

INTRODUCTION

THE GRANGE MOVEMENT IN BOULDER COUNTY

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It was in this atmosphere of heightened awareness of rural needs that the national Grange, or Patrons of Husbandry, was founded on December 4, 1857.

INTRODUCTION

The grange movement began after the Civil War, during a period of restlessness and discontent in America. Early in the 1860s, President Lincoln had signed legislation creating agricultural colleges, and Congress later established experimental research stations. But these efforts did little to help rural Americans battle prohibitive loan interest rates and unjust price-fixing by the railroads. Farmers seemed destined to remain voiceless and geographically isolated. Only through the creation of a self-help organization could permanent progress be achieved.

It was in this atmosphere of heightened awareness of rural needs that the national grange, or Patrons of Husbandry, was founded on December 4, 1867.

FOUNDING OF THE PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY

In 1866, the U.S. Government sent Oliver Hudson Kelley, a Minnesota farmer, into the southern states to study current agricultural conditions. In his report, Kelley concluded that one of the farmers' greatest needs was a fraternal organization binding them together for a stronger and more effective political voice.

That same year, Kelley was hired by the U.S. Post Office Department in Washington. As time permitted, he continued to work on plans for a farm organization. Within a year, he and six associates had founded the Patrons of Husbandry. It was Kelley's wife and niece, however, who convinced the founders to include wives and families, thus imparting greater strength to the organization. While much of the grange ceremony is patterned after Masonic ritual, its one major distinction is the participation of its women. It was one of the earliest fraternal organizations to allow women to hold office.¹

The order of grange hierarchy begins with the National Grange, headquartered in Washington D.C. Each State Grange oversees "subordinate" granges at the local level. These local granges are further clustered by counties into groups called "Pomonas".

For many years, members purchased their farm equipment, personal and household items from their official supplier, a Chicago mail-order company later known as Montgomery Ward.²

The slate of officers reads like the personnel register from an old English feudal estate: Master, Gate-keeper, Overseer, Lecturer, Steward, and Chaplain. Women are given the special positions of "Ceres" (goddess of grain), "Pomona" (goddess of fruit), and "Flora" (goddess of flowers).³

¹ "Brief History of the National Grange", The Colorado Granger, November 1941.

² Rudolph Johnson, "A Brief History of Left Hand Grange" (August 31, 1958), 6. Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.

³ "The Grange: It Remains an Integral Part of Country Life", Illinois Agri-News, January 18, 1985.

COLORADO STATE GRANGE

At the end of the Civil War, a period of economic depression settled over the country. In the wake of the financial Panic of 1873, Colorado farmers felt the effects of that depression and began to organize Farmers' Clubs. The Colorado Farmers' Union resulted from a series of Farmers' Club meetings. This group immediately adopted a resolution stating that the only hope for Colorado farmers was the organization known as the Patrons of Husbandry.⁴

The national grange movement was now several years old and spreading quickly throughout the country. Local awareness at that time is illustrated by this portion of a Rocky Mountain News editorial, dated 1873:

The little speck in the sky has become a cloud overwhelming the whole horizon. The Patrons of Husbandry, at first scarcely noticed by the railway corporations, have spread themselves over entire states, and the order is today the rising political power of the land.

William Byers⁵

The same year that Byers wrote that editorial, the National Grange appointed John L. Brown, from Nebraska, to organize subordinate granges in Colorado. Two already existed in Jefferson County, and Brown delivered their "unwritten secret work". He helped to form nineteen Colorado granges in 1873, and organized the Colorado Territorial Grange in January of the following year.⁶ In February of 1874, a special session was held at Boulder City to further perfect the organization of the Territorial Grange.⁷

A total of 492 granges were eventually formed in Colorado.⁸

- ⁴ Alvin T. Steinel, History of Agriculture in Colorado, (Ft. Collins, Colorado: State Agricultural College, 1926), 367.
- ⁵ Editorial, Rocky Mountain News, August 6, 1873.
- ⁶ History of Agriculture, 368.
- ⁷ Colorado State Grange History: 1874-1975, (Colorado State Grange, 1975), 11.
- ⁸ Ibid. 104-115.

The first territorial session was held in 1874, with Porter Hinman of Niwot as its secretary.⁹ Both Jeremiah and Augusta Leggett from eastern Boulder County became state officers the following year. Subsequent years saw many state positions filled by Boulder County grangers.

