

Dublin Historical Society

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MONADNOCK GRANGE #103

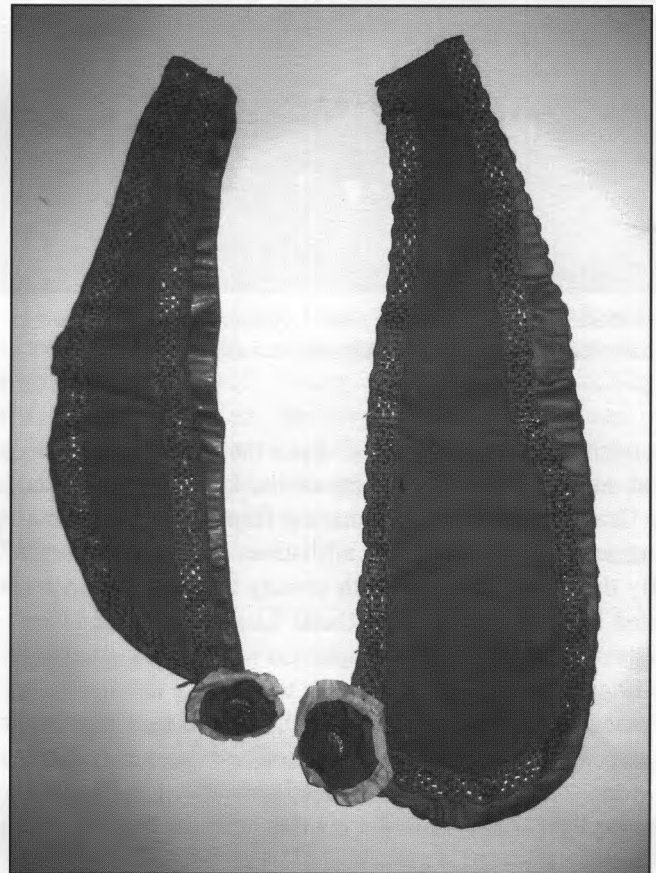
Reflections on a Simpler Time

For eighty-two years, from the opening ceremony on October 14, 1884, to the last fall of the gavel on December 26, 1966, there existed in Dublin a local chapter of a uniquely American organization. The Order of Patrons of Husbandry – “the Grange” as it was commonly known – is an organization that many have heard of but, due to its secretive nature, know little about. It was founded to improve the economic, moral and social condition of the nation’s farmers. Its branch in Dublin, Monadnock #103, may well have been a barometer of the changes that were beginning to transform the New Hampshire landscape at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Grange as a National Organization

Before refining our focus to the local chapter, it seems apropos to discuss the history of the organization at a national level. After the Civil War, General Grant said of the Confederate soldiers, “Let them keep their horses; they will need them to put in their crops.” President Andrew Johnson, through his Secretary of Agriculture, sent a representative to see what could be done to resurrect agriculture in the war-ravaged South. O. H. Kelley, a Minnesota farmer originally from Boston, was selected for the mission. Kelley went south in 1866 and after spending time among the farmers became impressed with the level of organization that had developed out of necessity: something that rose “above and beyond sectional and party lines.” From this trip, Kelley brought back with him the seed of an idea that would germinate into the Grange.

The first Grange was established in 1868 at Fredonia, N.Y. Mr. Kelley was a Freemason and that probably accounts for the secretive nature of the Grange’s ceremonies and initiation rites. Among the founders was Kelley’s niece, Caroline A. Hall. It



Two sashes from our collection of Grange regalia

Historical Society’s 2005 Calendar

The 2005 Dublin Historical Society calendar is now available at Carr’s Store, Dublin General Store, the Town Hall and the Archives.

This year’s theme is *Industry and Occupations of Dublin*. Copies are \$10.00 each and make excellent Christmas presents.

was her proposal that women be equal members of the organization with the same rights and privileges as men. The Patrons of Husbandry thus became the first organization of its kind to admit women to full membership.

The moral high-ground that the founders of the Grange strove for is well summarized in this paragraph from the preamble to the constitution of the National Grange: “The ultimate object of this organization is for mutual instruction and protection; to lighten labor by diffusing a knowledge of its aims and purposes; expand the mind by tracing the beautiful laws the Creator has established in the universe, and to enlarge our views



Past Master's medal, made for Ethel L. Adams (Mrs Fred), who was Master from 1923 to 1929. (Museum purchase)

were agricultural and had such intriguing titles as "How to Skim Milk" and "The Origin of Potatoes".

