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ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

Beinhauer, Myrtle. "Development of the Grange in Iowa, 1868-1930." *The Annals of Iowa* 34 (1959), 597-618.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.7525>

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Development of the Grange in Iowa, 1868-1930

By MYRTLE BEINHAUER*

Since Iowa is an agricultural state, it is understandable that early interest in the improvement of rural life and production was evidenced. Soon after Iowa Territory was created, the landowner turned his attention to the improvement of his status. The Territory was first open for settlement in 1833. By 1838, its First General Assembly passed a law providing for the organization of county agricultural societies.

The farmer showed continued interest in improving his product, his way of life, and his economic status. Throughout the years the Iowa farmer has organized and supported societies dedicated to the improvement of agricultural pursuits and the general welfare of the rural population. Predominately, in the early years of Iowa's development, these organizations emphasized improvement of the farmer's lot through education, but they could not avoid economic and political activities. Later, there appeared societies whose primary concern was the economic problems of the farmer, and still others which were basically political in nature.

THE ORIGIN OF THE GRANGER MOVEMENT

The second oldest agricultural society in Iowa is the Grange, which was founded in 1868.¹ This organization, having had its inception in Washington, D.C. among government officials, is national in scope and, when once started, it found hearty support in Iowa.

Conditions in the South gave rise to the Granger movement. After the Civil war the farmers of America, particularly those in the South, were suffering from hardships and losses. Because of their circumstances, President Johnson, in 1866, authorized the Commissioner

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¹ The oldest is the Horticultural Society, founded in 1866.

of Agriculture to send a clerk through the South to procure "statistical and other information from those states."²

Oliver Hudson Kelley was selected for this mission. He not only noted the farmers' financial distress, but was struck by "their blind disposition to do as their grandfathers had done, their antiquated methods of agriculture, and most of all by their apathy."³ Kelley pondered the situation of the southern farmers and initiated an organization for them based upon the Masonic Order of which he was a member. He interested some of his friends in the idea and, in 1867, seven men, "one fruit grower and six government clerks, equally distributed among the Post Office, Treasury, and Agricultural Departments," founded the Grange.⁴ These men were: O. H. Kelley and W. M. Ireland of the Post Office Department, William Saunders and Rev. A. B. Grosh of the Agricultural Bureau, Rev. John Trimble and J. R. Thompson of the Treasury Department, and F. M. McDowell, a pomologist of Wayne, New York.⁵ On December 4, 1867 they framed the constitution which was the official beginning of the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry.

The purpose of the Grange was the advancement of agriculture through education rather than through politics. With this idea in mind, the men began organizing the farmers according to their new plan. At first progress was slow, but agricultural conditions were so deplorable that the farmer, nearly desperate, was ready to try almost anything to improve them, and before long the Granger movement was in full swing. In Iowa and the surrounding states, it was particularly successful. Dissatisfaction in the midwest was so great that the farmers of this region accepted the organization more readily than those of other sections of the United States.

² Solon J. Buck, *The Agrarian Crusade* (Vol. 45 of *The Chronicles of America Series*; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919), p. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

CAUSES FOR THE RISE OF THE GRANGE

According to W. A. Anderson, in his article "The Granger Movement," there were economic, political, social, educational, and psychological reasons for the Grange's rapid growth in America.⁶ Of these, the economic factors were the most vexing to the farmer, with his most bitter grievance against the railroads. The farmer must market his produce and, in an effort to secure better transportation facilities for his goods, he had supported the railroads, investing large sums in them. He was disappointed in his investment, for he did not receive dividends, nor were his shipping rates lowered.⁷

The railroads had their problems also. Traffic was not great, competition was keen and, in their effort to realize a profit, they discriminated in rates between various towns and customers. Persons shipping to distant points were charged lower rates than those shipping short distances. Thus developed the so-called "long and short haul" discrimination. Again, persons frequently shipping large amounts were given lower rates or, if charged the same rates, were given rebates. These practices incensed the farmer,⁸ who was not a beneficiary. In addition, passengers were treated discourteously. Accommodations for them were inadequate, and the conductors and brakemen were rude to them.

