

"Because They Joined the Grange"

An Architectural History of the
Grange Halls of Benton County, Oregon

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The cover photograph is titled, "Group leaving the Willamette grange hall." The photograph was taken in 1925 and is described as, "A group leaving the Willamette Community Grange Hall after a picnic lunch and several addresses by the Extension Service on better homes."

Photo HC 0975, courtesy of Oregon State University Special Collections & Archives Research Center.

Preface

I wrote “Because They Joined the Grange” in 1981 for a graduate school course on historic rural architecture taught by the late Philip Dole. The title for the paper is from the songbook *Grange Melodies* by the Patrons of Husbandry. The song follows an exchange between a young woman and her parents regarding her intent to marry. The father disapproves because the young man is a member of the Grange. The response from the daughter is: “It don’t make people dumb or poor because they joined the Grange.”

The Grange flourished in Oregon during the late 19th century and well into the 20th century. Later, it experienced a decline and some individual halls struggled for membership. This is likely still the case for some grange halls. However, in some areas of Oregon and around the U.S. young farmers are revitalizing grange halls. The Mary’s River Grange stands as an example of a hall rescued from closing. It is again a focal point of the community, hosting a variety of events for young and less-than-young farmers and others. Because of this renewed interest in grange halls, I thought it was a good time to pull this paper out of the archives.

The paper includes a description of the origins of the Patrons of Husbandry and how its rituals influenced the form of its halls. There is a description and brief history of each of Benton County’s six halls with photographs and other resources such as original drawings.

I did the research for the paper during the fall of 1981. I interviewed the leadership of the individual halls and members familiar with their history. I took photographs, explored the exterior and interior of each hall, had long conversations with my hosts, and I very willingly accepted a gracious invitation to stay for Thanksgiving lunch at the Fairmont Grange. At the time, in my twenties, it was always apparent to me that I was the youngest person in the room by many decades. Now, when I attend events at the Mary’s River Grange, the reverse is true and that is a good thing.

Published here is a digital version of the original document. As I read through the paper, I am occasionally amused by my writing style and frankly, I am not sure everything I wrote is true. The song lyrics in the margins were innovative for a college research paper and a painful task for the typist. The original paper is on file at the Benton County Historical Museum in Philomath, Oregon.

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"It don't make people dumb or poor,
because they join the Grange" (Patrons 1925:50).

The meeting halls of local subordinate granges are a widespread, persistent and largely unnoticed ingredient of the Willamette Valley landscape. In proportion to population, Oregon has had a far greater number of granges than any other western state (Scott 1923:40). Most of these granges erected halls. These halls, as Brownridge (1976:1) points out, have had little previous examination. Indeed, nowhere is there a complete record of past and present grange halls. The State Grange itself keeps no systematic record of the numerous grange halls under its jurisdiction. Halls of subordinate granges which become defunct as well as former halls of active granges are soon forgotten and to date little attempt has been made to rescue the location, form and history of these buildings from the memories of the former membership.

Most grange halls were erected during the feverish hall building era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Funded and constructed solely, in most instances, by their membership and without the aid of professional architects, grange halls represent an engaging interpretation of the needs of a public meeting house, the ritualistic needs of the order, and the economic and mechanical abilities of the membership. They represent a truly vernacular form of architecture.

This paper focuses on the meeting halls of the six active subordinate granges of the Benton County Pomona. Examination includes the history of the halls of each of the above subordinate granges, the impact of ritual on grange hall architecture, and a discussion of the architectural features of these buildings.

The Grange History, Politics and Growth

In her preface to the Washington State Grange, Harriet Ann Crawford tells of the conditions which faced Pacific Northwest farmers during the late nineteenth century. She writes that within a

... space of thirty-five years there were telescoped the stages of development which, on the Atlantic Coast were unfolded during centuries. Under conditions of bewildering change, farming, the primitive industry, was in the path of evolutionary forces in accelerated motion. Virgin land acquired from the public domain was cleared and planted by much the same methods as were used by settlers on the Mohawk, the Chesapeake and the James. ... State government (was) launched during the heyday of capitalistic expansion; in the same generation technological inventions worked a complete metamorphosis in the conditions of daily living. Under such conditions, farmers, predominately "native born of native parents," well-grounded in the traditions of Jeffersonian democracy, strong in the faith of individual initiative, --such farmers grappled with the problems of a changing world and attempted to exert control over their contending forces (1940:7-8).

In the East, the Civil War left farmers ravaged and confused. Oliver Hudson Kelley, a farmer himself, recognized the need for an organization to promote communication among farmers. He also recognized the total failure of the various short-lived farmers unions and social clubs to achieve this goal. He visualized an organization

which would not only be a political organization by which the voice of the farmer could be heard but also a social organization to bind farmers and their families into a viable and enduring group. With the help of his close associates he presented the Patrons of Husbandry in 1867; an amalgamation of characteristics of existing farmer's clubs and Masonry. Kelley felt this social and educational fraternity would provide the framework necessary to help farmers solve their problems.

Farmers clubs and societies were not new to Oregon, some dated as early as 1851. The purposes of these groups included education, farm exhibits and fairs as well as political action groups opposing monopolies controlling transportation. So when W. J. Campbell called a meeting in Marshfield (presently Clackamas) in December of 1872 for the purpose of organizing the first subordinate Grange in the Pacific Northwest, he received a rather mixed response (Ore. Grange Bulletin 1948:3).

For the most part, Campbell encountered problems with organizational goals and collecting dues from prospective members. In an example of the extensive correspondence between Campbell and Kelley, Kelley suggests a solution to Campbell's dilemma and indication of the method of organizing the State of Oregon.

As it is new in your state some latitude must of course be allowed to get it introduced when it will soon become popular.

As soon as you have Subordinate Granges enough to organize a State Grange, then on its organization any informalities can be corrected.

Get good reliable men and women in the first Grange as that is the foundation of your prosperity in the state.

Then organize in the adjoining towns and thus radiate to all parts of Oregon. (From a letter to W. J. Campbell by O. H. Kelley 1872, in Oregon Grange Bulletin 1948:5.)

Campbell, after many trials, succeeded in organizing Marshfield Grange No. 1. He made use of the "latitude" allowed him by Kelley and permitted his charter roll to contain 30 men, no women and two non-farmers (the National Grange required no less than nine men and four women, nor more than 20 men and 10 women; non-farmers were prohibited). It was a beginning however, and by the fall of 1872, 40 granges had been organized in Oregon. Less than twelve months later there were 175 (Ore. Grange Bulletin 1948:5). This dramatic growth was probably a result of the enthusiasm produced by the presence of professional organizers from the National Grange (Scott 1923:40) and the feeling among many farmers that the Grange could solve all of their problems (Ore. Grange Bulletin 1948:6).

