

“A Survey and Inventory of Historic Grange Halls in Lane County, Oregon with Historic Context Report”

Terminal Project by Gail Hammerich



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Acknowledgements:

Liz Carter, Terminal Project Committee Chair  
Janice Rutherford, Terminal Project Committee Member

Phyllis Wilson, Oregon State Grange Master

All Lane County Grangers

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

*“Too much emphasis can scarcely be placed upon the part Grange halls during the entire history of the Order have played as community centers, the brightness of whose lights has done much to illuminate entire localities, and before whose glowing beams ignorance, misunderstanding and prejudice have been largely dispelled...Each [grange hall] is a symbol of the progress rural families have made in the past eighty years as the result of ‘meeting together, talking together, working together, buying together, selling together, and in general acting together’ for their ‘mutual protection and advancement, as occasion may require.’”<sup>1</sup>*

### **Significance of Study**

Established in 1867, the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry – otherwise known as the Grange – is the nation’s oldest national agricultural organization. Similar to the unions that were formed to represent industrial workers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the National Grange and its subordinate community granges were formed to protect farmers from railroad companies, warehouse owners, merchants, and other businesses who threatened to take advantage of what was otherwise a scattered and voiceless population of rural agricultural workers.<sup>2</sup> Once the cornerstone of social and business life in Lane County’s rural communities, many of these local granges are facing extinction due to urban sprawl, limited funding, and decreasing numbers of private agricultural enterprises. Because these grange halls represent a significant cultural component of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American history, it is vital that efforts be undertaken to inventory the remaining buildings, thus providing an important groundwork for future preservation efforts.

Previous to this study, no cohesive record existed documenting each of Lane County’s remaining grange halls with attention to physical location, building materials, architectural style, condition, significance, or approximate date of construction. Nor was there any document that discussed the possibility of the grange hall as a distinct building type. At the time of this study, the Oregon State Grange itself was only just beginning to realize the historical significance of its individual properties. A survey and

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<sup>1</sup> Charles M. Gardner, *The Grange – Friend of the Farmer* (Washington, D.C.: The National Grange, 1949), 366.

<sup>2</sup> Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Lowell Grange, by Sarah K. Hahn, 2005.

inventory of community grange buildings located within Lane County would not only reveal to the Oregon State Grange the historical value of many grange halls under its administration, but such a study might also serve as a template for other counties in this and other states who wish to document their own historic grange halls.

The major significance of this project lies in the fact that the Grange has been, and in many ways still is, an immensely influential component of life in rural America; the history of the Grange is a history of the struggles and triumphs of the American farmer. Unfortunately, it is also a history that does not get told nearly as often as its more “glamorous” counterparts like the unionization of a large part of the country’s industrial workforce. Because grange halls are located in rural areas and small towns across the country, they are important on the local history level, but as branches of a much larger, nationwide movement, they also symbolize the joint efforts of independent farmers across the country to stand up for themselves and to speak out against issues that were deleterious to rural America. Today’s grange halls stand as tangible reminders of our country’s agricultural past and as monuments to a way of life that in many places no longer exists. Old farmsteads have long been preserved, and it is only logical that this part of the history of agricultural life should also be studied and preserved if a complete picture of the whole is to survive.

### **Project Goals**

The goal of this study is to provide the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and the Oregon State Grange, as well as any interested historic preservation organizations or individuals, with an accurate and comprehensive list of existing historic grange halls in Lane County, including descriptions of each building’s physical location, building materials, architectural style, condition, significance, National Register eligibility, and approximate date of construction. In addition, this study attempts to ascertain the social, economic, cultural, and environmental conditions under which these granges were organized and their buildings constructed. Finally, this study focuses on the nature of the forces that currently threaten these grange halls (including urban sprawl, limited funding, and decreasing numbers of private agricultural enterprises, among others) and the treatment options that might be the best preservation solutions for endangered Lane County grange halls. Ideally, this survey will not only serve as a template for similar surveys in other counties, but will also provide a foundation for a National Register Multiple Property Submission covering grange halls throughout the state.

## **Research Design and Methodology**

In order to meet the primary goals of this study as outlined above, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research techniques including field survey (quantitative), case-study (qualitative), and historical-comparative (qualitative) methods of inquiry and data collection were used. Historical-comparative research was especially useful, as it formed the framework of the archival research phase of this project. Both case-study research and field survey research can be of the utmost importance when applied to any group of threatened historic resources. Such research broadens current understandings of an architectural style or historic trend; in addition, the physical documentation (photographs, drawings, site plans, etc.) compiled as a part of this research provides future preservationists and historians with detailed records of a building type that only a few years from now may not longer exist. This, indeed, may be the case with many of Lane County's historic grange halls.

All research for this project has been conducted within the interpretive methodological paradigm with a constructivist orientation; as such, my research design was organized in a way that enabled me to create a report that was grounded in historical and architectural research and that provided concrete information regarding the location, condition, and historical significance of existing historic grange halls in Lane County. An idiographic approach to this research has also allowed me to limit any abstract theories or concepts from obscuring the concrete focus and practical applications of my study.

Delimitations in this study were based primarily on the geographic boundaries of Lane County, Oregon, while limitations include the possibility that my findings may be open to generalizations. An attempt has been made, however, to limit this possibility by including a discussion of the extent to which the information gathered through my research might be successfully applied to granges in other counties and states.

In order to analyze the data collected through a survey and inventory of existing grange halls in Lane County, I have focused on four initial themes: the history of Lane County, specifically agricultural areas and those of dense grange membership; the history of the Grange as a national, state, and local organization; traditional building types and methods commonly employed in grange hall construction; and preservation plans that have been adopted with similarly threatened building types. Because each of these concepts is closely tied to the others, a full understanding of each is necessary to present an in-depth study of the whole.

In addition, it is important to understand the unique relationships between each of these concepts and how those relationships may have evolved over time. The history of Lane County and its agriculture has shaped the identity and locations of individual grange halls, and turning points in Lane County history – introduction of the railroad, for example – often relate to important milestones in local grange history as well. In addition, the history of Lane County, its resources, and its people is also tied to the construction methods and building materials that were traditionally used in the area. A detailed examination of the Grange Movement in Oregon also reveals the relationships between local grange initiatives and the construction of local grange buildings. Finally, a study of the common forces that are threatening many of Lane County’s historic grange halls indicates which treatment options might be the best fit for local grange chapters and the communities in which they exist.

### **Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

The central location of my study is Lane County, Oregon, although certain findings have made it prudent to briefly examine grange halls in neighboring counties for the purpose of comparison. There are currently twenty-eight existing grange chapters functioning in Lane County today, including one dormant chapter. Investigation was required to determine whether or not each of the twenty-eight active grange organizations is currently meeting in a true grange hall (rather than, say, an all-purpose community center) and exactly how many of those halls can be considered “historic.” For the purposes of this survey, any grange hall over fifty years of age is considered to be historic pursuant to the National Park Service standard. It should be noted that use of the term “historic” in this study refers to age only, and is not to be considered a value-laden term.

The following survey includes extant Lane County grange halls that currently house subordinate grange meetings. Further investigation is required to locate those grange halls that were built by earlier grangers whose orders have since disbanded. The primary information to be collected from each site in this survey was based on the historic property survey form developed by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office in 2007. A modified version of this form, which required information from each building such as date of construction, building materials, architectural style, historic integrity, and method of construction, was my primary research tool when visiting each site. All grange halls received this reconnaissance-level survey; following this, grange halls determined to be historic (over fifty years old) received an intensive level survey which included additional information on the buildings’ significance and ownership history.

My primary methods of data collection consisted of cross-sectional survey work in the field as well as library and archival research at the Lane County Historical Museum, the Oregon State Grange Office, and the University of Oregon library system, among other area libraries, museums, and historical society archives. In addition, existing county-wide historical resource surveys have also been used as model frameworks for my own study.

Throughout the field survey process, field notes and photographs comprised my primary methods of data recording. A descriptive analysis of the data collected through my field survey work has indicated common elements among Lane County grange buildings, such as architectural style, building materials, construction methods, and floorplans. Archival research – through local libraries, museums, historical societies, grange meeting minutes, and other organizational records – has indicated whether these elements correspond to contemporary architectural trends in the area and under what specific social, cultural, economic, and environmental conditions they were created. This information will facilitate my understanding of the field observations made in the survey phase of my research and provide the necessary background for in-depth analysis of the buildings, their history, and their future, thus forming the historical-comparative element of my study.

### **Existing Literature**

Most of the information about historic grange halls in Lane County and elsewhere is contained in countywide rural surveys and grange histories from the early twentieth century, historical society records and photographs, and organizational literature published by the National Grange. There are also several published studies of the Grange Movement in this country, all of which provide important details about the organization's history and influence.

A brief review of existing literature on the Grange Movement reveals that many of these studies evolved between the 1880s and the 1950s. This body of literature generally focuses on the organization's history, future, and organizational structure. Very little attention is given to the physical act of building a grange hall or to the grange hall itself. For example, Scott and Carr in separate reports, document the history of the Grange movement in Oregon and along the Pacific Coast, but neither author gives attention to the architecture inspired by the movement in these areas.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Buck, Woods, and McCabe write extensively about grange history in political, social, and economic terms, but make little,

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<sup>3</sup> Edna A. Scott, "The Grange Movement in Oregon: 1873-1900" (master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1923); Ezra S. Carr, *The Patrons of Husbandry on the Pacific Coast* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft and Company, 1875).

if any, mention of grange architecture.<sup>4</sup> In one of the most recent histories of the Grange Movement, Howard continues earlier writers' tradition of disregarding the tangible aspects of grange history in favor of the movement's social, economic, and cultural histories – all of which are certainly important, but not so much so that they should be allowed to overshadow the movement's material history.<sup>5</sup> Because published authors seem to take the architectural aspect of the grange movement for granted, a noticeable void in grange history has been created – one which this study helps to fill.

In contrast to these and other published histories of the Grange Movement, there are countless recent newspaper articles documenting communities' efforts across the country to preserve their historic grange halls, many of which focus primarily on adaptive reuse. Nearly all of these articles describe the decay into which many grange buildings are falling due to declining (or in some places, nonexistent) grange membership, encroaching urbanization, and, in some cases, state granges' inability to sell or maintain their property. In a similar fashion, Gwartney's article examines the impact of declining grange membership on community grange halls, most notably those in Oregon.<sup>6</sup> In addition to revealing the common threats that grange halls across the country are facing every day, articles like these also illustrate various treatment options that have proven to be successful alternatives to complete demolition.

Individual government reports also help to fill in the architectural histories that most published Grange histories ignore. For example, Lane County contains two grange halls that are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The reports that brought about those listings contain important documentation of those buildings, as well as general information about the formation of those individual grange chapters.

Because of the lack of previous research and documentation of historic grange halls, this study fills a gap in existing grange-related studies, the vast majority of which focus almost entirely on the history of the Grange Movement while mentioning little, if anything, about the physical manifestations of the organization.

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<sup>4</sup> James Dabney McCabe, *History of the Grange Movement, or the Farmer's War Against Monopolies* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Co., 1873);

Thomas A. Woods, *Knights of the Plow* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1991);

Solon Justus Buck, *The Granger Movement: A Study of Agricultural Organization and Its Political, Economic, and Social Manifestations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913).

<sup>5</sup> David H. Howard, *People, Pride and Progress: 125 Years of the Grange in America* (Washington, D.C.: National Grange, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Debra Gwartney, "Grange Interlude," *Preservation Magazine* (January/February 2003): 40-43.

**Project Timeline**

This study began in earnest with field survey work in October and November of 2008 and continued into the new year with primary research into library and museum archives. Analysis of this information along with composition of the final document began in February of 2009 and continued through early April. The completed project, "A Survey and Inventory of Historic Grange Halls in Lane County, Oregon with Historic Context Report," was presented to committee members and University of Oregon Historic Preservation faculty and students on June 1, 2009.

