

**Project Title:** Oliver Kelley Farm Revitalization

**Project Number/Description: (Designate if this is a new project or continuation of a previously funded project)**

The Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) is grateful to the Sugarbeet Research and Education Board of MN & ND for the previous two grants of \$20,000 for the Oliver Kelley Farm Revitalization. This year, and each year until 2020, we would like to request \$20,000, to bring your total support for this major revitalization project to \$100,000. As the scope of the project has not changed, the content of this request is similar to previous requests, with a few updates to the timeline and details on the progress towards objectives. Please feel free to contact me at [caitlin.mcgowan@mnhs.org](mailto:caitlin.mcgowan@mnhs.org) should you have any additional questions.

As you know, the Oliver Kelley Farm is a National Historic Landmark and the state's premier location for exploring agricultural history. Located on the banks of the Mississippi River in Elk River, the 189 acre site aims to connect 21<sup>st</sup> century guests with the evolution of Minnesota agriculture through hands-on learning experiences. In FY17, the Kelley Farm served over 34,000 visitors, including over 15,000 students on field trips. We anticipate this number will rise in the coming years as the site revitalization becomes fully realized with expanded, year-round programming.

Since we submitted our last request, our construction project has been completed. We opened the revitalized site to the public in May 2017. As we had hoped, our new revitalized site has made it possible to serve a significantly larger number of children and families, and to bring to life the "farm-to-table" story. With the new buildings in place, we are now shifting our focus to create programming that looks beyond the historic 19<sup>th</sup> century farm and gives our audience a deeper understanding of contemporary agriculture in Minnesota, specifically related to farming practices, agribusiness in Minnesota, modern land management and conservation issues, and nutritional education.

**Project Leader:**

The current Oliver Kelley Farm site manager and program manager continue to the implementation of the project. Together, they bring over 40 years of knowledge and interpretive experience to the site. Additional oversight is provided by Historic Sites Division and the Society's Sustainability and Risk Management Department. An MNHS cross-departmental program team will continue to monitor and maintain the exhibits, new programming and evaluation results.

**Other Personnel Involved:**

The Oliver Kelley Farm continues to leverage its 20+ year partnership with Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom, which is expected to grow as new programming is developed to bring the farm into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom works with site staff to create relevant programs for teachers and students, share educational materials and provide opportunities for STEM-related experiences.

In 2018, we will be launching the Oliver Kelley Farm Agricultural Advisory Committee, which will guide us as we continue focus on new programming around modern agriculture. Oliver Kelley Farm staff will be reaching out to project partners, including the Sugarbeet Research and

Education Board of MN & ND. The Minnesota Historical Society has formed similar relationships with other agricultural stakeholder groups that will advise on content, including the Minnesota Corn Growers Association, the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, the Minnesota Milk Producers, and the University of Minnesota Extension.

**Project Location:**

With 189 acres of farm fields, prairie and woods located on the Mississippi River in Elk River, MN, the Oliver Kelley Farm is a flagship site for the Minnesota Historical Society and a National Historic Landmark. Oliver Kelley homesteaded the land in 1849 and the farm has been operated continuously since that time. In 1961, the farm was donated to the Minnesota Historical Society to ensure the preservation of the land and buildings. It allows us to tell the story of agriculture and farming—a story central to Minnesota’s history and current economy. The majority of our student visitors are from the Twin Cities metropolitan area. For most, it's the first time they've ever set foot on a farm and their first real-world exposure to the importance of agriculture in our state. We place high priority on serving diverse and low income student populations, and offer subsidies and scholarships to make field trips financially accessible for schools serving these students.

**Justification for Research: (For new projects only)**

**Summary of Literature Review: (For new projects only)**

**Objectives:**

The farm will introduce students and families to the stories of agriculture, Minnesota’s second largest industry. Visitors will experience hands-on learning in the farmhouse, historic gardens, new exhibits, classrooms, guest animal shelter, contemporary fields and teaching kitchen.

Cooking programs for K – 12 students will weave in history, science and math. The kitchen will use food to connect students with agriculture today while encouraging kids to “eat well to be well.”

***K – 12 Students will have an increased:***

- Understanding of the broader farm to table story
- Appreciation of farms and farmers – past and present
- Awareness of the role of science and technology in agriculture
- Awareness of crops, livestock, weather, soil and environmental stewardship
- Opportunity for STEM-related agricultural career exploration

***Teachers will have an increased:***

- Ability to meet state academic standards
- Access to interactive technology and program delivery
- Awareness of MNHS as an educational resource
- Appreciation for alternative learning experiences

***General public will have an increased:***

- Understanding of agriculture past, present and future
- Knowledge of diverse people and practices involved in agriculture

- Sense of connection to agriculture and relevance to daily life
- Opportunity for intergenerational learning
- Opportunity to discuss issues of modern food production in a neutral arena

***Farmers and community partners will have:***

- Opportunities to share their stories and farming philosophies through programming and special events
- An increased understanding of the Kelley Farm as an educational resource

**Materials and Methods: (Briefly Describe)**

***Capital Improvement Project:***

The capital improvement project tripled the size of the visitor center, to include expanded exhibition and public program space; two new classrooms (800 square feet each) with modern technology; a 1,200 square foot teaching kitchen so students can learn about nutrition and cook the crops they've harvested; updated technology to make distance learning possible for students throughout the state; a 1,200 square foot community room; and museum store.