Early meetings were held on the top floor of the recently constructed town hall. In 1905, the Grange began meeting in the vestry of the Dublin Community Church, paying \$40 yearly for the privilege. A typical meeting began at 8:00 PM and ended around 10 PM with refreshments served after the meeting. The secret *Manual of Subordinate Granges*, several copies of which among the Grange records at the Dublin Historical Society, discusses the four degrees of initiation required to become a fully qualified member of the Grange. They were as follows:

The 1st degree (Preparation) represented spring and childhood. Candidates were called Laborers and Maids. The lesson was faith.

The 2nd degree (Culture) represented summer and youth. Candidates were called Cultivators and Shepherdesses. The lesson was hope.

The 3rd degree (Harvest) represented autumn and maturity. The Candidates were called Harvesters and Gleaners. The lesson was charity.

The 4th degree (Home) signifies winter and old age. The Candidates were called Husbandmen and Matrons. The lesson was fidelity.

Candidates for each degree had to memorize a speaking part in the induction ceremony. The manual also extols the virtues of punctuality in arrival to meetings and in payment of dues. Any member not meeting their financial obligation by Dec. 31st would be denied the new yearly password and would in turn be denied entrance to the meetings by the Worthy Gate Keeper. Passwords were generally representations of higher human values such as, faith, mercy, truth, etc. Annual dues in 1936 were 50 cents.

By the second year (1885) membership had grown to 43. Of the 22 male members, 21 were listed as farmers and 14 out of 21 female members were identified as farmer's wives. These proportions would soon change. By 1911, when membership had swelled to over 100, the occupations of the members had changed dramatically. Some of the jobs listed were: telephone operator, store boy, carpenter, innkeeper, electrician and plumber. The town physician, Dr. A. H. Childs, and the renowned artist George deForest Brush were also members. This trend may have signaled a shift in the Grange's appeal and may also have mirrored the changing face of Dublin.

There was also a change in the range of activities. The minutes during this later period record, beside the rituals and lectures, social activities such as a maple sugaring party that attracted over 100 participants. There also seemed to be a concerted effort to attract young people to the Grange with events like a dance at the Town Hall that featured cake and ice cream and lasted to well past midnight.

Thea Sabine, a Grange member in the waning stages of the organization, recalls an exchange program of sorts, where an out-of-town Grange would invite a group of Dublin Grangers to

of creative wisdom and power." Later the focus shifted to technical and cultural improvement of the farmer's lot. Although the Grange was in some senses a farm lobby, it pointedly remained free of any political affiliations.

By the end of the nineteenth century the Grange was represented in every state except Rhode Island and its membership numbered 880,000, but its complexion was beginning to change. An original intent of the order was to organize farmers in order to strengthen their position in the market. This meant that membership was limited to tillers of the soil and denied to other professions – artisans, laborers, merchants and manufacturers – because their concerns might conflict with the interests of the Grange.

The Grange Comes to Dublin

The first meeting of Monadnock Grange #103 was held in October of 1884 at the home of its first Worthy Master, Samuel Adams Jr., with 16 founding members in attendance. The Master presided at all meetings and was always addressed with the respectful adjective "worthy" in front of his or her title, as were all officers of the organization. Regular members referred to each other as brothers and sisters. The minutes of the Worthy Secretary from the early meetings were spare, but it is clear that they followed a ritualistic format that included a prayer, flag salute, musical interludes and a recitation by the Worthy Lecturer that fulfilled an organizational mandate to enlighten the membership. The topics of these readings

visit. Edith Mason, an elderly Grange member who lived on Main St. was taken on one of these "mystery rides" However, Miss Mason had never ventured any further than Keene and upon her arrival in Winchendon, Mass., thought she had reached the end of the world.

Thea also remembers a meeting where she reluctantly consented to represent the goddess Pomona who, along with Ceres and Flora, plays an important role in the rituals.

Demise of the Dublin Grange

During the 1950s, Grange membership began a steady decline and by 1962 (the last year that records were kept) there were only 37 members. The final meeting was held on Dec. 23, 1966. Upon its dissolution, the Grange voted to give its records, implements and regalia to the Dublin Historical Society. The majority of the records were found in the old Schoolhouse in a tin box that was apparently used by the Grange for record storage. Many additional records were mixed in with the Gowing family papers, probably because Alice Gowing had been Secretary for over forty years. Among the artifacts at the historical society are four staffs of office, each topped by a Grange symbol – an owl, a shepherd's crook, a spud and a pruning hook – all made by the first Worthy Master, Samuel Adams Jr.

