

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT  
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

SH-ERC-029  
CS 7101  
National Grange Historical Marker

<b>Historic Name</b> <b>Other Name</b>	National Grange Historical Marker Grange Shrine	<b>CS #</b> <b>SHPO Inv #</b>	7101 SH-ERC-029
<b>Location</b>	SW side of TH 10/TH 169 2.3 mi SE of TH 101	<b>Hwy</b> <b>District</b> <b>Reference</b>	TH 10/169 Met W 217
<b>City/Township</b> <b>County</b> <b>Twp Rng Sec</b> <b>USGS Quad</b> <b>UTM</b>	Elk River, City of Sherburne 32N 26W Sec 13    32N 26W Sec 14 Elk River Z15 E458190 N5012150	<b>Acres</b> <b>Rest Area Class</b>	.2 4
<b>Designer</b>	Nichols, A R, Consult Land Arch	<b>SP #</b>	7101-02 7101-06 10-3-58-A
<b>Builder</b>	National Youth Administration (NYA)	<b>SHPO Review #</b>	
<b>Historic Use</b> <b>Present Use</b>	Roadside Parking Area Roadside Parking Area	<b>MHS Photo #</b>	013505.02-10
<b>Yr of Landscape Design</b>	1938	<b>MnDOT Historic Photo Album</b>	Nic 1.23    Ols 3.142 Ols 3.143
<b>Overall Site Integrity</b>	Intact/Slightly Altered		
<b>Review Required</b>	Yes		
<b>National Register Status</b>	Eligible, see Statement of Significance		
<b>Historic Context</b>	Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960		
<b>List of Standing Structures</b>			
<b>Feat#</b>	<b>Feature Type</b>	<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Fieldwork Date</b>
01	Marker	1938	10-31-96
02	Marker	Ca. 1976	
NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table			<b>Prep by</b> Gemini Research Dec. 98    G1. 49
			<b>Prep for</b> Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit
<b>Final Report</b>	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)		

■ BRIEF

The National Grange Historical Marker is a small, .2-acre site that is located on the southwestern side of T.H. 10/T.H. 169 about 2.3 miles southeast of T.H. 101. The site is located near the driveway to the Oliver Kelley Homestead, a National Historic Landmark that is operated by the Minnesota Historical Society. The site is about three miles east of the City of Elk River.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

**Stone Marker.** Erected 1938 by the NYA. The principal structure on the site is a stone marker that is built of gray, random and coursed ashlar, roughly-cut striated limestone on a stone footing. The marker is about 36' long by 14' wide and is aligned roughly parallel with the highway. It has a rectangular flagstone terrace (about 1'9" above the ground) that is entered via a 20' opening and three steps in the front (eastern) wall. Historic photos show that there were originally two 6'-long stone and concrete benches on the terrace (missing). Enclosing the terrace are walls that are about 18" thick and 4' tall with corner piers that are about 2' square and 4'6" tall. The western wall of the marker has a central projecting shaft that rises 10' from the floor. Mounted on the shaft is a bronze plaque, which is set into a rectangular niche that has a stone sill. The text of the plaque addresses the origins of the National Grange. (See text at the end of this document.)

**Wooden Marker.** Erected circa 1976 by Boy Scout Troop 905. A wooden sign was erected on the grassy island in front of the stone marker circa 1976 by a local Boy Scout troop. The sign reads "Troop 905 Tribute to Red River Oxcart Trail 1820-1872."

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The site has a curved, asphalt-paved pull-off drive that is lined with concrete curbing. There is an oval, curb-lined island between the drive and T.H. 10/T.H. 169. There is a rectangular plaza comprised of poured concrete squares in front of the stone marker.

The site is planted with grass. Mature ash trees, planted about 15-20' apart, line the western curve of the asphalt drive. There are a few evergreens framing the monument and patches of low spreading juniper in the front of it. Behind the marker is a grassy, tree-planted hill that drops quickly down to the fields of the Oliver Kelley Farm. The Kelley Farm fields are lined with a wooden rail fence.