## Chapter 2: History

*“Everything that was of interest to the community was discussed and acted upon if necessary...And if anyone in the community had sickness or bad luck, the Grange was ready to help.”<sup>7</sup>*

### **History of the Grange Movement**

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, America’s independent farmers began to experience a wide range of economic, political, and social changes that brought upon them what was seen as an undue share of difficulties. Together, these problems created a situation among the farming population that was ripe for the birth of a national farmer’s union.

One of the common complaints among farmers in the mid-nineteenth century was that their interests were not adequately represented in the federal government. Even though farmers constituted the majority of America’s working class population at the time, and as Buck notes, were “far more numerous than all the professions combined,” farmers had “little if any influence in the government of the country.”<sup>8</sup> This was in sharp contrast to the politics of the first decades of the century when a large number of men holding high political offices made their living via agriculture. In the years leading up to the Civil War, independent farmers and southern planters served as legislators, executive officials, and political figures at various levels of government, and as a result, agricultural interests were sure to receive adequate consideration.<sup>9</sup> With the industrialization of many cities in the mid-nineteenth century, however, those holding high government positions tended to be businessmen, bankers, and lawyers; not surprisingly, commercial and manufacturing interests supplanted those of the agricultural class. At the same time, in an effort to make their concerns known to their representatives in Congress, mercantile and manufacturing unions emerged to form a collective voice from those sectors of the working class.<sup>10</sup>

This political shift from agricultural interests to those of big business naturally coincided with a sharp decline in the social status of the independent farmer. During America’s revolutionary period and the

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<sup>7</sup> Matilda Graham to Triangle Grange #533 in *The Pioneers of Lake Creek Valley (and a Few Later Ones)* by Elma Rust (Blachly, OR: Eugene Public Library, 1984), 297.

<sup>8</sup> A.B. Gosh, *Mentor in the Granges and Homes of Patrons of Husbandry* (New York: Clark & Maynard, 1876), 30.

<sup>9</sup> Solon Justus Buck, *The Granger Movement: A Study of Agricultural Organization and It’s Political, Economic, and Social Manifestations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), 34.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

decades immediately following, farming was generally seen as a gentlemanly occupation, and earning a living from working the land was viewed as an honorable pursuit that bred virtues like industry and self-reliance. Over time, however, this gracious view of farmers gradually declined until, by the 1870s, farming had come to be seen as a crude pursuit that was “suitable only to those who were not equipped for anything else.”<sup>11</sup>

As the political activity and social status of the agricultural class waned in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, not only did farmers feel that they were not receiving adequate representation in their national government, but they also felt that their interests were not being considered by the government officials who were supposed to be representing them. This disconnect between America’s farmers and its government was due, in large part, to the fact that officers appointed to positions within the Federal Bureau of Agriculture were relatively ignorant of most farmers’ shared interests and concerns. Since the country’s farmers were generally isolated in rural areas and in many cases had neither the time nor the opportunity to express their concerns, it is not surprising that their representatives in Washington D.C. were not aware of their problems.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Buck notes that because farmers were seen as a stable population that tended to follow “blindly in the wake of the political party to which they had been attached by issues now dead and gone,” most politicians felt that they had little to gain from including agricultural interests in their party platforms, or even in the framing of state and national legislation.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to a lack of adequate representation in the federal government, farmers in the first half of the nineteenth century also lacked educational opportunities, both in modern agricultural techniques and in practical business and economics. In particular, their ignorance of basic economic principles and the ways in which those principles applied to their own concerns made it difficult for them to “reason intelligently in matters in which their own interests were at stake” and was at least partly responsible for their constant financial losses in the marketing of crops and the buying of supplies.<sup>14</sup> Although several states did promote their own agricultural colleges in the 1850s and 1860s, these schools were in their infancy and often did not receive adequate state or federal funding. Consequently, many farmers believed that members of the working class whose jobs allowed them to live in urban centers had better access to educational opportunities and instructional centers and that rural workers were at a marked

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 38.

disadvantage as they generally did not have the time or the means to reach the educational organizations located within the nation's metropolitan areas. In reality, urban workers saw that proximity to educational centers did not necessarily bring increased opportunities, and they actually shared many of the same complaints as their rural counterparts – hence the formation of labor groups like the Knights of Labor.

Additionally, the agricultural newspapers that would later serve to educate farmers were not common until the last years of the nineteenth century, and those that existed earlier offered little practical or scientific advice. In fact, O.H. Kelley, the founding father of the Grange, wrote in 1867 that in one state, the circulation of such agricultural papers “was but one to every two hundred and thirty inhabitants” and that “of the science of agriculture...there was ninety per cent. [of farmers] who were totally ignorant.”<sup>15</sup>

Many farmers, however, believed that their problems were entirely external. When it came to marketing their crops and buying supplies, most farmers believed that their financial losses were solely the result of dishonest middlemen and discriminatory railroad rates. Buck notes that “farmers were wont to look upon agriculture and land as the source of all wealth and to divide society into the two classes of producers and non-producers” and that the non-productive class was “looked upon distinctly as a necessary evil.”<sup>16</sup> Among these non-producers were the middlemen who acted as liaisons between producers and consumers. Farmers generally dealt with two types of middlemen: those who bought and sold their produce and those who sold agricultural supplies on behalf of large corporations. From the farmer's point of view, the price he received for his produce seemed to be fixed by the middlemen to whom he sold, while the price of the supplies he bought seemed to be fixed by the middlemen from whom he purchased.<sup>17</sup>

By far the most common source of frustration to the farmer in the nineteenth century, however, was the railroad companies. In the latter half of the century, many railroad companies began to form large-scale consolidations in order to end damaging rate wars, resulting in a standard rate that was agreed upon by the leading railroad executives. In addition, many railroad corporations created what was generally referred to as “the free pass system” which gave all public officials at any level of government unlimited

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<sup>15</sup> O.H. Kelley, *The Origin and Progress of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry in the United States: A History from 1866 to 1873* (Philadelphia: J.A. Wagenseller, 1875), 17-18.

<sup>16</sup> Buck, *The Granger Movement*, 16.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

free rail transportation for themselves and their families. Not surprisingly, this system practically eliminated any political support farmers, or anyone else with grievances against the railroad lines, might find.

In addition, there were other, more personal injustices to which railroad companies subjected the independent farmer. These injustices came primarily in the form of discriminatory freight rates. Many farmers believed that railroads charged higher rates in isolated areas where there was no real competition than in places where alternate forms of transport existed. In actuality, however, this was not common practice; far more common was the equally unjust practice of issuing secret rebates to large companies who needed to ship the largest amounts of freight. Railroad companies designed the rebate system to attract and keep their biggest customers, but it came at the expense of independent farmers whose relatively small shipments did not warrant a discount. Because these railroad companies were not publicly owned, they denied the right of local, state, and federal governments to interfere with their operations.

Many farmers' distrust of the railroads was also a result of their early financial investments in such companies that, in the end, did not pay out as expected. During the railroad boom of the 1850s, many farmers had bought railroad shares by mortgaging their farms; they naturally assumed that a railroad in their area would make it cheaper and easier to market their produce. Not only did the introduction of the railroad not lower the costs of marketing their produce, but due to unscrupulous management, many railroad companies went through a series of reorganizations that also effectively wiped out much of the stock that had been purchased. And so, by the middle of the nineteenth century, a farmer who had invested in the railroad as a means of developing his community "found himself with a mortgage on his land, his railway stock worthless, and the expected advantages from the road a chimera."<sup>18</sup> At the same time, the tax rates in many places increased due to the failed investment that many towns and counties had made in the railroad with the same expectations.

The common system of buying tools, seed, and other agricultural equipment on credit also led many small farmers to inescapable debt which generally came with high interest rates and increased the degree of general poverty within the agricultural class. J.D. McCabe, a New England clergyman and historian, observed the difficulty of many farmers' financial situations first-hand in 1873: "The most that the majority of farmers are capable of achieving is to become the absolute masters of their property.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

He is a lucky man who can do this, who can keep the farm clear of mortgages and himself free from debt.”<sup>19</sup>

In addition to a lack of educational opportunities, an increase in debt, and the disadvantages at which farmers found themselves when dealing with railroad companies and middlemen, they were further impaired by a distinct lack of social opportunities, as a prominent Vermont farmer remarked in 1872: “Of all the evils that fetter and hamper this class of our people, there is nothing so destructive of that happiness human beings were permanently destined to enjoy as the seclusion in which they drag out their lives.”<sup>20</sup> Because many farmers worked large tracts of land, most did not have close neighbors, and the demanding nature of their work left them with little time to visit one another. This disconnect between a farmer and his neighbors not only affected the happiness and general welfare of individuals, but also created a situation in which farmers were ignorant of the interests they shared with their neighbors and consequently, of those of the agricultural class as a whole.

Individually, many of the problems that beset farmers in the mid-nineteenth century might have been manageable, but together these issues created the need for a platform from which farmers could band together and speak out on issues that affected their livelihood. By the end of the Civil War, the situation in rural America was ripe for the formation of a nationwide farmers’ union; such were the circumstances in 1867 when the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry was born.

### **The National Order of the Patrons of Husbandry**

The inspiration to form a national organization of farmers came in 1866 when the U.S. Department of Agriculture commissioned Oliver Hudson Kelley – then a clerk in that department – to provide a survey of agricultural conditions in the post-war South. On his travels, Kelley witnessed the plight of countless disheartened, apathetic, and frustrated farmers scattered throughout the devastated South. This tour, along with his personal experience farming the Minnesota prairie and his previous travels through the Midwest, awakened Kelley to the “utterly helpless condition of the farming interest, not only of the South, but of the whole country. . . The farmers were scattered, divided in opinions, almost indifferent to their condition, and without any means of expressing or enforcing their views as a body.”<sup>21</sup> While nearly every other industry seemed to have some form of labor organization, or was progressing in that

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<sup>19</sup> James Dabney McCabe, *History of the Grange Movement or the Farmer’s War Against Monopolies* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Co., 1873), 289.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 454.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

direction, this type of cooperation was nearly nonexistent in agricultural work, a fact which Kelley acknowledged in a letter to a friend upon returning from his tour of the South: “Everything is progressing. Why not the farmers?”<sup>22</sup>

As the federal government struggled with Reconstruction policies and the enforcement of new legislation in the South, Kelley saw no improvement in the lot of small farmers, noting that “politicians [will] never restore peace in the country; if it [comes] at all, it must be through fraternity.”<sup>23</sup> As a member of the Freemasons, Kelley believed that a “Secret Society of Agriculturists” would best be able to bridge party lines and unite farmers throughout the country.<sup>24</sup>

As a result, Kelley, along with six other government officials who shared his beliefs, founded the National Order of the Patrons of Husbandry in December of 1867 as a fraternal organization designed to unite and give voice to the country’s scattered and unorganized farm population. The seven founders included Kelley himself, along with William Saunders, Aaron B. Grosh, William M. Ireland, John R. Thompson, Francis McDowell, and John Trimble. Together, these men elected officers, composed the order’s constitution, and soon developed a meeting ritual that would be carried out at all future assemblies of the Order. Kelley’s niece, Caroline Hall, was also instrumental in the early formation of the Patrons of Husbandry; in particular, she insisted that women be allowed as full members – a drastic departure from the male-dominated Masonic fraternity on which the Order was initially modeled.

At a time when America was struggling with post-war reconstruction, the newly formed Grange, as the order came to be known (derived from the Latin *granium*, meaning “farm”) enabled farmers North and South to join together to speak out on issues important to the common welfare of rural America. This representation was especially needed in the last half of the nineteenth century as the new technologies of the Industrial Revolution increasingly quickened the pace of industry and increased the number of capitalists and railroad monopolies that threatened to exploit private farmers. A notable instance of exploitation occurred in 1872 when the infamous Credit Mobilier scandal brought the corrupt relationship between railroad corporations and high government officials to light.

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<sup>22</sup> O.H. Kelley, *Origin and Progress*, 25.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>24</sup> David H. Howard, *People Pride and Progress: 125 Years of the Grange in America* (Washington, DC: National Grange, 1992), 37.

