981:146; Regan 2002:86).



Irish brothers and engineers, John, William, and Frank Maher who worked as engineers for the Great Northern Railway (Regan 2002:48)

## **Norwegians**

The heaviest period of Norwegian immigration to the U.S. was between 1825 and 1928, during which time Norwegians were the third largest ethnic group in Minnesota (Gjerde and Qualey 1981:220). Norway, similar to other European countries, experienced economic changes and a doubling of its population in the mid-1800s, both of which limited job opportunities (Gjerde and Qualey 2002:16). The biggest driver of immigration occurred in the mid-1860s, when overpopulation, food shortages, mechanization, and changing market structures led to farm foreclosures (Gjerde and Qualey 2002:17). Norwegian immigrants initially settled in rural Minnesota to establish farms. In the 1850s, they began moving into urban areas, with the largest influx of Norwegian immigrants to Minnesota occurring

between 1880 and 1890 (Gjerde and Qualey 181:233). The earliest Norwegian settlement was in the East Side and in the Mount Airy areas of St. Paul, although a greater number ultimately settled in Minneapolis (Gjerde and Qualey 2002:44). Some Norwegian immigrants worked in flour mills and sawmills in Minneapolis while others owned grocery stores, funeral parlors, and furniture showrooms around the intersection of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and Washington Avenue, within walking distance of their homes (Gjerde and Qualey 1981:233). In the 1880s, the community shifted towards Cedar-Riverside and eventually into South Minneapolis (Gjerde and Qualey 1981:233). Norwegian Americans faced many of the same pressures that other European immigrants faced, including suspicion of nativist sentiment and anti-immigrant bias, which accelerated pressure to assimilate into mainstream American society (Gjerde and Qualey 1981:240; Gjerde and Qualey 2002:77). However, in recent years, Norwegian organizations have increased promotion of Norwegian language and culture in the Twin Cities (Gjerde and Qualey 1981:243).



Thorstein Skarning's Norwegian Hillbillies orchestra,  
c. 1938 (Gjerde and Qualey 2002:71)

## **Swedes**

Swedes primarily immigrated to the U.S. from 1845 to 1915, during which time they settled in Minnesota in large numbers. By 1880, Minnesota had the largest Swedish population in the nation (Ljungmark 1979:89). Swedes left their homeland for a variety of reasons, including religious conflict, severe crop failures in the late 1860s, job opportunities, and an encouragingly large Swedish-American community already abroad (Lewis 2004:47; Rice 1981:253-261). Minnesota emerged as a destination for Swedish immigrants in part because their arrival in America coincided with the settlement of Minnesota, and because the new state offered ample opportunities to acquire farmland for cultivation, which many Swedes sought (Rice 1981:248). Swedish immigrants in the Twin Cities tended to settle in clusters, though they were also often intermixed with other Scandinavians. Swedes first settled in St. Paul for job opportunities in the milling and brewing industries, in particular in the Phalen Creek area in St. Paul (later known as Swede Hollow), as well as the East Side (Rice 1981:262-263). The living structures in Swede

Hollow reflected the Swedes' initial working class status, consisting of shack-like structures that lacked heating and plumbing. After World War II, the Swede Hollow settlement was deemed a health hazard and the residents were forced to move out. In 1956, the remaining houses were burned to the ground (Reicher 2016). Payne Avenue in the East Side was the center of the community and the primary location for neighborhood shopping and celebrations (Lewis 2004:51). However, many Swedes eventually relocated to Minneapolis. By 1910, about 70% of all Swedish immigrants in the Twin Cities lived in Minneapolis, especially in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood and Northeast Minneapolis, and later in the Seward and Longfellow neighborhoods (Rice 1981:262-263).



Santa Lucia ceremony  
at the American Swedish Institute, 1951 (Lewis 2004:89)

### **Recent Immigrants**

European immigrants continue to arrive in Minnesota. From 2010 to 2014, between five and seven thousand immigrants arrived each from Germany, the United Kingdom, and Russia/Former USSR, with other European countries representing smaller portions of the immigrant population (Minnesota Compass 2016). Russians, in particular Russian Jews, began to arrive in greater numbers in the 1970s and 1980s as part of the third wave of Jewish immigration, particularly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. By 2000, Russian Jews comprised 10% of Minnesota's Jewish population (Weber 2016). The most recent Russian immigrants have arrived to join family members or work in medical facilities or multinational corporations (Hirsi 2016).

## WHO were early settlers in Minnesota?

Missionaries such as Presbyterian brothers Samuel and Gideon Pond, who settled in what is now Minneapolis in 1834, and Bishop Henry Whipple, an Episcopal bishop who arrived in Minnesota in 1859, came to convert the local Dakota and Ojibwe to Christianity. Other Europeans moved to the Twin Cities from New England for economic opportunities, religious freedom, and the chance to own land.

## WHAT remains important?

Today, the majority of Euro-Americans in Minnesota are several generations removed from their immigrant ancestors. In recent years, promotion of ethnic heritage has increased among many communities through cultural, arts, and social organizations, such as the American Swedish Institute and the Germanic-American Institute.

Euro-Americans are the largest population in the Twin Cities, so population density and distribution are omitted

Culturally Significant Area/Place

## WHY did Europeans immigrate?

European immigrants fled famines, land seizures, rampant unemployment, overpopulation, and political violence in the late 1800s to early 1900s. Anti-Semitic violence in Western Europe, particularly in Germany, also resulted in the mass migration of Jews. Later, Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe arrived in increasing numbers following the Holocaust.

## WHEN did Europeans first arrive in Minnesota?

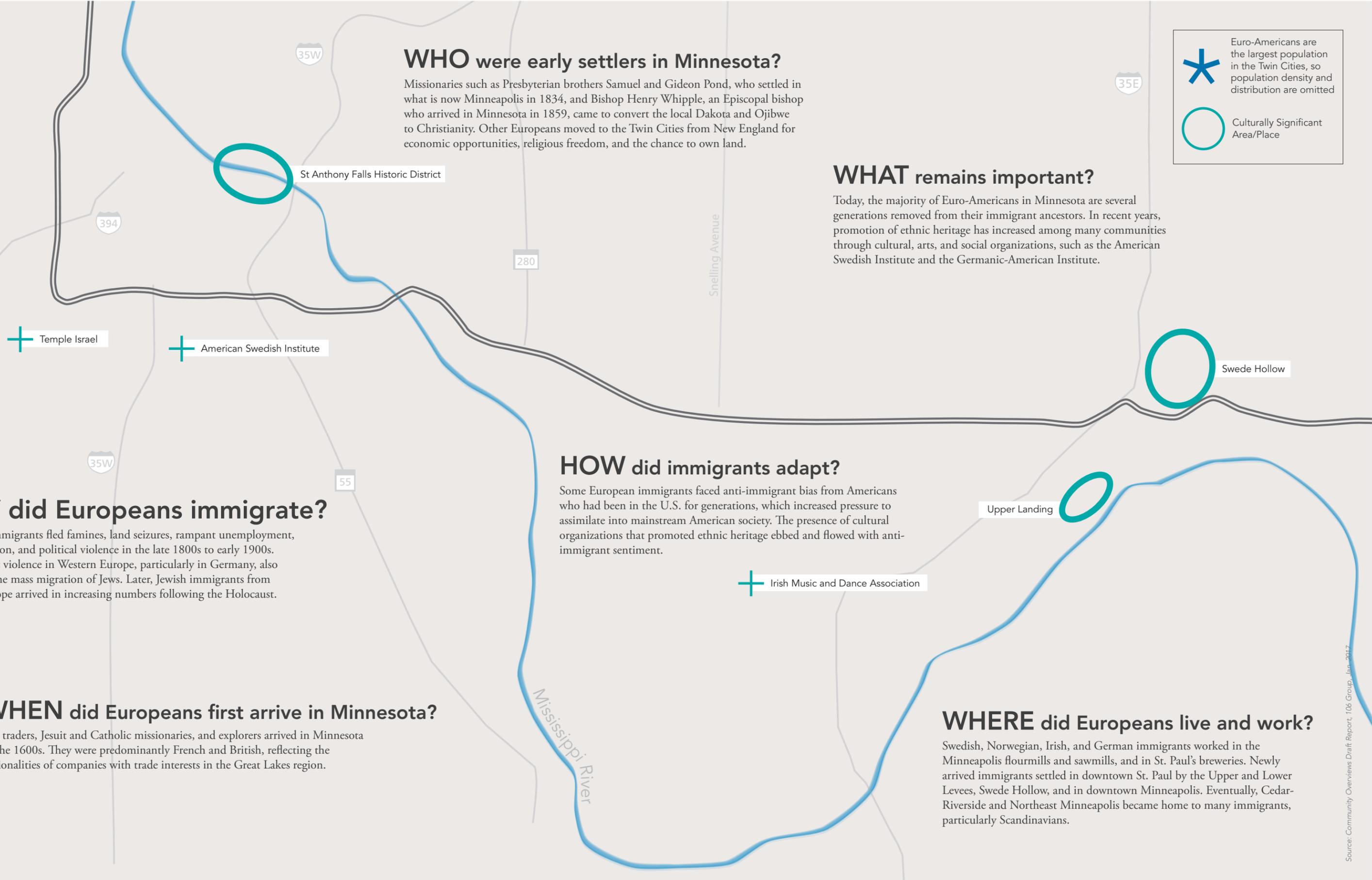
Fur traders, Jesuit and Catholic missionaries, and explorers arrived in Minnesota in the 1600s. They were predominantly French and British, reflecting the nationalities of companies with trade interests in the Great Lakes region.