Membership fell as quickly as it rose and as the "faint hearts and malcontents" fell to the wayside, Oregon grange membership dropped to its lowest point in its history (Ore. Grange Bulletin 1948:6). But, as the ranks dwindled, progress was already being made in the Oregon legislature. The Oregon State Grange provided the impetus to enact legislation in utilities regulation, tax reform, representation for farmers, public highways, agricultural education, public schools and public electrical power (Ore. Grange Bulletin 1948:10-15).

Grange membership did grow again, though more slowly, beginning in the late 1880s and continued to do so through the mid-twentieth

century. There have been 946 granges chartered in Oregon since the state was organized in 1872. Of this number, 150 are now defunct (Brownridge 1976:16).

Grange Structure and Ritual

Farmers during the late nineteenth century worked long hours and enjoyed few diversions. Religious services and visits to town offered the most consistent escape from daily routine. Other social outlets existed but they often were ineffective because they lacked the binding force to draw agricultural families together. Kelley felt the influence of oaths of loyalty and brotherhood along with the spell cast by mystical and secret ritual similar to the Masons would bring lasting success to the Grange (Nordin 1974:9). It is difficult then, to discuss the administrative structure of the Grange without also discussing the symbolism and ritualism connected with it.

The basic unit of the Grange is the subordinate grange. Subordinate granges are grouped into county or Pomona Granges which are grouped into State Granges. These State Granges are, in turn, under the National Grange which is the administrative body for the nation. Each level met in regular meetings: as often as twice a month for the subordinate grange, bimonthly for the Pomona Grange and yearly for the State and National Grange. All subordinate granges are issued consecutive numbers as they are chartered. These numbers are issued to one grange only and if a grange becomes defunct

its number passes with it. The lower charter numbers are sometimes a source of prestige.

The administrative structure of the Grange once carried extensive agricultural symbolism and as A. B. Grosh, first chaplain of the National Grange, wrote:

... the Grange Room, or place of meeting is supposed to represent a real Grange, or large farm, with all buildings and structures properly belonging to the same; and the community or membership of each Grange is supposed to represent the family or household occupying such a farm, and gathered and living together in the Grange-mansion. For, as the membership of each Subordinate Grange represents such a family, so each County (or District), State, and the National Grange, --or the order itself,-- is supposed to be a collection or gathering of such families into one household, on one large Grange-farm, and in one spacious Grange-mansion (1876:163).

The Grange was thus structured on four levels: Subordinate, Pomona, State, National. Each level had thirteen officers--master and overseer, who acted as presiding officers at all meetings; lecturer, who planned Grange programs; steward, assistant steward and lady assistant steward, who cared for the persons and furnishings of the Grange; chaplain, the spiritual leader; treasurer and secretary, who attended to business matters; gatekeeper, who guarded the "outer-gate" and requested the password from all participants; Pomona, Ceres and Flora, symbolic offices whose duty it was to encourage cultivation, flowers, and labor with diligence (Grosh 1876:351-353).

Like other secret lodges, the Grange has "degrees" or ranks of membership. The seven degrees of the Grange are again tied to agricultural symbolism.

In early spring, Laborers are received to prepare the ground for seeding, and Maids are welcomed to the work of the mansion and dairy. As summer approaches, these Laborers become Cultivators, and the Maids are promoted to care for the flocks. When the crops ripen, Cultivators are advanced to be Harvesters, and the Shepards becomes the Gleaner. And when the year is crowned with goodness . . . Harvesters and Gleaners are exalted to the dignity of Husbandmen and Matrons, to oversee farm and household . . . (Grosh 1876:160-162).

The more difficult fifth, sixth and seventh degrees consisted of the Pomona, Flora and Ceres (Grosh 1876:163).

The ritual surrounding the Grange meeting as well as the elaborate ceremonials of degree work had a definite influence on the design of Grange halls and is discussed in the sections which follow.

Grange Hall Ritual and Stylistic Features

For the members of a subordinate grange political, social and ritual discourse takes place in some sort of meeting room. For some this is in a school house or community center, for most it is in a hall built and owned by the members.

Grange hall building was slow during the early, uncertain days of the Oregon Grange. By the turn of the century, hall building was becoming commonplace and later was even encouraged by State Grange officials at the risk of debt for the subordinate grange.

Even if a grange has to go into debt to build a hall, I believe it nearly always works out to the benefit of the grange community, for it gives members something to do . . . and the satisfaction of knowing it is your own is worth a great deal (Patrons of Husbandry 1925:32).

Grange halls are purposely located in rural settings. These locations are due to the "rural fraternity" nature of the organization as well as providing access by local residents during pre-automobile days. Further, the location of the hall was also determined by the availability of land. Lots were generally obtained through donation or rent-free lease from a local property owner. As a result, many halls are completely isolated from settlement or are located on hill-sides or otherwise poor farming land (Brownridge 1976:38).

Hall building is solely the undertaking of the subordinate grange. Funds for building are obtained from various sources including membership dues, loans from members, stocks or bonds issued to members, and even bake sales. A large portion of the materials needed are donated by members or businesses and labor is nearly always volunteer. Brownridge (1976:37) surveyed one-third of the active Oregon granges and showed that 88 percent of grange-built halls had been constructed primarily with volunteer labor. Through this effort and sacrifice grange halls take on a very special and intimate meaning for grangers and are a source of great pride.

When a grange hall is erected it is dedicated in a ceremony conducted by the State Master. Calling for participation by several of the local officers, establishment of an altar and appropriate music, the ceremony, "... when properly carried out is an inspiring occasion" (Gardner 1949:353).

Many halls have been erected to replace earlier halls which usually are destroyed by fire. Even so, Brownridge (1976:58-59) was able to show that about 62 percent of the subordinate granges in Oregon retain their original buildings.