Shortly after the first official meeting of the National Grange in January of 1868, the first subordinate grange, Potomac Grange No. 1, was formed in Washington DC as a “practice grange” for the emerging ritual work.<sup>25</sup> In April of that year, founding father O. H. Kelley set off on a journey to spread news of the virtues of grange membership to farmers throughout rural America who had yet to hear of the organization. Largely through Kelley’s efforts and the advocacy of independent rural newspapers, local granges were formed first in Eastern and Midwestern states, and later in the West and Northwest. By September of 1873, the total number of subordinate granges had reached 6,062; less than a month later the number had reached 6,914, prompting J.D. McCabe, a contemporary chronicler of the movement to write, “The number of Granges in the United States is increasing so rapidly that it is hard to give an accurate statement concerning them,” however, “the number of members may be safely estimated at about half a million.”<sup>26</sup> After a decline in membership in the 1880s, nationwide grange membership leveled off and has since fluctuated between 150,000 and 300,000 members.

Between the 1880s and 1890s, other agricultural associations were also being established in various parts of the country, although few of these groups possessed the meticulous organization or stability of the Grange. Various states and localities established independent farmers’ clubs, but the most notable agricultural organization outside of the Grange Movement was the Farmers’ Alliance. Beginning in the late 1880s, Farmers’ Alliances began appearing throughout Southern and Midwestern states, and in some cases, adopted objectives and practices that mirrored those already established by the Patrons of Husbandry.<sup>27</sup> In 1887, the Farmers’ Alliance of Texas and the Farmers’ Union of Louisiana joined to form the National Farmers’ Alliance and Cooperative Union of America. Two years later, the group merged with the Arkansas Agricultural Wheel to become the Farmers’ and Laborers’ Union of America, also known as the National Farmers’ Alliance and Industrial Union. The late 1880s also saw the formation of the National Colored Farmers’ Alliance which drew membership from Southern states, as well as from parts of Indiana and Illinois; the group was incorporated by the National Farmers’ Alliance in 1890. Due to retaliation from commodities brokers who resented the Alliance’s attempts at cooperative sales and financing, the Alliance collapsed in 1892 and was reborn as the popular, but short-lived Populist Party.<sup>28</sup> The effective organizational structure of the Grange, as well as its avoidance of political platforms ensured the group’s stability during these hectic years.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>26</sup> McCabe, *History*, 411.

<sup>27</sup> Buck, *The Granger Movement*, 302-303.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 304-306.

From the outset, the Grange had been designed as a three-tiered organization that would effectively provide private farmers with an official channel through which to communicate with outside influences on local, state, and national levels. A local, or subordinate, grange was traditionally formed through a charter issued by its state grange. In turn, each state grange reported its business to the National Grange located in Washington, DC. In 1874, county, or Pomona, granges were added to the organization in order to facilitate the far-flung administrative duties of state granges. Although this multi-tiered structure was in place from the earliest days of the organization, subordinate granges were usually established prior to the initiation of county or state granges in areas where the Movement was just beginning.

The formation of subordinate granges throughout the country remedied many of the problems with which farmers had been struggling for years. Although the founders asserted that the Grange was in no way a political organization in their 1874 Declaration of Purposes (“No Grange, if true to its obligations, can discuss political or religious questions, nor call political conventions, nor nominate candidates”), the Order was instrumental in the passing of national legislation concerning issues in which farmers had long been interested.<sup>29</sup> In 1887, the National Grange, with support from its subordinate and state chapters, played an important role in the creation of the Interstate Commerce Act, which outlawed railroad companies’ infamous secret rebate system as well as the common practice of discriminating against small markets; the Act also created the Interstate Commerce Commission to oversee the regulation of railroad shipping rates. Two years later, Grange petitions to Congress led to the passing of the 1889 legislation advancing the Federal Bureau of Agriculture to a regular government department (today’s USDA) to be led by a member of the president’s cabinet.<sup>30</sup>

Grange formation also alleviated the social and educational deficiencies of many of the nation’s farmers and their families. Since the earliest days of the organization, grange halls across the country were used not only as official meeting places for local grange chapters, but also served as community centers where social, educational, and charity events regularly took place. This was an important feature of the Order that its founders emphasized in their instructions to new subordinate granges: “As soon as [grange] work is over, open the doors and admit the public, or have regular evenings for the public to be present.”<sup>31</sup> Most granges also opened their doors to local community groups and organizations in an effort to foster a spirit of cooperation within the community. As a result, the Grange organization was

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<sup>29</sup> Grosh, *Mentor in the Granges*, 70.

<sup>30</sup> Buck, *The Granger Movement*, 117.

<sup>31</sup> Kelley, *Origin and Progress*, 24.

of major significance within isolated rural communities where local grange halls stood very much alone as places for social interaction and as a headquarters for community service projects.

The social aspect of the Grange not only alleviated the monotony and loneliness of farm life, but it also created a communal fund of practical knowledge, as Aaron B. Grosh, one of the Order's founding fathers explained:

Only by social intercourse can genial sympathy and every-day needful information be obtained...our Grange meetings, which are designed to break up the solitary separation of families...give unto *all* the information which *each* has acquired concerning the best methods of farming, housekeeping, marketing, &c.; and to unite the knowledge and skill...thus acquired, for the benefit of all.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, the National Grange encouraged every subordinate grange to house its own library of books and other reading materials in order to encourage regular reading among grangers. On a larger scale, all levels of the Order supported agricultural colleges and were often instrumental in their formation. Subordinate granges also commonly helped their local country schools to acquire better textbooks and to integrate agricultural subjects into the standard curricula.<sup>33</sup> County and state fairs were organized by granges throughout the country with the goal of exhibiting individual farmers' skills and expertise, as well as showcasing the latest in agricultural technology and equipment for the benefit of all in attendance.

The increase in social and educational opportunities effected by the Grange also served to lessen the financial burdens that many farmers faced since, as Grosh observed, "much of the poverty and destitution of the farming classes is owing to their isolated condition, and a consequent lack of general information."<sup>34</sup> With the unity that came with membership in their local grange, farmers were less likely to become "the prey of sharpers" and "the dupes of speculators and demagogues" who had previously taken advantage of their relative ignorance and separation from one another.<sup>35</sup>

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Order of Patrons of Husbandry was by far the "largest, most comprehensive, and most thoroughly organized of the agencies which the farmers used in their efforts to improve their position materially, politically, socially, and intellectually, through

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<sup>32</sup> Grosh, *Mentor in the Granges*, 74-75.

<sup>33</sup> Buck, *The Granger Movement*, 290.

<sup>34</sup> Grosh, *Mentor in the Granges*, 74.

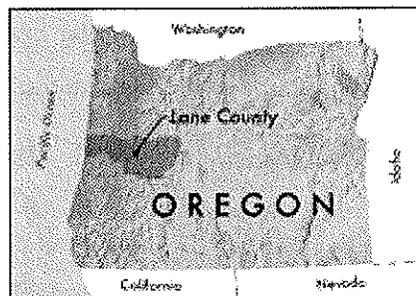
<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

organized cooperation.”<sup>36</sup> From the beginning, subordinate granges have admitted men, women, and youth over the age of fourteen as full members on equal terms. Each member votes to elect local grange officers and to decide the grange’s role in community matters. Subordinate granges promote activities designed to develop leadership, improve life in the community, and expand civic, professional, and educational opportunities for all members of the community, and they often provide emergency relief for community members affected by illness, fire, or natural disaster.<sup>37</sup>

Today’s Grange (now known formally as the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry), remains the nation’s oldest national agricultural organization and maintains subordinate chapters in 3,600 local communities across thirty-seven states. With over 300,000 members, the Grange currently provides service to rural areas on issues such as “economic development, education, family endeavors, and legislation designed to assure a strong and viable rural America.”<sup>38</sup>

### History of Lane County, Oregon

Located in west-central Oregon, Lane County reaches from the Pacific coastline in the west to the Cascade Mountain range in the east (Figure 2.1). The broad expanse of the county – approximately 4,600 square miles – encompasses a wide range of landscapes including beaches, river valleys, and mountains. As a result, Lane County boasts three major physiographic regions: the coastal region, the Willamette and McKenzie Valleys, and the Cascade Mountain range.



**Figure 2.1. Lane County, Oregon.**

Image courtesy of Convention and Visitors Association of Lane County.

Before European contact c. 1750, Lane County was home to a variety of native peoples including the Siuslaw in the coastal region, the Kalapuya in the Willamette and McKenzie Valleys, and the Molalla in

<sup>36</sup> Buck, *The Granger Movement*, 73.

<sup>37</sup> National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, “History: 137 Years of Service to Rural America,” National Grange, <http://www.nationalgrange.org/about/history.html> (accessed February 2, 2008).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

the Cascade region.<sup>39</sup> Archeological evidence shows that people had been living in the area for thousands of years before historic contact; in the Willamette Valley, this was as early as 5800 BCE. As was the case elsewhere, the native population in the Lane County area was decimated by the introduction of European diseases such as smallpox, tuberculosis, and measles in the eighteenth century.

The first Europeans to reach the Pacific Northwest coastline came as early as 1565 when the Spanish sailed along the Oregon coast in search of mineral wealth and suitable land for colonies and missionary work such as they had found in California. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, other European countries – and eventually the new United States – sent exploring parties to the Pacific Northwest in search of valuable natural resources and habitable areas for settlement. It wasn't until the height of the fur trade in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, however, that the area became known as a genuine source of wealth. Between 1785 and 1820, over eight countries sent trapping expeditions to the Pacific Northwest, mainly in search of beaver pelts.<sup>40</sup> The beginning of the nineteenth century also saw explorers moving towards the Northwest interior, most notably with the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804, although the party did not venture far enough south of the Columbia River to reach what would become Lane County.

The first recorded exploration of the Lane County interior was led by Donald McKenzie on behalf of the Northwest Company, a leader in the American fur trade, in April of 1812. It is generally believed that this party of explorers gave the McKenzie River its name. Permanent settlement, however, did not occur in Lane County until the late 1830s. Not surprisingly, the first areas in the county to be settled by European-Americans were the fertile floodplains of the Willamette Valley, beginning in the northern end of the valley and quickly moving south.

Shortly after the first settlers arrived in the area, the U.S. government organized the Wilkes expedition to investigate what was then known as the Oregon Territory (today's Oregon, Washington, and much of British Columbia); when the expedition formed in 1841, this territory was jointly held by Britain and the United States. By the early 1840s, American emigrants were starting to arrive in the area via the Oregon Trail and quickly began to outnumber their British counterparts. A provisional government was established in the territory in 1843, and three years later, the U.S. Senate ratified a treaty with England that formally ceded Oregon to the United States. In January of 1851 the Oregon Territorial Legislature

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<sup>39</sup> Thomas B. Forster, et al., eds., *The Cultural and Historic Landscapes of Lane County, Oregon* (Eugene, OR, 1986), 24.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

officially formed Lane County, named after General Joseph Lane, the area's first Territorial Governor. Over the next few years, its borders and those of neighboring counties were adjusted, more or less to their current dimensions. Finally, in 1859, Oregon became the thirty-third state admitted to the Union.

Because of the ideal agricultural quality of land in the Willamette Valley, this area was home to many of the earliest settlers in Oregon. Initially, a large part of Oregon, and Lane County in particular, was settled as a result of the Donation Land Claim Act, a measure designed in 1850 to promote settlement in what was then the Oregon Territory. The act entitled each claimant to 320 acres of land if single and 640 acres of land if married, although the Homestead Act of 1862 later limited the size of any one claim to 160 acres.

The early development of Lane County was highly dependent upon the area's unique topography. In a 1915 rural survey of the county, Ayers and Morse noted that the initial settlement of the area followed the land's natural water courses, consisting primarily of the Willamette, McKenzie, and Siuslaw Rivers, and that the numerous mountains, hills, streams, and "swampy areas" in the county determined the "direction and extent of the development of many communities."<sup>41</sup> Because the land on either side of the Willamette River was known to be fertile, relatively flat, and to have adequate drainage, this area was the first in Lane County to receive a large number of land claims.<sup>42</sup> These first families were usually subsistence farmers who cultivated as much of their claims as was needed using the tools, seed, and livestock that they had brought with them from Eastern or Midwestern states.