## HOW did immigrants adapt?

Some European immigrants faced anti-immigrant bias from Americans who had been in the U.S. for generations, which increased pressure to assimilate into mainstream American society. The presence of cultural organizations that promoted ethnic heritage ebbed and flowed with anti-immigrant sentiment.

## WHERE did Europeans live and work?

Swedish, Norwegian, Irish, and German immigrants worked in the Minneapolis flourmills and sawmills, and in St. Paul's breweries. Newly arrived immigrants settled in downtown St. Paul by the Upper and Lower Levees, Swede Hollow, and in downtown Minneapolis. Eventually, Cedar-Riverside and Northeast Minneapolis became home to many immigrants, particularly Scandinavians.



# AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

African American culture tends toward both high collectivism and high individualism (Coon 2001). Many individualistic cultures tend toward low context communication—where one’s meaning is stated explicitly—while many collectivistic cultures tend toward high context communication—where meaning is contained in nonverbal cues and context. African American culture has been described as using predominantly high-context communication. Table 1 in the Introduction compares common cultural characteristics of collectivistic and individualistic cultures. While this serves as a useful guideline in understanding a culture's general approach to communication, an individual's communication style may be influenced by a variety of factors, including age, gender, and others.

## African American Demographics

### Minnesota

**5.4% of total population**

### Minneapolis and St. Paul

**16.9% of total population**

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2014*

### I-94 Corridor

**28% of the population**

*Source: Zan Associates 2016*

## EARLY SETTLEMENT

African Americans first arrived in the part of the Wisconsin Territory that was later to become Minnesota during the early 1800s, as part of the fur trade. Despite their small numbers during this period, the first African Americans in the Minnesota Territory played a vital role in navigating the cultures and economics of the times. According to one source, a number of fur traders sought out African Americans to serve as negotiators with American Indians, noting that these interactions were characterized by “less friction” than those between whites and American Indians (Porter 1934:432).

The first enslaved blacks were brought to Fort Snelling soon after construction began in 1819, despite the fact that slavery was illegal in land acquired as part of the Louisiana Purchase (excluding the state of Missouri). Slaves Dred Scott and Harriet Robinson Scott met and married while at Fort Snelling from the 1830s until 1840, when they were relocated to St. Louis to live with the wife of their owner, Dr. John Emerson. The Scotts came to national attention when they unsuccessfully sued Emerson’s wife for their freedom in 1846. After a series of appeals the case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ultimately upheld the ruling against them. The decision, opposed by Abraham Lincoln, became a catalyst for escalating tensions surrounding slavery within communities across the nation (MNHS 2016g), including in the Minneapolis area.

Following forced removal of Dakota populations to reservations in South Dakota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Canada in the mid-1850s and into the 1860s, in the aftermath of the U.S.-Dakota War, settlement of the area around Minneapolis by Euro-American immigrants burgeoned. Along with immigrants from New England, Scandinavia, the British Isles, and Germany, free blacks began immigrating in the 1850s to the nascent towns of St. Anthony and Minneapolis, incorporated in 1855 and 1857, on either side of St. Anthony Falls. Some African Americans were also brought by Euro-American pioneers as servants and slaves. In 1859, a group of local citizens founded the Hennepin County Anti-Slavery Society (Spangler 1961). In 1863, the African American community in St. Anthony founded the

St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church on 2nd Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues SE (Zellie and Lucas 2008).

At the same time that St. Anthony and Minneapolis (which merged into the city of Minneapolis in 1872) were growing, St. Paul was keeping pace, and served as a place of settlement for African Americans as well. Some accounts note that blacks were settling at Mendota just south of St. Paul as early as 1837, with the children attending an integrated public school which likely consisted of children of families associated with Fort Snelling (Spangler 1961:22). In the 1830s, hundreds of enslaved people and other African Americans journeyed up the Mississippi toward freedom, and despite resistance from European immigrant workers fearful of competition for jobs, many settled in St. Paul. Among those arriving were the Reverend Robert Thomas Hickman, one of the organizers of the Pilgrim Baptist Church in 1866, still in existence today at 732 Central Ave W, St. Paul (Murphy and Murphy-Gnatz 2002), and African American educator, editor, and politician John Quincy Adams, who went on to help found the National Afro-American League with African American civil rights leaders Frederick McGhee and Booker T. Washington (Delton 2002).

The late 1850s and early 1860s were a tumultuous time for the residents of Minnesota, as a result of the high civilian casualties during the U.S. Dakota War of 1862, the forced internment and removals of Dakota people that followed, and the Civil War that raged across the nation from 1861-1865, drawing large numbers of young men away from the newly formed state. Minnesota was the first state to offer troops to the Union Army, and had an unusually high volunteer rate in proportion to its population. In 1860, the U.S. census recorded 259 African Americans in the state. Only one year later, 104 African American men voluntarily enlisted in the Civil War (Scott Publishing Company 1976, Taylor 2002, MNHS 2016h) - a substantial portion of the state's African American population.

## **INDUSTRIAL ERA**

The earliest industry of Minneapolis and St. Anthony was sawmilling, which first started in the 1820s and began operating in earnest in the 1860s. By the early 1880s, many of the Minneapolis sawmills were converted to, or replaced by, flour and grist mills, and from the 1880s to the 1930s Minneapolis was known as the Flour Milling Capital of the world (Mill City Museum 2016). While there is little to suggest that African Americans worked in either sawmills or flourmills in significant numbers, they worked in a variety of positions that served both the milling industries and the growing population of the metropolitan area. One possible explanation for the lack of an African American presence in sawmills and related laborer positions is that blacks do not appear to have migrated in large numbers to Minnesota during the 1850s and 1860s (Spangler 1961), and the black settlers who are known arrived with families and vocations, such as barbers and editors. In contrast, large numbers of single European immigrants came to America in search of laborer positions, and appear to have overwhelmingly held these positions. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, many African Americans were employed in hotels, restaurants, and factories and foundries, as well as in private homes (Spangler 1961). A smaller number owned their own shops and businesses, such as barbershops, real estate companies, beauty parlors, and funeral homes, while others worked as educators, activists, architects, and lawyers (Murphy and Murphy-Gnatz 2002, Zahn 1990). A large number of African American men worked as Pullman Porters, who served on sleeper cars for the many railroads that passed through the Twin Cities.

In 1925, the Pullman Porters formed the first all-black union, and large-scale organization efforts by the African American community in Minneapolis followed (Zahn 1990). Prior to this, African Americans in Minneapolis had led efforts to end slavery, secure the vote for black men (which passed in Minnesota in 1868), and fight racism (Taylor 2002). Now, the unionization movement, powered by large numbers of laborers concentrated within metropolitan areas, in concert with the burgeoning civil rights movement, heralded a new era. The local Twin City Protective League voted to affiliate with the newly-formed National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), whose local branches continue to play a prominent role in defending and advancing the rights of African Americans in the metropolitan area. Notably, in 1920, the NAACP came to the defense of a group of black men, three of whom were lynched while in jail, accused of an alleged assault (Kenney 2016).

In 1934, the racially and ethnically diverse Minneapolis Teamsters went on strike in the Minneapolis Warehouse District in partnership with the Hotel and Restaurant Employees International Union. Despite the fact that two of the striking teamsters were fatally shot by police, the Teamsters eventually won the strike and, in solidarity with other massive labor strikes in 1934, initiated the rise of industrial unionism (Teamsters 2016). Efforts to organize laborers and secure basic civil rights intensified with the return of African American soldiers from World War II, when African American veterans faced discrimination and lack of access to vital resources. Minneapolis Urban League annual reports between 1933 and 1950 paint a vivid picture of the African American community's fight for employment and fair treatment (Minneapolis Urban League collection, on file at MNHS).

African American women were key figures in the fight for civil rights. Lena Olive Smith was born in Kansas and moved to Minnesota in 1906 with her family. She went on to obtain a law degree and fought for her African American clients' right to live in white neighborhoods as a successful civil rights attorney and activist. Nellie Stone Johnson was born on a farm in Lakeville, Minnesota and moved to Minneapolis to attend high school. She attended college as well and went on to become a leader in Minnesota's civil rights and labor movements, including helping to found the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, which involved the alliance of blacks and white farmers.



Lena Olive Smith (Pioneer Press file)

## MODERN ERA

The earliest blacks settled in St. Anthony in the mid-1850s but by the late 1800s most lived adjacent to the Warehouse District, which skirted the heavily industrial riverfront. By the early 1900s, the largest African American neighborhood was coalescing in the North Side, northwest of downtown Minneapolis (Taylor 2002). As whites began to move further out from the downtown and public transportation became widely available, African American residents began to migrate south and northwesterly through Minneapolis (Taylor 1981:78). By 1930, there were 4,176 African American residents in Minneapolis (Taylor 1981:81).