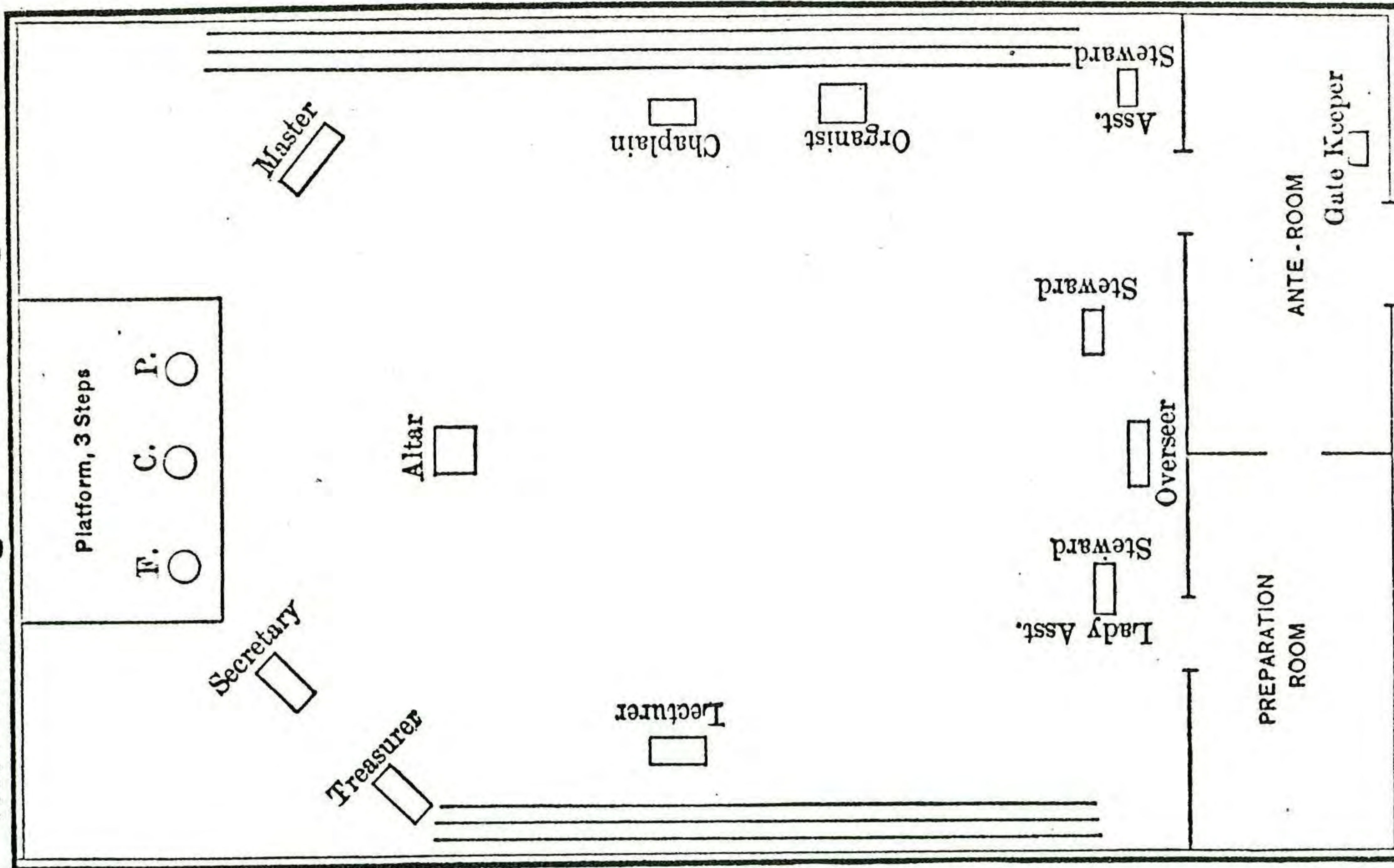
Grange halls tend to fall into two categories: halls which a grange built itself and buildings once used for other purposes but which were purchased by a grange and converted for grange use. Grange-built halls are discussed above. The types of buildings granges purchase for their use are always buildings whose configuration is conducive to conducting grange meetings and ceremonies, that is, they are rectangular and open; a hall. Buildings commonly purchased are churches, schools and community centers.

The rectangular form is a constant among grange halls. This shape is not so much a function of seating people, as in a church or school, as it is a function of Grange ritual adopted from Masonry. The Mason lodge room is based on the highly symbolic "double cube" (a room twice as long as wide) and is arranged around a central altar. This is similar to the "grange rooms" described by Grosh (1876:140-141) in his book which explained the purpose and ritual of the Grange to its members. Figure 1 shows the basic floor plan and arrangements of a grange meeting room. Grosh's summary follows:

For sake of distinction and matter-of-fact expression, the several parts of the place of meeting are called, 1, the outer passage, or entry; 2, the ante-room; 3, the preparation room; and, 4, the Grange-room or 'hall,' when the whole building is not so called. In the latter the meetings proper are held, and general business transacted. The door separating the entry from the ante-room represents and is called the 'Outer Gate' of the Grange; and that separating the ante-room from the Grange room is the 'Inner Gate.'

This general floor plan encourages utilizing a rectangular room, with an ante-room and perhaps a preparation room, and a platform or stage. Grange ritual complimented and necessitated this floor plan.