By the time of Oregon's statehood in 1859, Lane County had over 600 residents, and the population continued to grow exponentially as the area saw increased civic, educational, and commercial organizations. By the 1890s, Lane County boasted a population of approximately fifteen thousand people; twenty years later, the population was well over thirty thousand.

### **Agriculture**

Historically, Lane County's economy was largely based on agriculture. The Willamette Valley, in particular, was known as one of the nation's most productive farming regions.<sup>43</sup> Crops – such as wheat, fruit, and hops – were hearty and plentiful because of the moderate climate and fertile alluvial soil that

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<sup>41</sup> Fred C. Ayers and Herman N. Morse, *A Rural Survey of Lane County, Oregon* (Eugene, OR: University of Oregon, 1915), 23.

<sup>42</sup> Forster, *Cultural and Historic Landscapes*, 62.

<sup>43</sup> "Lane County History," Oregon State Archives, <http://www.sos.state.or.us/archives/county/cplanehome.html> (accessed February 17, 2008).

farmers in the valley relied upon. Initially, the valley's early pioneer settlers were purely subsistence farmers, but by the 1860s area farmers also began marketing their produce in surrounding communities. The arrival of the Oregon & California railroad in 1871 introduced Lane County farmers to expanded markets and prompted an increase in production. The railroad's high freight costs and fluctuating prices were prohibitive and would be a major impetus behind the formation of the first granges in Lane County.<sup>44</sup>

Between 1850 and 1870 many Lane County farmers had moved beyond simple subsistence farming to "an agricultural system generating a surplus of production for export from Lane County."<sup>45</sup> This change first occurred with the arrival of steamboat operations on the Willamette River in the 1850s; although the boats operated quite sporadically, a few farmers began shipping their produce to markets up river and down in the 1850s and 1860s (although few of these got as far upriver as Eugene). After the arrival of the Oregon & California Railroad in 1871, however, exporting crops to distant markets became both reliable and commonplace. As a result, what were once open prairies where farmers let their livestock roam freely were converted into various fenced fields for the production of cereal crops, stock grazing, and the creation of fruit orchards. In addition, the vast acreage of Lane County's early Donation Land Claim farms meant that these farmers had to invest in equipment such as horse-drawn (and later mechanized) plows, combines, and threshers. For the most part, farms during this period produced wheat as their mainstay, but by the 1880s, hops and fruit had become commercially viable crops as well.

By 1890 the dairy industry had added another dimension to Lane County agriculture due to the development of the cream separator.<sup>46</sup> Most dairy farms were found in the Coast Range where winters were relatively mild and the terrain made other agricultural pursuits impractical, although Ayers and Morse note that the rougher terrain in this area was also used to graze beef cattle.<sup>47</sup>

### **Other Industry**

In addition to agriculture, Lane County's economy was also heavily reliant on the logging industry. Lumber was a major industry in the Mohawk Valley and in communities in and around the coast and Cascade mountain ranges. The earliest logging in Lane County was conducted primarily to serve the

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<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Carter and Michelle Dennis, *Eugene Area Historic Context Statement* (Eugene, OR: City of Eugene Planning and Development Department, 1996), 42.

<sup>45</sup> Forster, *Cultural and Historic Landscapes*, 63.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>47</sup> Ayers and Morse, *Rural Survey*, 15.

immediate needs of settlers, many of whom had taken land claims in forested areas that needed to be cleared before any substantial farming could take place. The first sawmills in Lane County were water-powered and were built as near the timber supply as possible to eliminate cumbersome transportation of logs to sawmills. In the 1880s, water-powered sawmills were built in Lorane, Creswell, and the Mohawk Valley, and in 1895 Coburg and Springfield became home to Booth-Kelly lumber mills. In the 1870s and 1880s, loggers began to use the McKenzie, Willamette, and Siuslaw Rivers to transport logs to sawmills on a larger scale. The arrival of the railroad in 1871 meant that the lumber could then be shipped for sale across the country. Around the turn of the twentieth century, small rail lines were built between the forests where the timber was cut and the mills where it was sawed into lumber; this innovation allowed for heavier transport to sawmills and largely replaced so-called “river logging.” In the 1930s, “truck logging” became feasible and soon replaced the individual lumber company railroads.<sup>48</sup>

On a much smaller scale, Lane County boasted a small mining industry around the turn of the twentieth century. Small amounts of gold were discovered near Jacksonville in 1851, and in streams near Bohemia and Blue River in the 1860s. These small mining claims were purchased by mining companies that created active mines and mining communities in these areas between the 1890s and about 1915. Also found in varying quantities were mercury, silver, copper, lead, and zinc.<sup>49</sup>

In coastal communities, fishing was a major industry between the 1870s and the turn of the twentieth century. Although the first settlers to the coastal area of Lane County arrived in 1870 and made abundant use of the plentiful fishing waters there, it wasn't until the 1880s and 1890s that towns like Florence became economically dependent on the fishing industry and supported canneries and shipping wharves.<sup>50</sup> Large scale salmon fishing soon depleted the salmon population and by the first decades of the twentieth century, the economy of these communities became more reliant on logging than fishing.

### **Transportation**

The first roads in Lane County were simple wagon routes between early communities of settlers; these unpaved roads, however, were often so muddy throughout the rainy season that they were not considered passable for several months of the year. Beginning in the 1890s, these old wagon roads were improved to facilitate the transport of agricultural products, but even up to 1915, county surveyors noted

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<sup>48</sup> Forster, *Cultural and Historic Landscapes*, 76-77.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

that “the development of many parts of the county is retarded by roads which, for a considerable portion of the year, are inexpressibly bad. It is hard to describe them within the limitations of proper speech.”<sup>51</sup> Improved highways in the 1920s allowed an increased amount of automobile traffic, and many small farmers began to use automobiles to transport their produce as it was generally cheaper than railroad transport for smaller amounts of freight. The 1930s saw the completion of Highway 99 and the coast highway.

Because of the difficulty of early road transportation, beginning in the 1850s, steamboats operated intermittently on the Willamette River; but, again, river conditions made navigation impossible through several months of the year. Nevertheless, some early farmers utilized steamboat transport to reach new markets for their produce.

In 1871, Lane County received its first railroad, the Oregon & California line, and towns along its route – Junction City, Creswell, Cottage Grove, and Eugene – saw a boom in their economies and populations.<sup>52</sup> With the reliability and relative ease of rail transport, the majority of steamboat and stagecoach operations dwindled. The arrival of the railroad connected Lane County to the rest of the country and brought worldwide markets within the reach of Lane County farmers; as a result, agricultural production increased and the area saw a rapid rise in immigration. Between 1870 and 1900, the population of the Willamette Valley alone grew from 61,000 to 233,000 and the number of farms in Lane County tripled.<sup>53</sup> Coastal communities, however, did not benefit from the advent of railroad transportation due to the difficult terrain along the coast range. In towns west of this range, such as Florence, Acme, and Mapleton, transportation by boat on the Siuslaw River was commonplace and often more reliable than overland travel. Lane County’s coastal communities were not reliably linked to those in the Willamette Valley until 1916 when rail lines were finally extended from Eugene to Coos Bay.

### **The Grange Movement in Oregon**

Since its earliest years of settlement, Oregon has been a largely agricultural state with private farming enterprises scattered throughout. From individual county fairs in the 1850s to the inception of the Oregon State Fair in 1861, Oregon farmers saw advantages in the practice of gathering together to share

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<sup>51</sup> Ayers and Morse, *Rural Survey*, 8.

<sup>52</sup> Douglas Card, *From Camas to Courthouse: Early Lane County History* (Eugene, OR: Lane County Historical Society, 2008), 61.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

ideas, concerns, and advice.<sup>54</sup> For this reason, dense agricultural areas like the Willamette Valley saw the formation of individual farmers' clubs beginning in the early 1870s. The number of such clubs in Oregon began to decline, however, by the mid-1870s when the Grange Movement began to gain momentum throughout the state. As a nationwide organization with state and national headquarters, the Grange was able to benefit farmers in ways that individual farmers' clubs could not.

By the winter of 1872-73, the Grange Movement had reached the agricultural communities of Oregon, due in large part to the efforts of Grange spokesman N.W. Garretson of Iowa and later, W.J. Campbell of Clackamas County. In January of 1873, the two men succeeded in establishing the first subordinate grange in Oregon in Marshfield (present-day Clackamas), Clackamas County. For the next several months, Campbell and other early Oregon grangers actively organized other grassroots granges throughout the length of the Willamette Valley. After thirty-seven subordinate granges had been established in the state, the Oregon State Grange met for the first time in Salem on September 24, 1873.<sup>55</sup> From that time until today, the State Grange has been responsible for overseeing the membership, activities, and formation of subordinate and Pomona granges throughout the state. Because State Grange policies originate at the subordinate and Pomona levels, the State Grange was often considered to be uniquely expressive of Grange thought and sentiment throughout the entire state.<sup>56</sup> Since its inception, the Oregon State Grange has petitioned state and national legislatures on issues as diverse as women's suffrage, the direct election of senators, and rural free delivery. The State Grange was also active in establishing the Oregon Agricultural College, an institution that has grown into today's Oregon State University in Corvallis.

In the year following the formation of the Oregon State Grange, the number of granges in the state increased so rapidly that by 1875, Oregon boasted 175 subordinate granges spread throughout 22 counties.<sup>57</sup> After a brief decline in the 1880s, statewide grange membership rose and fell according to changes in population, agriculture, and the economy. As a result, through the first half of the twentieth century, new subordinate granges were chartered in the state while older chapters fell dormant.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Edna A. Scott, "The Grange Movement in Oregon: 1873-1900" (master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1923), 4-5.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-21.

<sup>56</sup> National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, "History: 137 Years of Service to Rural America," National Grange, <http://www.nationalgrange.org/about/history.html> (accessed February 2, 2008).

<sup>57</sup> Carr, *The Patrons of Husbandry*, 285-6.

<sup>58</sup> Scott, "The Grange Movement," 1-21.

The influence of the Grange in Oregon can be seen in its successful petitions to regulate transportation in the state, first with legislation passed regarding the use of locks on the Willamette River in 1877 and again with legislation pertaining to railroad companies in 1887. Grangers throughout the state supported local agricultural organizations, such as the Sheep Breeding Association, as well as the public school system and other groups that emphasized education, such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Oregon granges have also always been very active in lobbying their local and state legislatures on issues important to the welfare of Oregon's rural communities; as a result, Oregon's local granges were instrumental in bringing electrical service, improved roads, better schools, and the Rural Free Delivery program to rural areas.<sup>59</sup>

### **The Grange Movement in Lane County**

The first grange established in Lane County was Springfield Grange (no longer active), chartered in 1873 in Springfield, Oregon. Less than two years later, Eugene City Grange (also no longer active), the first in Eugene, was established. By 1875 Lane County boasted seventeen subordinate granges, second in number only to Linn County's twenty-six.<sup>60</sup> Much of the grange formation in this period was the result of local farmers' frustrations with the Oregon & California Railroad which had been taking advantage of its local monopoly by charging farmers disproportionately high freight rates. Because this practice threatened to reduce or even eliminate the profit farmers received from marketing their produce, Lane County grangers repeatedly petitioned their state government to bring an end to the railroad's "unbearable oppression."<sup>61</sup> In 1885, the state legislature responded with a measure that finally restricted any railroad's right to charge unjustifiably high shipping rates.<sup>62</sup>

Beginning in the last years of the nineteenth century, the number of private farms in Lane County increased dramatically; this increase continued into the early 1900s, so that by 1910, Lane County had 2,826 individual, owner-operated farms.<sup>63</sup> This increase in private agricultural enterprise in the early twentieth century brought about an increase in countywide grange formation and membership. As a result, the construction of many Lane County grange halls came at the height of both agricultural and grange-related activity in the area.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 52-62.