The 1938 planting plan (S.P. 7101-02) specified 20 evergreens behind the marker, 68 juniper shrubs flanking the front of the marker and flanking the site's entrance and exit, 20 evergreens across T.H. 10/T.H. 169 from the site, and 50 Green Ash and 80 American Elm scattered throughout the site and across T.H. 10/T.H. 169, which would have created a shady, sheltered site. A second planting plan from the same time period (S.P. 7101-06) (A. R. Nichols, Consulting Landscape Architect) was very similar.

The topography is relatively flat. The site is located a few feet above the elevation of the Kelley farm fields to the west.

■ **SETTING**

The site is located in an agricultural setting and is surrounded by farms. It is bounded by T.H. 10/T.H. 169 on the east and the fields of the Oliver Kelley Farm on the west. The driveway to the Oliver Kelley Farm is located near the northern end of the wayside rest and is marked by brick gate posts. It travels westward to the farmstead.

■ **INTEGRITY**

**Alterations**

The site appears to have been built close to the original plan.

Historic photos show that there were originally two low stone and concrete benches resting on the marker's terrace. The photos also show the site's original plantings, most of which have been removed or replaced. The wooden marker was added to the site circa 1976. The drive was originally gravel and is now paved with asphalt.

The National Grange Historical Marker retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**Notes on Condition**

The stone marker is in fair condition and the site is minimally maintained.

■ **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

This wayside rest and historic marker were constructed in 1938 by the National Youth Administration (NYA) working in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Highways. The .25-acre plot of land on which the wayside was constructed was donated to the State by the National Grange Society. The wayside was developed shortly after T.H. 10 was constructed. In 1938, the NYA crew planted 68 evergreen shrubs, 40 evergreen trees, and 130 deciduous trees. They constructed a 170' concrete sidewalk, a 420' flagstone walk (presumably the marker's terrace), a 58 cubic yard stonemasonry wall, and 967 lineal feet of 4" concrete curbing (*Annual Report of the Accomplishments 1938:28*).

The marker was designed by A. R. Nichols, the highway department's Consulting Landscape Architect. The National Grange Society, a group that exceeded 800,000 members nationwide in 1938, donated the site and provided the plaque. Harold Olson, Engineer of Roadside Development, supervised construction. The site was dedicated in ceremonies held in November of 1938. National Grange officers who were traveling from the East Coast to the National Grange Convention in Portland, Oregon, attended the dedication.

The original construction plans were signed in 1938 by A. R. Nichols, Harold E. Olson, A. W. Moulster (Division Engineer), and O. L. Kipp (Construction Engineer).

The stone used to construct this marker was probably obtained from one of the many Platteville limestone quarries in Anoka, Hennepin, and Ramsey counties. Outcroppings of

limestone in the bluffs along the Mississippi and Minnesota River Valleys have been quarried in the Twin Cities area since the mid-1800s.

■ **PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

There apparently have been no previous SHPO cultural resource reviews of the property.

■ **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The National Grange Historical Marker was built in 1938 by the MHD and the NYA in cooperation with the National Grange Society. It is one of 18 stone, free-standing, shrine-type historic markers recorded in this inventory. It is one of 19 sites in the inventory on which the NYA worked. National Grange is one of more than 60 sites in the inventory that were designed by, or whose design is attributed to, Arthur R. Nichols.

This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that the National Grange Historical Marker is ELIGIBLE for the National Register under this historic context because it meets the following registration requirements:

Significant to the History of Roadside Development. The National Grange Historical Marker is among the 68 Depression-era properties in the inventory that represent the MHD's first large-scale effort to construct roadside development facilities in the state. The site is important as a well-preserved example of the accomplishments of the NYA working in cooperation with the MHD. The property is an example of the distinctive and well-constructed public facilities, built by the MHD in partnership with federal relief agencies, that met the objectives of roadside development while providing essential work and job training to the nation's unemployed during the Depression. (National Register Criterion A.)

Design Significance. The National Grange Historical Marker is a well-preserved example of the MHD Roadside Development Division's small pull-off style roadside parking areas that incorporate shrine-type historic markers. The site is an intact example of the application of the "National Park Service Rustic Style" to a roadside development facility. It has stonework of excellent quality, and displays the special labor-intensive construction techniques and distinctive use of indigenous materials that characterize both the Rustic style and federal relief construction in Minnesota. Furthermore, the National Grange Historical Marker is an important example of the roadside development work of prominent landscape architect A. R. Nichols. (National Register Criterion C.)

