The St. Anthony Falls Laboratory in History
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The St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (SAFL) was designed and built under the direction of a dedicated individual, Lorenz G. Straub. Straub had been a Freeman Fellow and observed several laboratories in Germany during the year of his fellowship. He came to the University in 1930 and promptly set to work to establish his own laboratory. His vision came to fruition through a WPA grant to the University of Minnesota and construction started in 1936. Straub came to be known as the “River Doctor” for his many studies at SAFL on several aspects of river engineering.

The Laboratory building lies on the Falls of St. Anthony in Minneapolis, Minnesota where there is a drop of about 15 meters. Up to nearly 9 cms may be drawn through the building and distributed to the many flumes for experimental research. Laboratory personnel have pursued studies in many areas of river engineering, hydrology and experimental and theoretical fluid mechanics. The legacy left by Straub is more than just a laboratory building and the equipment it contains. His vision of a university laboratory as a leader in the advancement of pioneering methods in water resources engineering as well as being an educational tool lives on. SAFL continues to explore cutting edge research on fluid mechanics and apply its knowledge to a variety of engineering problems. It continues to graduate the future leaders in the profession and nurture its international reputation for timely and innovative contributions to the field.