The low price of farm produce caused by overproduction during the Civil war and the aftermath of the Reconstruction period contributed to the discontent. During the war between the states, farm products had been in great demand and their prices were high but, with the close of the war, the demand for these products decreased without a corresponding decrease in their production; so naturally prices fell. Martin, writing in the decade of the 70's, said, "One of the principal causes of the great distress prevailing among the farming in-

⁶ W. A. Anderson, "The Granger Movement," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, Vol. 22. (January, 1924), p. 9.

⁷ Solon J. Buck, *The Granger Movement* (Vol. 19 of *Harvard Historical Series*; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913), p. 294.

⁸ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

terest today is the low price which the farmer receives for his product."⁹

On the other hand, while the farmer was getting a low price for his products, the middleman was making handsome profits, or so it seemed to the unhappy farmer. Martin expressed the sentiment of the time when he said:

Now the truth is, that of all the profits we have enumerated, (miller's, merchant's, and farmer's) that of the farmer is the smallest and the most unfair. It is not in proportion to that of the merchant or miller. He is robbed by the railroads in the first instance, and in the next place his price is kept down in order that the grain merchant and the miller may enlarge their profits.¹⁰

Depreciated currency was a third reason for complaint. Many farmers had contracted debts during the Civil war when prices were high and currency was inflated. These debts had to be paid with goods. With the return to peace, money began to appreciate in value which was equivalent to a decrease in prices. Naturally, if a product was worth only 50 per cent of its former value, it would require twice as much to pay a given debt. This meant that, while the dollar amount of the debt had not increased, the lower price of goods had the effect of increasing the indebtedness. Greater purchasing power was paid the creditor than he had loaned and, conversely, the debtor farmer repaid greater purchasing power than he had borrowed. With falling prices, it became increasingly difficult for the farmer to meet his obligations plus the seemingly exorbitant interest rates.

Finally, among the economic reasons for dissatisfaction were high taxes. To defray the cost of the Civil war, the government needed more money. Taxes rose. Theoretically, taxes on all property were increased during the period of strife, but in reality the farmer felt the burden most keenly because his property was

⁹ Edward W. Martin, (pen name of James Dabney McCabe), *History of the Grange Movement* (San Francisco: National Publishing Company through A. F. Bancroft Company, 1873), p. 294.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

chiefly in land which was easily assessed. On the other hand, possessors of intangible property were able to avoid taxes on a large portion of their holdings since they could easily be concealed.¹¹

The next group of causes of discontent among farmers, in order of importance, was the political. Anderson accredited this to the fact that the farmer was under-represented in the legislature. To prove his point he stated that the farmers were represented by one legislative member to every 228,000 persons, while professional men were represented by one to every 10,800, and trade and industry by one to every 26,000.¹² It is the opinion of Buck that, at this period, the farmer was looked upon as a stable element whose vote could be depended upon for the party, and hence his interests received little consideration from the politician.¹³

The remaining causes of discontent, while seemingly minor, were nevertheless significant. Educationally and socially great differences existed between rural and urban populations. Rural communities were comparatively isolated and had fewer school facilities than the towns. Consequently, they did not enjoy the social and educational advantages of the urban districts, and they felt the apparent class distinction between themselves and their city cousins.¹⁴ Psychologically, the extreme individualism of the farmer increased his discontent and dissatisfaction, but at the same time, it made him more willing to support an organization whose purpose was to better the then existing conditions.¹⁵

GROWTH OF THE GRANGER MOVEMENT IN IOWA

With the farmers of the country so obviously disgruntled, the Grange found fertile soil, especially in Iowa, where agriculture was the chief occupation. Iowa claims the oldest Grange west of the Mississippi River,

¹¹ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹³ Buck, *The Granger Movement*, p. 36.

¹⁴ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

that of Buena Vista, located about four miles from Newton.¹⁶ This Grange came into existence when A. Failor of Newton, on May 2, 1868, sent the required \$15.00 fee to Washington, D.C. and secured a charter for the Newton group.¹⁷ This was soon followed by a second Grange, established at Pottsville October, 1869. Later that same year, Kelley himself organized a third at Waukon.