Over the decades, a number of African American churches and community organizations had formed. St. Peter Claver Church, the first African American church in Minnesota, was founded informally in 1888 or 1889 under the leadership of African American civil rights supporter Archbishop John Ireland and professional leaders in Saint Paul's early African American community, such as lawyer Fredrick McGhee and newspaper founder Samuel Hardy. Initially the congregation held services on Market Street in Saint Paul before building a church at Aurora and Farrington Avenues in 1892. In 1950, the church moved to a new complex at Oxford Street and St. Anthony Avenue, which included a tuition-free school, gymnasium, convent, church, and rectory (Goetz 2016). Churches and community organizations were sources of vitally important programming and services, including women's employment offices, children's clubs, and home economics and art classes (Pillsbury United Communities 2016), and offered a safe place for traveling blacks to stay during a time when hotels were segregated (Phyllis Wheatley Community Center 2016, Hallie Q. Brown Community Center 2016) at North 10th Avenue, Minneapolis and 270 N Kent St, St. Paul, respectively.



Phyllis Wheatley House founding director W. Gertrude Brown in 1924 (Taylor 2002:53)

In the first part of the 1900s, jobs could be difficult to come by in an environment where some employers refused to employ black workers (Delton 2002). Nonetheless, community organizations such as the Phyllis Wheatley Community Center and the Pillsbury House offered African Americans opportunities to gain assistance and skills, and according to lifelong resident Polletta Webster, Minneapolis offered better living and working opportunities for blacks than many other areas of the country, stating in a 1974 interview, "I really think Minneapolis was better [for black people than elsewhere in the nation] ... If you want a job, you can find it" (Webster 1974). In addition, the St. Paul and Minneapolis Urban Leagues, founded in 1923 and 1928, were dedicated to helping African Americans obtain employment and offered an opportunity for blacks to become actively engaged in addressing the unemployment problem, though they still had few opportunities to enter the political mainstream (Delton 2002). During both World War I and World War II, some Minneapolis companies recruited Southern blacks to move to the North to meet labor shortages, although the job opportunities in the Twin Cities were relatively scarce compared to other metropolitan areas such as Detroit and Cleveland (Taylor 2002). Restrictive housing covenants beginning in the 1920s had resulted in the formation of dense population centers, particularly on the North Side and Seven Corners, riddled with poverty and poor quality housing, which worsened with an increasing population as a result of migration and returning veterans after both World Wars (Taylor 1981:81; Taylor 2002).

In the 1930s, the government-sponsored Home Owner's Loan Corporation produced maps of American communities, including Minneapolis, which ranked blocks as "Best," "Still Desirable," "Definitely Declining," and "Hazardous" (Hudson Map Company c. 1930). The "Hazardous" sections typically corresponded to areas in which African Americans lived; on the map, these areas were shaded red and shunned for their "inharmonious" racial groups. This practice, and other related redlining tactics, cut off these "Hazardous" sections from funding from private banks, which made it impossible for African American residents to acquire home mortgages (Badger 2015).

The housing shortage was further intensified by urban renewal, freeway construction, and city planning efforts that displaced African American residents in the late 1950s and early 1960s. From 1950 to 1970, the black population in Minnesota grew from 13,775 to 34,868, coinciding with the peak of the civil rights movement. Contributors to this growth in the state's African American population may have included employment opportunities, public assistance, and legislation aimed at minimizing some racial disparities, though an analysis of data suggests that the racial climate in the Twin Cities was not substantially different than that of other northern cities (Taylor 2002).

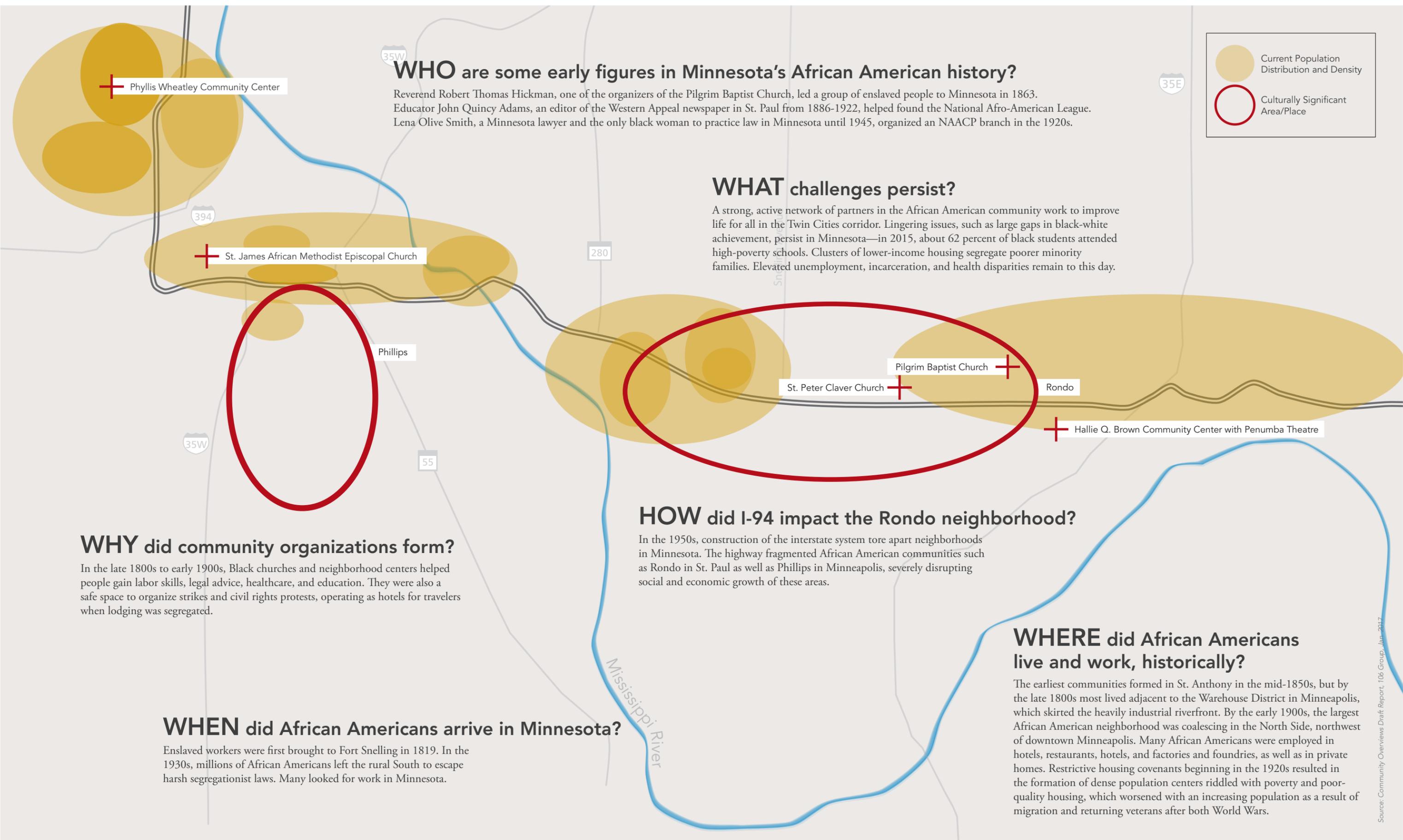
In the 1950s, the development of the interstate system in Minnesota segmented a number of neighborhoods, particularly those that were predominantly poor communities of color. The tearing apart of the African American Rondo community in St. Paul as well as neighborhoods such as Phillips in Minneapolis, severely disrupted the social and economic growth of these communities. During the 1960s, demonstrations were held by African Americans of diverse ages and backgrounds, including out-of-work black citizens as well as students feeling the strain of racial discrimination. In the mid 1960s, The Way, a community organization dedicated to addressing power imbalance between whites and blacks, was founded. Operating on a Black Power foundation, The Way was established as a community center born

out of racial crisis that attended to the needs of youth, particularly those along Plymouth Avenue (Rosh 2013). The organized efforts of African Americans to fight racism and discrimination eventually led to the passage of a variety of legislation. With the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968, and the commencement of the process of desegregation (United States Commission on Civil Rights 1977) following an NAACP suit, Minneapolis, along with the rest of the nation, was spurred to examine and begin working to redress many of its long-standing inequalities.

Recent decades have seen a great number of initiatives around preserving African American history and culture for social and economic community benefit. Founded in 1982, Rondo Avenue, Inc. preserves the legacy of the Rondo community through an annual Rondo Days Festival (Rondo Avenue, Inc. 2016a). Community organizations, foundations, and federal, state, and local government have come together to support creation of a Rondo Commemorative Plaza (Rondo Avenue, Inc. 2016b). Community leaders have partnered with transportation agencies to envision a “land bridge” over I-94 to heal the divided community, and with public cultural organizations to undertake a historical and cultural context study of Saint Paul’s African American community (Callaghan 2016, MNHS 2016i).

## **RECENT YEARS**

African Americans in Minnesota have a rich and complex history of individual success and development of strong, multifaceted communities, despite systematic challenges. The majority of the present community members' ancestors were brought to the United States—and in some cases to Minnesota—as enslaved people. They have endured obstacles in the form of discriminatory legislation, systemic and violent persecution as a result of racism, and forced relocations from urban renewal and the advent of the interstate system. Certain segments of the community continue to experience elevated unemployment, crime rates, and health disparities that often plague low-income, minority, and historically disenfranchised populations. However, despite a history of oppression, African Americans in Twin Cities have, from the beginning, formed vibrant, close-knit communities, even when relegated to urban locations less desirable to others.