In the outdoor Farm Lab area, there is a "guest animal" shelter for visiting livestock from program partners, giving visitors access to modern farm animals. This area also features demonstration gardens to showcase modern farming practices and crops (included standard and organic), as well as various forms of irrigation and drainage systems. In spring of 2018, we will be planting 10 acres of contemporary croplands and a "machinery hill" exhibit with modern farm equipment.

***Program Expansion and Enhancements:***

The farm has identified four primary topics for new programs: modern farming, environment and agriculture, food, and the agricultural industry. These themes have been identified through conversations with a variety of stakeholder groups, including farmers, educational organizations, agribusiness, environmental organizations, and historic preservation agencies. All programs offered at Oliver Kelley Farm fully satisfy Minnesota Department of Education learning outcomes; many teachers use Oliver Kelley Farm to satisfy STEM learning outcome requirements, as well as social studies. STEM topics that can be explored with sugarbeets present include genetics, crop improvement, chemistry of sugar making, beet math (production multiplication, yield addition, beet to sugar conversation algebra), and/or soil science for beets.

The MNHS Marketing and Communication Department rolled out a new communications plan to attract new visitors to the Oliver Kelley Farm, including targeted newspaper advertising and billboards. Plans for the revitalized site and new offerings will continue to be promoted through field trip brochures, membership newsletters, media kits, the MNHS website, social media, etc.

**Time Line of Anticipated Accomplishments:**

All construction is now complete. Program staff have moved into the new visitor center and the guest animal building and multi-purpose education building are open for use by casual visitors and schoolchildren. The outdoor Farm Lab area is open to the public, however there are a number of additions and enhancements that will be made throughout 2018 based on visitor observation and feedback.

The acreage to be planted with modern crops has not been farmed for over 20 years and has needed considerable preparation and amendment for planting. Thanks to the help of local farmers, we are pleased to announce that the land will be planted with modern crops in spring 2018. Next summer, visitors will wander among nearly ten acres of modern crops commonly grown in Minnesota, such as sugar beets, corn, wheat and soybeans.

Based on the results from on-site and teacher surveys, staff continue to revise strategies and programs as appropriate to meet the needs of students and educators. Programs for the general public will be designed and introduced on a rolling basis. An evaluation process has been implemented in line with other efforts across the Society, and new evaluation tools will be created as we continue to develop programs at the revitalized site.

In March 2018, we will host the kickoff meeting for the Agricultural Advisory Committee. This committee will help ensure that the Oliver Kelley Farm is sharing the story of modern Minnesota agriculture in its rich and ever-changing diversity. The Committee will provide expertise on modern agriculture topics and issues; help connect the historic site to agribusiness leaders; reviews and make recommendations for interpretive program content related to modern agricultural practices and issues; and help the historical site respond to emerging agricultural concerns.

#### **Progress Toward Objectives of On-going Projects: (Please List)**

- **Serving More Students and Families**  
Since the grand opening in May 2017, the Kelley Farm has seen a 46% increase in the number of visitors! Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we now have the capacity to serve these visitors in classrooms, an expansive learning kitchen and a multi-purpose shelter. The new facilities also allow for special event programming through the winter months.
- **Interpreting Modern Agriculture**  
The new Farm Lab area tells the story of modern agriculture, allowing visitors to compare the traditional 1860s farm with modern farming practices. After stopping in the new visitor center to watch an immersive introductory video, guests can tour through indoor and outdoor spaces that include exhibits on modern livestock, gardens, nutrition and wind energy.
- **Launch of New Education Programs**  
This spring, the Oliver Kelley Farm launched four new multidisciplinary lessons for the school field trip audience in grades 3-12, including “Minnesota Feeds the World” and “Growing Minnesota.” The new lessons meet Minnesota state standards in social studies and STEM, and hands-on learning and expanded programming allow students to experience the broader story of agriculture, past and present. The lessons were reviewed by teachers as well as agriculture specialists from Ag in the Classroom (Dept. of Agriculture program) and the Minnesota Agriculture Education Learning Consortium.
- **Training our Interpretive Staff**

In addition to the visuals and interactive activities in the Farm Lab area, we rely on our interpreters to share the story of modern agriculture with our guests. Since the Kelley Farm story has largely focused on 1860's farming techniques, our staff has needed new training on the story of modern agriculture. Kelley Farm staff visited local farms and processing plants to learn from experts firsthand. Additional training opportunities will be offered to staff to ensure that they are equipped to deliver key messages about modern agriculture.

- **A Community Gathering Space**

The revitalized site has expanded rental spaces, including a large community room, a boardroom, and the annex building. We have been happy to host events for local and agricultural partners, including Cargill Animal Nutrition, Thrivent, the Elk River Chamber of Commerce, the Minnesota Board of Animal Health, and the District 728 Career Readiness Development Workshop.

**Prepare a budget for each research project:**

The projected cost is \$14.5 million, including construction, program design costs necessary for the new exhibit spaces, and some operating bridge funding to help cover reduced revenue from attendance during the construction period. To date, we have received written commitments that bring us close our goal of \$14.5 million from public and private donors. \$20,000 for the next three years from the Sugarbeet Research and Education Board of MN & ND would allow us to fully meet our goal. As mentioned in previous proposals, this money will go towards the design and construction of the new outdoor crop plots and exhibit areas. As outlined in the budget section, \$50,000 would go towards staffing (program and exhibit design) and \$50,000 would go towards construction materials.

**2018 Grant, \$10,000**