By this time, the grange was beginning to influence Colorado's legislature. When the State Board of Agriculture was created in 1876, seven of its eight members were grangers. Their presence helped prevent a move to divert state funds away from the new agricultural college in Fort Collins.¹⁰ At the state grange meeting in 1885, officers formed a lobbying committee to observe legislative sessions. They were concerned that legislators might give away control of Colorado's rivers and streams, thereby affecting the water rights of its farmers.¹¹

Almost all of Boulder County's twenty-four granges were formed before 1915. Only four remain today. The Boulder Valley Grange, although dormant since 1984, is included below because much of its history is pertinent information for local research.

LEFT HAND BRANDE, #9. Its organizational meeting was held on December 20, 1872, in the Batchelder School at 53rd and Monarch Road. Charter members included Henry Burch, M.L. Burch, G.C. Batchelder, Melvin F. Batchelder, S.M. Caywood, Catherine and Richard Coyn, Edwin and Mary A. Day, N.H. Henry, J.B. Henry, Melissa Henry, Frank Hinman, Ida H. Hinman, M.L. Hinman, P.M. Hinman, P.T. Hinman, and Mary A. Hinman.

Porter Hinman was elected the first Master of Left Hand Grange, and the following year became the first secretary of the Colorado State Grange. On Christmas Day in 1872, Left Hand Grange absorbed all the members of the Ailing Haystack Mountain Grange #26. That roster included many well-known pioneer families as well: Fred Atfelter, Samuel Arbutnot, Mary R. Arbutnot, James Arbutnot, Fred W. Baber, J.C. Baber, Mary F. Baber, Belle A. Calhoun, Daniel Johnson, Phoebe A. Johnson, P. Johnson, Phoebe A. Steele, C.A. Steward, and Thomas Stewart.

⁹ "A Brief History", 1
¹⁰ Colorado State Grange History, 16.
¹¹ History of Agriculture, 374.

BOULDER COUNTY GRANGES

The appendix at the end of this report lists all granges founded in Boulder County with their dates and places of origin. The number following each grange name indicates the order in which it was organized (or reorganized) in the state. John L. Brown, the man sent to Colorado by the National Grange in 1873, formed five subordinate granges in Boulder County that year: Valmont Grange #5, Washington Grange #8, Left Hand Grange #9, Harmony Grange #14, and St. Vrain Grange #16.¹²

Through the years, local granges significantly influenced public policies. In 1910, members drafted a resolution condemning the pollution of Boulder Creek; sent a delegate to the Farmers' Union in Denver that same year, to discuss sugar beet contracts; in 1933, protested to Senator Edward Affolter regarding a 5% sales tax bill, on the grounds that "it taxed the necessities of life"; protested a long-range highway program in 1951, which proposed truck license fees and increased gasoline taxes; and asked the county to suspend the 1956 pheasant season to allow the game birds to propagate.¹³

Almost all of Boulder County's twenty-four granges were formed before 1915. Only four remain today. The Boulder Valley Grange, although dormant since 1984, is included below because much of its history is pertinent information for local research.

LEFT HAND GRANGE, #9. Its organizational meeting was held on December 20, 1873, in the Batchelder School at 63rd and Monarch Road. Charter members included Henry Burch, M.L. Burch, G.C. Batchelder, Melvina F. Batchelder, S.M. Caywood, Catherine and Richard Coyn, Edwin and Mary A. Day, N.M. Henry, L.B. Henry, Melyssa Henry, Frank Hinman, Ida H. Hinman, M.L. Hinman, P.M. Hinman, P.T. Hinman, and Mary A. Hinman.

Porter Hinman was elected the first Master of Left Hand Grange, and the following year became the first secretary of the Colorado State Grange. On Christmas Day in 1875, Left Hand Grange absorbed all the members of the ailing Haystack Mountain Grange #36. That roster included many well-known pioneer families as well: Fred Affolter, Samuel Arbuthnot, Mary R. Arbuthnot, James Arbuthnot, Fred W. Bader, J.C. Bader, Mary F. Bader, Belle A. Calhoun, Daniel Johnson, Phoebe A. Johnson, P. Johnson, Phoebe A. Steele, C.A. Steward, and Thomas Stewart.

¹² Colorado State Grange History, 104.

¹³ Boulder Valley Grange minutes books. Private collection.

Meetings continued at the Batchelder School until 1878, when it became dormant. In 1886, a reorganization meeting was held in the Bethany Chapel west of Niwot. At that time, the following persons signified their intent to join: Fred Affolter, C.K. and Luella O. Blanton, A. Boylan, Sylvanus Budd, Henry R. Burch, Stephen Butler, Thomas and Rebeza Cavey, J.T. Caywood, Eva Goyns, F.W. Goyns, Richard Goyns, Catherine Goyns, Jerome Gould, Fred Greub, Frank Johnson, A. Johnston, Clemens Knaus, Peter A. Leyner, Mrs. M.A. Leyner, William Neeley, Mary Neeley, Thomas Richart, Mary A. Richart, John G. White and R.A. White.