The decline of the Grange may have been a microcosmic metaphor for the changes that would transform the face of America as we moved from an agrarian society to one dominated



Grange staffs of office: L-R, pruning hook (Assistant Steward), owl (Gate Keeper), spud (Steward), shepherd's crook (Lady Assistant Steward)

by technology. As the American family farm teeters on the brink of extinction, these words from the *Manual of Subordinate Granges* may be worth considering: "Before literature existed, before governments were known, agriculture was the calling of man. Agricultural toilers, therefore, claim this precedence over royal dynasties and titles of nobility – that they represent the oldest and most indisputable lineage and hold a patent that issues from the ancient gates of Eden."

— Walter Schnabel

SOCIETY NEWS

Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting on August 18, outgoing President Paul Tuller expressed the Society's thanks to Linda Oja and Bob Weis, who had completed their terms as trustees. Newly-elected members of the Board are Anne Anable, Rusty Bastedo, Curt Merrick and Sue Streba. New officers are Rusty Bastedo, President and Oscar Sanden, Vice-President. Bill Goodwin continues as Treasurer and Nick Thacher will serve as Secretary.

Our new president, Rusty Bastedo, has had a long and distinguished career in the field of local history, having served as Director of historical societies in Brooklyn, N.Y. and Stamford, Conn. Since 1997 he has been New Hampshire State Curator, having charge of all state-owned paintings and historical artifacts

Museum Accessions

Marcia McKenna has surprised us with the gift of a tambourine signed by the late Hildreth Allison. Those of us who remember Hildreth have some difficulty picturing him performing on the tambourine.

Continuing our e-bay purchases of Dublin souvenir china, we have acquired two small vases, both decorated with pictures of Joseph Lindon Smith's Italian garden.

Accessions to the Archives

Anne Anable has given us, among other items, 28 documents relating to Dublin Associates, of which her mother, Lucy Steinert, was a trustee.

The Archives Fund has enabled us to acquire, through e-bay, a broadside illustrating the sizes of shoe pegs manufactured in Dublin by Samuel W. Hale. The broadside is undated, but Hale, who lived in Dublin at the time of the 1850 census, operated a shoe peg factory on Stanley Brook below Mud Pond. He later moved to Keene, and served as Governor of the State from 1883-1885. He was the direct ancestor of the late Rev. Samuel Whitney Hale, Jr. of Loon Point.

In response to a request, the archives at the Missouri Historical Society have supplied considerable biographical material on Hudson E. Bridge, a native of Walpole, N. H., who

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went to St. Louis and made a fortune in the iron stove business. One of his daughters married George Eliot Leighton, builder of the house later known as "Morelands" (now the summer home of the senior Loring Catlins) and another married John Gilbert Chapman, whose buying spree at Tiffany & Co. was described in our last newsletter.

Marion Richardson Phelps and her daughter, **Charlotte Schaefer**, have given us nearly 100 old documents (dating from 1784 to 1914). These are mainly deeds and copies of deeds to real estate belonging to various members of the Abijah Richardson family.

Abijah Richardson and his wife Elizabeth were founding members of the Trinitarian Church in 1827. Among these

Richardson papers is a handwritten confession of faith, read before the Trinitarian congregation as a requirement for admission to membership. Unfortunately, the manuscript is neither signed nor dated, but was probably written by one of Abijah and Elizabeth's sons, two of whom were admitted to membership in 1828.

Louisa Spencer has given us a bound photocopy of the garden diary kept by her parents, Fanny Dwight and Grenville Clark, between 1913 and 1961.

Other gifts have been received from **Karen Bunch, Justine Eaton, Jessie Hale, Gordon Hayes, John Nelson** and **Richard Meryman**. Many thanks to them all.

THE END (ALMOST) OF THE SCHOOLHOUSE PROJECT

Although I have stepped down as president of the Society, I have continued on as project manager for the Schoolhouse renovation. Progress is now obvious but here are some of the details. All the original granite sill stones were reused and mortared in on top of the concrete foundation wall. Three I-beams that were used to move the building have remained to stiffen the floor. We now have a full basement with a concrete floor for future development as storage and new underground electric service.

A fire and burglar alarm is being installed now and the furnace installation will follow in a few weeks. The rough grading has been completed but we will wait until spring to do the final grading with topsoil. Even the topsoil will be the original 1841 issue, since we have it stored in my field on Pierce Road. We still need to cover the bulkhead, build stairs and install a basement door. I am confident we will get these details completed before winter. I think the project has gone smoothly and will meet our goals of preserving the building while adding storage space, heat and a fire alarm.

I want to thank the many generous contributors who made this project possible, as well as the contractors who worked so hard to make it all happen.



The Schoolhouse in suspension, September, 2004

— Paul Tuller

C R E D I T S

This issue of the Dublin Historical Society Newsletter was edited by John Harris.

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