During the year 1870, largely through the efforts of General W. D. Wilson, nine more Granges were added, making a total of twelve such organizations in Iowa.¹⁸ On January 12, 1871, representatives of these twelve local groups organized the Iowa State Grange with Dudley W. Adams, Master and General W. D. Wilson, Secretary.¹⁹ At this time the enthusiastic members planned to organize the entire state into local Granges and to work through them to redress the grievances of the farmer. As a result of their ardor and activity, the number of Granges in Iowa reached thirty-seven by April, 1871; by the end of that year, 102 locals had been instituted.²⁰ Within another year, over one-half the Granges in the entire United States were in Iowa; of the 1,150 local Granges in existence, 652 were in Iowa.²¹ This surprising development was revealed by Martin when he reported that, "the most remarkable growth was manifest in the state of Iowa, in which as many as eighty Granges per week were organized at one period of the present year [1873]."²²

The following chart shows the singular growth of the Grange in Iowa.²³

¹⁶ Letter, F. L. Hummel, Master of the Iowa State Grange, to Myrtle Beinhauer, February 16, 1931.

¹⁷ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹⁸ Buck, *The Granger Movement*, p. 49.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50. The State Grange held its first meeting after its organization meeting, September 14, 1871.

²⁰ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²² Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

²³ Buck, *The Granger Movement*, chart between 58 and 59.

THE GROWTH OF LOCAL GRANGES IN IOWA, 1873-1874

DATE	NO. OF LOCAL GRANGES
May '73	1507
Aug. '73	1763
Oct. '73	1818
Mar. '74	1918
Sept. '74	1991

Another way to demonstrate the spectacular development of the Granger movement in Iowa is to compare it with the growth in other midwestern states as is done in the following table.²⁴

THE GROWTH OF LOCAL GRANGES IN MIDWESTERN STATES, 1873-1874

State	MAY 1873	AUG. 1873	MAR. 1874	SEPT. 1874
Iowa	1506	1763	1918	1999
Minnesota	219	327	467	538
Missouri	245	483	1807	1976
Kansas	128	399	1073	1350
Nebraska	100	300	504	596
Illinois	431	562	1148	1503
Indiana	142	266	1502	1987
Ohio	47	80	594	1014
Michigan	24	40	284	496
Wisconsin	140	189	410	504
Dakota Territory	8	11	47	56

PHILOSOPHY OF THE GRANGE

The Grange, as organized, was a fraternal organization and, therefore, a secret society exclusively for the farmer. Its signs and its symbols played upon the imagination and, since social contacts of the farmer were few at the time of its origin, it filled a need of the period and became distinctly a farmer's club. Membership in the Grange gave a certain glamour and distinction to an otherwise drab existence. At its monthly meetings, the farmer forgot some of the dull monotony of his existence and eagerly participated in the ceremony and business of the organization.

²⁴ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

Its purpose, as expressed in the declaration of the National Grange adopted at St. Louis in 1874, was:

... to foster mutual understanding and cooperation, to buy less and produce more in order to make our farms self-sustaining, to diversify our crops, to act together for our mutual protection and advancement, as occasion may require, to dispense with a surplus of middlemen and bring producers and consumers, farmers and manufacturers into the most direct and friendly relations possible²⁵ and to advance education among ourselves and our children.²⁶

As has been implied, the Grange was composed of the local, the state, and the national Grange units. The local Grange was, of course, the smallest. Anyone interested in agricultural pursuits, male, 16, and female, 18, might become a member,²⁷ after having paid a membership fee of five dollars for men and two dollars for women.²⁸

The membership of the Order is confined to persons engaged in agricultural pursuits. This limitation is necessary as the success of the Order depends upon the unity of interests existing among its members. There must be a common object and a common incentive to attain the fulfillment of that object.²⁹

A charter could be issued a local Grange when at least nine men and four women had pledged themselves to membership, that is, when there were enough persons to fill the offices of a local unit. These officers were Master, Overseer, Lecturer, Steward, Assistant Steward, Chaplain, Treasurer, Secretary, and Gatekeeper, filled by men, and Ceres, Pomona, Flora, and Lady Assistant Steward, held by women.³⁰

Originally the subordinate Grange conferred four degrees:

²⁵ National Grange, *Declaration of Purposes*, pp. 1, 2 (Adopted at St. Louis in 1874).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁷ Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 423.