The grange later purchased Bethany Chapel for its meeting hall. In 1891, money was raised for a new grange hall in Niwot by selling shares in the Niwot Building and Development Company. After fifty years, this building became unusable and was sold to the Dodd brothers as a granary. It has since been torn down.

The minutes books indicate considerable involvement in local affairs affecting its members. Resolutions were adopted to boycott farm implement dealers who refused to sell to granges or other farmers' clubs; to hold wheat until prices were raised; to resist paying high coal prices; to donate wheat seed to farmers ruined by grasshopper plagues; to obtain cut-rates from local blacksmith and hardware shops; and to support or oppose pertinent state legislative bills.

As proof of their commitment to the welfare of the rural community, four men from Left Hand Grange eventually held office in the state legislature; Sylvanus Budd, Hiram Prince, John W. Goss, and Rudolph Johnson.

Membership in the grange dwindled to 30 members, and for several years, meetings were held in homes and churches. In 1942, after several regular meetings in Nelson Hall on 2nd Avenue, a revival of this grange occurred. Its members purchased Nelson Hall in September of 1945, and it continues to be the home of Left Hand Grange today. Left Hand Grange remains the second oldest active grange in the state.¹⁴

ALTONA GRANGE #127, was organized in February, 1891, in the Bader schoolhouse. Land was purchased for a grange hall at Nelson Road and 39th Street in 1895, and Andrew Steele recalled listening to his father tell of building it.¹⁵

¹⁴ "A Brief History", and

Colorado State Grange History, 118-119.

¹⁵ Andrew Steele, 1978 interview by Rachel Homer, oral history collection, Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado

Years later, horse sheds were added at the rear of the property, which were large enough to accommodate ten teams of horses on meeting nights. In 1945, a unique building expansion was undertaken. After digging a basement to the north of the existing building, the entire hall was maneuvered over it, thus adding much needed space for a kitchen and dining room. Frank Gould remembered holding rifle practice down there for several years. Altona Grange remains one of the oldest active granges in the state.¹⁶

BOULDER VALLEY GRANGE, #131. This grange first organized on January 6, 1874. Its charter members met on the second floor of the Andrus Store in Valmont, and called themselves the South Boulder Grange, #28. Conflicting sources claim their first Master to be Jeremiah Leggett¹⁷, or Edgar Housel¹⁸. This grange soon fell on hard times and lay dormant until 1893. At that time, its members reorganized in the Davidson schoolhouse on 95th and Isabelle Road and voted to call themselves the Boulder Valley Grange. Some of the original charter members protested this name change because it meant losing their status as one of the oldest granges in the county. The new name prevailed, however, and Moses Hoover was elected Master. The group continued to meet in the schoolhouse until 1900 when they built a hall directly across the road on land donated by Hannah Barker. Her gift stipulated that no alcohol be allowed in the hall and that the land remain the property of the Boulder Valley Grange for as long as it was used as such. In the event the grange ceased to exist, the property was to revert to her heirs. The original building cost \$384.84, more than their members had pledged, but they were able to pay off their note to the lumber yard in only six years.

In 1903, all officers of this grange were women, headed by Master Frances Montgomery. Involvement of the membership was strong, but by the 1980s, attendance had declined to the point it was no longer viable. A decision was made to go dormant in 1984, and after futile attempts to locate Hannah Barker's heirs, the hall was sold to a private party. It remained privately owned until 1988, when it was purchased by Pleasant View Grange.

¹⁶ Colorado State Grange History, 123-124.

¹⁷ "First Grange in Boulder County Organized in Valmont in 1871", Boulder Daily Camera, Boulder, Colorado, June 4, 1952.

¹⁸ Colorado State Grange History, 124.

The original hall, measuring 24' by 50', remains the nucleus of the existing building, and qualified that part of the structure to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. At that time, it was the only registered grange hall in Colorado. In 1992, it remains the only one so honored in Boulder County.¹⁹

CRESCENT GRANGE #136. Thirty-one charter members gathered in Broomfield on October 20, 1898, to organize this grange. H.H.Graves was elected its first Master. A hall was constructed in 1916. Being located within city limits, Crescent Grange has been involved in community as well as rural affairs, contributing to such things as renovation of the Lakeview Cemetery, providing trash barrels for city park, making cancer pads for the VFW, and donating to Meals on Wheels. It remains an active grange today.²⁰

PLEASANT VIEW GRANGE #164, This grange was organized on April 8, 1908, at the Pleasant View School on 47th Street, near Kalmia. Its fifty charter members elected G.W.Wingate as their first Master and continued to meet in the schoolhouse for several more years. In 1910, they purchased an acre of land south of the school for \$141, but waited nine more years before building their 30' by 46' brick grange hall.

