



For Immediate Release

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MINNEAPOLIS, MN – March 17, 2016 – Flying Pieces Productions is thrilled to announce *MINNESOTA 13: FROM GRAIN TO GLASS* will have it's the **World Premiere** at the 35th Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival (MSPIFF).

***MINNESOTA 13: FROM GRAIN TO GLASS* at MSPIFF**

SATURDAY • APRIL 16 • 7:30PM

SUNDAY • APRIL 17 • 1:45PM

St. Anthony Main Theater
115 SE Main Street • Minneapolis, MN
Tickets: <http://bit.ly/1RmPFeT>

Q & A with Directors Kelly Nathe & Norah Shapiro to follow.

MINNESOTA 13: FROM GRAIN TO GLASS is a documentary feature film that explores the little-known story of an elite moonshine produced in the heart of Minnesota during Prohibition, and the modern-day attempts of a new St. Paul micro-distillery to resuscitate the brand as a premium whiskey.

Directed and Produced by Kelly Nathe and Norah Shapiro, the documentary duo who brought Shapiro's *Miss Tibet: Beauty in Exile* to MSPIFF in 2015, *MINNESOTA 13: FROM GRAIN TO GLASS* is partially based on **Elaine Davis' book, *Minnesota 13: Stearns County's Wild Wet Prohibition***. The film blends interviews with historians and participants in the illegal activities of that era with a compelling assortment of archival photographs and recordings, and current footage of an upstart distillery in St. Paul, MN.



Legacy of Minnesota 13

The story of the rise and fall of American Prohibition, which lasted from 1920-1933, has remained a fascinating topic in popular culture, from classic books like *The Great Gatsby* to the recent HBO series *Boardwalk Empire*. **MINNESOTA 13: FROM GRAIN TO GLASS** pulls the curtain back on an unexplored side of this story that played out right here in the Midwestern heartland: **the creation and distribution of a popular moonshine from Central Minnesota that came to be known as “Minnesota 13.”** According to **Elaine Davis’ book, *Minnesota 13: Stearns County’s Wild Wet Prohibition***, this spirit is believed to be the only branded moonshine of its day, and was widely distributed throughout the Midwest and beyond, with **Al Capone’s bootlegging operations** leading the charge.

Illegal but not Immoral

But this is not the typical Prohibition story of gangsters and speakeasies, just as Minnesota 13 was not the typical gut-burning moonshine of the era. Produced by destitute church-going farmers, **Minnesota 13** was widely regarded as a higher quality spirit. Often double-distilled and aged in oak barrels, **Minnesota 13** was said to have tasted just like Canadian Club, and provided a safer alternative to the ubiquitous bathtub gins and white lightening moonshines being consumed during the era. **Stearns County was home to farming communities of primarily Polish and German Catholics, first and second-generation immigrants who held firm to the beer drinking traditions brought along from the Old Country, and their priests did not consider their moonshining endeavors to be immoral.** Even the local sheriffs understood these were hard times and their community had to take extreme measures to simply put food on their tables.



Origins of Minnesota 13

The moonshine was named after the ubiquitous corn of the same name. **Developed in the late-1800s by agronomists at the University of Minnesota, their 13 attempt finally yielded a seed corn that could stand up to the region's shorter growing season, which had hindered earlier varieties.** This singular agricultural development shifted the farming economy of the upper Midwest from wheat to corn-based, and the wide reaching effects of this transformative development remain to this day.

After the Great War ended, so did the financial incentives offered by the federal government to grow corn for our Allies, and sheds were soon brimming with the worthless crop. As the farming economy collapsed—preceding the Great Depression a decade, farmers needed to find a new market that could turn this yellow seed into gold. The passing of the 18th Amendment provided just that opportunity. **Farmers soon discovered they could earn far more by turning their surplus corn into whiskey, and by the peak of Prohibition, the vast majority of Stearns County citizens were believed to be involved.** Oddly, no one in the area emerged as the Jim Beam of Minnesota after Prohibition was repealed in 1933. Instead, residents of Stearns County returned to the quieter life of farming—**though a few continued to dabble in the underground distilling of spirits, even to this day.**

A Modern Resurgence

Throughout the United States, a booming subculture of craft distilleries is growing by a remarkable 30% each year, according to the American Distilling Institute. Changes in both state laws and licensing fees for micro-distillers has beckoned this surge, and among the first to spring forth in Minnesota is 11 Wells Distillery. **MINNESOTA 13: FROM GRAIN TO GLASS follows 11 Wells Distillery in their attempts to revive Minnesota 13 as a premium craft whiskey, and finally put Minnesota on the global whiskey map.**



