GROVELAND
GALLERY

James Conaway
NICOLLET ISLAND: A VISUAL HISTORY
September 7 – October 19, 2019

1 ***Boom Island Bridge #1***, oil on yupo $950.00

This bridge was the only one linking Boom Island to Nicollet Island. The east channel was filled in by local businesses and Boom Island became an island in name only. It is used now by pedestrians and cyclists.

2 ***BSF Railroad Bridge***, oil on canvas $3,200.00

In 1893 BSF Railroad crossed Nicollet Island to the east bank of the river and eastward. The current bridge is of the same design as the original bridge.

3 ***Mississippi Vortex,*** oil on canvas $2,700.00

In 1869, wealthy business men and owners of Nicollet Island, Mr. William Eastman and Mr. John Merriam, decided to dig a tunnel through the limestone under the river near the southern tip of Nicollet Island. Their plan was to provide more water power for their mills. On October 5th, the limestone shelf gave way and a vortex of raging water destroyed everything in its way –mills and all. Early news thought that the falls had been destroyed. National newspapers titled the story "the reason for Minneapolis' existence has just been destroyed." The breach took several weeks to close. The U.S. Congress and the U.S. Corps of Engineers finally succeeded in permanently sealing the breach and saved the falls by building a concrete dike.

4 ***175 East Island Avenue,*** oil on canvas $1,200.00

The Loberg Brothers were carpenters who originally built their two homes in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. The homes were identical to each other with the exception that their floor plans were the mirror image of the other. These two homes were moved to their current location on East Island Avenue in 1990 to fill empty lots in the northern part of the island to help create an authentic neighborhood.

5 ***St. Anthony East Bank,*** oil on canvas $1,800.00

This iron bridge which was once a portion of the Plymouth Bridge is a contemporary of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. In 1986, when the Plymouth Bridge was replaced, the portion of the bridge that was considered an *aesthetic gem* was floated down the river to create another link between the island and the East Bank of St. Anthony. The church in the background was originally built as a meeting hall in the Greek Revival style in 1857 by the First Universalist Society of St. Anthony. A congregation of Catholic French Canadians acquired the church in 1877 and named it in honor of the Virgin Mary. The Catholic parish made significant additions to the building between 1880-1883 by adding a transept, apse, and the front bell tower with three steeples. A front vestibule was added in 1914.

6 ***Stone Arch Bridge Construction,*** oil on wood $3,200.00

In 1863 James J. Hill started building the Stone Arch Bridge in order to carry the Minneapolis Union railroad over the Mississippi River just below the St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis. Originally the bridge had 23 limestone arches with spans ranging from 40 to 97.8 feet.

7 ***1st Hennepin Avenue Bridge,*** oil on canvas $2,700.00

The first suspension bridge across the Mississippi was built in Minneapolis in 1855. It spanned the river from the West Bank to Nicollet Island. It allowed pedestrian and horse traffic to easily cross the river above St. Anthony Falls.

8 ***Boom Island Bridge #2,*** oil on yupo $850.00

9 ***St. Anthony Falls,*** oil on canvas $3,200.00

The history of the St. Anthony Falls, Nicollet Island and the Mississippi River has been linked together for centuries.

10 ***St. Anthony Falls 1680,*** oil on natural wood $1,900.00

The history of the St. Anthony Falls and the "Twin Cities" has been interwoven for the past 500 years. 10,000 years ago, these falls were much larger and further South of where Minneapolis is located today – at the junction of the Mississippi and the Minnesota Rivers where Fort Snelling is located. The falls were formed with the help of melting glaciers at the end of the Ice Age and shifting earth. The falls became much smaller as they moved north, but when they reached Nicollet Island, they were large enough to be heard 15 miles away by early explorers. Father Louis Hennepin, a Franciscan priest, was the first white man to see the falls. He knew from the local people that the falls were a very sacred place. In 1680, Father Hennepin christened them St. Anthony Falls because Anthony of Padua was his patron saint.
Both the Falls and Nicollet Island are very sacred to the Dakota and Ojibwe peoples.

11 ***Nicollet Island Morning Light,*** oil on canvas $2,800.00

Around the 1700's before the settlers arrived there, Nicollet Island was called *Wita Waste* by the Dakota people. *Wita Waste* means *beautiful island.* According to oral tradition, it was a sacred place where the women went to give birth and where treaties were discussed and signed. No weapons were allowed on the island. Today, the island is part of the Park Board. North of bridge, there is a small residential neighborhood and De LaSalle High School, both of which are there under special conditions created by the Park Board. The southern part of the island has the Nicollet Island Inn and an event center. There are also frequent walkers, some with dogs, picnickers and an occasional artist or two.

12 ***Nicollet Island Tree Study,*** charcoal, ink and water on yupo $1,100.00

13 ***Pathway,*** pastel and water on yupo $1,100.00

14 ***Aerial Twin Cities,*** oil on wood $2,400.00

In 1872, the original Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Anthony were two independent cities on opposite sides of the Mississippi River separated by Nicollet Island. In 1872, the citizens of both cities voted to merge and then became the city of Minneapolis. The aerial view of the Twin Cities shows the original St. Anthony on the upper right and Minneapolis on the lower left with Nicollet Island between them with the falls in the middle right.

15 ***Merriman's Bridge #2,*** oil on wood $2,400.00

In 1986, a portion of the old Broadway Bridge was saved because of its superior design qualities and floated down the river to Nicollet Island. It was installed over the East channel of the river near the Nicollet Island Inn in order to link the island to the East Bank business area on Main Street.