Pleasant View Grange helped to organize the Boulder Rural and Suburban Volunteer Fire Department in 1957, when the city of Boulder discontinued operation of their county fire truck. This action had left local farms, homes and businesses without fire protection, so the grange spearheaded efforts to acquire the fire truck, then provided four rural firemen to staff it. The site for a rural fire station was also purchased. After raising \$5800, a total of eighty-seven men donated their time and labor to build the new station.

In 1960, Pleasant View Grange worked with the Boulder County planning board to develop new county maps and to name and number many county roads. This project was completed in 1965.

¹⁹ Boulder Valley Grange minutes books. Private collection. and Colorado State Grange History, 124-126.

²⁰ Ibid. 128-129.

The Colorado Highway Department purchased the Pleasant View grange hall in the early 1980s. The building stood directly in the path of the proposed Foothills Highway, which would soon flank Boulder's eastern boundary. The hall was razed shortly thereafter and the grangers moved their meetings to other locations. In 1988, they purchased the former Boulder Valley grange hall on 95th Street at Isabelle Road.²¹

CRESCENT BRANCH 6134. Thirty-one charter members gathered in Broomfield on October 30, 1898, to organize this grange. H.H. Graves was elected its first Master. A hall was constructed in 1916. Being located within city limits, Crescent Grange has been involved in community as well as rural affairs, contributing to such things as renovation of the Lakewood Cemetery, providing trash barrels for city park, making cancer pads for the VFW, and donating to Meals on Wheels. It remains an active grange today.

PLEASANT VIEW BRANCH 6144. This grange was organized on April 8, 1908, at the Pleasant View School on 47th Street, near Kalama. Its fifty charter members elected G.W. Wingate as their first Master and continued to meet in the schoolhouse for several more years. In 1910, they purchased an acre of land south of the school for \$141, but waited nine more years before building their 30 by 45 brick grange hall.

Pleasant View Grange helped to organize the Boulder Rural and Suburban Volunteer Fire Department in 1927, when the city of Boulder discontinued operation of their county fire truck. This action had left local farms, homes and businesses without fire protection, so the grange spearheaded efforts to acquire the fire truck, then provided four rural firemen to staff it. The site for a rural fire station was also purchased. After raising \$2800, a total of eighty-seven men donated their time and labor to build the new station.

In 1960, Pleasant View Grange worked with the Boulder County planning board to develop new county maps and to name and number many county roads. This project was completed in 1965.

²¹ Boulder Valley Grange minutes book, Private collection, and Colorado State Grange History, 104-126.

²¹ Colorado State Grange History, 145-146.

CONCLUSIONS

The grange movement played a vital part in the transition from rural simplicity in the 1860s to the agribusiness of the 1990s. Until the Patrons of Husbandry rose to national leadership, there was no agricultural press, no agricultural colleges, no experimental research stations. As a result of the grange's involvement in the rural life of our country, the Department of Agriculture was created, transportation monopolies were controlled, rural mail delivery was introduced, a good road system was established, and pure food legislation was enacted. Most important of all, farm families were given a voice which was heard by legislators and corporations across the country.

Grange numbers have diminished nation-wide over the last decade and today, only four remain in Boulder County: Pleasant View Grange, Left Hand Grange, Crescent Grange, and Altona Grange.

28	* South Boulder	Vailmont	January 4, 1874
29	* Lower St. Vrain	Longmont	January 10, 1874
30	* Coal Creek	Louisville	January 10, 1874
31	* Burlington	Longmont	January 14, 1874
36	* Haystack Mtn	Mitot	January 19, 1874
84	* Pleasant View	Longmont	January 24, 1890
127	Altona	Mitot	February 24, 1891
128	* Rocky Mtn.	Longmont	March 12, 1891
130	* Longmont	Longmont	January 28, 1892
131	* Boulder Valley	Boulder	November 12, 1892
134	* Hygiene	Hygiene	February 26, 1894
136	Crescent	Broomfield	October 20, 1898
140	* Highland Lake	Longmont	June 27, 1899
157	* Clarkson Valley	Louisville	May 29, 1907
164	Pleasant View	Boulder	May 1, 1908
202	* St. Vrain	Longmont	March 14, 1912
216	* Liberty	Longmont	September 20, 1913