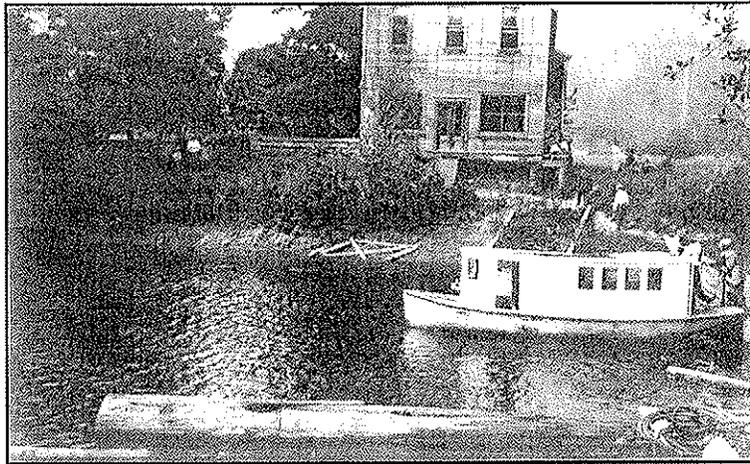
<sup>60</sup> Carr, *The Patrons of Husbandry*, 285-6.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>62</sup> Buck, *The Granger Movement*, 198.

<sup>63</sup> Forster, *Cultural and Historic Landscapes*, fig. 44.

This period also saw the creation of the Lane County Agriculturalist's office in 1914. The position was designed in to allow an appointed county official to act as a liaison with subordinate granges across the county, and as such, to attend to the various agricultural interests of the area's farmers. A large part of the County Agriculturalist's work entailed the promotion of agricultural education among the farmers of Lane County via agricultural fairs, lectures, and farm institutes.<sup>64</sup> In addition, the county legislature established an official "agricultural committee" which consisted of representatives from each local grange, as well as the executive committee of the Lane Pomona Grange. The committee met every month to discuss local agricultural issues and to "devise uniform plans along the lines of the various problems which were considered urgent."<sup>65</sup> In 1915, the agricultural committee and the local subordinate granges, spearheaded by Willakenzie Grange of Eugene, established the Producers' Public Market in that city where local farmers could sell their produce directly to consumers without the need of middlemen. The market was well received by area residents because farmers were able to sell their wares at rates below those of most area grocers. Known today as the Lane County Farmers' Market, this event has since become a Eugene tradition and a key piece of Lane County's cultural heritage.



**Figure 2.3. Siuslaw area grangers arrive by boat in front of original North Fork Grange Hall, c.1920.**  
Photo courtesy of Lane County Historical Society.

By the time the Producers' Public Market was established, Lane County boasted twenty-one individual subordinate granges supporting over 2,000 members.<sup>66</sup> At the time, the Grange was the only agricultural organization in the county that was actively working to better the social, educational and financial situation of Lane County farmers.<sup>67</sup> Together, Lane County granges established the practice of cooperative hog shipping (earning farmers a considerably higher yield), as well as the cooperative

<sup>64</sup> Ayers and Morse, *Rural Survey*, 20.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19.

<sup>66</sup> Ayers and Morse, *Rural Survey*, 30.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

purchasing of agricultural supplies. The North Fork, Irving, and Lorane Granges were especially active in these pursuits.<sup>68</sup> In addition, the subordinate granges of the coast region – most notably Mapleton and North Fork – played an instrumental role in the county’s construction of paved roads in the Siuslaw River Valley where until the late 1930s, many residents commuted via boat for lack of passable roadways (Figure 2.3).<sup>69</sup>

Of specific importance to many local grangers in the 1920s, ‘30s, and ‘40s were the social activities sponsored by community granges throughout the county. These events included dances, picnics, fairs, plays, and music recitals among other diversions. One Florence resident remembered the importance of the grange to the rural communities of the coast region in the early 1930s:

[For fun,] they used to have a lot of old-time dances in the Grange Halls... There was a music group that played old-time music: a fiddler and an accordion player and a pianist and maybe some drums... There were about four different halls [in the Florence area], so the crowd would circulate. The social functions were open to anyone.<sup>70</sup>

In many rural areas, such grange-sponsored events were the only community activities available. In the 1940s some granges, Lorane for example, purchased or borrowed equipment to show popular movies inside their halls – a practice which has recently been revived by some Lane County granges. Other granges were known for their annual picnics and holiday festivals. Crow Grange was especially popular with area residents due to its annual oyster suppers.<sup>71</sup> While some of these events were used to raise funds for building maintenance or charity works, the majority were held for no purpose other than to bring communities together, as one Lane County granger noted in the 1920s: “the purpose was fun, the profit incidental.”<sup>72</sup>

In addition to purely social events, however, each subordinate grange in Lane County established regular community service programs, from community beautification projects and rural conservation initiatives to annual food drives and fundraising events to benefit the sick and disabled. As the National Grange Publicity Bureau noted, “All this... is tangible evidence that, with proper leadership, people are willing to donate their time and their services to help themselves and others.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>69</sup> Patricia Riechel, *Siuslaw Pioneer: Siuslaw Area Granges* (Florence, OR: Siuslaw Pioneer Museum, 1997), 20-31.

<sup>70</sup> *Season of Harvest: Recollections of Lane County* (Youth and Senior Exchange Project, 1975), 133-4.

<sup>71</sup> Crow Grange #450, *History: 1911-1961* (Crow, OR: Lane County Historical Society, 1961), 9.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>73</sup> *The Grange Blue Book: Describing America’s Oldest and Largest Farm Organization and the Only Rural Fraternity in the World* (Springfield, MA: National Grange Publicity Bureau, 1941), n.p.

Today, Lane County boasts twenty-seven active subordinate granges, the highest number in the state.<sup>74</sup> In 2009, nine of the sixteen officers of the Oregon State Grange hail from subordinate granges in Lane County. According to promotional materials distributed by the organization, today's modern Grange focuses on community service, grassroots legislative action, leadership development, and cites "friendship with people of good character," "family environment," and the "opportunity to make a difference" as some of the key benefits of Grange membership.<sup>75</sup>

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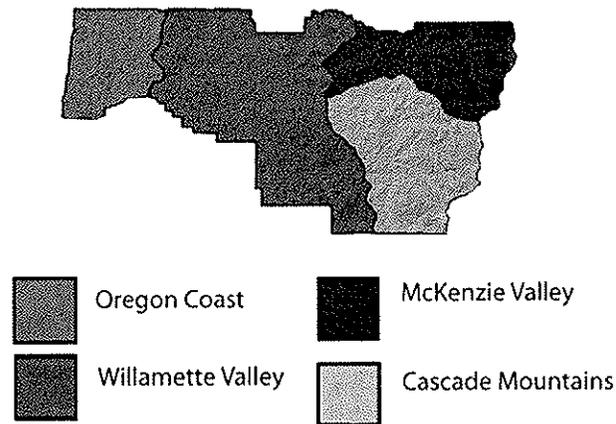
<sup>74</sup> As of May 2009, Lane County contains twenty-seven active subordinate granges; Franklin Grange is currently inactive, but its hall remains and is currently owned by the Oregon State Grange.

<sup>75</sup> National Grange, "Friends, Family, Fun, & You" brochure (Washington, D.C.: National Grange), c.2005.

## Chapter 3: Survey Findings

### Grange Hall Locations

For the purposes of this survey, Lane County was divided into four general geographic regions: the Oregon coast, the Willamette Valley, the McKenzie Valley, and the Cascade Mountain range (Figure 3.1).<sup>76</sup>



**Figure 3.1. Geographic regions of Lane County, Oregon.**  
After map by Convention and Visitors Association of Lane County.

The vast majority of the twenty-eight existing grange halls in Lane County are located in the Willamette Valley, with the notable exceptions of the Ada, North Fork, and Mapleton grange halls of the Oregon Coast region (see Figure 3.2 insert). Although located in Lane County, these three granges report to the West Coast Pomona Grange, rather than the Lane Pomona Grange which covers the rest of the county.

The centralization of Lane County's grange halls around the Willamette Valley is not surprising given the well-known and widely-touted agricultural capacities of the region. Historically, a few granges did operate in the McKenzie Valley area, but none of these is active today, and there are no extant grange halls remaining in that region. In addition, no evidence was found of grange organizations in the Cascade Mountain region – a fact that is not surprising, as this area did not support a significant agricultural population. This may also be explained by the fact that a large part of the eastern half of the county has been encompassed by the Willamette National Forest since 1893. It should also be noted that some granges in Lane County's history may have been formed to protect not only agricultural

<sup>76</sup> Lane County Visitor Guide (Eugene, OR: Convention and Visitors Association of Lane County, 2008).



interests, but also those of fishing and logging communities, hence the occasional location of halls outside of heavily agricultural areas.<sup>77</sup>

While many of Lane County's grange halls (Long Tom, Central, Goshen, Dorena, Ada, and Mohawk-McKenzie, to name a few) are located in rural areas where agriculture remains a major industry, many others now stand in busy commercial and residential centers where farm work is only a memory (most notably Santa Clara, Thurston, Willakenzie, and Irving halls). It is important to note, however, that some grange halls were purposely built in or near busy town centers if these locations provided convenient access to members. Two such examples are Coburg Community Grange Hall and Creswell Grange Hall, both of which were built along their communities' main commercial streets. Other grange halls, however, were initially constructed within rural communities that have since grown into or been annexed by larger cities. Santa Clara Grange Hall, for example, was located a significant distance from the city of Eugene at the time of its construction in 1951, but has since been annexed by the city and is part of an increasingly expanding residential community (see appendix for specific information regarding locations of individual grange halls).

### **Grange Hall Construction**

In the first months of organization, most subordinate granges met in private homes, shops, schoolhouses, or barns until the group had purchased land for a new hall, drawn up building plans, and acquired the necessary building supplies. As was generally the case throughout the country, the construction of grange halls in Lane County was funded through individual grangers' donations of time, labor, materials, money, and occasionally land. As Gardner notes, "such contributions have correspondingly increased the pride of ownership among the members."<sup>78</sup> This fact is noted in meeting minutes, photographs, and interviews with grange members throughout the county. An early member of Triangle Grange #533 reported,

When we finally built the Grange hall everybody helped out all they could with donations of time, money and anything else that anyone had that they might share and that could be used... In 1936 [that] hall collapsed from the weight of too much snow and again everyone pitched in and helped rebuild it. One member donated the shakes for the roof, another put on all of the siding, another had some rough lumber which he donated and with the help of others they handplaned that lumber and built a set of dining tables for the hall. Two members made a heating stove out

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<sup>77</sup> Oregon State Grange Master Phyllis Wilson, interview by author, Salem, OR, February 26, 2009.

<sup>78</sup> Gardner, *The Grange – Friend of the Farmer*, 364.

of an old oil barrel. The members used a drag saw to cut the wood and some one with a truck would haul it.<sup>79</sup>

Such was the communal, “make-do” spirit with which all existing accounts show Lane County’s grange halls were built. Whenever construction of a new hall was completed, a celebratory dedication ceremony was performed as prescribed by the National Grange as early as 1875.<sup>80</sup>



**Figure 3.3. Members of Santa Clara Grange #746 act in the dedication ceremony of their new hall, c.1951.**  
Photograph courtesy of Santa Clara Grange #746.