**GRANGE ROOM.
No. II. As arranged for conferring Degrees.**



**GRANGE ROOM.
No. I. As arranged for Business meetings.**

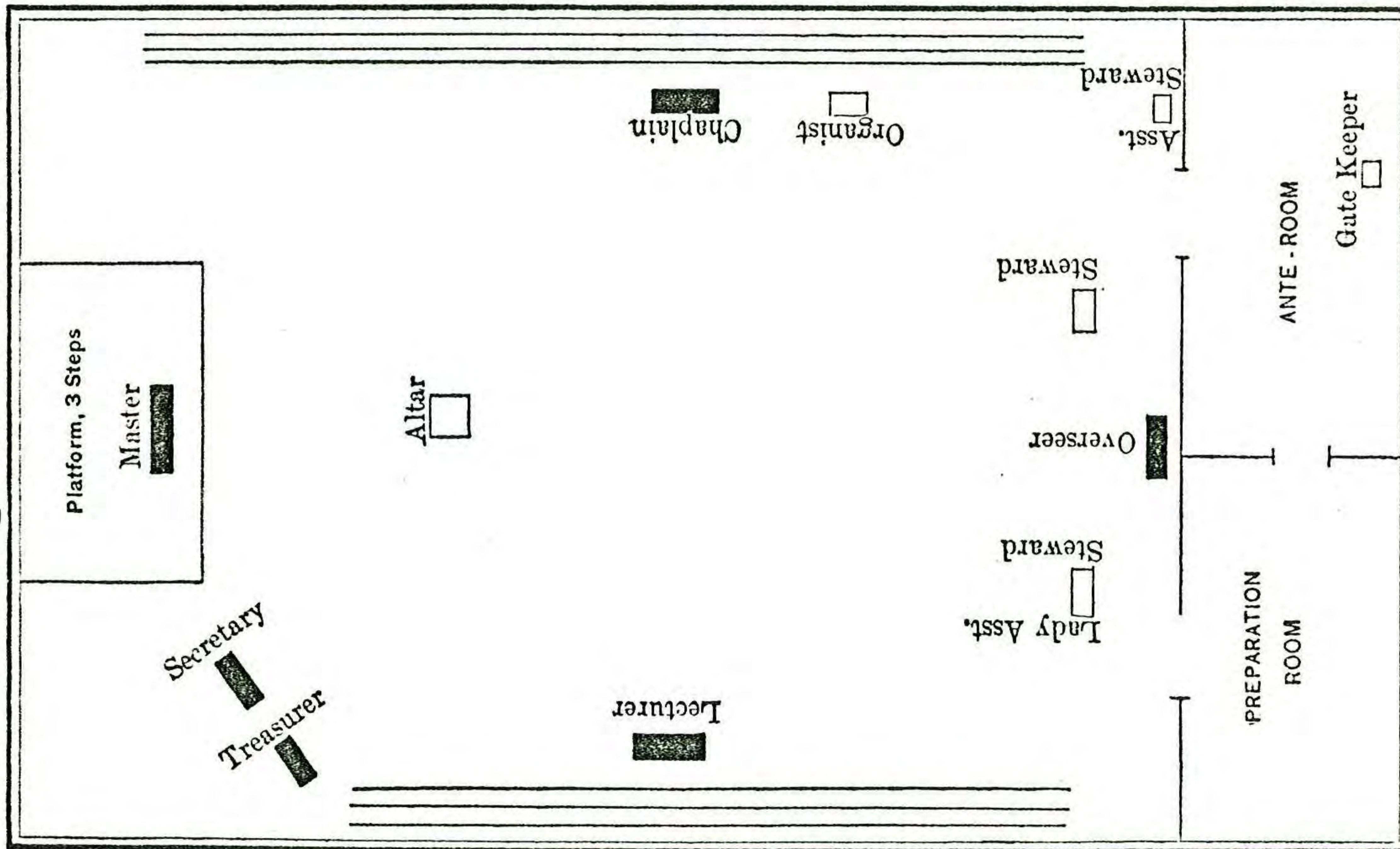


Figure 1.

To gain admission (to the grange hall), members rapped a predetermined number of times on the outergate and then replied correctly to the gatekeep's questions. Adhering to a code permitted members to come into the anteroom. In order to enter the main assembly room, grangers once again knocked an appropriate number of times. The assistant steward guarded the inner door and judged the incoming member's adherence to entrance specifications. Satisfactorily complying with ritual demands permitted the entrant to . . . participate in the meeting. But he could not take any seat that suited his fancy. According to grange ritual, every officer had a designated post to man, and all others were required to sit outside the perimeter occupied by elected officials (Nordin 1974:10-11).

It should be stressed that adherence to a specific floor plan was not required by the National Grange. In fact, in Grosh's determination, the plans he outlined (above and Figure 1)

are not designed to give more than these general features; and, in many cases, necessity or convenience will probably require variations of location, omissions, or additions (Grosh 1876:142).

Subordinate granges were, then, given considerable latitude in the design of their halls. The examination of Benton County's six grange halls which follows illuminates this relationship between grange ritual and grange hall form as well as describes their general stylistic features.

The Grange Halls of the Benton County Pomona

The Benton County Pomona consists of the Willamette, Mountain View, Summit, Mary's River, Fairmount and Hope granges. Each of these granges owns a grange hall. All of these halls were erected at or after the turn of the century. Most of the present halls of the Benton County Pomona were built to replace earlier halls which had burned. Several of the present halls are of comparatively recent construction. In the discussion which follows, recent halls are not described extensively, instead, the history of previous halls is focused upon.

The information for hall history and description was collected through interviews with members of each grange, examination of each hall and various other sources including original hall building plans and grange scrapbooks. As may be expected, information on some grange halls was extensive while being scant on others due to the availability of informants and the amount of information concerning the hall on record.

*Now, father, do not scold me, please, when I have
told you all That Rufus said to me last night when
he came here to call; He talked about the crops,
you know, how they were going to be; But after you
were gone he talked of something else to me.*

*He told me of the hopes and plans he had for years
to come, And asked me if I'd be content to share
his future home, I'm sure he's very earnest, father,
for he told me so, And asked me if I'd be his wife;
and--father, may I go?*

*It ain't no use to talk, and 'taint no use to cry,
We don't want any Rufus Brown mixed in this family;
Besides, it's just as like as not, whatever else may
change, He'll not amount to anything, because he's joined the Grange....*

Willamette Community and Grange Hall No. 52

The Willamette Grange is honored with having the fourth longest continuous membership in the State of Oregon. The Grange was organized in November of 1873 by Anthony Simpson and boasts having J. C. and Martha Avery (founders of Corvallis) as charter members.

There have been two previous halls of the Willamette Grange, both were destroyed by fire. Little information is available on the first hall. According to informants it was located on the east side of Muddy Creek near the Greenberry Road in the Corvallis vicinity. It was destroyed by fire possible in the mid-1890s. The oldest Willamette Grange members cannot recollect its appearance nor does there seem to be a photograph of it available.

The second Willamette Grange hall was built shortly after the first burned. It was located approximately one-quarter of a mile from the site of the first hall in what is now Benton County's Albert Saxon Memorial Park named for a long-time county commissioner and active member of the Willamette Grange. The estimated date of construction of the hall is 1897. This building was destroyed by fire on the night of January 25, 1922.

Although no photographs of the second hall are available, one long-time grange member and local resident described it as being a two-story,

*Git married, Lucy?
Rufus Brown? What's
that I hear ye say?
Young Brown that talks
in sich a smart and
hifalutin way?
You marry him? No,
Lucy, no,--now 'taint
no use to cry; He'd
live on education's
plan, and let ye
starve and die.*

*Besides, young Brown
has jined the Grange;
what made him sich
a fool? Why can't
he jine the meetin'
folks, or jine the
Sunday School?
They're good enough
for sich as me, and
good enough for him;
There hain't no pesky
goat for one to ride
a jinin' them.*

*It ain't no use to talk,
and 'taint no use to
cry, We don't want any
Rufus Brown mixed in
this family; Besides,
it's just as like as
not, whatever else
may change, He'll not
amount to anything,
because he's joined
the Grange.*

rectangular building approximately 50 feet by 25 feet. It had a clapboard exterior which was painted white; he considered it very plain. It had a small porch or stoop. The first floor was used as a dining area and a lean-to kitchen was added to the rear (south) end of the building at an unknown date. The second floor was used as the lodge room.

Following the destruction of the second hall an intense effort was made to revitalize the grange and erect a new building and when it was decided to construct a combination grange hall and community center, Corvallis businessmen and other members of the community donated much of the necessary materials. John Porter, a local farmer, donated two acres for the hall's present site on U.S. 99W south of Corvallis.

