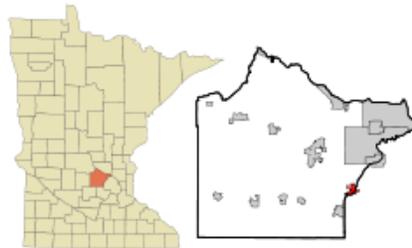




History of Rockford, Minnesota

Rockford is a city in Wright and Hennepin counties in the U.S State of Minnesota. While Rockford is mainly located within Wright County, a small part of the city extends into Hennepin County. It is part of Minneapolis St. Paul metropolitan statistical area. Minnesota State Highway 55 serves as a main route in the city.



The history of Rockford as a settlement began about 1855, when a campaign was started in St. Paul to lure settlers to the Minnesota Territory. In the winter of 1855 the Minnesota Territorial Legislature passed an act calling for the cutting of a road from Minneapolis west to what is now Rockford. Rockford was platted in 1857, and named for a nearby rocky ford on the Crow River.

The early years were rough on the early settlers. Land was difficult to clear since this was the heart of the “Big Woods”, a thick forest. There were rumors of Indian attacks, and grasshopper invasions which ruined most gardens and crops. Through it all, Rockford survived. Early businesses notably a saw mill, woolen mill and flour mill, revolved around the river and the mill dam. A post office has been in operation at Rockford since 1856. Additional businesses were gradually added and the railroad came through Rockford in the 1880’s. Ginseng roots grew in abundance in the shade of the huge trees. Col. Robert Blaine came to town and offered five cents a pound for ginseng roots which were in demand for medicine used in East Asia, especially in China. Rockford village was formally incorporated October 21, 1881, by an act of the Minnesota Legislature and the first election was held on December 6, 1881.

The town remained small for many years: in the 1970’s the population exceeded 1,000 and by 1980 the population rose to 2,408. The 1990 census shows a population of 2,665 and in 2010 estimated population of 4,316.

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