

WILLIAM H. RINGLER

19th MASTER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE GRANGE (1988-1992)



The Person:

- In July of 1988, Overseer William H. Ringler became Master of the Pennsylvania State Grange when Charles E. Wismer resigned.
- Ringler was a native of Berlin, Somerset County, and a well-known potato and dairy farmer. He married the former Mildred Kimmel, and together they raised a son and a daughter.
- “Bill” served on many agricultural, conservation, electrification and association boards. He was named Pennsylvania’s first State Granger of the Year in 1969. Other prestigious awards include Grange Family, Pennsylvania Master Farmer, Century Farm Award, and Outstanding Person of the Year from the Somerset County Chamber of Commerce.
- The Ringlers were named a part of a six-delegate team that participated in a Farmers’ and World Affairs Tour of India. They were also hosts to Indian delegations that came to the United States.

1988 IN REVIEW

- In July of 1988 State Master Charles E. Wismer, Jr. resigned, and William H. Ringler, Overseer, was installed as Master.
- The Grange Service Corporation President Charles Wismer, Jr. reported \$5 million in business with a profit of \$44,000, so that the State Grange received \$33,000.
- The Grange Credit Union President Gordon Hiller reported the hiring a full-time manager, and a move into the Grange Headquarters Building. Their assets totaled \$875,000.
- Master Ringler was elected to a two-year term at the convention in Allentown.

LEGISLATION

- The State Grange supported legislation that would allow employers with 5 or more employees apply for Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority loans.
- The Grange supported the approval of the Farmland Preservation initiative by referendum.

THE ORDER

- There were 41,330 members reported in 1988, along with 350 Associate members, a category created so that non-Subordinate Grange members might purchase insurance from the Service Corporation.
- Some 570 members had taken advantage of the Lifetime Membership opportunity for dues payment.
- Four Granges consolidated, seven were declared dormant and Porter Grange #2101, Clarion County was organized.
- There were 469 Subordinate Delegates representing 223 Subordinate Granges, 80 Pomona Delegates from 43 Pomona Granges at the Annual Session.
- There were 162 candidates to receive the Sixth Degree, and 594 members and guests attended the All Granger Banquet.
- Thomas Beitel, South Auburn Grange, Susquehanna County, was selected as the Granger of the Year.

- A Ritual Study Committee, chaired by Kenneth Schlegel, Berks County, met three times throughout the year and made numerous recommendations. They discussed the pros and cons of the Ritual; felt that there had been too many changes in today's society that make it impossible to live with yesterday's ritual and presented a series of six resolutions presented through the Good of the Order Committee.
- In conjunction with the Youth Committee the Study Committee sponsored a creative ritual contest.

NATIONAL GRANGE

- Fae Snyder replaced her recently deceased husband, J. Luther Snyder, as Priestess Analyst of the Assembly of Demeter.

DEAF ACTIVITIES

- Many Pomona Granges purchased "Listen To The Wind" slide program.
- The Deaf Poster & Essay Contests were begun.
- David Parker and his Breakthrough group performed at State Grange.

JUNIORS

- The Juniors made 100th anniversary banners that were hung in the Capitol Rotunda.
- The Juniors held a two-day Harrisburg Extravaganza with 325 participants with many Juniors and chaperones sleeping overnight at Perry Valley Grange in Perry County; That Grange's hall was destroyed by fire one hour after the Juniors left for the day.
- Jeff Wetzel, named the Junior Director of the Nation at the 1987 National Session.
- Junior Prince William Steel, Beaver County and Junior Princess Mary Greiss, Berks County.

LECTURERS

- The second Summer Jubilee was held at St. Francis College, Loretto, with 200 plus in attendance.
- Pioneer Grange #1777 Berks County placed first in the Community Service Contest.
- Community Night recognition with less than 100 members was won by Penn Line Grange #1784, Crawford County; 100-199 members – Pioneer Grange #1777, Berks County and over 200 members – Virginville #1832, Berks County.
- Pomona Lecturer of the Year – Jean Bonham, Susquehanna Pomona #7 and Subordinate Lecturer of the Year – David Hay, Hillcrest Grange #1674, Somerset County.

WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

- The 30th year of the National Grange Sewing Contest held a drawing to win a trip for two to Disney World as the first prize. PA's entry was Lois McAlevy, Logans Valley Grange #664, Blair County.
- The goal set by National Grange for PA was 2,206 entries. PA fell short with only 876 entries and 51 being judged at the State level.
- Over 3,000 stuffed toys were made and donated.

YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS

- At the Mid-Atlantic Youth Conference in the Group Sign-a-Song Contest Mary Ann Keith, Huntingdon County and Ellen Huber, Chester County placed second.
- In the Individual category Mary Ann Keith, Huntingdon County, placed third.
- Eighty youth participated in the annual Youth Camp. Heather Schlegel, Berks County and Mark Marshall, Lawrence County, named Youth Ambassadors.
- George and Nancy Rodgers, Lawrence County, Young Couple of the Year.

1989 IN REVIEW

- Membership growth was emphasized, and 1,679 were initiated into the Subordinate Granges.
- Women's Activities Director, Becky Michalka, reported that the National Grange had discontinued the Sewing Contest and the CARE relationship, but that the PA State Grange would continue these programs.
- State Grange Lecturer, Hedy Chaffee, introduced a traveling Teddy Bear to promote visitation programs.

LEGISLATION

- A year of serious drought brought requests for increases in milk prices for the dairy farmers.
- The use of the hormone BST made news, and the Grange requested withholding use until more tests could be done to show that it was safe to use milk from treated cows.
- The Farmland Preservation Program became law.

THE ORDER

- The membership numbers fell to 39,087 despite valiant efforts; 325 Associate Members were reported and 594 Lifetime Members.
- Seven Granges were consolidated and ten Granges declared dormant or disbanded.
- At the State Session in Uniontown, 286 candidates received the Sixth Degree.
- Attendance at the All Granger Banquet was 501.
- Delegates from Subordinate Granges was 349 representing 193 Subordinate Granges and 70 Pomona Delegates from 38 Pomona Granges.
- Reed Burman, Susquehanna County received a membership award for obtaining 22 members.
- Leadership/Membership Trainings were held in all Eight Regions of the State following a three-day training of 21 members by National Grange Director of Membership Harry Massey.
- Two new halls were dedicated: November 1988 - Perry Valley #1804, Perry County and June 1989 – Mountain Grange #567, Luzerne County.
- Two Junior Granges were organized – Greene County #544 and Sinking Valley #543, Blair County. Two Junior Granges were reorganized – Henderson #91 and Derry Township #306
- Laura McCardle, Brandywine Grange #60, Chester County, named Granger of the Year.
- A 1995 Steering Committee appointed to host National Grange.

NATIONAL GRANGE

- Mary and William Buffington served as delegates to the convention when illness prevented the attendance of Master and Sister Ringler.

JUNIORS

- Junior Camp had 189 campers, counselors, helpers, and staff in attendance.
- Junior Prince David Teufel, Lehigh County and Junior Princess Melinda Berger, Berks County.
- Community Junior Grange #479, Perry County named Junior Grange of the Nation; Debra Campbell, Junior Leader.
- Pleasant Hill Junior Grange #529, Cambria County, recognized for best gain in membership in the Nation.

LECTURERS

- Summer Jubilee held at St. Francis College, Loretto with 300 in attendance.
- Community Night recognition with under 100 members – Wilmot Grange #512, Bradford County; 100-199 members – Pioneer Grange #1777, Berks County; and over 200 members – Virginville Grange #1832, Berks County.
- Pomona Lecturer of the Year – Karen Mohn Berks County Pomona #43 and Subordinate Lecturer of the Year – Robin Fabo, Ontelaunee Grange #1617, Berks County.
- Community Service – Ringtown Grange #2100, Schuylkill County.

WOMEN’S ACTIVITIES

- Pomona Women’s Activities Director of the Year – Nettie Martsolf, Butler County Pomona #17 and Subordinate Women’s Activities Director of the Year – Elaine Cook, Brandywine Grange #60, Chester County.
- Berks County received first place quilt in the Nation.
- Martha Baldwin, Chester County, received Grand Award for a bedspread in the Needlework Contest at National Grange.

YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS

- Keith Treichler, Berks County, received Young Agriculturist Award, and served as a member of the National Youth/Young Adult Team for one year.
- Nettie Kauffman named Youth Director of the Year for states with over 100 Granges.
- Calvin Cook, Fayette County, received second place in the National Grange Public Speaking Contest.
- Jennifer Cummins, Lawrence County and Henry Seidel, Berks County named Youth Ambassadors.
- Michael and Jane Adams named Young Couple.
- Heather Schlegel named National Ambassador Runner-up 1989-90.

1990 IN REVIEW

- The Deaf Activities Director Wanda Gallimore introduced a coloring book for use by first through third grade students to give them knowledge of the importance of hearing protection and deaf awareness. The coloring book was developed by Darlene Gruber of Mercer County and dedicated in her memory as she died prior to its publication.
- The Sixth Degree was conferred on 75 members at the convention in West Chester.

LEGISLATION

- The Grange supported a bill making it a crime to trespass on private land in a motor vehicle without out the permission of the landowner.
- “Pick Your Own” operations were exempted from liability with the “buyer assumes risk” philosophy.
- The PA Department of Agriculture was convinced to approve the University of Pennsylvania accreditation for Johne’s Disease testing.
- Legislation was passed to prohibit garbage and chemical waste haulers from transporting food products.

THE ORDER

- There were 37,110 Subordinate members reported in 507 Subordinate Granges, with 681 of those classified as Lifetime Members and 307 Associate Members.

- Four Subordinate Granges consolidated and four Granges declared dormant or disbanded.
- Junior members numbered 821 in 88 Junior Granges.
- Hillcrest Junior Grange #504 reorganized and Meadows Junior Grange #545, Susquehanna County organized.
- State Session had 316 Subordinate Delegates representing 178 Subordinate Granges and 77 Pomona Delegates from 40 Pomona Granges.
- The All Granger Banquet attended by 405 members and guests.
- Granger of the Year Patricia Rudy, Mt. Nebo Grange, Allegheny County.
- Grange Week Banquet held in April with 330 in attendance.
- A “Help Our Headquarters Fund” was established.
- Sister Grange program introduced.

NATIONAL GRANGE

- Lois Steele, Chester County and a member of the National Grange Deaf Activities Committee, signed the Seventh Degree for the first time.
- Jennifer Cummins, Lawrence County, was named the National Grange Youth Ambassador. This program was discontinued the following year.

JUNIORS

- Junior Camp held at Camp Kanesatake with 155 campers, counselors, helpers and staff.
- Junior Prince Christopher Straub, Mercer County and Junior Princess Jennifer Beiler, Lehigh County.
- Pleasant Hill Junior Grange #529, Cambria County received Junior Achievement Award and Annette Farabaugh names Junior Leader in the Nation.
- Tim Grim, State Junior Director, received National recognition for states with more than 20 Junior Granges.

LECTURERS

- Summer Jubilee held at St. Francis College, Loretto, with 200 in attendance.
- Community Night recognition less than 100 members – Mt. Joy Grange #537, Armstrong County; 100-199 members – Pioneer Grange #1777, Berks County; and over 200 members – Virginville Grange #1832, Berks County.
- Berks County Pomona Lecturer Karen Mohn received first place on annual report at National Grange.
- Subordinate Lecturer of the Year Cheryl Folk, Fleetwood Grange #1839, Berks County and Pomona Lecturer of the Year Margaret Ann Vernam, Mercer County #25.
- State Lecturer Hedy Chaffee received National recognition for states with more than 200 Granges.
- Frances Merkel, Ontelaunee Grange #1617, Berks County, placed first in the National Grange Talent Contest Variety Acts Division.

WOMEN’S ACTIVITIES

- Pomona Director of the Year Thelma Shultz, Somerset County, and Subordinate Director of the Year Betty Young, Marshall Grange #539, Armstrong County.
- A total of 4,350 stuffed toys were made and donated.

YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS

- Steve Mohn, Berks County, named National Outstanding Young Adult and served on the National Youth Team for one year.

