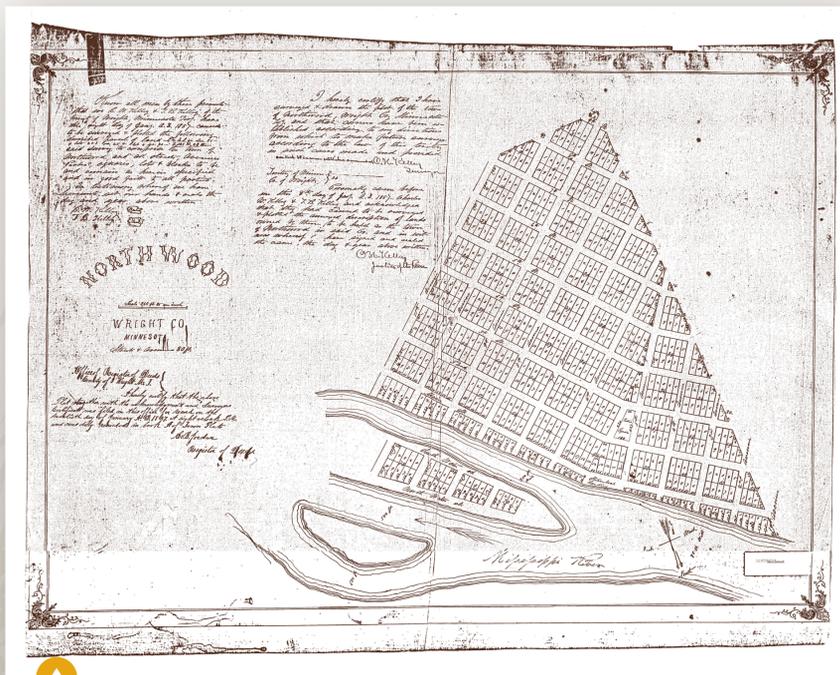


NORTHWOOD PARK

16600 72nd Street NE, Otsego, MN

TOWNSHIP OF OTSEGO

est. 1858



Credit: Wright County Recorder

Oliver Kelley and his brothers, William H. and Charles, planned a town site on the west bank of the Mississippi and named it Northwood. Founded in 1855, a large hotel, a store, and a school were built.

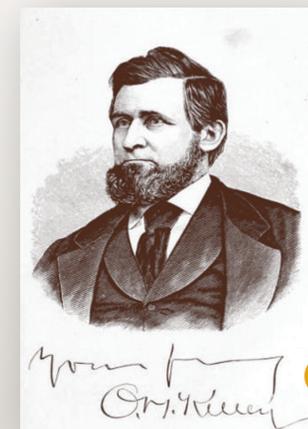
A ferry service was established, and a steamboat landing was determined near a gentle slope in the river bank. The post office was established with Charles Kelley as postmaster. But a significant national economic recession (The Panic of 1857) hit and the town was never fully completed. It was said that William H. Kelley gave up on the whole project, tired of farming and no hope for Northwood profits, and walked to St. Paul to work in a clothing store.

Oliver Kelley's farmstead is just across the Mississippi River and preserved as a U.S. National Historic Landmark. Oliver Kelly served residents of Wright County as a notary public, probate judge, and justice of the peace.

In 1964, Kelley went to Washington D.C. for a position in the Department of Agriculture. While there, Kelley worked on developing a fraternal organization for farm families. "Encourage them to read and think; to plant fruits and flowers, — beautify their homes; elevate them; make them progressive," he wrote in a letter to a friend. "I long to see the great army of producers in our country, turn their eyes up from their work; stir up those brains, now mere machines... set them to think, — let them feel that they are human beings, and the strength of the nation, their labor honorable, and farming the highest calling on earth."

This idea led to Kelley being one of the founders of the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, which was first nationwide farm organization, The Grange served as both a social and advocacy group for farmers, as Kelley originally envisioned. Kelley also wrote newspaper articles that were increasingly critical of manufacturing and processing monopolies that fixed prices at rates unfair to farmers and of railroads with exorbitant freight rates.

Source: Minnesota Historical Society



Oliver Hudson Kelley; unknown year
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission



The Grange Movement Poster
Credit: Library of Congress