Current Population Distribution and Density  
 Culturally Significant Area/Place

## WHO are some early figures in Minnesota's African American history?

Reverend Robert Thomas Hickman, one of the organizers of the Pilgrim Baptist Church, led a group of enslaved people to Minnesota in 1863. Educator John Quincy Adams, an editor of the Western Appeal newspaper in St. Paul from 1886-1922, helped found the National Afro-American League. Lena Olive Smith, a Minnesota lawyer and the only black woman to practice law in Minnesota until 1945, organized an NAACP branch in the 1920s.

## WHAT challenges persist?

A strong, active network of partners in the African American community work to improve life for all in the Twin Cities corridor. Lingering issues, such as large gaps in black-white achievement, persist in Minnesota—in 2015, about 62 percent of black students attended high-poverty schools. Clusters of lower-income housing segregate poorer minority families. Elevated unemployment, incarceration, and health disparities remain to this day.

## HOW did I-94 impact the Rondo neighborhood?

In the 1950s, construction of the interstate system tore apart neighborhoods in Minnesota. The highway fragmented African American communities such as Rondo in St. Paul as well as Phillips in Minneapolis, severely disrupting social and economic growth of these areas.

## WHERE did African Americans live and work, historically?

The earliest communities formed in St. Anthony in the mid-1850s, but by the late 1800s most lived adjacent to the Warehouse District in Minneapolis, which skirted the heavily industrial riverfront. By the early 1900s, the largest African American neighborhood was coalescing in the North Side, northwest of downtown Minneapolis. Many African Americans were employed in hotels, restaurants, hotels, and factories and foundries, as well as in private homes. Restrictive housing covenants beginning in the 1920s resulted in the formation of dense population centers riddled with poverty and poor-quality housing, which worsened with an increasing population as a result of migration and returning veterans after both World Wars.

## WHY did community organizations form?

In the late 1800s to early 1900s, Black churches and neighborhood centers helped people gain labor skills, legal advice, healthcare, and education. They were also a safe space to organize strikes and civil rights protests, operating as hotels for travelers when lodging was segregated.

## WHEN did African Americans arrive in Minnesota?

Enslaved workers were first brought to Fort Snelling in 1819. In the 1930s, millions of African Americans left the rural South to escape harsh segregationist laws. Many looked for work in Minnesota.

Source: Community Overviews Draft Report, 106 Group, Jan. 2017

# ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

The first Asian immigrants to Minnesota were Chinese, and today, Hmong Americans make up the largest community of Asian Americans in the state. Therefore, this historical overview focuses primarily on those two communities, to provide a snapshot of the century-and-a-half long history of Asian Americans who have made a home in Minnesota. Over a quarter million Asian and Pacific Islanders live in the state, among which many identify ethnically as Hmong, Asian Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and/or Korean (Hmong American Partnership 2012). Since 2000, Karen and Burmese refugees have also immigrated to Minnesota in increasing numbers (Zander 2011). U.S. Census data has been included when available. For population data not provided in the U.S. Census, alternative sources are provided.

Chinese immigrants were the first Asian immigrants to arrive in Minnesota, beginning in the 1870s, and for a century remained the most predominant. The majority came from the West Coast of the U.S. in response to labor needs. The Hmong were historically an ethnic minority in China but later fled to other countries in Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, due to longstanding oppression. Hmong immigrants fleeing from conflicts associated with the Vietnam War and the Secret War began to arrive in Minnesota in the 1970s, and their numbers swelled in the 1980s; today they comprise the largest subgroup of Asian Americans in Minnesota. Among recent Asian immigrants, the most common countries of origin are India, Laos, and Vietnam (Minnesota Compass 2016).

Chinese, Japanese, and South Korean cultures are some of the most collectivistic cultures, in contrast to the United States as a whole, which has one of the most individualist cultures. Individualistic cultures tend toward low context communication—where one’s meaning is stated explicitly—while collectivistic cultures tend toward high context communication—where meaning is contained in nonverbal cues and context. Table 1 in the Introduction compares common cultural characteristics of collectivistic and individualistic cultures. While this serves as a useful guideline in understanding a culture’s general approach to communication, an individual’s communication style may be influenced by a variety of factors, including age, gender, and when their family of origin came to America.

## Asian American Demographics

### Minnesota

#### **4.3% of total population\***

- 26% Hmong
- 15% Asian Indian
- 12% Chinese
- 11% Vietnamese
- 8% Korean

*Source: Hmong American Partnership 2012*

### Minneapolis and St. Paul

#### **10.2% of total population**

- 72% Other Asian
- 8% Chinese
- 7% Asian Indian
- 5.6% Vietnamese\*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2014*

*\*Percentages greater than 5% of the total population are shown*

### I-94 Corridor

#### **7.5% of total population**

*Source: Zan Associates 2016*

## CHINESE

### Early Settlement

Many of the earliest Chinese settlers in Minnesota had originally immigrated to the West Coast—primarily California—for laborer positions with railroads and mines, but had fled racial violence and labor conflicts during the anti-Chinese movement in the 1870s and 1880s (Mason 1981a:531). Economic depression and unemployment resulting from the Panic of 1873 led to the targeting—particularly in California—of Chinese immigrants by Americans who feared workforce competition, through attacks, lynching, and burning of homes (Fuller 2004:15). Men who had worked as laborers in the West established themselves as entrepreneurs in Minnesota, opening laundries, restaurants, and import shops. These ventures required little capital investment, did not compete with established businesses, and provided employment for family members and new settlers for minimal or no wages (Mason 1981a:531). Although nationwide the Chinese population fell after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which placed a ten-year moratorium on Chinese labor migration into the U.S., the Chinese population in Minnesota grew during this time through internal migration from the West. In 1885, there were 100 Chinese in Minnesota; by 1910, the number had grown to 400 (Mason 1981a:531).



Canton Café (later Canton Restaurant) is thought to be the first Chinese restaurant in Minnesota, c. 1905 (Fuller 2004:40)

Structural barriers remained for Chinese immigrants and immigrant families through the first half of the 1900s. Chinese communities faced barriers to family cohesion due to restrictive immigration law and the high cost of trans-Pacific travel (Mason 1981a:535). For example, only merchants who owned property valued at \$1,000 or greater were allowed to bring their wives and children to the U.S. (Mason 1995:229). During the Great Depression, the Chinese population in Minnesota faced particular economic challenges, and some had to close their shops and return to China (Fuller 2004:56; Mason 1981a:531). This time period was also psychologically difficult for Chinese Minnesotans, who feared for friends and family in China weathering violent upheavals through the fall of imperial China in 1911, resulting in power struggles, and hostilities with Japan leading up to World War II (Fuller 2004:49; MNHS 2016j).

The first half of the century brought positive developments too. Chinese students began enrolling at the University of Minnesota in 1914, marking the beginning of a long and important relationship between the University and China (Fuller 2004:55). The 1943 repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act enabled, for the

first time, American citizenship for Chinese immigrants (MNHS 2016j). The end of World War II in 1945 brought another influx of Chinese immigrants to Minnesota (Mason 1981a:531), due in part to the War Brides Act of 1945, which lifted racial restrictions on immigration, allowing about 8,000 Chinese wives of American servicemen to enter the country (Mason 1995:232). The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 removed all immigration quotas based on national origin, which again increased the number of Chinese immigrants (MNHS 2016k).

Like other ethnic minorities, the Chinese in Minnesota experienced racial discrimination in many areas of their lives, including employment, housing, and educational and organizational membership (Mason 1995:227). However, the atmosphere in Minnesota was generally considered friendlier and more accepting towards Chinese than in California (Fuller 2004:58; Mason 1995:228). Chinese-owned grocery stores served as an important gathering place for men to share news from the homeland, arrange to send money home, and get help with translations (Fuller 2004:28). Chinese families often socialized on Sundays when their businesses were closed, and to assure continuation of their tradition and culture, Chinese parents arranged evening classes in Chinese language and culture (Fuller 2004:33,34). The primary area of Chinese settlement in St. Paul was from St. Peter Street to Sibley Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Street, and in Minneapolis, the primary settlements were in the Gateway district, generally bounded by Hennepin Avenue to the west, the Mississippi River to the north, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South to the east, and 5<sup>th</sup> Street South to the south, and around Glenwood Avenue and North 1<sup>st</sup> Street (Mason 1981a:532-534; Millett 1992:268). Neither Minneapolis nor St. Paul's Chinese neighborhoods were considered to be Chinatowns, as was common in other major cities with large Chinese communities during this time, but Chinese immigrants were still able to form "networks of mutual assistance" due to their close proximity to each other in these neighborhoods (Mason 1981a:532-534).



Chinese immigrants at an English-language class, c. 1950 (Fuller 2004:68)

## **Recent Years**

By the 1980s, there were nearly five thousand Chinese and Chinese Americans in Minnesota, ranging from young couples and teenagers who had recently immigrated to well-established businessmen, students, professionals, and second- and third-generation members (Fuller 2004:86; Mason 1981a:531). At least 27 Asian churches—including Catholic, Lutheran, and Evangelical denominations—and Buddhist temples had been established in the Twin Cities (Fuller 2004:89). The Chinese government began to allow foreign adoptions in 1992, resulting in the adoptions of thousands of Chinese children by Americans, including more than 300 children to Minnesota (Fuller 2004:94). Today, there are nearly 30 thousand Chinese Americans living in Minnesota (Hmong American Partnership 2012).

