

# Prairie Park

13355 90th Street NE Otsego, MN 55330

TOWNSHIP EST.  
**1858**



**Otsego General Store >**  
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission

**When the first permanent settlers arrived at Otsego in 1852, Minnesota had not yet attained statehood; this occurred May 11, 1858.** In Wright County, Pleasant Grove Precinct was established April 9, 1855 under the territorial government. The name Pleasant Grove is used in several history books, but the name appears as Pheasant Grove on the 1855 Census and in some County records. **The Township was established April 5, 1858 and renamed Otsego.**

The Otsego townsite of about 400 acres was surveyed and platted in 1857 [at the current intersection of Nashua Avenue and 95th Street (CSAH 39)]. There was a school, town hall, post office, store, ferry, sawmill, blacksmith shop, church, parsonage, tabernacle, camp grounds, and hotel as well as a number of homes. A few original structures still stand.

Many of Otsego's early settlers came from Maine and other New England states. They made their living in the fur trade, lumbering and agriculture. Most forests in New England had been cut down, destroying the habitat for fur-bearing animals. The thin, rocky soil made farming difficult and unprofitable. News of cheap, affordable land in the west attracted many to this area.

Settling in the "Big Woods" presented a real challenge. The thick growth of large hardwood trees and undergrowth of bushes and grasses had to be cleared for crop land. The settlers chopped and felled trees, using oxen to haul the logs. Old fallen and rotting timber and undergrowth was burned. To prepare the land for planting crops, a man walked beside the oxen pulling the plow, using a stick or whip to guide them while another man steered the plow through the hard soil, grasses and roots.

The trees that were cut down provided shelter and household furnishings. Log cabins were usually 12 by 20 feet. Floors were dirt, bark or wood. The cabinets, shelves, beds, tables and chairs were sometimes home-made. Mattresses were often filled with grass or corn husks and supported by rope.

Source: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission, 1996. *Otsego - In the Beginning 1852 to 1880.*



*Myrtle (Williams) Davis, Claude Davis, Emmeline (Spencer) Davis, Grace & Joe Davis, Arthur Davis*  
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission



**Otsego townsite in Otsego township surveyed and platted in 1857 ^**  
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission



**Otsego Blacksmith Shop ^**  
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission

WEB

[www.ci.otsego.mn.us](http://www.ci.otsego.mn.us)