- Mary Ann Keith, Huntingdon County and Kirk Sattazahn, Berks County attended a White House Youth Forum.
- Youth Camp held in Hamburg, Berks County. Youth Ambassadors Jodi Marshall, Lawrence County and Clair Wriglesworth, Clearfield County.
- Young Couple Wayne and Tami Iman, Mercer County.
- State Youth/Young Adult Chairman Nettie Kauffman recognized at National Grange for states with more than 100 Granges.

1991 IN REVIEW

- The breakup of the Soviet Republic was on the minds of members; war in Iraq involved U.S. troops.
- More than \$10,000 was raised for the Help Our Headquarters Fund to be used to repair, repaint, and re-decorate the Headquarters in Harrisburg.
- A Mission and Goals Statement was approved to again implement the goals of “The Blue Ribbon Committee”: Leadership training, Public awareness, Community service, Legislative involvement, and a membership goal of 50,000.
- The Deaf Activities Department raised \$2,500 to assist in providing certified interpreters for the deaf.
- There were 50 Granges participating in the Sister Grange Program.

LEGISLATION

- Testimony in favor of a Nutrient Management Law was presented before the House Ag Committee.
- Testimony on Wetland Regulations was presented before the Senate Ag Committee
- The Milk Marketing Board was again asked to increase milk prices.

THE ORDER

- There were 34,948 members in 493 Subordinate Granges, 757 Associate members and 716 Lifetime Members.
- Six Granges consolidated and six Granges declared dormant.
- Junior membership indicated 753 members from 88 Junior Granges.
- Allegheny Junior Grange #545, Lycoming County organized.
- There were 353 Subordinate Delegates from 198 Subordinate Granges and 72 Pomona Delegates from 38 Pomona Granges.
- There 362 Sixth Degree candidates at the annual session, and 500 in attendance at the All Granger banquet.
- Mary Jane Kent, Harveys Grange, Greene County named Granger of the Year.
- \$6,545.66 collected to date to host the 1995 National Grange Session in PA.
- Dolly Sterner hired as a membership worker in February 1991.
- Sixty-six Granges received were recognized by National Grange with a Certificate of Achievement in Membership Development for 1990-91.

JUNIORS

- Junior members sold 220 cases of M&M Candies to raise funds to purchase a copier and help with financial expenses of the Junior Department.
- Junior Camp held at Camp Kanestate with 157 campers, counselors, helpers and staff. Junior Prince Jeremy Coyer, Mercer County and Junior Princess Amy Beck, Venango County.
- There were 92 Juniors who attended the Junior Jamboree at State Session, with 111 participating in the tour and 157 attending the luncheon.

WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

- Pomona Director of the Year Esther Stitzel, Berks County and Subordinate Director of the Year Betty Yeager, Berks County.
- The stuffed toy contest continued with 5,000 toys made and donated.

LECTURERS

- Summer Jubilee held at St. Francis College, Loretto with 210 registered.
- Karen Mohn received first place for the third year in a row for the Berks Pomona Lecturer's Report.
- Subordinate Lecturer of the Year Tammy Schaeffer, Pioneer Grange, Berks County and Pomona Lecturer of the Year Irene Lenhart, Crawford County.
- There were 232 Granges registered to participate in the Community Service Contest; an increase of 50 over the previous year. Lakeland Grange, Crawford County received first place.
- Community Night recognition less than 100 members - Shavers Creek #353, Huntingdon County; 100-199 members - Pioneer Grange #1777, Berks County and over 200 members - Ontelaunee #1617, Berks County.
- Beth Taylor, Butler County placed first in the National Talent Contest Vocal Division.

YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS

- Celebrated the 40th Anniversary of Youth Programs at Youth Camp
- Faye Schaeffer, Berks County, received the National Youth Recognition Award.
- Melinda Tercha, Berks County, received the National Female Young Agriculturalist Award.
- Youth Camp moved to Camp Sylvan Hills, Centre County with 120 in attendance. Youth Ambassadors Faye Schaeffer, Berks County and Kirk Sattazahn, Berks County.
- Young Couple Tim and Tammy Schaeffer, Berks County.