## **HMONG**

### **Early Settlement**

The Hmong people, whose homeland is near the Yellow and Yangtze rivers in China, experienced centuries of oppression by Imperial Chinese rulers. Following ethnic uprisings in the 1800s, they fled into the mountainous regions of Southeast Asia, including present-day Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, and Vietnam (MNHS 2015b). Decades of turmoil in Southeast Asia followed, including the Japanese occupation of Vietnam during World War II; the First Indochina War from 1946 to 1954; the Laotian Civil War, also known as the Secret War, from 1953 to 1975; and the Vietnam War, which was fought in North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia from 1955 to 1975. Beginning in 1961, ethnic minorities in Laos, including the Hmong, were recruited by the CIA to serve in covert anti-communist military operations for the Vietnam War and the Secret War. By 1973, about 50,000 Hmong civilians had been killed or wounded in the conflicts. In 1975, Pathet Lao and the Royal Vietnamese Army overthrew the Laotian monarchy and launched an aggressive campaign to capture or kill Hmong soldiers who had allied with Americans, prompting a mass exodus of Hmong refugees from Laos into Thailand (MNHS 2016k).

The Hmong were severely affected by the trauma of wartimes (World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Secret War) and the psychological effect of confinement in the refugee camps in Thailand. Moreover, many children were born or grew up in these refugee camps without any first-hand knowledge of their ancestral home or traditions (Lee 2016). The Hmong fled first to Thailand and then to the United States (MNHS 2016k). Voluntary resettlement agencies tried to disperse the Hmong immigrants in cities across the country; however, many sought to be reunited with other family members and, as a result, Hmong settlements became concentrated in a few states, including California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Many Hmong immigrants chose to settle in Minnesota for agricultural opportunities and the availability of social services (Asian Nation 2016). Initially, the Hmong settled in St. Paul's Summit-University neighborhood and in South Minneapolis (Mason 1981b:586). In 1977, the community hosted the first Hmong New Year celebration in St. Paul as a way to preserve important cultural traditions; it has since become a widely attended annual event (Vang 2015). There are a variety of tribes among the Hmong, which visually distinguish themselves by their style of traditional clothing.



Hmong youth at a Hmong New Year Celebration (Vang 2015)

## **Recent Years**

In the 1980s, the Hmong, drawing on their traditional knowledge as a farming culture, began establishing farms in Minnesota through assistance from the Hiawatha Valley Farm Cooperative (HVFC) and the Minnesota Agricultural Enterprise for New Americans (MAENA), led by the University of Minnesota Agricultural Extension Services and Lao Family Community (Lee 2016). The Lao Family Community organization (originally Hmong Association of Minnesota) was an important force in Hmong settlement in the 1980s and has continued to offer assistance to the community, despite some recent financial difficulties (Mason 1981b:587; McClure 2016; Mohr 2015). Although the farming assistance programs ended in 1985, many Hmong trainees went on to buy or rent their own land (Lee 2016). In this way, the Hmong were also able to introduce traditional Southeast Asian products to Minnesota. In the 1990s, a wave of Hmong Americans in California moved to the Twin Cities due to a lower cost of living, higher quality education, and better job opportunities (Asian Nation 2016).



A class offered through Lao Family Community (McClure 2016)

In addition to farming, the Hmong in the Twin Cities have a history of entrepreneurship, which led to the formation of the Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce in 1996. In particular, many Hmong-owned businesses are located in Frogtown, along and near University Avenue and just north of Interstate 94. In total, Hmong businesses in the Twin Cities produce more than \$100 million in revenue annually (Lee 2016). The Hmong have also gradually assumed positions in local and state government. In 1991, Choua Lee became the first Hmong elected to any public office in the U.S. when she was elected to the St. Paul School Board. In 2001, Mee Moua was elected to the Minnesota Senate, making her the first Hmong American elected to any state legislature in the U.S. (Thao-Urabe et al. 2015).

Educational attainment has improved dramatically, particularly among Hmong American women—nationally, nearly 20% now have bachelor's degrees, compared with only 3% in 1990. The percentage of Hmong American men with bachelor's degrees grew from 7% in 1990 to about 16%; these statistics are comparable to Minnesota's Hmong population. Over ten Hmong charter and magnet schools, including an immersion school, have been founded in the Twin Cities since 2000 (Lee 2016). The last Hmong refugees arrived fairly recently, in 2004, and despite much community success, the struggles of a recent immigrant population are still apparent (MNHS 2015a). For example, one quarter of the Hmong population in Minnesota lives below the poverty line. However, there are now at least ten Hmong non-profit organizations in St. Paul focused on addressing economic and social issues in the community.

In 1996, the passage of the Welfare Reform Act eliminated public financial assistance for Hmong residents who did not have U.S. citizenship. In response, the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000, spearheaded by Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone, waived the English-language requirement for Hmong veterans of the Secret War, their spouses, and their widows to become citizens. In addition, the Lao Family Community and Hmong Cultural Center began holding citizenship classes to assist the elders. In 2015, a Secret War memorial was dedicated on the lawn at the State Capitol in St. Paul (Cox 2016; Lee 2016).

## WHO are Hmong leaders?

The Hmong have assumed positions in local and state government. In 1991, Choua Lee became the first Hmong elected to any public office in the U.S. when she won her St. Paul School Board seat. In 2001, Mee Moua was elected to the Minnesota Senate, making her the first Hmong American elected to any state legislature in the U.S.

## WHAT remains important?

Hmong people in the Twin Cities have a history of entrepreneurship, which led to the formation of the Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce in 1996. In particular, many Hmong-owned businesses are located in Frogtown, along and near University Avenue and just north of Interstate 94. In total, Hmong businesses in the Twin Cities produce more than \$100 million in revenue annually.

+ CAAM Chinese Dance Theater

+ Nankin Cafe - A Twin Cities favorite, 1919-1981

+ Hmong Chamber of Commerce

+ Hmongtown Marketplace

+ Hmong American Farmers Association

+ Hmong Cultural Center

+ Secret War Memorial

## WHY Minnesota?

After the Vietnam and Secret War had ended, the Royal Vietnamese Army launched an aggressive campaign to capture or kill Hmong soldiers who had allied with America. This campaign prompted a mass exodus of Hmong refugees from Laos into Thailand and eventually to the U.S. Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone spearheaded the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000, waiving the English-language requirement for citizenship for Hmong veterans of the Secret War, their spouses, and their widows. In 2015, a Secret War Memorial was dedicated on the lawn at the State Capitol in St. Paul.

## HOW have Hmong contributed?

In the 1980s, many Hmong immigrants resettled in Minnesota, particularly St. Paul, for agricultural opportunities and the availability of social services. Drawing on their traditional knowledge as a farming culture, community members established farms in Minnesota through assistance programs led by the University of Minnesota Agricultural Extension Services and Lao Family Community. In this way, the Hmong were also able to introduce traditional Southeast Asian products to Minnesota.

## WHEN did Asians arrive in Minnesota?

Chinese immigrants were the first Asians to arrive in Minnesota, beginning in the 1870s, and for a century remained the most predominant. Hmong immigrants fleeing from conflicts associated with the Vietnam War and the Secret War began to arrive in Minnesota in the 1970s, and their numbers swelled in the 1980s. Today they comprise the largest subgroup of Asian Americans in Minnesota.

## WHERE did Asian Americans live and work?

The earliest Chinese settlers in Minnesota established themselves as entrepreneurs in Minnesota, opening laundries, restaurants, and import shops, such as the Canton Cafe and Woo Yee Sing's Laundry in Minneapolis. Chinese-owned businesses served as important gathering places to socialize, send money home, and get help with translations. In both St. Paul and Minneapolis, Chinese primarily settled in and near the downtowns.



# LATINO COMMUNITIES

The Latino community in Minnesota is predominantly of Mexican descent, at nearly 70% (U.S. Census Bureau 2014, Kolnick 2016). This is true both historically and at present. Therefore, this historical context largely focuses on the history of Mexican Americans in Minnesota.

The Latino culture is collectivistic, in contrast to the United States as a whole, which has one of the most individualist cultures. Individualistic cultures tend toward low context communication—where one’s meaning is stated explicitly—while collectivistic cultures tend toward high context communication—where meaning is contained in nonverbal cues and context. Table 1 in the Introduction compares common cultural characteristics of collectivistic and individualistic cultures. While this serves as a useful guideline in understanding a culture’s general approach to communication, an individual’s communication style may be influenced by a variety of factors, including age, gender, country of origin, and when they or their family immigrated to America.

## EARLY SETTLEMENT

There are a few Mexican-born individuals listed in the Minnesota censuses of 1860–1885, but since most have Anglo names, it is likely they immigrated from Anglo communities in Mexico that are in present-day Texas. The development of these communities was facilitated by government programs in the 1820s and 1830s aimed at making lands accessible to immigrants, most of whom were Anglo (General Land Office 2015). The first known Mexican to settle in Minnesota permanently was Lu s Garz n, an oboe player on tour with an orchestra who came to Minneapolis in 1886. He remained in Minneapolis and married a German American. Garz n founded an orchestra, worked as a music teacher, and operated a grocery store on Fairfield Street in St. Paul, which became a popular social gathering place for the Mexican community in the 1920s (Vald s 2005, Roethke 2007).

