Edina Mill: A Fast Creek Generates Industry…and a Community

How Did Edina Become Edina?

The Waterville Mill was built at this spot in 1857 by four partners looking to make use of fast-running waters in Minnehaha Creek. Land was purchased and a dam installed at a natural cascade in the creek. A millrace diverted current over a waterwheel to power the grinding of wheat, oats and barley.

A Scots emigre named Andrew Craik bought the mill in 1869 and re-christened it “Edina Mills” after his native Edinburgh. A nearby community would flourish and in time take its name from the mill—eventually becoming the Edina of today!

The Edina Mill saw its greatest use as the primary provider of flour to the Fort Snelling Reserve during the Civil War, operating 24 hours a day to supply the Union Army. The mill passed through many owners over the years and was converted by its last owner to turbine power in 1879, employing three turbines to drive the millstones—advanced technology for the time.

In the late 1890s the mill fell into disuse with the completion of Grays Bay dam at the headwaters of the creek. The rushing creek became a meandering stream, and Edina Mill followed the fate of other mills in the area. But its legacy remains in the city it helped form.