The present hall, erected in 1923 (Figure 2), is a rectangular, wooden, two-story structure. It has a clapboard exterior painted white; window trim is painted black. It has a low hipped roof with boxed cornices. There are two, projecting, two-story, gabled bays on either side. The eave return on these gables gives them a pediment-like appearance. The porch and trim are simple with little or no apparent stylistic preference.

Entrance to the building is through double doors on the east side. The lower floor contains a dining hall and restrooms with a kitchen in the building's rear. There are front and rear stairways leading to the lodge

*Pray, father, do not
scold the girl, I'm
sure you must forget
The time when you
were twenty-one and
I not twenty yet;
I left my home for
one I loved without
reproof or tears,
And I've been happy
with him now for
five and thirty years.*

*A better boy than
Rufus Brown I'm sure
I never say, And
education's just as
good for farming
as for law; He's
good to Lucy, and
we know, whatever
else may change,
It hasn't made him
dumb or poor,
because he's joined
the Grange.*

*It ain't no use to
talk, and 'taint no
use to cry, We don't
want any Rufus Brown
mixed in this family;
Besides, it's just as
like as not, whatever
else may change,
He'll not amount to
anything, because he's
joined the Grange.*



Figure 2.

room. The front stairway has sets of doors which function as "inner" and "outer gates." There is a stage in the building's front and a large brick fireplace in the rear.

Mountain View Grange Hall No. 429

The roots of the Mountain View Grange date back to 1873 and the Locke Grange No. 14. Locke Grange initially met in a log school house near the present Mountain View School in the Corvallis vicinity. It was later moved into Corvallis where it met its fate because, according to one informant, "the men would stand on the streets and fail to come in to the hall for a grange session." The Mountain View Grange was organized in 1910 with at least one former member of the Locke Grange.

According to notes from grange proceedings, meetings were first held in the Mountain View School house. At an unspecified date (grange members say 1911) the Grange began meeting in a hall owned by the "Lewisburg Hall and Warehouse Company." Apparently the building was located on a railroad siding and contained warehouse facilities on the lower floor and a meeting hall on the upper floor. In 1925, the entire building was purchased for \$1000.00.

Major exterior alterations to the building (Figure 3) are few and include modifications to convert the lower floor from a warehouse into a more habitable space beginning in 1929. The patching of a large freight door on the building's west side and the possible addition

*For more than thirty
years, dear wife,
you've been my
faithful guide;
Your love has never
colder grown since
you became my bride;
I've learned to profit
by your counsels, and
I'll not refuse
To grant the wishes
of your heart,
whatever you may choose.*

*And so, I s'pose, we'd
better let the young
folks have their way;
And if our Lucy wants
to wed young Rufus,
she may; For when I
think of days gone by,
it don't seem right
to scold; It seems
as if our hearts keep
young, while we ourselves
grow old.*

*It ain't no use to
talk, come, Lucy,
don't you cry, Go wed
your Rufus if you
choose, and live
contentedly; For, wife,
I guess that you are
right, whatever else
may change, It don't
make people dumb or
poor,
because they
join the Grange.*

--James L. Orr

of windows to the lower floor are most apparent. An elaborate wooden fire escape was added to the north side of the building in 1925. A new porch was added onto the east side in 1936.

The present hall (Figure 3) is a rectangular, wooden structure built about 1911. The exterior is clapboard painted white. The roof is gabled with exposed rafters and knee braces. It has two floors. The ground floor contains restrooms, dining room and kitchen. A stairway leads to an antechamber and the lodge room. The antechamber has inner and outer gates consisting of double doors.

The Summit Grange Hall

The Summit Grange has few of its old members left and therefore, details on the construction of its hall are scant. The Grange was organized in 1911 and, according to informants, the hall constructed within a year. A family named Strouts leased the land indefinitely for one dollar. The hall was constructed by its members and is the oldest grange-built hall still standing in Benton County.

The Summit Grange Hall (Figure 4) is a single story, rectangular, wooden structure. It has a clapboard exterior painted white. Its roof is gabled, with exposed rafters and knee braces. There is a combination porch and wood shed at the entrance on the building's west end. There is an antechamber and a preparation room immediately inside. Both rooms have doors leading into the lodge room. There is a stage at the opposite end of the building, added as a lean-to at an unknown date. The entire north side of the hall was expanded to make room for kitchen and dining facilities during the 1940s.