*Anglo*: refers to both the English language and white Americans of non-Hispanic descent

## MODERN ERA

Immigration from Mexico to Minnesota began in earnest in the first decade of the 1900s. The first Minnesota sugar beet factory opened in St. Louis Park near the present-day Louisiana Oaks Park in the Oak Hill neighborhood just before the turn of the century, and although it burned down a few years later, its success spurred the opening of other sugar beet plants (St. Louis Park Historical Society 2016). These factories turned to Mexico and Texas for the recruitment of their labor force, as they considered Mexican workers an inexpensive, reliable work force. The work itself was physically arduous, and the housing accommodations were often extremely substandard, with many workers housed in cramped, deteriorated structures such as chicken coops (Diebold 1981).

### Latino American Demographics

#### Minnesota

**4.9% of total population**

#### Minneapolis and St. Paul

**9.7% of total population**

- 67.3% Mexican
- 25.8% Other Latino
- 5.1% Puerto Rican
- 1.7% Cuban

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2014

#### I-94 Corridor

**7.0% of total population**

Source: Zan Associates 2016

The advent of World War I increased the need for laborers in the United States and coincided with large numbers of displaced Mexican residents fleeing the political and economic instability of the Mexican Revolution (circa 1910-1920). Previously, the vast majority of migrant workers who arrived seasonally to work the fields would return home in the winter, or move on to other seasonal work in a different part of the country. However, during World War I, the first permanent Latino communities began to form with migrant workers wintering in St. Paul's Lower West Side flats, which had been vacated by Jewish residents moving up the bluff. Other Mexicans soon joined, having found work in the meat-packing, canning, and railroad industries around St. Paul. Smaller numbers settled in Swede Hollow, behind the St. Paul public market on the east bank of the Mississippi, and along the Burlington railroad tracks in Dayton's Bluff in St. Paul (Diebold 1981).

The Latino community in St. Paul soon established a number of community organizations. The Sociedad Mutua Beneficia Recreativa Anahuac (Anahuac Mutual Benefit and Recreation Society) was formed in 1922 to provide economic assistance and serve as a center of social activity. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church opened in 1931 at 186 Fairfield St. in St. Paul's Lower West Side, and served families of migrant workers, provided citizenship and relief assistance, and hosted the Guadalupanas, a women's service organization. The church also hosted Congregation of the Sacred Heart, which was formed in 1934 by men in the community (Kolnick 2016). In the early 1960s, Our Lady of Guadalupe moved to a new building at 401 Concord in St. Paul. Latinos in St. Paul's West Side also participated in a number of programs provided by Neighborhood House, originally founded in 1897 to aid Jewish immigrants but reorganized in 1903 to serve a broader community. Here, immigrants could take classes in sewing, cooking, health, athletics, and citizenship (Diebold 1981). Neighborhood House was initially located at 153 Robertson Street in Saint Paul's Lower West Side. In 1923, a new location was constructed at 229 East Indiana, also on the West Side Flats.

Although Latino immigration to St. Paul continued in the 1930s, Latinos faced a variety of obstacles to settlement. Many of the migrants did not speak English and lacked incomes to afford basic amenities such as transportation and adequate housing. They also faced racism and discrimination, which was heightened by the advent of the Great Depression. Railroads in particular began to shun the hiring of Mexican employees, and the U.S. Department of Labor obtained permission from railroad companies to question their workers to determine if they were in the U.S. illegally (Diebold 1981). Anti-Mexican sentiments peaked as the country experienced employment shortages and the economic decline of the Depression, and in the 1930s, the U.S. government forcibly deported approximately a million Mexicans and Mexican Americans to Mexico. Shockingly, approximately 60% of those deported were U.S. citizens of Mexican descent (NPR 2016). This mass deportation was not only highly disruptive to Latino families and communities in the Twin Cities, but was only the first of many mass deportations, juxtaposed with periodic recruitments of Mexican migrant labor, that would keep many members of the Mexican community in an almost perpetual state of dislocation between Mexico and Minnesota. Neighborhood House in St. Paul, which up until this time had been associated with positive efforts to aid immigrants, assisted Ramsey County welfare authorities with organizing an effort to repatriate Mexican residents. When Neighborhood House learned that the repatriation was not voluntary, it opposed the effort (Valdés 2005).

Despite these challenges, Latino beet workers became an important part of the local labor movement in the 1930s, joining the American Federation of Labor (AFL; founded 1886) and Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO; founded 1935) in St. Paul and Minneapolis (Valdés 2000). During this time, the majority of the Twin Cities Latino population lived in St. Paul, with only a small number living in Minneapolis. In 1940, the Alien Registration Act was passed, allowing Mexicans who could establish that they arrived in the U.S. prior to July 1, 1924, and had remained in residence, to become legal citizens. Spouses and parents of American citizens could petition to become citizens as well.

World War II brought increased efforts to encourage Mexicans to move to the U.S., mainly to staff defense plants but also to work in meat-packing, textile mills, and on railroad tracks, in addition to ongoing work in the sugar beet fields. In 1942, the Bracero Program began, which was a series of laws and agreements between the U.S. and Mexico enabling the importation of temporary laborers from Mexico into the U.S., and guaranteeing basic rights and wages to those workers (Bracero History Archive 2016). This provided a plentiful source of labor to Minnesota companies, including beet growers and canning companies. During the 1940s and 1950s, there was a shift from agricultural to urban employment among Latinos in the Twin Cities. While the war brought jobs to many, it also separated families as Latino men served overseas. Increased employment opportunities unfortunately did not relieve predominantly dismal living conditions; most in the Lower West Side lived in old frame "cold water flats," with three or four families living in single-family spaces without hot water or central heating. Tuberculosis was the leading cause of death among Mexicans in St. Paul in 1946 due to inadequate plumbing and heating (Diebold 1981). St. Paul continued to outpace Minneapolis in its Latino population, with 3,100 Mexican residents in 1946 compared with 300 in Minneapolis in 1948 (Diebold 1981).



Young Mexican American Minnesotans, c. 1950 (Kolnick 2016)

By the 1950s, returning veterans were in search of jobs, and national sentiment once again turned against the Latino community. In 1954, Operation Wetback, an immigrant law enforcement initiative that adopted a derogatory term for unauthorized immigrants from Mexico, was implemented, leading to another mass deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans that was beset by human rights violations. People were arrested and deported without the opportunity to prove their citizenship, some were beaten, and many were transported to remote locations without food or water, resulting in deaths (Ngai 2004, Hernandez 2006). Ironically, the Bracero Program to import Mexican workers into the U.S. was still in effect during this time, and was not terminated until 1964.

The 1960s and 1970s were a tumultuous time for the Latino community of the Twin Cities. In 1962, urban renewal targeted the Lower West Side flats, which periodically flooded, resulting in the removal of all families from the area within two years so that homes and businesses could be demolished and replaced with industrial infrastructure. Approximately half of the Latino community resettled on the West Side, near Roosevelt School and on Concord Terrace, where a low-income housing development was constructed in 1968 and utilized primarily by Mexican Americans (Diebold 1981). The forced relocation of the Latino community from the Lower West Side, combined with a growing Chicano movement across the U.S., catalyzed activism within the Latino community of the Twin Cities. The Brown Berets pro-Chicano organization—founded nationally in the late 1960s to create safe, drug-free communities—was quickly adopted within the St. Paul community (Saucedo 1976). Migrants in Action, a Twin Cities based assistance organization, was founded in 1969, and La Clinica opened in 1969 to serve the West Side community. Beginning in 1970, the monthly bilingual paper "La Voz" was published in the West Side neighborhood, and its publication continues today. In 1971, after two years of demonstrations, the Department of Chicano-Latino Studies was established at the University of Minnesota, and in 1978, the Chicano Latino Affairs Council, later the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs, was created as a state advisory group (Kolnick 2016).

## **RECENT YEARS**

The 1980s and 1990s brought refugees from Guatemala and El Salvador, as well as the growing establishment of Latino neighborhoods in Minneapolis, including along East Lake Street, along Central Avenue NE, and in South Central Minneapolis. In the early 2000s, Ecuadorians began immigrating in greater numbers to Minnesota as well, though Mexicans are still by far the largest Latino immigrant group in Minnesota. In 2004, the Mexican Consulate opened in St. Paul, signifying an effort to strengthen ties between Mexico and Minnesota (Pheifer 2016).



Mexican Independence Day Parade on Lake Street in Minneapolis (Fibonacci Blue 2016)

Latino immigrants have overcome a variety of obstacles to establish communities within the Twin Cities, including racial and anti-immigrant bias, forced relocations due to legislation, urban renewal efforts, and mass deportations. In addition, Latinos in Minnesota throughout most of the 1900s were subject to the instability of migratory work, poverty, and laborer exploitation. Despite these challenges, the Latino community within the Twin Cities has established a variety of cultural, social, educational, and economic organizations and businesses, and continues to be a strong social, political, and economic force in both Minneapolis and St. Paul.



## WHO are the most recent Latino immigrants?

In the 1980s and 1990s, refugees from Guatemala and El Salvador arrived and settled in neighborhoods along East Lake Street and Central Avenue NE in Minneapolis. In the early 2000s, Ecuadorians began immigrating in greater numbers to Minnesota. Mexicans are still by far the largest Latino immigrant group in Minnesota.

## WHAT remains important today?

The Latino community has overcome many obstacles including racial and anti-immigrant bias, forced relocations, laborer exploitation, and mass deportations. However, the community continues to be a strong social, cultural, economic, and political force in the Twin Cities. In 2004, the Mexican Consulate opened in St. Paul, signifying an effort to strengthen ties between Mexico and Minnesota.