The site may also be associated with the "Federal Relief Construction, 1933-1943" and "Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions, 1870-1945" historic contexts.

■ **OTHER COMMENTS**

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 10/T.H. 169 past this site is a busy, divided highway.

This portion of T.H. 10/T.H. 169 has been designated part of the Great River Road.

The text of the markers is associated with Kelly farm and a portion of the Red River Trail. They are not specifically associated with the site of the wayside rest.

#### ■ REFERENCES

*Annual Report of the Accomplishments of Roadside Development Along the Trunk Highways in Minnesota.* Minnesota Department of Highways. 1938.

Barns, William D. "Oliver Hudson Kelley and the Genesis of the Grange: A Reappraisal." *Agricultural History*, vol. 41 (July 1967):229-242.

*Final Report National Youth Administration for the State of Minnesota: Sept. 1935 to July 1943.* U.S. National Youth Administration, Minnesota. 1943.

Gilman, Rhoda R. and Patricia Smith. "Oliver Hudson Kelley: Minnesota Pioneer, 1849-1868." *Minnesota History*, Fall 1967.

*Guide to Historic Markers Erected by the State Highway Department, Cooperating with the Minnesota Historical Society.* Prepared by the Minnesota Historic Records Survey, Division of Professional and Service Projects, Work Projects Administration. St. Paul: May 1940.

"Highway Dept. to Erect Monument at Kelley Farm." *Sherburne County Star News*. Undated clipping.

"Historic Site Ahead: Marks Birthplace of Organized Agriculture." *Minnesota Farmer*, September 1957.

Site Plans. Minnesota Department of Transportation, St. Paul.

Thiel, George A. and Carl E. Dutton. *The Architectural, Structural, and Monumental Stones of Minnesota.* Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1935.

#### ■ ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND TEXT OF PLAQUE ON MARKER

The Oliver H. Kelley Farm is located along the Mississippi River just west of the National Grange Historical Marker. The National Grange purchased the farm property in 1935 and restored the farm site. The Grange presented the property to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1961. It was named a National Historic Landmark in 1964 and listed on the National Register in 1966. The 190-acre farm is currently maintained and operated as an historic site by the Minnesota Historical Society.

Oliver Hudson Kelley (1826-1913) homesteaded the Kelley Farm in 1850. On December 4, 1867, Kelley founded the National Grange of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry. The Grange was one of the first of a succession of farmers' protest movements that flourished in the Midwest during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (These groups included the Populist Movement, the Non-Partisan League, and the Farmers' Holiday Movement.) The Grange was founded as a response to the political disenfranchisement felt by family farmers

in the mid-19th century. Its members voiced frustration at technological improvements that pressured them to produce more crops with less labor at the same time that farmers were facing wildly fluctuating market prices, artificially high railroad shipping rates, and unresponsive government policies. During this period, the U.S. was becoming increasingly urbanized, and political and economic power was shifting from the farmer, once the "noble" backbone of society, to urban industrialists.

The Grange was loosely based on fraternal groups such as the Masons. In addition to political activism, the organization promoted modern-farming techniques, including experimental farming. Kelley wrote of his vision for the Grange: "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 thinking, -- let them feel that they are human beings, and [that they are] the strength of the nation, their labor honorable, and farming the highest calling on earth" (Gilman and Smith 1967:338). By 1875 the Grange had approximately one million members and had established itself as the leader of an agricultural reform movement. Kelley remained the organization's secretary for 11 years until 1878. In the 1920s and 1930s the three largest farmers' organizations in the U.S. were the Grange, the Farm Bureau, and the Farmers' Union.

**Text of Plaque on Stone Marker**

"The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry was founded in Washington, D.C., on December 4, 1867. This date marks the birth of organized agriculture on American soil. Oliver Hudson Kelley first advanced the idea of a farm fraternity. As first secretary and one of the founders of the National Grange he maintained official headquarters here until 1870. This farm has been purchased by contributions throughout the nation and is preserved in honor of our founders. National Grange, 1938."