

KITTREDGE CROSSINGS PARK

7150 Kittredge Parkway NE, Otsego, MN

TOWNSHIP OF OTSEGO
est. 1858



Painting of the Anna and Lorenzo Smith Family barn
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission

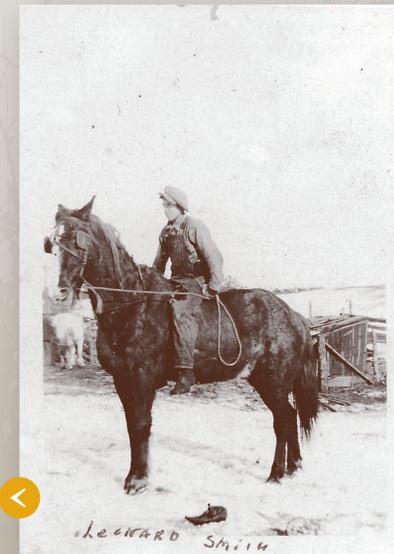
Original dwellers of this land were Native Americans who hunted here seasonally. A couple of significant battles took place on the Mississippi River between the Dakota and Chippewa 1772-1773.

Early permanent settlers came from New England, Canada and Europe in the early 1850s. A grasshopper infestation plus a national recession in 1856 and 1857 caused farms to fail and some people to abandon their land claims. Others survived by harvesting ginseng which grew naturally in the woods. Ginseng was bought by traders from Virginia who sold it to those who used the ginseng as medicine.

In 1858 the Federal Homestead Act was passed and signed by President Abraham Lincoln. The Act allowed settlers to get 160 acres of cheap land (\$1.25 per acre) if they built a house where they lived and worked the land for a specific length of time, often five years. Farmers supplemented their income by working seasonally as loggers on the Mississippi.

Later, land was divided so that farms became much smaller, an average of 80 acres, mostly dairy farms with subsistence stock and varied crops. Some still remember when Interstate 94 came through the area in the 1960s and split some properties again. Otsego was not incorporated as a city until 1990!

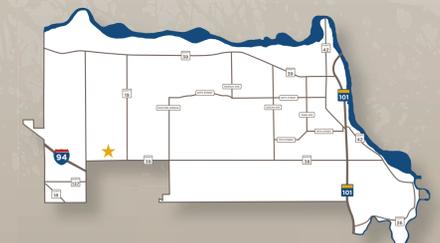
Source: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission



Leonard Smith on a work horse
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission



American Ginseng
Credit: Shutterstock.com



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www.otsego.mn.gov