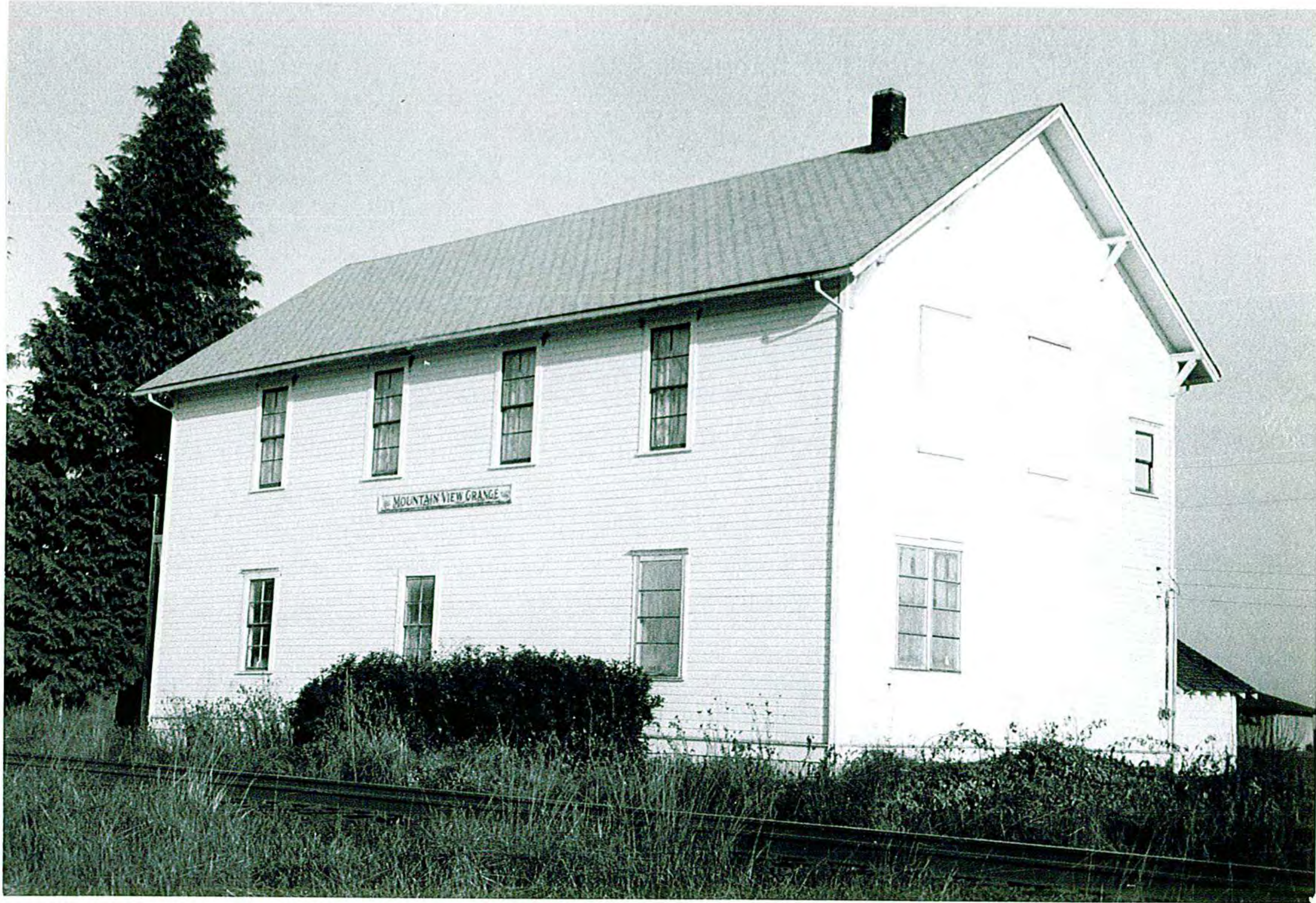


Figure 3.



Figure 4.

Mary's River Grange Hall No. 685

The Mary's River Grange is the youngest active grange in Benton County. Organized in 1927, it spent the next six years meeting in various halls about Philomath including the Plymouth Church, the Women's Club and the I.O.O.F. Hall.

Meeting proceedings for the Grange show that early in the 1930s members decided upon building a log building rather than a frame building. In 1932, the Griswold Saw Mill near Philomath allowed the Grange to pond logs and to use the mill for "one dollar per thousand." Later, a local landowner named Thomsen offered the Grange a site in a field he intended to convert into a playground. The one acre lot he offered with no strings attached. Thomsen and his wife, Elsie, also presented the Grange with plans for a log building (Figures 5 and 6, and Appendix).

In order to raise money to build the hall, the Grange members invested \$52.35 from their building fund, in seed and farmed 42 acres of oats, vetch and wheat. This scheme collapsed when the crops froze in the December fields. Unrelenting, the members proceeded with construction in 1933 and dedicated the hall in January, 1934. The total cost of the building was \$794.22.

The present building (Figures 5, 6 and 7) is a single story, log and frame structure. The roof is gabled with clipped eaves. The exterior has been altered extensively during the past 20 years. The original projecting entrance has been removed and the building framed and sheathed in plywood paneling with battens in its place. The present entrance is on the south end of the building. As a result of rotten

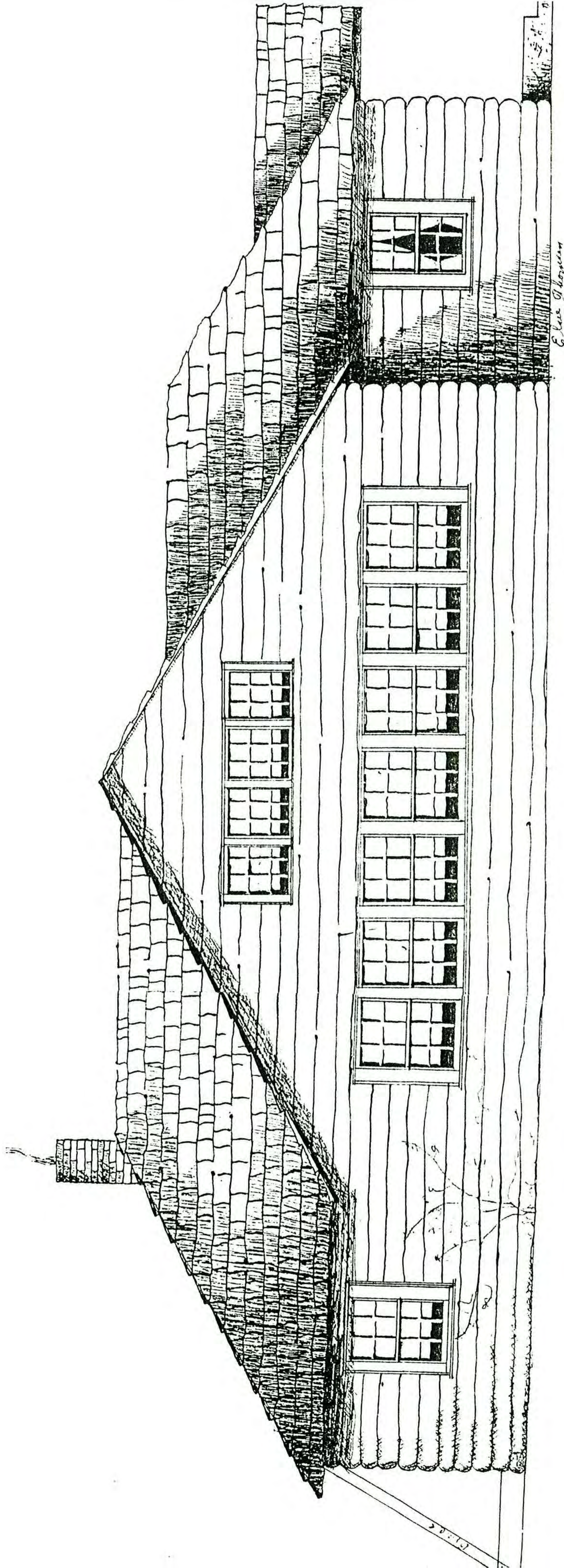


Figure 6.

