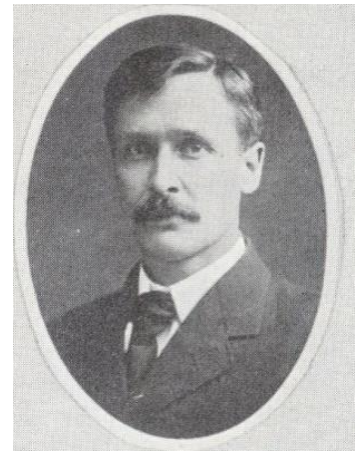


WILLIAM F. HILL

4th MASTER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE GRANGE (1898-1908)



The Person:

- A native of Shenango Township, Crawford County was educated at Allegheny College in Meadville and became a farmer.
- He married Mildred Collins who died in 1893, leaving a daughter, Lina. In 1897 he married Marie A. Hill of Leechburg and they had three sons.
- He first served as Lecturer from 1894-1998 when he was elected Master. During his ten year term, he lived part of the time in Chambersburg.
- He died of a heart attack June 21, 1935 at his home near Huntingdon.

Of Note:

- PA Grange News established during his term as Master. The first issue was mailed at Chambersburg in 1904.
- From 1874-1902 The Farmers Friend and Grange Advocate, published by R. H. Thomas, first Secretary of the PA State Grange, was the official organ of the Order in PA.
- Appointed by various Governors to represent PA at Farmers' National Congress, Interstate Road Congress and Charleston Exposition.
- President Theodore Roosevelt appointed him to represent the US Government at the International Conference of Agriculture in Rome Italy with David Lubin, CA and Ambassador Henry V. White in 1904.
- In 1905 he was the accredited representative of the US Congress and in 1908 he was one of five accredited representatives at the International Conference of Agriculture in Rome. In 1908 he was again designated to go to Rome to assist in the establishment of International Institute of Agriculture.
- In 1903 there were 26 Grange picnics held in different parts of the State. Those Granges in the vicinity of the picnics were expected to contribute toward the expenses. The largest picnic with an attendance of 20,000 was held at Osterburg, Bedford County.
- Between 1903 and 1904 approximately 12,000 new members were received. Thirty-five new Granges organized in 1904 bringing the total of Granges to 540.
- Some officers of the PA State Grange attended the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904. The PA State Government had contributed \$300,000 for the interests at the Exposition, but the Commission handling the funds allocated \$15,000 to agriculture. Master Hill reported to Governor Pennypincher that there were not enough exhibits to fill the space.
- At the 1904 Annual Session Master Hill reported progress was being made in construction of new ag buildings at PA State College.
- The State Library at Harrisburg agreed to send out Grange Libraries to Subordinate Granges who made application for them. Granges paid \$1.00 to defray transportation expenses.
- There were 5,000 new members in 1905 and the total membership of 33,226 was the highest since the inception of the organization.

- Oliver Hudson Kelley attended the Annual Session at Sunbury – the only one he attended in the State, but was a speaker at the Williams Grove Picnic & Grange Encampment in 1894.
- The Executive Committee in 1906 authorized the Master to appoint a Special Committee to consider establishment and feasibility of Grange banks. Two Grange Banks were established in Tioga and Cambria Counties in 1906. There were a total of 14 Grange Banks and one trust company by 1907.
- A net gain in membership of 5,472 was realized in 1906 increasing the total membership to 38,451.
- During 1907 there were 619 Subordinate Granges with 30 new Granges established with a total membership of 42,760.
- The Sixth Degree conferred on a class of 439 candidates.
- Master Hill criticized the National Grange in 1908 regarding the same number of delegates being permitted from each State regardless of the membership.
- In 1908 there were 654 Subordinate Granges, and during the ten years of the Hill Administration membership more than doubled.

Legislative:

- Congress approved an appropriation of \$300,000 for rural free delivery in 1899.
- The State Legislative Committee appealed for the enforcement of the protection that citizens were paying for was not being given and the PA markets were being flooded with oleomargarine being sold as butter in 1900.
- The Legislative Committee called for the resignation of the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary of Agriculture anticipated this action and tendered his resignation in 1903 before the Committee met and made the request. N. B. Critchfield, a Grange member, was appointed and served until 1915.
- Opposed any system of road construction that will increase the burden of the already over-taxed farmer.
- The State Legislature passed a new oleomargarine law licensing manufacturers and dealers and totally forbidding the sale of yellow oleomargarine in the state. State Ag Secretary was opposed to this legislation and was determined to prevent the enactment of the bill. Hundreds of petitions from Subordinate Granges and farmers were received and the bill was passed. After the law was enacted, a factory manufacturing colored margarine in the State was allowed to continue without any consequences.
- The State Legislature passed a law appropriating \$500,000 a year for good roads of which there was 100,000 miles. Grange members felt that much authority was being centralized at Harrisburg.
- The State Grange had a special committee for the promotion of agriculture education. The primary purpose of the Committee was to secure more adequate appropriations for the PA State College. The Committee reported that working with other organized groups substantive appropriations had been secured for erection of various buildings along with funds for purchasing necessary equipment.
- At the 1905 Annual Session the State Legislative Committee reported many bills which the Grange was interested in were killed in the Legislature.
- The State Grange Session was held at Sunbury near Fort Augusta which was built at the time of the French & Indian War. The Grange adopted a resolution advocating the purchase of the land by the State.
- In 1907 the Legislative Committee reported various measures backed by the State Grange were enacted. They included a Trolley Freight Bill, \$.02 passenger fare on railroads, appropriations to public schools including township high schools were increased.