Experts and Archivists

Historians and experts who appear in the film to flesh out the culture of the era as well as the current whiskey boom include:

Elaine Davis, author of *Minnesota 13: Stearns County's Wild Wet Prohibition*

Bob McManus & Lee Egbert, founders of 11 Wells Distillery

Kieran Folliard, 2 Gingers Whiskey/ Beam Brand Ambassador

John Decker, Director of Archives at Stearns History Museum

Marilyn Salzl Brinkman, author and historian

Jeanette Blonigan Clancy, author and historian

Bill Morgan, author and professor at St. Cloud State University

Kurt Greenley, Dassel Area Museum

Herman Ebnet & Mike Odden, Holdingford Historical Society

Jean and Roger Paschke, Melrose Area Museum

Talent Available

Filmmakers **Kelly Nathe** and **Norah Shapiro** are available for interviews prior to & during the festival.

Social Media and Additional Information

Official Site: www.mn13doc.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MN13doc/>

Twitter: www.twitter.com/minnesota13doc

MSPIFF Tickets: <http://bit.ly/1RmPFET>

About MSPIFF:

Now in its 35th year, the Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival (MSPIFF) is largest film event in the Upper Midwest, and one of the longest running film festivals in the country. **MSPIFF 2016 runs from April 7-23** and will present more than 250 films from 60+ countries around the world.



~ Crew Bios ~

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER Kelly Nathe has over 20 years experience on various films and broadcast productions, including programs for A&E, BBC, HBO, PBS, TLC, VH1, and MTV, and feature documentaries for Michael Moore and Robert Greenwald. Kelly studied filmmaking at Minneapolis Community College and Minneapolis College of Art & Design. Her first documentary, *Hotel Hidajet*, about life in post-war Sarajevo, received awards at SXSW and Slamdance Film Festivals. She was a producer on *Miss Tibet: Beauty in Exile*, which premiered at DOC NYC. She is the recipient of filmmaker grants and funding from the Jerome Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board, General Mills Foundation, and the Minnesota Filmmakers Legacy Fund. ***MINNESOTA 13: FROM GRAIN TO GLASS* is her first feature film as director.**

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER Norah Shapiro was a public defender for over a decade before pursuing documentary filmmaking. Her first short doc, *A Sacred Heart*, won the Emerging Filmmaker award at Minnesota History Center's Greatest Generation Film Festival. *If You Dare*, her first feature documentary, followed an inner-city theater company's work with at-risk children, and premiered at the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival. Her second feature documentary, *Miss Tibet: Beauty in Exile*, about a Tibetan teenager's participation in a western-style beauty pageant held in India, premiered at DOC NYC and won the Best Minnesota Made Feature Documentary Award at MSPIFF in 2015. She is a recipient of the McKnight Filmmaking Fellowship, and her films have received funding from the Jerome Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board, and the Minnesota Filmmakers Legacy Fund.

CO-PRODUCER Elaine Davis was a longtime professor at St. Cloud State University. In addition to numerous academic publications, she also authored two books on history in rural Minnesota, *Use It Up, Wear It Out, Make it Do* and *Minnesota 13: Stearns County's Wet Wild Prohibition Days*. It was Elaine's lifelong dream to produce documentaries, and she worked tirelessly to help bring this film to fruition. **Elaine passed away July 31, 2015, shortly after principal production on *MINNESOTA 13: FROM GRAIN TO GLASS* was completed.**

STORY EDITOR Margaret Elkins is an experienced television producer, story editor and writer. As Series Producer, she launched and oversaw five successful seasons of Twin Cities Public Television's personal finance series, *Right on the Money*. She was Head Writer on Food TV's *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* for 11 seasons., and served as Senior Producer for seven seasons of *FreeStyle* on HGTV. She also wrote and supervised post-production on various pilots and specials for the Travel Channel and Spike TV.

CAMERAMAN Chris Newberry is a Minneapolis filmmaker whose work as cinematographer has appeared in A.J. Schnack's short documentary *Speaking is Difficult*, which premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival; Norah Shapiro's *Miss Tibet: Beauty in Exile*; and the award-winning 2013 documentary *American Heart*, which he also produced and directed.

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