1992 IN REVIEW

- Deaf Activities Director Lois Steele reported that \$3,900 was raised and disbursed to deaf/hearing impaired agencies.
- The Women's Activities Committee published the fifth State Grange cookbook.
- More than 7,400 stuffed toys were made and distributed.
- The PA Department of Agriculture awarded a grant to assist with the Mid-Atlantic Grange Youth Conference to be held in Pennsylvania.
- It was noted that Pennsylvania lost two Congressional seats due to population, and the new districts were drawn.

LEGISLATION

- Legislation limiting the length of school teacher strikes was supported.
- Agricultural Land Preservation rules were updated.
- Living Will legislation was supported and approved by the General Assembly.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act became law.

THE ORDER

- Grange Week Banquet had 330 in attendance
- The Secretary reported a total of 34,316 members, 1,883 Associate Members and 716 Lifetime Members. It was also noted that there were 2,485 Golden Sheaf Members in PA.

- Junior membership totaled 753 in 87 Junior Granges. Reorganized Plain Grove Junior Grange, Lawrence County.
- Nine Granges consolidated and four Granges were declared dormant.
- The annual session had 387 Subordinate Delegates from 210 Granges and 76 Pomona Delegates from 40 Pomona Granges.
- The Sixth Degree was conferred on 299 candidates.
- Ruth Osborne, Fayette County named Granger of the Year.
- Seventy-four Granges received a National Grange Certificate of Achievement in Membership for 1991-92 with 90 Granges achieving a net Gain in Membership.
- A total of \$12,871.87 was raised to date to host the National Grange Session in 1995.

NATIONAL GRANGE

- Jeff Wetzel of Berks County was named National Grange Director of Youth Activities.
- Mary Ann Keith, Huntingdon County, won first place in the Public Speaking Contest, and was also named Female Youth Ambassador under new guidelines developed for this title.

JUNIORS

- The 125th Anniversary of the Junior Grange was celebrated at Junior Camp by 143 campers, helpers, counselors, and staff.
- Junior Prince Brian Ebersole, Perry County and Junior Princess Beth Marshall, Lawrence County.

LECTURERS

- Subordinate Lecturer of the Year Betty Master, Scrubgrass Grange #1705, Venango County; Pomona Lecturer of the Year Nancy Brackman, Bradford-Sullivan Pomona #23.
- The Mid-Atlantic Lecturers' Conference hosted by PA.
- Karen Mohn, Berks County Pomona Lecturer received the top Lecturer in the nation for the third year.
- Robin Fabo, Berks County placed third in the Nation for Subordinate Lecturers.
- Community Night recognition under 100 members - Scrubgrass Grange, Venango County; 100-199 members - Perry Valley Grange, Perry County and over 200 members - Virginville Grange, Berks County.
- Community Service first place Wyalusing Grange, Bradford County and Pomona first place Bradford-Sullivan Pomona Grange.
- There were 1,000 teddy bears collected and distributed where needed.

WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

- Twenty Granges reached the goal of 125 stuffed toys and 17 individuals reached a goal of 50 or more stuffed toys. A total of 7,429 stuffed toys made and donated.
- ABC Quilts for HIV Babies reported a total of 767 made. The total count through the year amounted to 1,064.
- Sixty-four sets of premie caps and booties were made and donated to hospitals.
- A total of 112 personal care kits were assembled and donated to various charities.
- A collection of 117 pair of mittens, 138 hats, 54 sets of hats and mittens, and 5 scarves were donated to shelters and various other organizations.
- Junior members completed 58 quilts during Junior Grange Camp.
- Rebecca Michalka, State Women's Activities Director named National Grange State Women's Activities Director of the Year.

- Subordinate Women's Activities Director of the Year Barbara Grim, Pioneer Grange, Berks County and Pomona Family Activities Director of the Year Esther Stitzel, Berks County.

YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS

- Youth Camp held at Camp Sylvan Hills had 66 participants. Youth Ambassadors Amy Marshall, Lawrence County and Joel Straub, Mercer County.
- The Young Marrieds Conference was held at Altoona. Young Couple Maurice (Skip) and Sheila Moyer, Berks County served for 1992 and 1993.
- In 1993 a Young Adult Conference for those age 22 and up replaced the Young Marrieds Conference.
- Karen Mohn, Berks County, received National Outstanding Young Adult Award, and Kenneth Kershner, Berks County, named Grange Recruiter of the Year.