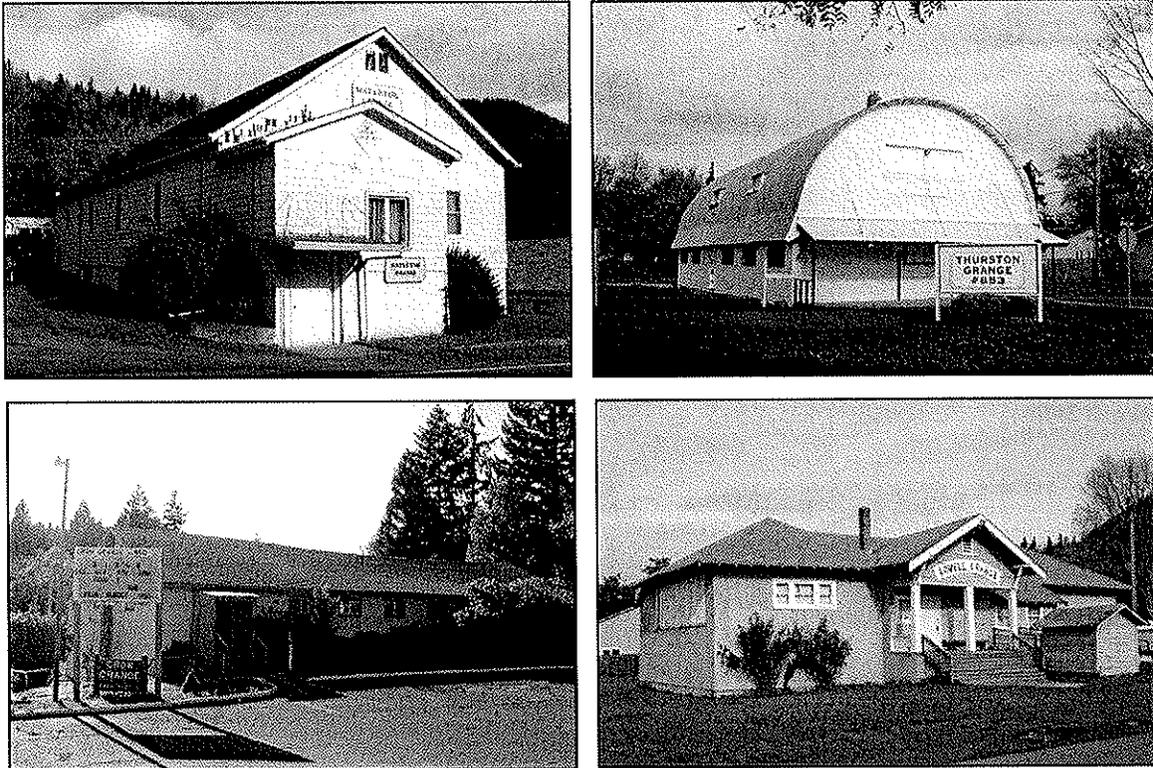
The vast majority of Lane County’s existing grange halls fall under the architectural classification of “vernacular.” Historically, vernacular buildings in Lane County tended to be “simple rectangular shapes of one and a half or two stories” whose “proportions tended to be broad, with gable roofs pitched at a low angle.”<sup>81</sup> In a report on the cultural and historic landscapes of Lane County, Oregon, the term “vernacular” is used to describe a building that 1) is built within a culture that values traditionalism, 2) has few significant stylistic characteristics, 3) has drastically modified stylistic characteristics, 4) has a primarily utilitarian form, and 5) has a primarily regional character.<sup>82</sup> The majority of Lane County’s historic grange halls meet all five characteristics, with the notable exceptions of the Central, Four Oaks, and Lowell halls which utilize clear Craftsman designs, and the Crow grange hall which is a Ranch-style building (Figure 3.4, Table 3.1, Table 3.2). It should also be noted that three of the four non-historic grange halls (those less than fifty years old) in Lane County are pre-fabricated metal or cinder-block constructions (the fourth is London Grange Hall, a Ranch-style building constructed outside of the historic period).

<sup>79</sup> Matilda Graham to Triangle Grange #533 in *The Pioneers of Lake Creek Valley (and a Few Later Ones)* by Elma Rust (Blachly, OR: Eugene Public Library, 1984), 297.

<sup>80</sup> Gardner, *The Grange – Friend of the Farmer*, 353.

<sup>81</sup> Forster, *Cultural and Historic Landscapes*, 90.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-90.



**Figure 3.4.** Mapleton Grange Hall (*top left*), built 1938-1940, and Thurston Grange Hall (*top right*), built 1913, are vernacular-style meeting halls. Crow Grange Hall (*bottom left*), built 1951, and Lowell Grange Hall (*bottom right*), built 1914, are among the few non-vernacular halls in Lane County. Photographs courtesy of author.

Generally speaking, most of Lane County's historic grange halls are rectangular, wood-framed structures built on concrete foundations and clad in wood shiplap siding with asphalt-shingled gable roofs. The recurrence of these features is not particularly remarkable, however, as these elements are common to most vernacular buildings constructed during the first half of the twentieth century in this area.

All but two of the existing subordinate granges in Lane County were organized before 1940; of these, seventeen were established before 1920. Not coincidentally, seventeen of the twenty-four grange halls determined to be historic were constructed during the 1910-1940 period of high grange membership and organization in Lane County (see Table 3.1). Walterville Grange Hall (also known as Millican Memorial Hall) is the oldest building in Lane County that is currently used as a grange hall; built as a one-room schoolhouse in 1889, the building has been significantly enlarged through numerous additions between 1900 and 1951. The oldest continually-active subordinate grange organization in the county is Lorane Grange #54, established in 1873; Lorane Grange Hall, built in 1909 is also the county's oldest

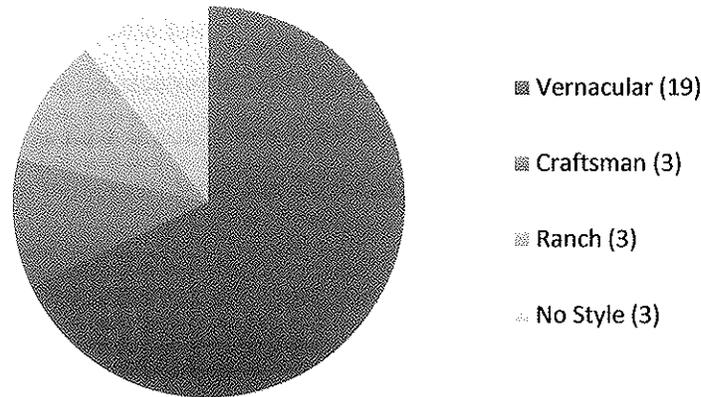
**Table 3.1.  
Existing Lane County Grange Halls**

Name	Location	Date of Organization	Date of Hall Construction	Style	Integrity/Condition	Original Use
Ada #570	Ada	1918	1918	Vernacular	Low/Good	Grange
Central #360	Eugene	c.1911	1920	Craftsman	High/Good	Grange
Coburg Community #535	Coburg	1915	1940	Vernacular	Moderate/Good	Grange
Creswell #496	Creswell	1913	1938	Vernacular	Low/Good	Grange
Crow #450	Crow	1911	1951	Ranch	High/Fair	Grange
Dorena #835	Cottage Grove	1935	c.1995	None	High/Good	Grange
Elmira #523	Elmira	1914	1927	Vernacular	Moderate/Good	Grange
Four Oaks #528	Eugene	1914	1917	Craftsman	High/Good	Grange
Franklin #751*	Junction City	1930	1923	Vernacular	Moderate/Good	School
Goldson #868	Cheshire	1936	1952	Vernacular	Low/Fair	Grange
Goshen #561	Eugene	c.1915	c.1965	None	High/Good	Grange
Irving #377	Eugene	c.1911	c.1980	None	High/Good	Grange
Jasper #532	Jasper	1915	c.1920	Vernacular	Moderate/Good	Grange
Junction City #744	Junction City	1930	c.1933	Vernacular	High/Good	Grange
London #937	Cottage Grove	1954	1966	Ranch	High/Good	Grange
Long Tom #866	Junction City	1936	1940-1960	Vernacular	Moderate/Good	Grange
Lorane #54	Lorane	1873	1909	Vernacular	High/Good	Grange
Lowell #745**	Lowell	1930	1914	Craftsman	High/Good	School
Mapleton #584	Mapleton	1919	1938-1940	Vernacular	High/Good	Grange
Mohawk Community #922	Marcola	1948	1912	Vernacular	High/Good	School
Mohawk-McKenzie #747	Springfield	1930	c.1915	Vernacular	High/Good	School
North Fork #492	Florence	1912	1950	Vernacular	Low/Good	Grange
Santa Clara #746	Eugene	1930	1951-1954	Ranch	Low/Good	Grange
Spencer Creek #855	Eugene	1936	c.1940	Vernacular	Moderate/Good	Grange
Thurston #853	Springfield	1936	1913	Vernacular	High/Good	Community Hall
Triangle #533	Blachly	1915	1919	Vernacular	Low/Good	Grange
Walterville #416	Springfield	1932	1889-1951	Vernacular	High/Good	School
Willakenzie #498**	Eugene	1913	1913	Vernacular	High/Good	Grange

\*No longer active

\*\*Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

**Table 3.2.**  
**Grange Hall Styles in Lane County, OR**



known purpose-built grange hall.<sup>83</sup> Most granges in the area, however, were generally eager to update their buildings whenever necessity dictated and funds allowed; consequently, older halls were often replaced by newer, “more efficient” buildings. As a result, the construction dates of individual extant grange halls do not reflect the spread of the movement through Lane County. Although records of the locations and construction dates of early grange halls in the area do not exist, it can be reasonably assumed that the spread of the movement across Lane County in the 1870s and 1880s coincided with the spread of agricultural development in settled parts of the county.

It should also be noted that whenever a dormant subordinate grange (one that had surrendered its charter) was reorganized, the Oregon State Grange issued the group an entirely new charter with a new registration number. As a result of this policy, the registration numbers assigned to each subordinate grange do not always reflect the age of an organization within its community. For example, Creswell Grange #64 was established in 1873, but fell dormant a few years later; when the group was reorganized in 1913, it was issued a new charter and became Creswell Grange #496.<sup>84</sup> This relatively high registration number obscures the fact that the community of Creswell was one of the first in the county to organize a local grange.

<sup>83</sup> Edwards, *From Sawdust and Cider*, 131.

<sup>84</sup> *Creswell's Centennial in Pictures* (Creswell, OR: Creswell Area Historical Society, 1973), 41.

### Grange Hall Plan

From its earliest days, the National Grange has distributed to all new subordinate granges its ideal grange hall plan (Figure 3.5). The design was based on the rituals conducted at official grange meetings and “incorporated specialized space, which expressed the...origins of the Order and the practical workings of the subordinate grange.”<sup>85</sup> Although this plan was not always immediately realized, every Lane County grange hall visited during this study was found to possess a variation on this same basic arrangement, often with the addition of kitchen and bathroom space as well as a general multi-purpose room. The platform, as noted in the diagram, is more often a small stage that reaches nearly from wall to wall at one end of the hall.

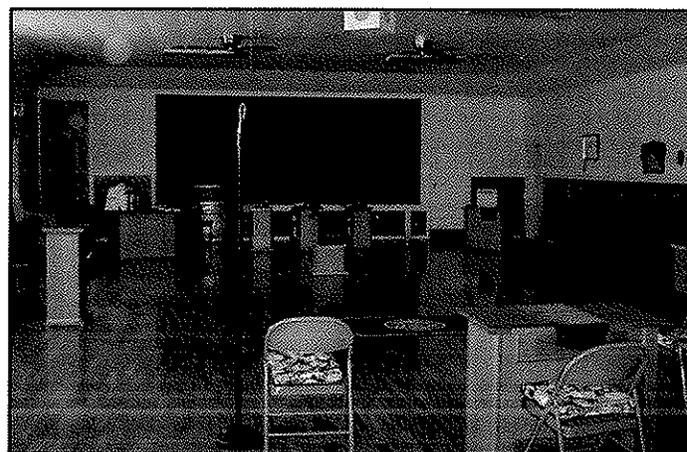
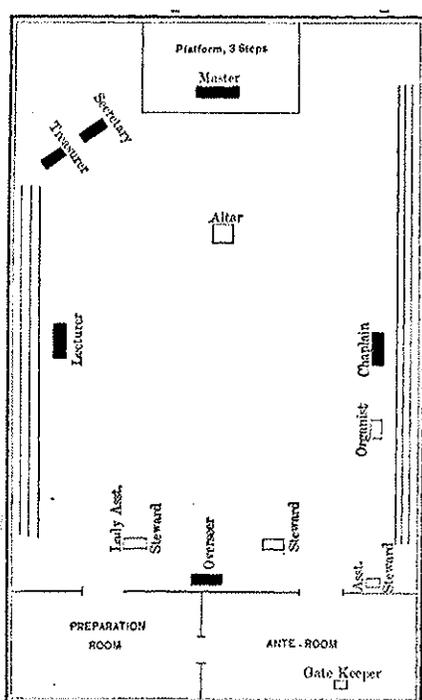


Figure 3.5. Grange hall plan as proscribed by the National Grange (left); Santa Clara Grange Hall, Eugene, OR, interior meeting space as seen from anteroom doorway (right).