DEGREE	MEN	WOMEN
First	Laborer	Maid
Second	Cultivator	Shepherdess
Third	Harvester	Gleaner
Fourth	Husbandman	Matron

The members assure us that each rank was conferred with a beautiful, elaborate, and appropriate ceremony. Although the Grange was a secret organization, we have learned that the "ritual is intended to symbolize man in his upward progress toward a better and higher condition."³¹ According to the philosophy contained in the ritual, man's moral and economic development are similar. Man began life as a barbarian. At first he lived by hunting and fishing and was often hungry, but gradually he learned that by laboring, by collecting flocks, and by tilling the soil, he could be assured of plenty. As a result, man began cultivating the soil. As the earth in its primitive state is unfit to bring forth products, so the mind of man without training is unfit to develop moral men and women. As the soil must be prepared to receive the seed, so the mind must be prepared to receive moral truths. Therefore, in the first degree, confidence in intelligent guidance, perseverance in overcoming difficulties, faith in his teacher and guide, and the lesson of fraternity were implanted in the mind.

In the second degree, emphasis was placed upon charity. Just as all soils do not yield the same quantity nor quality of a product, all men do not respond in the same way to their environment. The influences on human life are varied and the result is that human character is diversified. Hence, the members of the Grange were taught to be charitable to their fellow-men.

The third degree was that of the Harvester. After the seed had been planted and grown to maturity, harvest began. The members were assured that for every problem of life there is a solution which comes with the same regularity and certainty as the annual

³¹ Smedley, *Manual of Jurisprudence and Co-operation of the Patrons of Husbandry*, p. 84.

harvest in the agricultural world if they will but wait for it. Consequently, they were taught to await patiently the solution of their problems and not let the mind go forth into the future seeking for evil, or anticipating darkness which may never materialize, or when confronted is easily overcome. "A well-balanced mind will look every difficulty which really presents itself, squarely in the face, and use all honorable and legitimate means to surmount it or put it aside; but a constant going out into the future to borrow trouble is unworthy."³²

The lessons taught in these three degrees were designed to fit the individual for the high moral obligations of citizenship; so to be a Matron or a Husbandman was to occupy a position which could only be reached by study and appreciation of its character. The members learned that:

. . . trust and confidence in each other is essential to growth; that intelligent well-directed labor, a wise understanding of the laws of nature and their operation, are of vital importance and an absolute necessity . . . that we are but the stewards of God's gifts, that we are to be wise in dispensing as well as earnest in gathering, and . . . that only by intelligent action can we hope for success.³³

"Having reached this point we come to comprehend our duty as neighbors, as parents, as friends and as citizens, together with our relations to our country."³⁴ Love of country was shown by participation in a variety of activities as an occupation, sports, and culture. Beautifying the home was studied. The Matron learned the training of the "immortal soul" of her child for "the responsibilities and duties of life."³⁵ The Golden Rule was taught. These teachings were designed to improve the moral life of the members and "when the principles of our Order are fully understood, when

³² *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

its aims and its purposes are reached, wrong doing will scarcely be possible."³⁶

By 1875 the ritual was revised to permit the locals to confer a fifth degree, Pomona, originally conferred by the State Grange and open only to Masters and their wives. This change was made because the State Grange met only once a year with only a few of the Masters present. Because of the infrequency of meetings and the small attendance, the membership felt "the enjoyments and instructions of the real work of the degree were in a great measure lost."³⁷ It was believed that on a local level more would participate; hence the change would be beneficial to both the individual and the organization.

A Pomona Grange could be organized after nine men and four women petitioned the secretary of the State Grange for such an organization. As originally planned all Masters and Past-Masters and their wives who were Matrons, were eligible to membership. In addition, fourth degree members were admitted to membership if, after examination by a special committee, they were found to be sufficiently versed in the ritualistic and unwritten work.

This Grange was to aid and to strengthen the subordinate Granges within its jurisdiction and to look carefully to their interests. Further, this unit was to try all members of the subordinate Granges within its jurisdiction for any offense or misconduct.³⁸

Above the local was the State Grange, which could be organized when a state had a total of fifteen or more locals.³⁹ The membership of this group comprised the Masters and Past-Masters of the local Granges.⁴⁰ The

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

³⁷ Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 436 (Constitution of the Grange, Article IX, Section 5).

³⁸ Smedley, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

³⁹ This is the requirement according to the national constitution adopted in 1873, but apparently this provision was not effective before that time because the Iowa State Grange was organized in 1871 with only twelve locals.