## HOW have immigrants adjusted?

In the early 1900s, community organizations and churches offered opportunities for social activities, citizenship and relief help, and education. Neighborhood House, a Jewish settlement house, reorganized in 1903 to serve Latinos immigrants and other ethnic populations. In the late 1960s, organizations, such as the Brown Berets, formed around political, labor and social activism.

## WHERE did Latinos live and work?

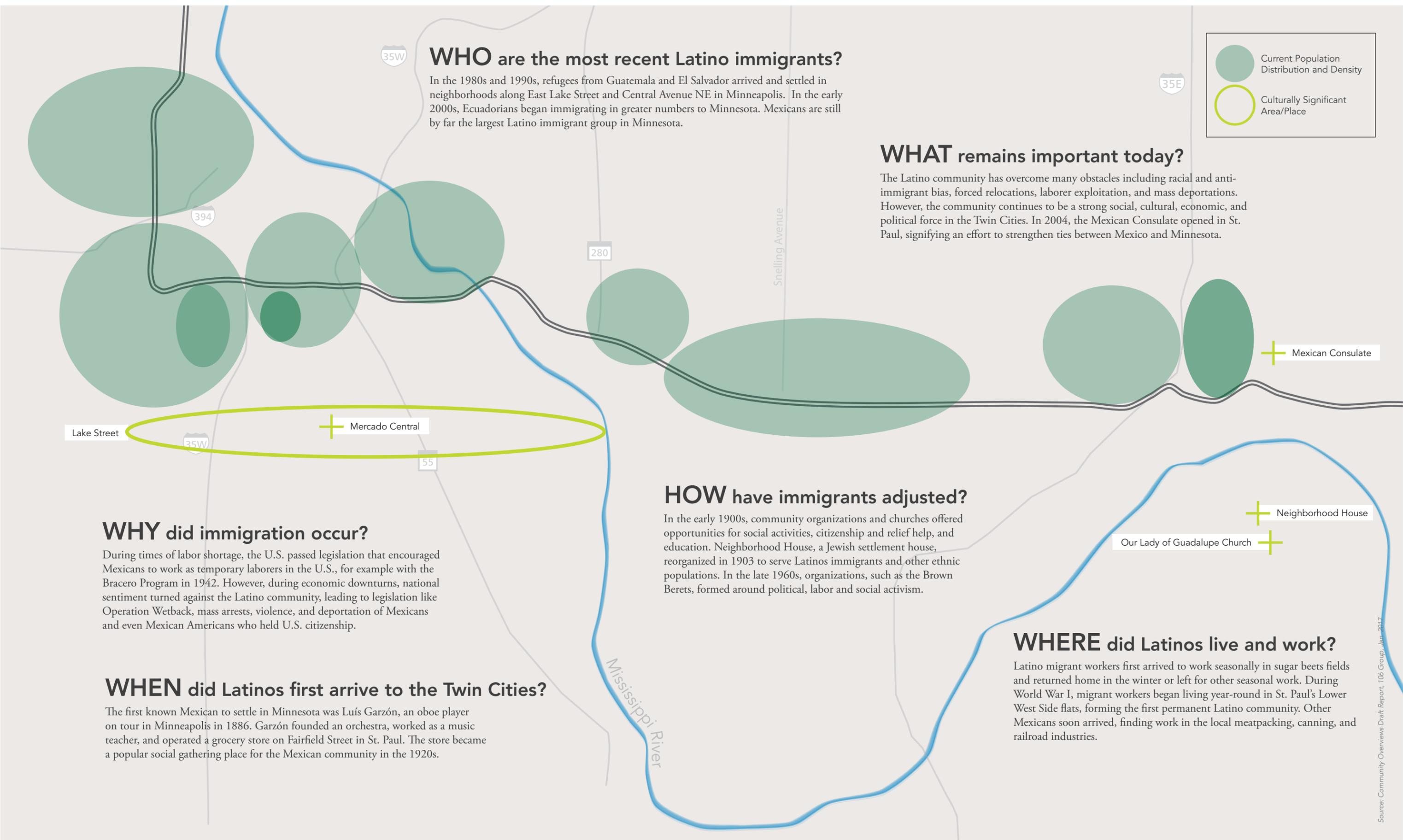
Latino migrant workers first arrived to work seasonally in sugar beets fields and returned home in the winter or left for other seasonal work. During World War I, migrant workers began living year-round in St. Paul's Lower West Side flats, forming the first permanent Latino community. Other Mexicans soon arrived, finding work in the local meatpacking, canning, and railroad industries.

## WHY did immigration occur?

During times of labor shortage, the U.S. passed legislation that encouraged Mexicans to work as temporary laborers in the U.S., for example with the Bracero Program in 1942. However, during economic downturns, national sentiment turned against the Latino community, leading to legislation like Operation Wetback, mass arrests, violence, and deportation of Mexicans and even Mexican Americans who held U.S. citizenship.

## WHEN did Latinos first arrive to the Twin Cities?

The first known Mexican to settle in Minnesota was Luís Garzón, an oboe player on tour in Minneapolis in 1886. Garzón founded an orchestra, worked as a music teacher, and operated a grocery store on Fairfield Street in St. Paul. The store became a popular social gathering place for the Mexican community in the 1920s.



# RECENT AFRICAN COMMUNITIES

This section provides a brief overview of the history of recent African immigrants in the Twin Cities, with focus on the two most populous groups: Somalis and Ethiopians. Minnesota has the ninth largest African population in the United States; approximately 22% of all immigrants in Minnesota come from Africa (Melo 2015, Remington 2008; United States Census Bureau 2015b). The 2015 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that about 76,000 African immigrants settled in Minnesota between 2000-2015, with two thirds from East African countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya, and the remainder from West African countries such as Liberia and Nigeria, and to a lesser degree, from throughout the African continent (Melo 2015; United States Census Bureau 2015b). U.S. Census data has been included when available. For population data not provided in the U.S. Census, alternative sources are provided.

Most African cultures are collectivistic cultures, in contrast to the United States as a whole, which has one of the most individualist cultures. Individualistic cultures tend toward low context communication—where one’s meaning is stated explicitly—while collectivistic cultures tend toward high context communication—where meaning is contained in nonverbal cues and context. Table 1 in the Introduction compares common cultural characteristics of collectivistic and individualistic cultures. While this serves as a useful guideline in understanding a culture's general approach to communication, an individual's communication style may be influenced by a variety of factors, including age, gender, country of origin, and when they or their family immigrated to America.

## SOMALIS

Minnesota has the largest population of Somalis in the U.S. (Remington 2008). The 2011-2015 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau estimated there are 41,280 Somali in Minnesota; however, Somalis themselves estimate their total state population to be up to 100,000 (Belz 2015; United States Census Bureau 2015c). Somalis first immigrated to the Twin Cities in the 1980s for educational and professional reasons, but did not arrive in larger numbers until the outbreak of civil war in their home country in 1991. Somalia lacked a central government until a series of transitional governments were instituted in the early 2000s, and conflict continued in different parts of the country throughout this time. Opposing groups competed for power until the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012. Although this brought more stability, the country is still considered one of the top 20 Fragile States (an index based on a state's vulnerability to conflict or collapse) (Fund for Peace 2016). With this growing stability, the number of Somalis returning to their home country from America has increased (Koumpilova 2015).

### Recent African Immigrant Demographics

#### Minnesota

#### **2.6% of total population\***

- 37% Somali
- 25% West African
- 21% Ethiopian
- 8% Kenyan\*

#### Minneapolis and St. Paul

#### **6.5% of total population**

*Source: Melo 2015; U.S. Census Bureau 2014*

*\*Percentages greater than 5% of the total population*

#### I-94 Corridor

#### **12.8% of total population**

*Source: Zan Associates 2016*

Drawn by the initial Somali community in the Twin Cities, thousands have chosen to settle here to be near friends and relatives who have advertised the merits of Minnesota by word of mouth (Jimale 2016). The majority of Somalis in the Twin Cities live in the Cedar-Riverside (West Bank) neighborhood and on or around Lake Street in South Minneapolis. The majority of Somalis in the Twin Cities are Sunni Muslim, and many speak Arabic as a second language, in addition to speaking their mother tongue, Somali (Stratis Health 2016b). Somali organizations in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood include the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota (CSCM), the Somali Senior Center, and the Somali Museum of Minnesota. In addition, the African Development Center, founded in 2002 in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, is an important provider of services to African immigrants, including assistance in financial literacy, home ownership, and business development (African Development Center 2016). The Somali community in the Twin Cities has also successfully established a number of businesses, including the Karmel Somali Mall in Minneapolis, which is thought to be one of the largest concentrations of Somali-owned businesses in the U.S. and features a plethora of shops run by women. Somali political activism includes a Somali American Caucus in the Democratic Farmer Labor (DFL) Party (Minnesota DFL 2016), and the chairing of the Republican Party's Immigrant Relations Committee in Minnesota by a Somali American (Shah 2012). In November 2016, the first Somali-American Muslim woman, Ilhan Omar from Minneapolis, was elected to the Minnesota State Legislature (Samuelson 2016).