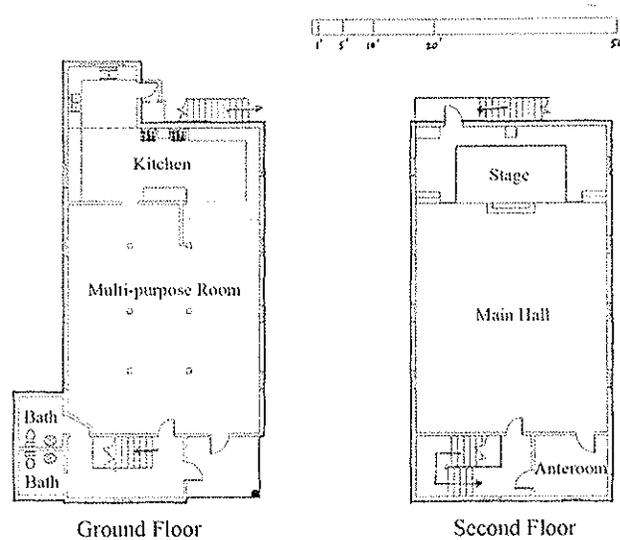
Figure courtesy of A.B. Grosh, *Mentor in the Granges and Homes of the Patrons of Husbandry*; photograph courtesy of author.

A grange hall’s main entrance or the door separating the entryway from the anteroom is traditionally referred to as the “Outer Gate,” while the door separating the anteroom from the hall is called the “Inner Gate,” emphasizing the traditional secrecy of the Order.<sup>86</sup> The anteroom generally serves as a space to

<sup>85</sup> Thomas A. Woods, *Knights of the Plow: Oliver H. Kelley and the Origins of the Grange in Republican Ideology* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1991), 165-6.

<sup>86</sup> Grosh, *Mentor in the Granges*, 142.

screen members from nonmembers, hence the position of the Gatekeeper at the “Outer Gate.” Traditionally, the preparation room was used by members to don the ceremonial regalia of the various degrees, but in more recent times has been used more often as storage space for official meeting materials. The ceremonial hall is generally reserved for official meetings and social events, although many halls with multi-purpose rooms utilize both spaces for social events, depending on the nature of each activity. A music recital, for example, would generally take place in the hall where there is a stage and often a piano, whereas a pot-luck dinner would be better served in the multi-purpose room.

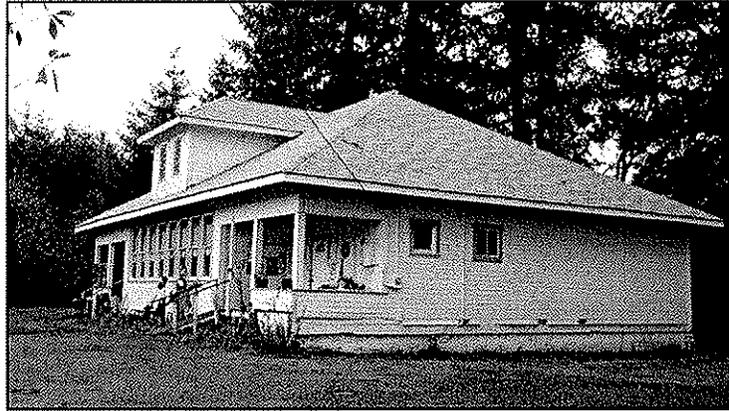


**Figure 3.6. Plan of Willakenzie Grange Hall, Eugene, OR.**  
Figure courtesy of author.

A good example of this modified-standard design is Willakenzie Grange Hall in Eugene. Built in 1913, Willakenzie Grange Hall was constructed by local grangers according to the standard layout advertised by the National Grange. The plan typifies the three-space hall, but also includes a multi-purpose room on the ground floor as well as a kitchen and bathroom, both of which were added or expanded within the historical period (Figure 3.6). The addition of kitchen and bathroom space is a common alteration among Lane County grange halls built before 1930, and is especially evident in the Lorane, Franklin, Elmira, and Willakenzie Grange Halls.

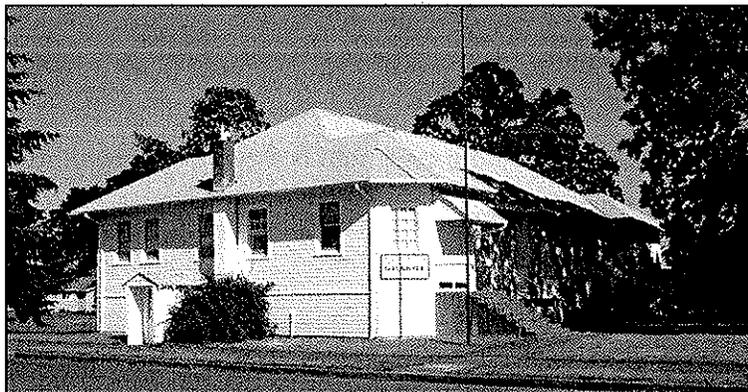
Most extant Lane County grange halls were purpose-built (built by grangers to be used as grange halls), but also common throughout Lane County are halls that were initially constructed by other organizations or individuals for different purposes and later assumed by grangers and adapted for use as grange halls. Most commonly grangers adapted abandoned country schoolhouses (Figure 3.7). Of the

twenty-eight existing grange halls in Lane County, six are adapted buildings; of these, five were originally built as rural schoolhouses (see Table 3.1).



**Figure. 3.7. Mohawk Community Grange Hall in Marcola, OR was originally constructed as a school for the logging community of Mabel in 1912.**  
Photograph courtesy of author.

Many of the area's first subordinate granges began meeting in local schoolhouses because these were the only public buildings in their communities that were spacious enough to accommodate large groups of people. Eventually, when the communities outgrew their school buildings, or when many school districts were consolidated in the first decades of the twentieth century, several granges purchased these abandoned schoolhouses for use as permanent grange halls.<sup>87</sup> Historian Thomas A. Woods notes that even purpose-built grange halls of the late nineteenth century tended to resemble "hybridized version[s] of the country schoolhouse."<sup>88</sup> Although built as a grange hall in the 1930s, Junction City Grange Hall



**Figure 3.8. Junction City Grange Hall, Junction City, OR, built c.1933.**  
Photograph courtesy of author.

<sup>87</sup> Forster, *Cultural and Historic Landscapes*, 71.

<sup>88</sup> Woods, *Knights of the Plow*, 165-6.

very much resembles the small schoolhouses that were common to the area in earlier decades (Figure 3.8).

A brief comparison of Lane County's grange halls with those in neighboring counties has shown that the largely vernacular, unadorned style of Lane County's halls is not unique. Characteristic elements of Lane County's grange halls (concrete foundation, frame construction, shiplap siding, asphalt-shingled gable or hipped roof, rectangular plan, three-room hall with bathroom and/or kitchen addition) appear to be characteristic of many of the grange halls in neighboring counties as well, although anomalies do exist. Further research is required to determine the degree to which Lane County's grange halls represent those found throughout Oregon and the Willamette Valley.

#### **Chapter 4: Threats and Potential Preservation Strategies**

*“Look around you...observe your community...its present-day farms, roads, schools, churches, recreation and health facilities, libraries, cooperatives, electric lines, telephones and youth organizations. These are the milestones of years of Grange progress. The Grange does not claim to be the sole initiator of these advancements; but it is, and long has been, the strongest sustained organizational force in rural America, working effectively toward those ingredients of today’s full, good, life.”<sup>89</sup>*

Despite the clear historical significance of community grange halls in agricultural, political, and social spheres, these buildings have not merited the same amount of consideration from preservationists and architectural historians as have other remnants of historical agricultural life such as barns, silos, farmhouses, and mills – all of which have been the subject of major historical and architectural studies. Although not located within the traditional farmyard, grange halls are a logical extension of farm life, as places where the agricultural class did (and in some places still does) socialize and discuss business matters that were crucial to farmers’, ranchers’, and dairymen’s ability to maintain their land and livestock and to profit from their labor. Because the Grange is no longer a vital part of life in many rural areas, and because isolated rural areas are becoming increasingly rare, many local grange halls are now facing extinction.

A variety of forces, both external and internal, threaten the survival of many of Lane County’s subordinate grange organizations and, consequently, threaten the area’s historic grange halls as well. With proper strategies to counteract these forces, however, none of these threats need spell the end of the organization, or its buildings (Table 4.1).

The unique character of the grange organization and the changing relationship between the grange hall and the community in which it exists present a multitude of challenges with which any interested preservationist must be familiar. Historically, grange halls were formed by members of rural communities interested in protecting their own interests; consequently, in a very real way, the community needed the grange hall. More recently however, these roles have been reversed. In many of

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<sup>89</sup> *The Grange Blue Book: Describing America’s Oldest and Largest Farm Organization and the Only Rural Fraternity in the World* (Springfield, MA: National Grange Publicity Bureau, 1941).

**Table 4.1.**  
**Threats to Lane County's Grange Halls and Potential Solutions**

<b>Threat</b>	<b>Potential Solution</b>
Low grange membership	Open meetings to public, increase community outreach
Urban sprawl	Shift focus of threatened groups away from agriculture and toward community service
Limited organizational resources	Increase membership
Historically inappropriate repairs/alterations	Educate grangers as to best preservation practices

these communities today, agriculture is no longer a major source of income, and new technologies and ready transportation have made a wide range of other social opportunities and entertainment options available. As a result, in order to survive in the twenty-first century, the grange hall needs the community.

It is this realization that has led many grangers to consider the potential benefits of dropping the organization's long tradition of secrecy in hopes of appealing to a wider public. Initially modeled after the Freemasons, the Grange has always been a fraternal organization, and as a result, although social events are open to the public, most meetings are open to official grange members only. When community grange formation was booming in the last decades of the nineteenth century, this secret aspect of its membership was a necessary feature of its success in the face of countless external threats to its existence. As a fraternal organization, Grange meetings opened "with a prayer and the salute to the flag" and employed "signs, symbols, and passwords...to represent the lessons of life and agriculture."<sup>90</sup> Today, however, some grangers view the organization's traditional secret passwords, closed meetings, and opening prayers as obsolete and exclusionary practices "that serve as obstacles to new members" who may turn instead to other community-minded organizations that do not require ceremonial initiations or strict meeting protocol.<sup>91</sup>

Although this is a divisive issue in many local grange chapters, it is certainly worth noting that declining membership is one of the primary threats to the community grange hall. According to National Grange bylaws, a subordinate grange must maintain a membership of thirteen individuals to sustain its charter. Many granges throughout the county are coming dangerously close to this minimum membership. Once

<sup>90</sup> National Grange, "Grange: Growing for the Future" Membership Application (Washington, D.C.: National Grange).

<sup>91</sup> Karen McCowan, "The Great Grange Revival," *The Register-Guard* (Eugene, OR), March 20, 2004.

a local grange chapter surrenders its charter, the hall becomes the property of the corresponding State Grange. The State Grange, in turn, has seven years to reorganize the chapter or sell the property altogether.<sup>92</sup> In many places, decreasing numbers of private agricultural enterprises, often due to urban sprawl, make reorganization an increasingly difficult task. Some halls are sold and adaptively reused as private residences, museums, or storage facilities, but at least as often, the buildings are demolished by new owners who place the financial value of the land over the cultural and historic value of the hall.