⁴⁰ Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 436 (Constitution of the Grange, Article IX, Section 5).

offices of the State Grange were the same as those of the local, but the officers were elected biennially instead of annually.⁴¹

Uniting all State Granges was the National Grange, which was composed of the Masters and Past-Masters of the State Granges.⁴² This division also met annually and followed the same patterns of organization as the other units, with its officers elected triennially.⁴³ In 1930 the annual meeting of the National Grange was held at Rochester, New York with approximately 30,000 persons attending.⁴⁴

The National Grange bestowed the sixth and seventh degrees. They were Flora (Charity), conferred upon the Masters of the State Granges and their wives who held the rank of Pomona; and Ceres (Faith), bestowed upon any member of the National Grange who had served one year.⁴⁵

The Grange also had a Juvenile Division for children between the ages of five and fourteen organized in a manner similar to the adult branch of the Order.⁴⁶ Each Juvenile Division carried on its own secret work and had educational programs in which its members participated. The work of the division was under the direction of the young people themselves although supervised by an adult.⁴⁷ At their monthly meetings, just as at the adult meetings, parliamentary law, book reviews, and subjects of the day, as well as farm problems, were discussed. In this way, the Grange attempted to make better farmers and better citizens of the rural youth of the nation. All locals did not have a Juvenile Division but apparently records were not complete, for in a letter to the author, Mr. Hummel

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 433.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 423.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Letter, F. L. Hummel, Master of the Iowa State Grange, to Myrtle Beinhauer, August 17, 1931 (Ms. form).

⁴⁵ Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

⁴⁶ Letter, F. L. Hummel, Master of the Iowa State Grange, to Myrtle Beinhauer, February 16, 1931. (Ms. form).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

stated that in 1930 it was impossible to ascertain the exact number of Juvenile Divisions in Iowa.⁴⁸

The entire Grange organization was supported by the membership fees collected by the local Granges, which were five dollars for men and two for women. The support of the State and National Granges is described by Martin in the following manner:

The treasurer of the subordinate Grange is required to pay to the State Grange the sum of \$1 for each man, and fifty cents for each woman initiated into the Grange, such payments being made quarterly. He is also required to pay a quarterly due of six cents for each member.

Each State Grange is required to pay to the National Grange in quarterly installments, the annual due of ten cents for each member of the Order within its jurisdiction. The funds of the Order are guarded by a series of judicious regulations, and their proper administration is thus guaranteed.⁴⁹

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The Grange filled a social and educational need, but from its inception, it was interested in the political and economic questions of the day. One of its more important activities in its early years was in connection with the railroads. Naturally, the question of transportation was important to the farmer. As has already been stated, the railroads discriminated between customers and points of shipment. They charged what the farmer considered unjust rates on farm produce. By 1864 the farmer was complaining loudly about these injustices and was asking that the state legislature regulate railroad rates. The Iowa General Assembly claimed authority to regulate railroad activity under the laws of 1856 and 1866⁵⁰ which stated that any company accepting a land grant would be subject to any regulation the legislature might place upon it. Consequently the Assembly made its first attempt to fix

⁴⁸ Letter, F. L. Hummel, Master of the Iowa State Grange, to Myrtle Beinhauer, August 17, 1931.

⁴⁹ Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 424-25.

⁵⁰ *Laws of Iowa*, 1856, Ex. Sess., Chap. I; *Laws of Iowa*, 1866, Chap. 137, Section 7.

railroad rates in 1866. This bill passed the house but was rejected in the senate.⁵¹ By 1870 three rate bills had been passed in the house, but each was defeated in the senate.⁵²

Feeling became so vehement that in 1870 and 1871 both political parties included the issue in their platforms, declaring the right of the state to control railroads and calling for the exercise of that right. Other attempts were made in 1872 to fix rates, but each bill met the fate of its predecessor. With continued failure the legislature was inclined to discontinue its efforts, but the Iowa Grange was persistent. During the special session of 1873, the Grange memorialized the General Assembly to enact a law "to protect the people from outrageous discrimination and exorbitant charges."⁵³

During the summer of 1873, the Grange's demand for railroad regulation and agricultural cooperation resulted in the organization of the Anti-Monopoly party.⁵⁴ This party demanded that the state legislature fix the maximum freight rates of the railroads of Iowa, permitting them to compete below those rates.⁵⁵ In the fall, fifty of the one hundred legislators elected to the Iowa General Assembly were members of the Anti-Monopoly party, while seventy of them were members of the Grange. With this dominance of agricultural interest, the legislature found it possible to enact a bill, effective July 4, 1874, which divided the railroads of Iowa into three classes: A, those with gross earnings of \$4,000 per mile; B, those with gross earnings between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per mile; and C, those with gross earnings of \$3,000 or less per mile. A detailed rate schedule was given. Each company was to post classification and schedules of fares, and make an annual report to the governor of the state, giving its gross receipts.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Iowa Senate, *Journal*, 1866: 25, 495, 540, 661; Iowa House, *Journal*, 1866: 59, 184, 235, 290, 438-56, 517, 764.