APPENDIX "A"
Historic Boulder County Granges

NO.	GRANGE	LOCATION	DATE
5	* Valmont	Valmont	December 12, 1873
8	* Washington	Niwot	December 19, 1873
9	Left Hand	Niwot	December 20, 1873
14	* Harmony	Valmont	December 23, 1873
16	* St.Vrain	Fella	December 26, 1873
27	* Longmont	Longmont	January 5, 1874
28	* South Boulder	Valmont	January 6, 1874
29	* Lower St.Vrain	Longmont	January 10, 1874
30	* Coal Creek	Louisville	January 10, 1874
31	* Burlington	Longmont	January 14, 1874
36	* Haystack Mtn	Niwot	January 19, 1874
94	* Pleasant View	Longmont	January 24, 1890
127	Altona	Niwot	February 24, 1891
128	* Rocky Mtn.	Longmont	March 12, 1891
130	* Longmont	Longmont	January 28, 1892
131	* Boulder Valley	Boulder	November 13, 1893
134	* Hygiene	Hygiene	February 26, 1896
136	Crescent	Broomfield	October 20, 1898
140	* Highland Lake	Longmont	June 27, 1899
157	* Clarkston Valley	Louisville	May 29, 1907
164	Pleasant View	Boulder	May 1, 1908
205	* St.Vrain	Longmont	March 14, 1912
216	* Liberty	Longmont	September 30, 1913

* Dormant

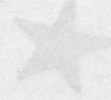
NO.	GRANGE	LOCATION	DATE
225	* South Boulder	Boulder	March 27, 1914
450	* Longs Peak	Hygiene	April 30, 1940



* Dormant



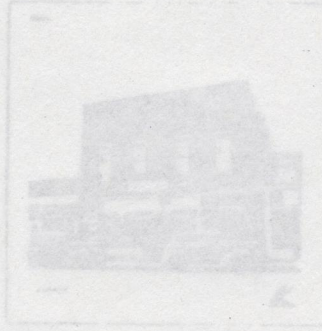
Crescent Grange # 126



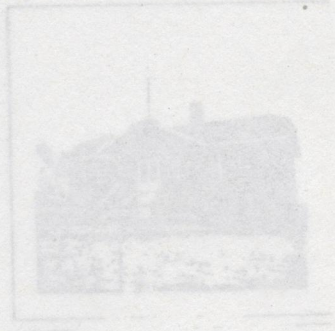
Alton Grange # 127



Boulder Valley Grange # 11



Little Thompson Grange # 42



Liberty Hall Grange # 43



Long's Peak Grange # 450



Pleasant Hill Grange # 124



Salt Lake Grange # 7

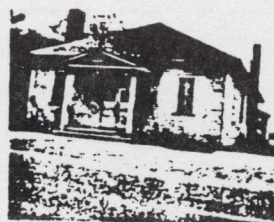
Source: Boulder Valley Grange scrap book. Private collection

APPENDIX "B"

Granges in Boulder Pomona, ca 1947



Altona Grange # 127



Crescent Grange # 136



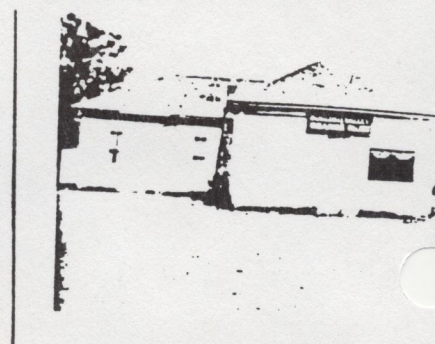
Rinn Valley Grange



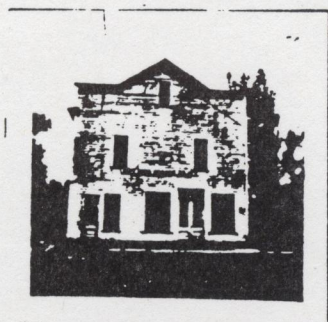
Liberty Hall Grange # 459



Little Thompson Grange # 454



Boulder Valley Grange



Left Hand Grange # 9



Pleasant View Grange # 164



Long's Peak Grange

Source: Boulder Valley Grange scrap book. Private collection

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ARCHIVES

The Colorado Grange Museum at 21901 East Hampden Avenue, Aurora. Open only during summer months, and then ONLY BY APPOINTMENT. Call 752-0406 for more information.

Colorado State Grange office: 2260 South Xanadu Way, Aurora.
Phone: 752-0406.