Since World War II, many rural areas near cities and towns have seen increasing amounts of urban sprawl, while other rural communities have experienced population slumps. The National Trust for Historic Preservation notes that these changes are threatening our country's rural heritage: "In some rural regions, shrinking agricultural, forestry, mining and manufacturing employment is leading to population loss, neglect and abandonment of historic structures and sites. In high growth areas near cities and resorts, new development is literally consuming the historic rural landscape."<sup>93</sup> The urbanization of rural areas accounts for the loss of much farmland, and consequently, a shrinking base of grange membership.<sup>94</sup> Likewise, in rural communities that are experiencing a general decrease in population, grange membership is dwindling proportionately.

Urban sprawl and population loss in and around rural communities, however, should not be regarded as the only factors in the gradual loss of active members from many of the nation's grange organizations. At least as important is the increased availability of other social opportunities, community groups, and entertainment options – activities once monopolized by the grange in many areas. In a 1988, editorial in the Marcola Rural Fire District Newsletter, declining membership is noted as "a focal point of concern" for the local Mohawk Grange.<sup>95</sup> One of its charter members was quoted as stating that the introduction of radio and television to rural areas meant that "people could stay home and entertain themselves...whereas in the earlier days the Grange was often the center of social activity for families."<sup>96</sup> Since then, the advent of the internet in homes across the landscape has also given a much broader definition to the word "community." As a result of these changes, local grange organizations are realizing that they must offer something that cannot be found elsewhere in their communities and that cannot be replaced by new technologies. In other words, local granges must find their niche in

<sup>92</sup> Oregon State Grange Master Phyllis Wilson, interview by author, Salem, OR, February 26, 2009.

<sup>93</sup> National Trust For Historic Preservation, "Preserving America's Rural Heritage," <http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/rural-heritage/> (accessed April 23, 2009).

<sup>94</sup> Samuel N. Stokes, *Saving America's Countryside: A Guide to Rural Conservation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 8.

<sup>95</sup> "The Granges: 140 Years of Tradition," *Marcola Rural Fire District Newsletter* (February 1988): 8-9, 14.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

communities that may no longer be invested in agricultural pursuits. Or, as National Grange Master Edward L. Luttrell stated, subordinate granges must take advantage of every opportunity to celebrate the Order's "relevance in today's society."<sup>97</sup>

Mohawk Community Grange #922, located just outside the small town of Marcola, Oregon, believes it may have created just such a niche for itself. Mohawk grangers have recently begun to host regular yoga classes, open to the general public, and are open to hosting other fitness classes as well. Bringing popular activities like these to an area that would otherwise be without them has helped to increase active membership in the Mohawk Community Grange.<sup>98</sup>

Because membership levels are directly tied to a subordinate grange's financial situation, a full and active base of members means that the group will have a reliable income and that fundraising activities will have the support they need. In other words, a strong base of dues-paying members helps to ensure that the grange can afford to properly maintain its hall and that its building and grounds fund will not be neglected.

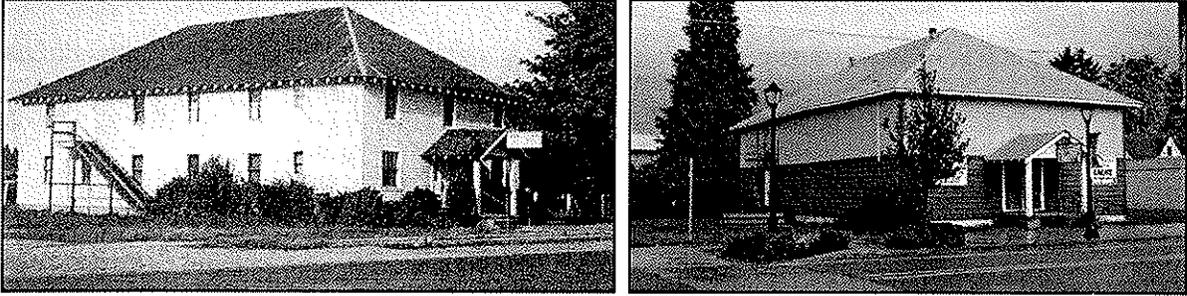
Unfortunately, like many historic homeowners, many grangers operate under the assumption that suitably maintaining a historic building is too expensive or too time-consuming. For this reason, some grange halls are allowed to fall into disrepair or, more commonly, are repaired in ways mistakenly thought to be more cost-effective and more efficient than those which maintain the buildings' historic integrity.

For example, members of Lane County's Four Oaks Grange Hall recently opted to replace the building's original wooden windows with vinyl replacements due to the perception that vinyl is cheaper, more durable, and more energy efficient. In reality, however, properly maintained wooden windows are remarkably efficient and are far less expensive to maintain than they are to replace. In a similar situation, Creswell grangers recently covered their hall's original wood shiplap siding with corrugated sheet metal siding, thus obscuring all of the building's original windows and greatly diminishing the building's historic integrity (Figure 4.1). While the new metal siding may cut down on the building's

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<sup>97</sup> Edward L. Luttrell, "Grange Month 2009," National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, <http://www.nationalgrange.org/about/GrangeMonth/GrangeMonth.htm> (accessed February 5, 2009).

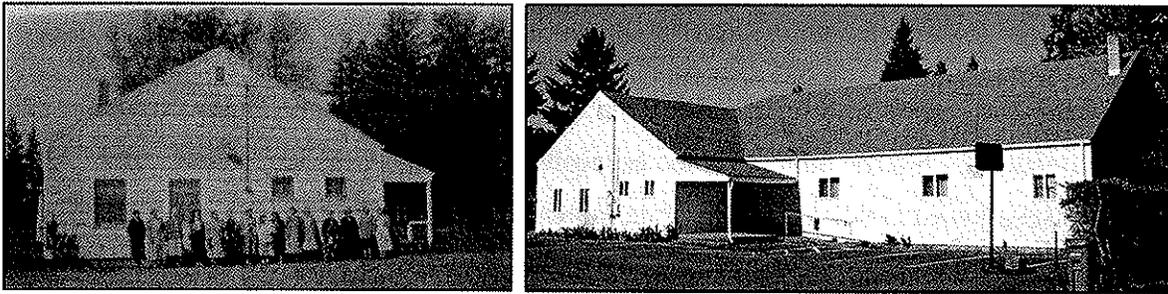
<sup>98</sup> Julia Mooney, interview by author, Marcola, OR, March 21, 2009.



**Figure 4.1. Creswell Grange Hall in Creswell, OR as originally built in 1938 (left) and in 2008 after the addition of corrugated metal siding (right).**

Photos courtesy of Creswell Area Historical Society and author.

need for repainting and window maintenance, it certainly cannot be considered to be a cheaper or maintenance-free “fix” as rust stains are already beginning to show along the building’s foundation, and will eventually cause more rapid deterioration of the new siding than would have occurred with the properly maintained original wood shiplap siding.



**Figure 4.2. Santa Clara Grange Hall, Eugene, OR in 1951 (left) and in 2009 (right) after the addition of vinyl siding and vinyl windows (the east wing was added in 1953).**

Photographs courtesy of Santa Clara Grange #746 and author.

With the proper information, however, grangers might strive for in-kind replacements and historically appropriate repairs that will maintain the character-defining features and historic integrity of their halls without straining their already limited budgets. As stewards of these historic buildings, current grangers need to be made aware of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Preservation (Table 4.2) and of the long-term benefits that adherence to these standards can bring.

This information might come in the form of an educational website, preservation handbook, or even a traveling lecture emphasizing the feasibility of historically appropriate building maintenance. Such an experiment would most likely have the greatest impact if it were supported and encouraged by the

**Table 4.2.**  
**The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation.**<sup>99</sup>

<b>The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation</b>
<p><b>1.</b> A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.</p>
<p><b>2.</b> The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.</p>
<p><b>3.</b> Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.</p>
<p><b>4.</b> Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.</p>
<p><b>5.</b> Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.</p>
<p><b>6.</b> The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.</p>
<p><b>7.</b> Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.</p>
<p><b>8.</b> Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.</p>

Oregon State Grange. As a preliminary step, maintenance calendars have been distributed to each subordinate grange in Lane County as a means of off-setting any potential damage to these historic grange halls (see appendix).

<sup>99</sup> Heritage Preservation Services, "Standards for Preservation," National Park Service  
[http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/preserve/preserve\\_standards.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/preserve/preserve_standards.htm) (accessed May 28, 2009).

The preservation of community grange halls is, in many ways, highly dependent upon the preservation of the community grange organizations they house. Although some historic grange halls have been maintained after the organization's use of the property has ended, the best way to ensure that these buildings receive the maintenance and care they deserve is to both preserve the local grange organization and educate its members – the halls' natural stewards – as to best preservation practices (per the Secretary's Standards) for their historic buildings.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

*“Throughout the Nation, Grange halls are looked upon as community centers. In fact, the very concept and philosophy of the Grange emphasizes increased opportunities in agriculture and the further development of rural and suburban America. Hence, the thousands of Grange halls throughout the Nation are considered signs of progressive communities...”<sup>100</sup>*

So states the 1941 Publicity Bureau of the National Grange, then hailed as America’s “Oldest and Largest Farm Organization” and the “Only Rural Fraternity in the World.”<sup>101</sup> Now, almost seventy years later, many of America’s grange halls seem to have lost their illustrious positions as centers of community life and have instead taken on the status of buildings whose viability in many rural areas is diminishing every year. Now, more than ever before in the organization’s one-hundred-and-forty-year history, the future of the once-ubiquitous American grange hall is uncertain.

Since the birth of the organization in 1867, grangers have spoken out on issues such as discriminatory railroad tariffs, unscrupulous commercial middlemen, and the lack of representation of the independent farmer in the federal government. These early grangers also petitioned local governments to bring passable county roads and in-home electrical and telephone service to rural areas. They were instrumental in the passing of various state legislations concerning women’s rights and the direct election of senators. Grange halls across the country have also played host to a wide range of educational and charity events and have provided meeting space for local community groups and neighborhood organizations in an effort to foster a spirit of cooperation within rural communities. Simply stated, the Grange’s influence on and importance to America’s rural communities is immense and deserves to be remembered.

One of the best ways to keep the history of the Grange Movement alive in Lane County is to preserve the area’s remaining historic grange halls. These buildings serve as tangible reminders of the historical importance of Lane County’s local grange organizations in rural communities across the landscape. The

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<sup>100</sup> *The Grange Blue Book: Describing America’s Oldest and Largest Farm Organization and the Only Rural Fraternity in the World* (Springfield, MA: National Grange Publicity Bureau, 1941).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

ideal preservation approach should encourage the continuation of the buildings' original use. In other words, new and existing generations of grangers should continue to use Lane County's grange halls for the mutual benefit of the granges and the communities they serve.

### **The Call for Future Research**

This study was designed to provide a survey and inventory of existing grange halls in Lane County, Oregon, and to present such findings within the framework of a historic context statement. Because of the necessary limitations of this investigation, some peripheral questions remain unanswered, but are certainly far from impenetrable.

It is reasonable to presume that the simple frame construction and shiplap siding of Lane County's historic grange halls are common to historic halls in other regions of the state that share the same climate, topography, and natural resources. Further investigation, however, is required to determine how Lane County's grange halls might compare to those in other regions of the country. Such an examination would increase current understandings not only of grange architecture, but of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century construction methods as well.

In addition, it is hoped that this project might serve as a foundation for a future Multiple Property Submission of Oregon's historic grange halls to the National Register of Historic Places. This would not only ensure that the historic significance of these buildings is recognized on state and national levels, but would also encourage the preservation of individual grange halls throughout the state.

Perhaps most urgent, however, is the need to inform current grangers of best practices in the preservation of their historic grange halls. To this end, this project includes a maintenance calendar to be distributed to each Lane County grange that will serve as a guide to the maintenance and preservation of the county's historic grange halls (see appendix). In the future, an informational website (ideally, one that is linked to the Oregon State Grange website) might enhance grangers' awareness of appropriate preservation methods and technologies, providing the majority of Lane County grangers are able to secure regular internet access. In this way, today's grangers will be able to make informed decisions and avoid irreversible and inappropriate alterations to their historic buildings so that future generations might benefit from the sense of history that these halls possess when properly maintained.

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