⁵² Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁵³ Buck, *The Granger Movement*, p. 169.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 513 (Platform Anti-Monopoly Party).

⁵⁶ *Laws of Iowa*, 1874, Chap. 68.

The railroads protested the law, claiming that the rates were too low for them to operate profitably. The law was not successful. The opposition of the railroad officials was so vehement and the administrative machinery so weak that the law was repealed four years after its passage.⁵⁷

Even though the law was revoked its impact was felt in Iowa's economic philosophy. It was held constitutional by the courts. It established the principle that the state had the right to regulate business, and that, until congress acted, the state could regulate interstate commerce so far as its own citizens were affected.

While the railroad legislation sponsored by the Grange is its most notable work, the Grange sought other legislation. For example, it favored and helped to enact prohibition into law. For years it supported a state income tax for Iowa which was eventually passed. It worked for several years, though unsuccessfully, to make military training in the state college optional. Other measures it supported were the abolition of the county assessor and the popular election of the county superintendent of schools.⁵⁸ While this is not a complete list of the Grange's legislative program, it does give an idea of its scope.

The Grange set up a systematic organization for presenting its bills to the legislature. First, needed changes were discussed in the local Grange, and a resolution embodying these needs was sent to the state legislative committee located at the state capitol. If the issue was of nation-wide interest, the resolution was sent to the national committee at Washington, D. C. The Grange did not use the lobby extensively nor did it resort to propaganda campaigns in behalf of, or in opposition to, pending legislative measures. It merely sought to bring its viewpoint and desires before the legislators.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *Laws of Iowa*, 1878, Chap. 77.

⁵⁸ Letter, F. L. Hummel, Master of the Iowa State Grange, to Myrtle Beinhauer, August 17, 1931. (Ms. form).

⁵⁹ National Grange, *The Grange in Legislation*, p. 1.

COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISES

Following their avowed purpose "to foster cooperation," the farmers undertook cooperative buying and selling enterprises. Iowa was the first state in which Grange cooperatives achieved marked success.⁶⁰ The first cooperative effort of the farmer was the purchasing of large quantities of goods from the local dealers. Later a county agent was appointed who took orders for his community and, with growing success, a state agent was employed. The first agent was J. D. Whitman, appointed in 1872, who maintained headquarters at Des Moines.⁶¹

Through cooperative buying large amounts were saved the farmer. According to Martin, "It is safe to say . . . that the purchases have amounted to many thousands, and that not less than \$50,000 have been saved to the farmers of the state, within a year in the purchase of plows and cultivators alone."⁶² Not only were there savings on these implements, but large discounts were also received on other commodities. It is estimated that 40 per cent was saved on sewing machines; 20 to 25 per cent on parlor organs; 15 per cent on shellers; 20 per cent on wagons; 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent on hay forks; and 25 per cent on implements. General Wilson, Secretary of the State Grange, thought that by 1873 two million dollars had been saved through cooperatives.⁶³

By 1874 cooperative buying had reached its peak. It is estimated that for that year the volume of business transacted by the Grange reached the five million dollar mark.⁶⁴ It is remarkable that a new enterprise should have grown to this extent in two years. Especially is this development noteworthy because it was the first experience with cooperatives in Iowa. The

⁶⁰ Buck, *The Granger Movement*, p. 243.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 477.

