

# W. SHARP FULLERTON

11<sup>th</sup> MASTER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE GRANGE (1944-1950)



## *The Person:*

- Son of Alexander and Margaret Fullerton born on a farm near New Castle, Lawrence County on November 23, 1878. The 130 acre farm was included in a land grant to a soldier of the Revolutionary War. Mr. Fullerton graduated from N. Beaver Township High School and attended Slippery Rock State Normal School. He taught for six years in rural districts of Lawrence County.
- In 1903 he married Opie Ellen Patterson of N. Beaver Township. They had three children; Erol, Ellen and Alice.
- Master Fullerton began farming at the age of 21, renting the family farm which he later purchased in addition to another 100 acre farm. He milked 50 registered Jerseys and sold milk at wholesale in the New Castle market.
- He was a Charter member of Westfield Grange #1514 which was organized in 1912. He served as Master and Lecturer of Westfield in addition to other offices, and was Master of Lawrence County Pomona for 12 years. He also served as State Assistant Steward for six years.
- In 1938 he was elected as a member of the PA Legislature serving three terms in the PA House of Representatives.
- Elected as State Master in 1944 at the annual meeting in Harrisburg.

## *Of Note:*

- A net increase in membership of 3,335 was reported in 1945.
- With the return of normal conditions in 1946, the Grange had a net gain in membership of more than 3,500 and a total membership of 70,000.
- The State Constitution was changed in 1945 to hold the annual meetings on the fourth Tuesday in October beginning in 1946. Reasons given were the weather conditions were more favorable and the roads less hazardous for travel. The policies adopted by the State Grange could be presented at National Grange in November.
- A net increase in membership of 5,000 was reported in 1947 with a total membership of 75,000.
- The Sixth Degree was conferred on 3,000 plus candidates, the largest in the history of the Pennsylvania State Grange. Many then received the Seventh Degree in Columbus, OH of which the class was 18,000 members.
- The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was celebrated in Reading in October 1948. In 1873 there were 25 Subordinate Granges and in 1948 704 Subordinate Granges. The total membership was 78,644. There were no Pomonas or Juvenile Granges in 1873 because they hadn't come into existence. In 1948 there were 57 Pomona Granges and 163 Juvenile Granges with a total membership in excess of 4,000.
- Beatty Demit, Lecturer, promoted a project adopted by the Grange for the relief of starving children and people in Europe. The project was called "The PA State Grange Milk of Human Kindness Project". It provided powdered milk which was sent for distribution through the American Friends Service

Committee. Granges raised \$13,000 for the project amounting to 40,000 gallons of milk distributed in Austria and in American-British Zones in occupied Germany.

- The State Grange Constitution was amended to raise the minimum dues of Subordinate members from \$1.80 to \$2.00 per year.
- The Diamond Jubilee pageant, “The Career of the Grange in State and Nation” written and directed by Professor William R. Gordon of Pennsylvania State College was presented. He also assisted with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Pageant in Pittsburgh.
- 1949 there was a net gain in membership of 1,474. The total membership was 80,118 in 706 Granges.
- During Master Fullerton’s Annual Report in 1949, he commented on education stating the opposition of the PA State Grange to federal aid for education at elementary and secondary levels and pointed out the inevitability of federal control. He emphasized the value of vocational education and this type of training should be available without requiring academic standards be maintained.
- Master Fullerton stressed the importance of ritualism in building the Grange. He stated ritualism is the cornerstone on which the Grange was founded and if lost, members will lose interest in the Grange.
- There were 4,000 copies of the first history of the PA State Grange, written by Fred Brenckman, published for sale.
- 1950 – Master Fullerton’s final address showed that as September 30, 1944 there were 712 Granges with 62,506 members and as of September 30, 1950 there had been an increase of 1,635 members with a total membership of 81,753 in 705 Granges. During his six year term a net gain of nearly 20,000 members was shown. This was the greatest growth period of the PA State Grange.

### ***Milk of Human Kindness Project***

- Adopted at PA State Grange Leadership School at Bloomsburg State College in 1948. Grange members responded to the appeal for relief of starving children in Europe. Each Subordinate Grange was given a quota of \$.25/member. All Departments working together there was a total of \$13,484.10 raised or estimated 40,452 gallons of milk distributed to hospitals, short-time feeding camps for youth and victims of tuberculosis due to malnutrition.
- Pomona Granges exceeding their quota received special honors. They included Berks, Lower Bucks, Upper Bucks, Carbon, Chester-Delaware, Juniata-Franklin-Mifflin, Indiana, Lehigh-Northampton, Lawrence, Lycoming, McKean, Mercer and Tioga Counties.
- Lecturer Betty H. Demit, reported the Mid-Atlantic Lecturers’ Conference, discontinued during the war, was reorganized and held at Indiana State Teachers’ College, Indiana, PA was attended by 286 delegates from NY, MD, DE, NJ, and PA.
- The MALC rotated between states and when in PA it was held in conjunction with the PA State Grange Leadership Conference attended by more than 400 leaders representing Lecturers, Youth, Juniors and Family Activities Departments.
- In 1949 a chorus contest was held with more than 50 choruses participating. The winning Grange was Claysville Grange, Washington County. Many of the choruses participated at the PA Farm Show in January 1950.
- Soil Conservation essay was held with Richard VanNoy, Troy Grange, Bradford County, participating. He later served as the State Grange Secretary and in 1973 became employed as a program specialist with the State Conservation Committee.