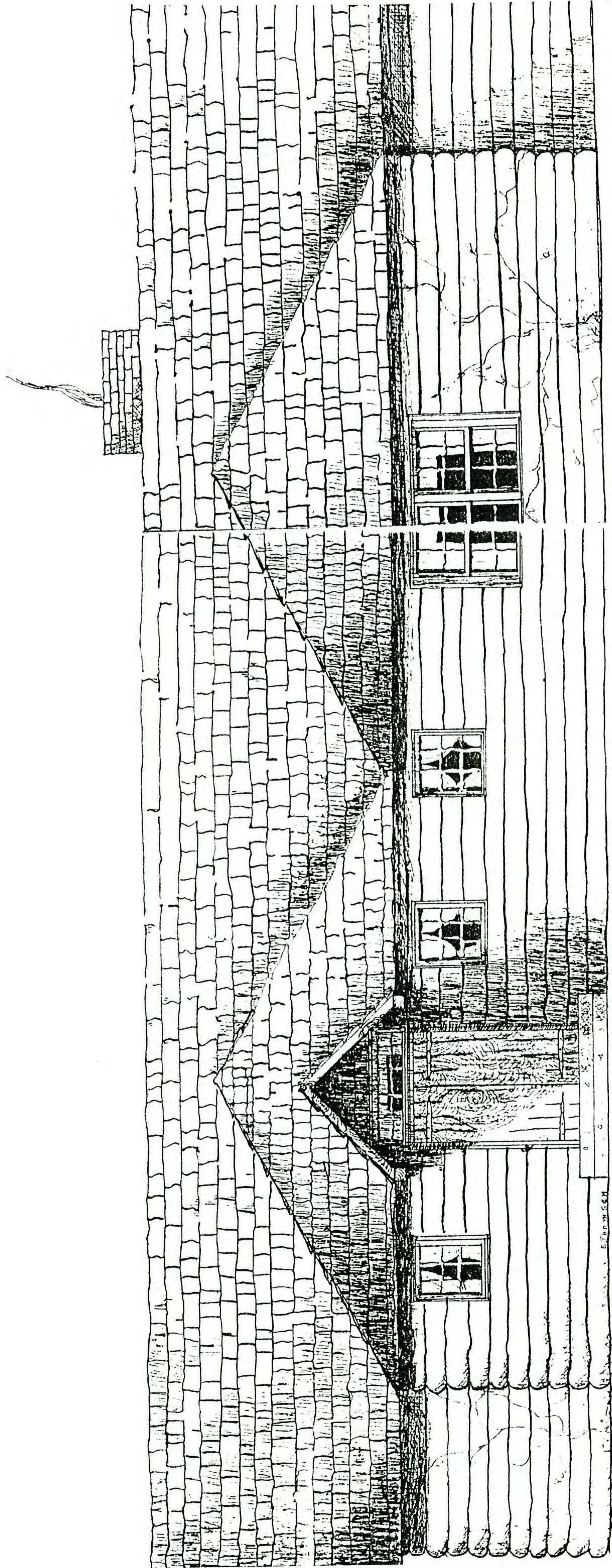


Figure 5.

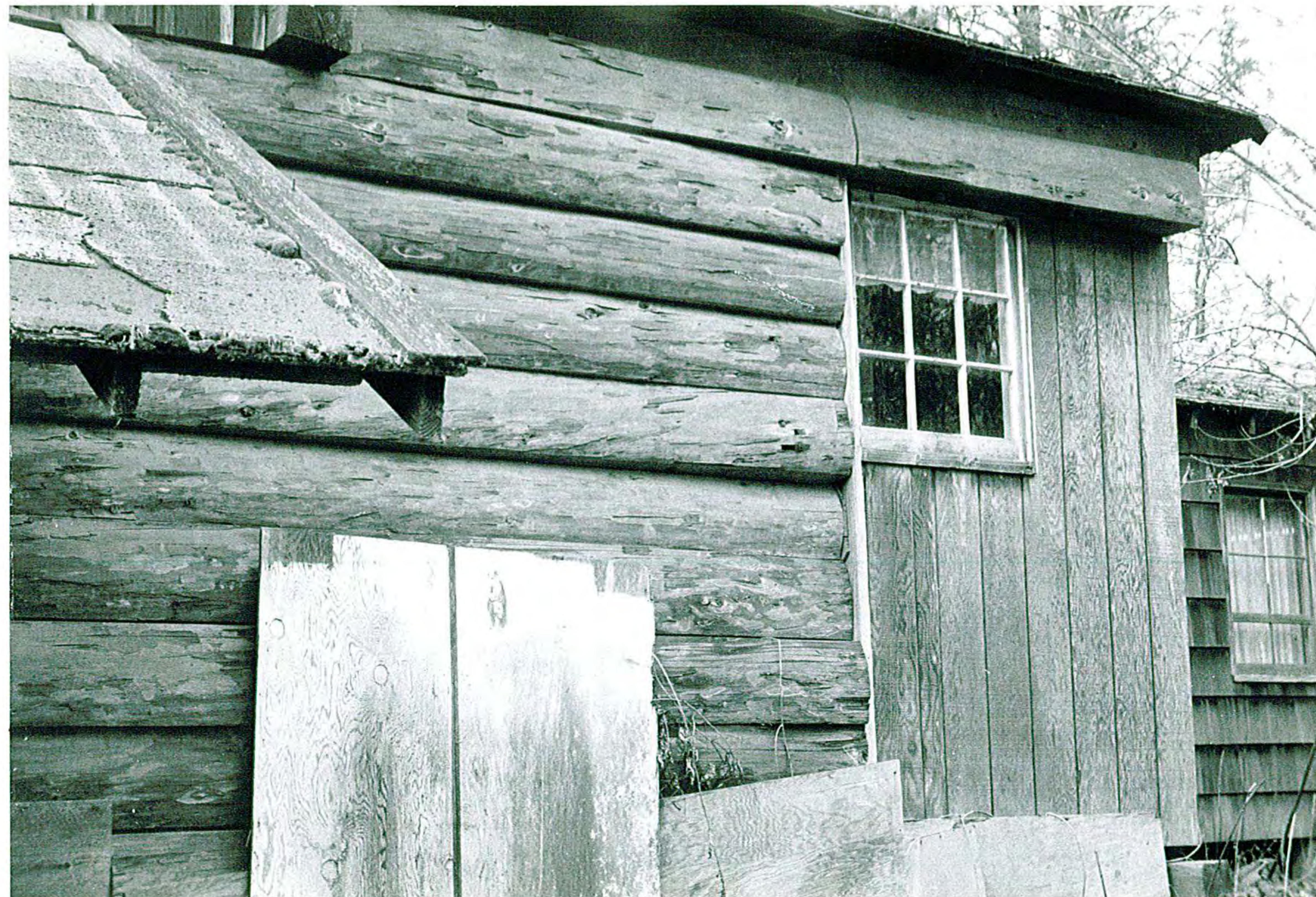


Figure 7.

wood, most of the logs have been replaced by or covered with plywood exterior paneling. A juvenile grange addition was constructed in the late 1940s.

The building contains lodge and antechamber on the east portion of the building, and dining and kitchen facilities on the west portion.

Fairmount Grange Hall No. 252

The Fairmount Grange, organized in 1891, is currently housed in its second hall. Its members met in Fairmount School until the first hall was built in 1892. It soon became the social center for the community and was known for its dances which continued into the "wee hours." The hall was located near the Willamette River in an area subject to flooding and it is said on occasion members were marooned by rising river water (Parker 1957).