Newly elected State Representative Ilhan Omar of Minneapolis (French 2016)

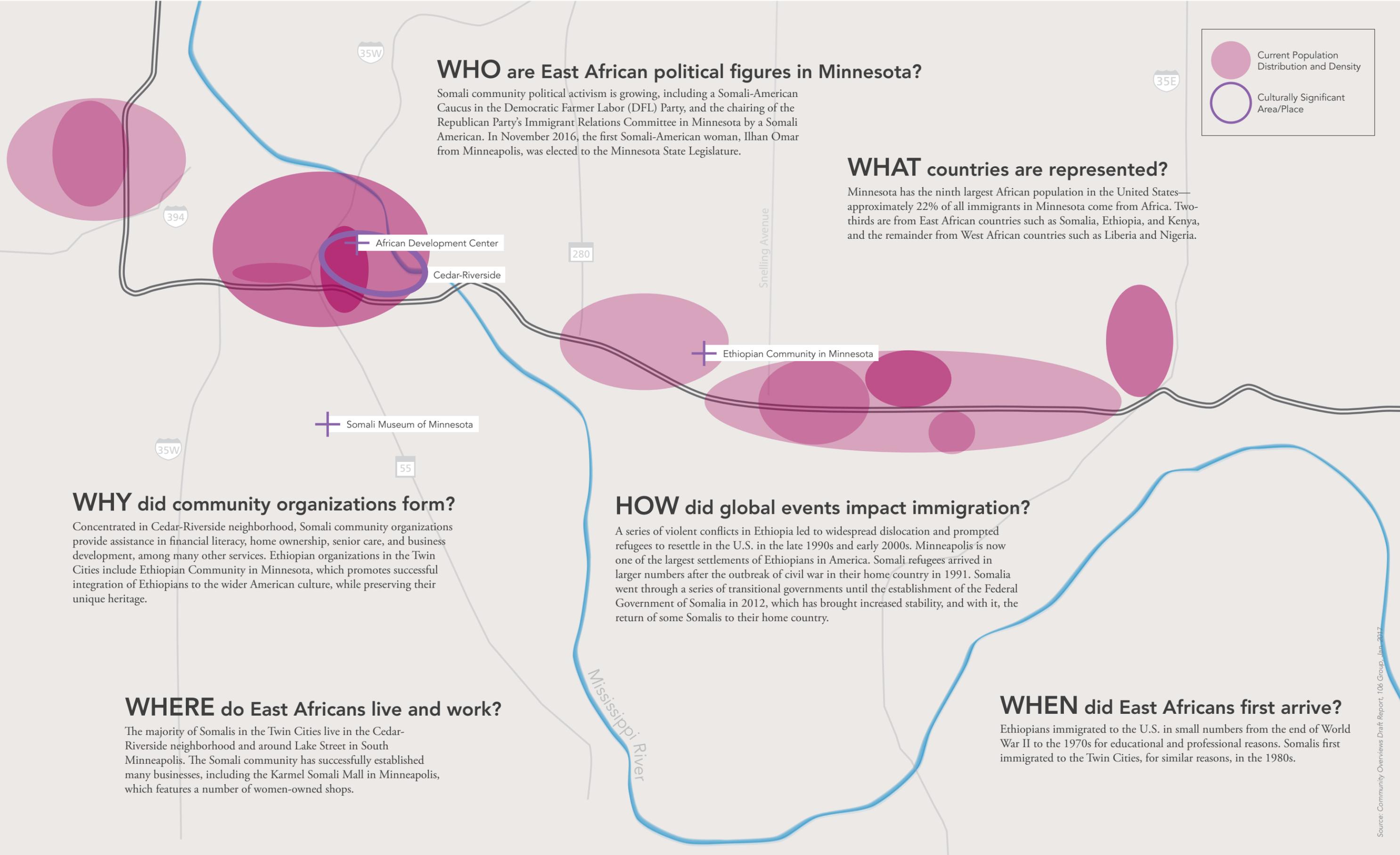
## **ETHIOPIANS**

Although Ethiopians immigrated to the U.S. in small numbers from the end of World War to the 1970s for educational and professional reasons, few remained due in part to restrictions on obtaining citizenship (Terrazas 2007). In 1974, a violent government coup by the Marxist Derg resulted in widespread dislocation and ethnic violence, compounded by conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia. In 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, an alliance of rebel groups, overthrew the Derg government. That same year, the Eritrean war of independence against Ethiopia ended after three

decades, resulting in Eritrea's independence. In 1998, the Eritrean-Ethiopian War erupted after Eritrea invaded Ethiopia, resulting in tens of thousands of casualties over two years (BBC News 2000). This series of conflicts prompted a large population of Ethiopian refugees to resettle in the U.S. in the late 1990s and early 2000s. One of the largest settlements of Ethiopians in America is in Minneapolis. Approximately half of Ethiopians in Minnesota are Muslim, and half are Coptic Christian (Stratis Health 2016a), with the majority of the Coptic Christians belonging to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church at 4401 Minnehaha Avenue in Minneapolis and 1144 Earl Street in St Paul. Predominant ethnic groups among the Ethiopian community in Minnesota are the Oromo, Amhara, and Anuak, each of which has its own language and cultural characteristics (Stratis Health 2016a). According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, almost 19,000 Ethiopians live in Minnesota, although the local community estimates that the number is much higher : the Oromo Cultural Institute of Minnesota (OCIM), for example, estimates there are about 40,000 Ethiopians living in Minnesota (Stratis Health 2012; United States Census Bureau 2015c). Ethiopian organizations in the Twin Cities include Ethiopian Community in Minnesota at 1821 University Avenue West in St. Paul, and ZE Habesha LLC at 6938 Portland Avenue in Minneapolis, an Ethiopian American media company and publisher of the Zehabesha newspaper (Find the Company 2016, Zehabesha 2016).



University of Minnesota's Ethiopian Student Association executive board (Esa Umn 2016)



### WHO are East African political figures in Minnesota?

Somali community political activism is growing, including a Somali-American Caucus in the Democratic Farmer Labor (DFL) Party, and the chairing of the Republican Party's Immigrant Relations Committee in Minnesota by a Somali American. In November 2016, the first Somali-American woman, Ilhan Omar from Minneapolis, was elected to the Minnesota State Legislature.

### WHAT countries are represented?

Minnesota has the ninth largest African population in the United States—approximately 22% of all immigrants in Minnesota come from Africa. Two-thirds are from East African countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya, and the remainder from West African countries such as Liberia and Nigeria.

### WHY did community organizations form?

Concentrated in Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, Somali community organizations provide assistance in financial literacy, home ownership, senior care, and business development, among many other services. Ethiopian organizations in the Twin Cities include Ethiopian Community in Minnesota, which promotes successful integration of Ethiopians to the wider American culture, while preserving their unique heritage.

### HOW did global events impact immigration?

A series of violent conflicts in Ethiopia led to widespread dislocation and prompted refugees to resettle in the U.S. in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Minneapolis is now one of the largest settlements of Ethiopians in America. Somali refugees arrived in larger numbers after the outbreak of civil war in their home country in 1991. Somalia went through a series of transitional governments until the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012, which has brought increased stability, and with it, the return of some Somalis to their home country.

### WHERE do East Africans live and work?

The majority of Somalis in the Twin Cities live in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood and around Lake Street in South Minneapolis. The Somali community has successfully established many businesses, including the Karmel Somali Mall in Minneapolis, which features a number of women-owned shops.

### WHEN did East Africans first arrive?

Ethiopians immigrated to the U.S. in small numbers from the end of World War II to the 1970s for educational and professional reasons. Somalis first immigrated to the Twin Cities, for similar reasons, in the 1980s.

Source: Community Overviews Draft Report, 106 Group, Jan 2017

# SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

These community culture and history overviews provide background on six key groups of stakeholders along the I-94 corridor, to provide insights into broader cultural characteristics and the history of engagement in transportation and planning. These overviews will be used to advise the Rethinking I-94 project team in designing an engagement strategy for this historically, socially, and geographically complex corridor, and to provide MnDOT staff information to guide their ongoing engagement efforts. The content presented in these overviews encompasses key historical events and experiences, significant values, reasons for settlement in a particular area, communication preferences, and common cultural mores across the groups. Due to past challenges with engagement along the I-94 corridor, cultural competency among MnDOT staff is essential to deliver more effective and more equitable engagement with these, and other, communities.

In January 2017, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) at MnDOT reviewed the overviews, provided suggestions for additional topics, and discussed potential uses of this information. ERGs greatly valued the content presented and stressed the importance of sharing the overviews throughout the agency. Additionally, ERGs underscored the impact of age, culture, background, and socioeconomic status on accessibility, choice of transportation mode, and access to opportunities—all of which may be further explored through future surveys, interviews, meetings, and other engagement efforts. ERGs also recommended ideas for future action, such as:

- Further research about more recent arrivals, who may not yet constitute a significant percentage of the population.
- Healing through bringing history to engagement efforts.
- A checklist for outreach professionals to address engagement concerns that have been heard previously.
- Transparency and honesty in the public process.
- A survey of community facility needs, e.g., for play, prayer, socializing, etc.—these needs are especially important for certain communities.
- Funding for the translation of printed materials and meeting content to make the information most accessible.

These overviews provide a historical and cultural foundation for six key groups of stakeholders, but they are not exhaustive. Accordingly, additional research and consultation of secondary sources may be useful to provide greater depth to building cultural competency and to include additional groups of stakeholders. In particular, it may be helpful to gather oral histories from community leaders to further understand past and current perspectives about the development of the corridor.

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