- 1950 a Quartette Contest was reintroduced after a one year lapse. North Sewickley Grange, Beaver County Quartette received first place. A Youth Public Speaking and essay contest were also instituted.
- Leadership School was held in April with 426 in attendance.

### ***Blue Cross Hospitalization***

- In 1949 Murray C. Stewart, Indiana County and member of the State Grange Executive Committee, responsible for promotion of Blue Cross Hospitalization program, reported on cooperation activities of Blue Cross Hospitalization and Subordinate Granges.
- Six Blue Cross Hospitalization Service Associations enrolled 396 Subordinate Granges with 10,794 family or individual contracts. Also available was a companion service – Blue Shield Medical-Surgical Care.
- 1950 – Blue Cross enrollment showed 435 Subordinate Granges with 12,014 member contracts.

### ***Home Economics***

- Mrs. Neff (Ethel) Richards, Bedford County Chairman of the State Home Ec Committee reported hall improvements in most Granges owning their own halls. Approximately 75% of Granges contributed to Tuberculosis and Cancer foundations, and there many other community service projects done.

### ***Juvenile Grange***

- 1947-48 Spring Hill Juvenile Grange, Bradford County, was one of the oldest in the Nation. The 1971 State Grange register indicated a membership of 21 and it had been continually active. Mrs. Louie Fiske, served as Matron. In 1973 the Juvenile Grange disbanded. Other Juvenile Granges had been organized but passed out of existence.
- Mrs. Gerald (Lucy) Shumway, Past Matron of Spring Hill Juvenile Grange and Past Juvenile Superintendent wrote the Juvenile Grange Graduation Ceremony used Nationally. She also served as a Past State Flor and initiated the Sixth Degree Drills and made the first rose curtain used in the PA Sixth Degree.
- The first Juvenile Grange Handbook on record in PA was prepared by Elizabeth Millard (Mrs. Vernon Norris), Virginville Grange, Berks County when she served as Juvenile Superintendent.
- The Beginning of Juvenile Grange Camp was written for the Centennial Edition of the PA State Grange History book. Excerpts follow:
  - Became a reality in 1947 at Camp Brule` for a full week from Saturday noon to Saturday noon.
  - Planning involved many hours with the National Master, Albert Goss. He pointed out problems that may occur and would disrupt the stability of the State Grange, but if they felt so included, to proceed.
  - Master Fullerton and the State Executive Committee gave their blessing but no financial backing. They felt it must be self-supporting, and issued a directive that all the buter and milk plus good meals be provided for all campers.
- Members of the first Juvenile Grange Committee included Neff Richards, Bedford County; Murray Stewart, Indiana County; Mrs. Jennie Bartholomew, Lehigh-Northampton County; Mrs. Doris Williams,

Tioga County; Miss Mabel Satterthwaite, Bucks County; Miss Helen Workley, Lawrence County; and Miss Elizabeth H. Millard, Juvenile Superintendent.

- Cooking were Mr. & Mrs. William Millard and Sister Elizabeth Millard for 90 campers. They were visited by Master Fullerton and two men from the Executive Committee to inspect them.
- Cost to the campers was \$12.00 per week, used to buy food, pay camp rental, mileage and board for teachers and counselors, mileage for the Juvenile Superintendent and craft materials for everyone. A profit of \$105.00 was turned over to the State Grange.
- After the next Juvenile Superintendent was appointed the State Grange appropriated a sum of money for the Juvenile Superintendent.
- Camp pictures were always taken, and the curriculum included Bible study, nature, music, Ritual, crafts and daily Grange meetings. Degree work was always exemplified during the week. Recreation of soft ball, swimming and ring games were held.
- The 1949 annual Juvenile report to the State Grange Session is quoted “Matrons deserve our respect but more than that they should feel they are a vital part of each Grange. How can the office of Matron be made so challenging and interesting that our best leaders will covet the office?”

### *Legislative:*

- At the 1945 Annual Session held in Clearfield Master Fullerton made a plea for the preservation of the system of private enterprise. He also called for the elimination of cartels and monopolies.
- As a result of strikes during 1946 the Taft Hartley Act was passed in 1947 in an effort to place industry and labor on equal footing before the law, in addition to protecting the public interests.
- Following the end of World War II, more manpower was available and the State approved a road building program with emphasis on arterial highways.
- At the 1947 Annual meeting in New Castle the State Grange urged Congress to appropriate funds to complete projects for flood control and soil conservation. They also urged that the St. Lawrence Seaway project be postponed until domestic undertakings were completed.
- The State Grange went on record at the 1948 session favoring an amendment to the Constitution changing the method of electing the US President and Vice President. The plan would abolish the electoral college.
- Called for the repeal of the Brunner-Stonier (tax anything act”. Favored a sales tax with exemptions to provide revenue for education and relieve the burden on real estate.
- Called for a full refund of all state taxes paid on gasoline used off highway.
- Opposed efforts to amend federal law regarding oleomargarine so it could be sold in colored form.
- Grange played a substantial part in legislation securing a free calfhood vaccination program for the control of Bangs disease.
- Master Fullerton called for a study of the Social Security program with the possibility of farmers being brought under the system.
- Urged the PA State Grange advocate the establishment of community colleges to provide advantage of two years of college training within commuting distance of home. This marked the beginning of a continuing effort that culminated in establishment of the community college program.