One early Grange member and local resident describes the hall as being a two-story, rectangular, wooden structure. It was built high off the ground to avoid flooding. Its exterior was clapboard painted white which faded into obscurity early in the hall's history. The roof was gabled with clipped eaves. The kitchen and dining area was located on the ground floor, the lodge room on the second floor. This hall burned on July 26, 1929.

The Grange members immediately went about constructing a new hall. A site, on higher ground, was purchased from William Peacock and in May of 1930 the new hall dedicated.

The present hall (Figure 8) is a single story, rectangular, wooden structure with a half basement. It has a shiplap exterior painted white.



Figure 8

The basement contains dining, kitchen and restroom facilities. The first floor, antechamber, preparation chamber and lodge room. There is a stage to the rear of the first floor.

Hope Grange Hall No. 269

The Hope Grange, located near Alsea, was organized in 1894. Some time after, it moved into its first hall. It is not certain this hall was constructed by Grange members or if it had some former use. This hall was destroyed by fire in the early 1940s. Some problems were encountered constructing a new hall. Initially, it seems the hall was to be constructed as a community center and grange hall and after delays encountered through the community/Grange agreement the Grange independently finished construction of its present hall in 1944.

The Hope Grange Hall (Figure 9) is a rectangular, single story wooden structure. Its roof is gabled and the building exterior is sheathed in aluminum siding leaving the original exterior unknown.

The lodge room and antechamber are located in the building's front, while kitchen and dining facilities are located in the rear.



Figure 9.

Conclusions

Now that we have reviewed the grange hall literature (conclusions here are drawn in part from Brownridge's 1976 general overview of the lodges of secret societies) and Benton County's grange halls, the question essentially is, what can be said of grange halls?

There are several aspects of grange organization and function which have had an impact on the architecture of grange halls. First, granges were initially a farmer's organization, the siting of its halls reflect this rural orientation. Many halls are completely isolated from settlement. When located within a town, these tend to be communities of very low population. Grange halls are rarely, if ever, located in urban areas.

The major concern in erecting a hall is economy and the halls reflect this in their simplicity and choice of materials. Grange halls usually have little in the way of detail and stylistic features reflect only the overwhelmingly popular styles of the period. Materials tend to be those which are the least expensive at the time of construction, therefore, virtually all early grange halls are wooden structures with gable roofs, sheathed in clapboards (Brownridge 1976:56).

Ritual and ceremony has had a major impact on grange hall architecture and, it could be said it has virtually guided the floor plans for these buildings.

The rectangular form of all grange halls (usually approaching twice as long as wide) may reflect its need for economy, but a narrow

rectangle or square is as easy to construct and roof as is the formula for the grange hall--the double cube of Masonic ritual and symbolism.

The floor plan usually contains several rooms and features, other than the lodge room itself, related to ritual and ceremony: antechamber, preparation chamber, stage or platform, sets of doors symbolizing inner and outer gates, storage closet or locker for ceremonial regalia, and peep holes in inner and outer gates. Dining and kitchen facilities, though not related to ritual and in many instances not part of original hall plans, are generally part of each hall's evolution.

The antechamber, important for meeting secrecy, is present in all of Benton County's grange halls. This room is always adapted to the individual halls. For instance, the Summit, Hope and Fairmount grange halls have antechambers as part of their end entrances; Mary's River grange hall originally had it as part of its side entrance; and Willamette and Mountain View grange halls have an antechamber as part of their stairways leading to the lodge room.

Preparation chambers, for use of degree candidates and other uses, are present in the Summit, Willamette and Fairmount grange halls. For the Summit and Fairmount halls, the position of the preparation chamber closely approximates that of the floor plan in Figure 1.

A stage or platform, originally used in conducting meetings, is currently used exclusively for plays and similar functions. All of Benton County's grange halls have a stage or platform. Willamette, Hope, Fairmount and Mary's River grange halls have stages as part of the original floor plan; Summit Grange hall's stage was added as a lean-to; and Mountain View has a platform.

A closet or locker for ceremonial regalia is present and essential to all grange halls as the halls are frequently rented for use by non-grangers. All of Benton County's grange halls have this feature as part of their original floor plans.

Doors symbolizing the inner and outer gates of grange ritual are a feature of the antechamber and are positioned to allow access to the lodge room (inner gate) from either a hallway or stairway within the hall or outside the hall (outer gate). In the instance of the Summit, Fairmount and Mountain View Grange halls, these doors have small round peep holes to allow the gatekeeper or steward to view the potential grange meeting participant.

Benton County's grange halls reflect the features Brownridge outlined in his very general treatment of grange halls of the western United States. The external form of the building is often greatly altered by the piecemeal addition of wings. Grange halls are continually being added to and improved upon.

The accretion of wings often gives grange halls a rambling, almost farm-like appearance But in spite of the widely varying ages of the parts, the whole assemblage has a certain unity, and the newer portions are not discordant (1976:52).

The Summit Grange hall reflects this accretion of wings (Figure 4). The hall originally was rectangular, later, a stage lean-to was added and the major addition of the dining and kitchen facilities occurred later still. These additions now offer an interesting and pleasant composition of varying roof pitch and exterior surface.

Concerning the resemblance of Benton County's grange halls to major architectural styles, the buildings seem to have come a complete circle. The halls of the late nineteenth century seem to be essentially featureless. Informants can recall no use of detail in treatment of gables, eaves, windows, porches, doors, etc. Later, grange halls of the early twentieth century reflect to a slight degree the stylistic preferences for the period. The Summit and Mountain View Grange halls (Figures 3 and 4) with their wide eaves, exposed rafters and knee braces definitely show a simple affinity to the intense bungalow fashion of pre-1920. Willamette Grange hall (Figure 2) with its boxed cornice and paired low gables with eave returns has a classical flavor. The Mary's River Grange hall (Figures 5 and 6) with its log construction and shake roof shows the Cascadian style of cabin and lodge architecture used by resorts and the U.S. Forest Service during the 1930s. The circle is completed by the Hope Grange (Figure 9) with its featureless almost barracks-like appearance.

In summary, this paper has highlighted the history of the six Benton County grange halls and has shown that much information on the early grange halls has passed with its members leaving little record of buildings once central to their communities. This paper has also demonstrated a relationship between grange ritual and hall architecture through the almost constant presence of the antechamber, inner and outer gates, etc.; and a relationship between the hall's social meaning and architecture through its additions of stages and dining

And kitchen facilities. Lastly, though all the above, this paper demonstrates the reason and utility of dealing with grange halls as a class apart from other public or institutional architecture.

Appendix

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