

HISTORY OF THE NEW YORK STATE GRANGE

Class Notes

I Organization & Structure

A. The Years preceding

1. Oliver Hudson Kelley (1826-1913)
 - a. Birthplace, career change, Minnesota (1849)
 - b. Farm life isolation, Ignorant of “practical” farming, Benton Co. Ag. Society
 - c. Washington, DC (1864)
2. William Saunders (1822-1900)
 - a. Birthplace, career
3. Francis Marion McDowell (1831-1894)
 - a. Birthplace, Alfred University, teacher, venture capitalist, farmer

B. Providential Meetings.

1. Kelley/Saunders, Saunders/McDowell, Kelley/McDowell,
2. Informal discussions
3. All men of superior intelligence, and perception.

C. Farmers needed to organize (92%)

1. Isolation, ignorance, limited social opportunities
2. Discussion as to what kind of Organization it would be, regular or fraternal
3. Road Trip 1866 –Isaac Newton – OHK to Boston - women

D. December 4, 1867 – official organization - still a work in progress (11/15/1867)

1. Hierarchical Structure – bottom up.
2. Missionary Journey 3/28/1868– One success story – Fredonia NY, April 1868.

II New York State History

1. Granges organized between 1868 & 1873 – 26, all but two in 1873
2. Call – OHK to organize Nov 6, 1873 reps from 21 Granges met in Syracuse
FM McDowell – chosen Chairman, Robert Farley Jr., NYC, chosen as Sec.

3. First Annual Session 3/18-20/1874 – now 164 Granges reported
 Committee of women to further their interests
 Resolution to lobby the Legislature to allow farmers to establish Fire Ins. Co's.

 For Granges to be able to organize county unite – facilitate trade
 Lobby Gov. for more public markets in State – where needed.
 Opposed liquor traffic
 Supported Women's suffrage
 Called for Agricultural research
4. Second Generation of Leadership 1878
 Cooperatives had been established one doing over \$200K in its first 10 month
 (with this came the establishment of County Grange organizations)
 Mutual Fire Insurance Companies, with over \$5M in assets
 Membership expanded to over 30k – 429 Granges
 1881 – moved to extend suffrage to women, Geneva Experiment Station
 Railroads still an issue. Called for establishment of State RR Commission 1887
 State Dairy Commissioner
 1890's Rural Free Delivery – Grange Building at State Fair –Rural Roads
 1893 – Structure changed – enter Pomona Granges
5. 20th Century
 1901 Pan American Expo, Buffalo 36,000 visitors to the Grange rooms
 Movement for better roads
 Strong competition from The Farmer's Alliance
 Juvenile Grange added 1904
 1906 – Protection of horses on public roads
 1906 Cornell Trustee until the 1970's
 1907 Dairyman's League
 1914 – Farmers & Traders Life Insurance Co.
 1920 - GLF
 1920's – Rural school situation 1928 extensive survey
 - Tax situation
 1927 – first Grange Hall in NYS Ovid 155 in Seneca County
 FDR – First Grange member as US President
 1930's – Rural Electrification & telephone
 1950's – CAO
6. Changing times
 High point in membership, spring 1952, 144k members
 Changes in Insurance Laws
 Changes in rural demographics
 Still making an impact – when it comes to community improvement
 Rural Broadband – Rural Telehealth
 Important seats on NYS Soil/Water Conservation Board, Milk Marketing Board

7. What does the future look like?
Depends on who you ask
I'm cautiously encouraged
Will depend on how much value individuals place in it.

Source Material

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Minnesota State Historical Society

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