⁶⁴ This amount includes the amount of business handled both in buying and selling.

singular achievement of this new experiment for 1874 is shown in the following summary:⁶⁵

PURCHASES AND SAVINGS MADE BY THE GRANGE COOPERATIVES
IN IOWA 1874

PRODUCT BOUGHT	AMOUNT PAID	PER CENT OF SAVING
Farm implements	\$225,000	27
Farm supplies	445,612	18
Lumber	107,000	15

Cooperative selling developed hand in hand with buying and, even before State Agent J. D. Whitman was appointed in 1872, one-third of all the elevators and warehouses in Iowa were owned by the Granges.⁶⁶ To market farm produce, agents were located at New York and Chicago. They received all the Granges' shipments and sold them at the best possible price. For their services these agents received a 1 per cent commission. From the following chart, showing the amount of produce sold by these agents in 1874, it is evident that the farmer had the utmost confidence in cooperative selling:

AMOUNT OF PRODUCE SOLD AND GAIN MADE THROUGH
GRANGE COOPERATIVES IN IOWA
1874

PRODUCE SOLD	AMOUNT SOLD	PER CENT OF GAIN
Farm produce	\$3,234,000	11
Livestock	1,021,200	12

It was also in that successful year of 1874 that the Grange cooperatives embarked upon a venture which was to herald their downfall. It was then that the National Grange, led by the enthusiastic E. R. Shankland of Iowa, conceived the idea of manufacturing farm implements.⁶⁷ Manufacturing establishments were set up in Iowa and in other midwestern states. Attempts were made to manufacture plows, binders, harrows, and other agricultural machinery.

⁶⁵ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁶⁷ Buck, *The Granger Movement*, p. 269.

For several reasons the Grange was unable to support such enterprises. First, it did not have enough capital to organize factories properly. Secondly, the market was too small. The Iowa factories could sell to Iowa farmers, but they could not sell to the farmers of other states for that was the market of the Grange manufacturing establishments of those states. The farmer used a machine several years. The number of farmers in Iowa was not increasing rapidly. Consequently, when the Grange factory had once supplied the farmer's needs, there would be little market for its product until the implements needed to be replaced several years later. In other words, the number of machines a factory could sell equalled the number of farmers in Iowa. Even then, each farmer was a prospective customer only once in approximately five years. Under these conditions, it is apparent that the market of these factories was too small to allow expansion of the plants or, for that matter, to cover costs. Thirdly, the farmer, to a great degree, needed to purchase seed and implements on credit. It was soon evident that the Grange manufacturing enterprises did not have sufficient capital to advance the necessary credit.

Because the factories did not have adequate capital nor income to meet the demands placed upon them, they failed. With their failure, faith was lost in all cooperative enterprises and the movement rapidly declined. Only three years after the inception of the cooperative movement, the Grange records stated that so few reports were made by the various business enterprises that it was impossible to make, an accurate statement regarding the extent of their business, except that they had saved the farmer "many thousands."⁶⁸

Although the cooperative efforts of the Grange were successful for a time and apparently saved large sums for the farmer, they were ultimately failures. In the first place, cooperative buying and selling required working together which was foreign to the independent

⁶⁸ Iowa State Grange, *Proceedings Sixth Annual Session, 1875*, p. 12.

spirit of the farmer who is first of all an individualist.⁶⁹ In the second place, many of the enterprises were not suitable for cooperatives. This was particularly true of manufacturing, as previously noted.⁷⁰ Third, the management of the cooperatives was in the hands of inexperienced persons whose frequent blunders caused large financial losses. Finally, the extensive credit needed by the farmer undermined cooperative buying and selling. The Grange at first insisted upon cash payments, while its competitors would sell on credit. When competition became too strong, the Grange was compelled to extend credit which, when once given, had to be continued. With the extension of credit and the resultant "bad debts," the financial condition of the cooperative system was greatly impaired.⁷¹

Although the cooperative efforts of the Grange ultimately failed, they were not without benefit. They resulted, temporarily, in large savings for the farmer and they showed the farmer that the hated middleman did perform beneficial and necessary services.

NONECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

The Grange's opposition to the railroads and its cooperatives have without question, received most attention, but the Grange was also interested in educational and social pursuits, that is, in the general welfare of the community. This is in keeping with the organization's declared purpose "to educate and elevate the American farmer." The social activities were largely the monthly meetings and the annual Grange picnics which brought the farm families of a community together. Particularly was this important in the early period of Grange activity when recreation was scant and transportation difficult, forcing the farmer to stay home the greater part of the year. At these meetings, and especially at the annual Grange picnics, the members met to play, to gossip and to be entertained.

Education was also carried on through the programs

⁶⁹ Buck, *The Granger Movement*, p. 274.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

of the monthly meetings. Here, public speaking, parliamentary law, subjects of the day and the latest books, in addition to subjects pertaining to farm life, were discussed. As a part of the educational feature, the subordinate Granges were asked to send crop reports to the secretary of the State Grange, who in turn gave these reports to agricultural papers for dissemination. The reports thus compiled were claimed by some to be more accurate than those published by the government.⁷² In an attempt to aid in the education of children, equipment and magazine subscriptions were given to schools.⁷³

The Grange was also active in charitable work. One of its early projects was to provide for 980 families made destitute by the grasshopper plague of 1873.⁷⁴ In later days, it provided toys for children's homes, gave dinners to the poor, presented fruit and candy to the sick, supplied beds for hospitals, and furnished hot lunches for needy children in schools.⁷⁵

DECLINE OF THE GRANGE

From 1875, the prestige of the Grange diminished in Iowa. There are a variety of causes for this decline: first, the business failures of the cooperative enterprises; second, legislation which proved unwise;⁷⁶ third, reaction to the very rapid growth during the years of 1873 and 1874;⁷⁷ fourth, the rapid growth resulted in a large membership which it was impossible to maintain;⁷⁸ fifth, politicians and other "outsiders" who were interested in their own gains rather than in the promotion of agriculture, crept into the organization.⁷⁹

The startling rapidity of the Grange's decline in Iowa is shown in the following table:

⁷² Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁷³ National Grange, *The Grange and the Community*.

⁷⁴ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁷⁵ National Grange, *The Grange and the Community*.

⁷⁶ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁷⁷ Buck, *The Granger Movement*, p. 70.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁷⁹ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

THE RAPID DECLINE OF THE GRANGE MOVEMENT IN IOWA
SHOWN BY THE DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF LOCAL
GRANGES, 1875-1892

YEAR	NUMBER OF LOCAL GRANGES
1875	1838
1876	1018
1885	8
1886	15
1887	36
1888	40
1889	37
1890	52
1891	31
1892	25

By 1930 the Grange was still moderately strong and active in Jasper county where the movement originated, and in Mahaska county, but elsewhere in Iowa its influence had diminished. During the '30's it was far more active in the eastern states than in the midwest⁸¹ where it was once dominate. This fact can probably be accounted for in two ways. First, the leadership in Iowa was not as competent as in the eastern states. True, the leadership in Iowa was efficient in the early period, but it gradually fell into less capable hands, while in the East it was retained by able men. Second, growth in membership in the Grange was phenomenal in Iowa. When growth of any organization is unusually rapid, it is difficult to continue that growth or even maintain its strength. Facilities cannot expand to meet the needs or interests of all. Consequently, there is usually a correspondingly rapid decline in the organization. Such was the case with the Grange in Iowa, whereas strength was maintained in the east where it had grown more slowly. Third, Grange cooperatives in Iowa far outnumbered those of any other area. With the failure of large numbers of these enterprises, support of the entire Granger movement was withdrawn.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁸¹ Interview, Carl Kennedy, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture in Iowa, August, 1931.

In the East, with fewer business failures, reaction against the Grange was less violent.⁸²

CONTRIBUTION OF THE GRANGE

There is no doubt but that the Grange rendered valuable service to the farmer, especially in the frontier days. It helped him to meet and to overcome many difficulties which were then confronting him. Specifically, it helped him to obtain legislative regulation of the railroad rates, which placed him in a more equitable position with respect to other shippers. Thus, he was able to realize greater benefits in the marketing of his crops.

Through education it encouraged him to increase his production and to broaden his life, and that of his family. It taught his wife to manage her household more efficiently and later, through the Juvenile Division, it taught his children to use to better advantage the opportunities which were offered them. When the Great Depression came, the Grange still felt that it had a great work to perform.⁸³ It hoped through its social, educational and legislative activities to make the farmer's home a more beautiful and profitable place in which to live.

⁸² Interview, Carl Kennedy, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture of Iowa, August, 1931.

⁸³ Letter, F. L. Hummel, Master of the Iowa State Grange, to Myrtle Beinhauer, August 17, 1931.

New Book on the Sac and Fox Indians

The Oklahoma University Press recently published a new study of *The Sac and Fox Indians*. Well written by William T. Hagan, professor of history at North Texas State College, it is amply documented and enhanced by several fine illustrations. The author limited his treatment of the Sac and Fox sojourn in Iowa, from 1833 to 1846, to one chapter. And oddly enough, he does not list any manuscript sources on his subject to be found in Iowa.

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