



Eagle Grange #1

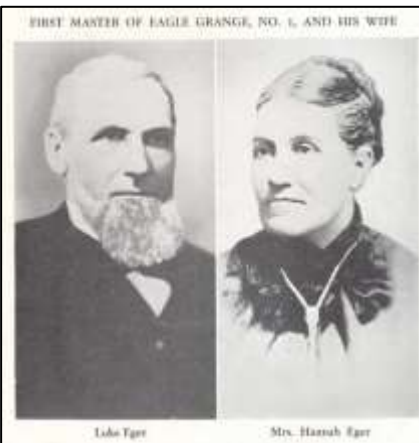
Route 15 & East Blind Road
Montgomery, PA 17752



January, 2021

Our 150th anniversary year has arrived!

One hundred fifty years ago a farmer who lived several miles west of Montgomery, PA was busy talking to his friends, neighbors and relatives about a new farm organization that he had read about in *The Prairie Farmer*, a leading agricultural publication of the time. The farmer Luke Eger corresponded with Oliver Hudson Kelley, the secretary of the new "Patrons of Husbandry" Grange organization and soon became enthusiastic about organizing a local Grange. At first, he made little headway generating much interest but Luke persisted. Finally, according to his brother-in-law Frank Porter "just to keep peace in the family" enough people agreed to become a part of the new Grange that Luke insisted must be formed.



On February 22, 1871, Luke Eger wrote to Mr. Kelley, I have at last succeeded in raising and organizing a club here...". In quick order (*and at a time without telephone or electronic communications!*), a reply came from Washington, D.C. stating the newly commissioned Grange deputy Col. D.D. Curtiss would be coming to Montgomery to organize the Grange. So on March 4, 1871, the first Grange in Pennsylvania was officially founded and took its name from the nearby Bald Eagle Mountain. Thus began a century and a half of history for Eagle Grange #1.

An interesting fact – Luke Eger served only one year (1871) as Master of Eagle Grange but was active until his death in 1890, attending most State Grange sessions and organizing six other Granges in Lycoming and Union Counties. But his work was far exceeded by that of his brother-in-law, the same Frank Porter who was reluctant at first to join the Grange, who

organized a total of 41 Granges throughout northcentral Pennsylvania.

Two identical vinyl banners (below), each 4' X 16', will be mounted on the outside of the hall – one on each short end - to share the Grange's birthday with everyone who drives by from either direction on Route 15. Our thanks to Jenn Nauss for the banner design and for finding a great offer that purchased both for just over \$100 total!



Long-Time Grangers Recognized in December

The December 1st holiday potluck dinner was a festive affair set in the seasonally decorated hall. Serious consideration was given to the COVID pandemic and recommended safety precautions were followed. Even with everyone wearing face masks except when eating, using disposable gloves while handling serving utensils in the buffet line and practicing social distance at the tables, we understand that some persons may not have been comfortable attending. All those due membership recognition will be mailed their certificates and congratulatory letters from the State Grange.

Everyone left with a potted poinsettia and tree ornament plus some lucky recipients also went home with a door prize. We had a wonderful musical program and message of encouragement from entertainer KJ Reimensnyder-Wagner of Lewisburg. The very best news is that KJ plans to reinstate her Grange membership, formerly in Chester County, at Eagle.



Brother Gordon Hiller was recognized for 78 years of continuous Grange membership, the most of any Eagle Grange member. Above, Gordon's daughter Kathy Clees (right) accepted the award on behalf of her father from Jenn Nauss (left) secretary. Gordon, who currently resides in Florida, is a former State Grange President and has held membership in four different Granges over the years – West Branch #136, Eldred #1604 and Eagle #1 (all in Lycoming County) and Shermanata #1796 in Perry County.



Eagle President David Troutman (below) – 34 years - originally joined the Grange in 1986 in Huntgintdon County, later transferring to Eagle.



Joann Murray (left) is all smiles upon receiving honors for 67 years of membership while her husband Fred (right) received 60 year honors. Sister Murray is the only current member of Eagle who is a direct descendent of charter members. Her ancestors John and Christianna Page were among the 40 residents forming Eagle Gange in 1871.

More Candidats from Holiday Potluck Dinner 12/1/2020



Four members who came to Eagle from the former Bottle Run Grange #1301 were also honored: Karen Williamson (above) – 65 years and (below, left to right) Sarah Weiss - 26 years and Elliot & Barbara Weiss – both 33 years.



Beth & Bernie Downey (above) are Affiliate Members of Eagle Grange with primary membership at Allegheny #1843. Beth has been a Grange member for 45 years and Bernie for 29 years.



Another Affiliate Member Doug Bonsall (right), has been a Granger for 51 years at Perry Valley #1804 in Perry County. He is chair of the State Grange History Committee and, along with Jenn Naus (left), has been attending Eagle for the past two years to help with the renewal process.

CHANGES NECESSITATED BY PANDEMIC

The next Grange meeting will be held January 5, 2021, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Grange Hall. The program previously announced – *FFA speaker and presentation of Blue Jackets to five students from the Milton High School FFA* – is being postponed until COVID restrictions are lifted and school extracurricular activities are once again permitted. The program time at the January meeting will be devoted to planning for 150th anniversary events.

Although the members present at the December meeting voted to continue meeting in person, arrangements have been made to enable anyone interested to participate remotely either by phone or by computer. You may join anytime after 6:15 p.m.

ZOOM Instructions to join 1/5/2021 meeting @ 6:30 p.m. if you choose not to attend in person.

TO JOIN BY PHONE

1. Dial **1 (929) 436-2866**
2. You will hear: "Welcome to Zoom. Enter your meeting ID followed by #"
Meeting ID: 849 6044 3585, Press #
3. Next you will hear: "Enter your Participant ID followed by #. **There is no Participant ID, so just press the # key.**"
4. Next you will hear: "Please enter the Meeting Password followed by #."
Meeting Password: 592701, Press #
5. Next you will hear: "You are in the meeting now. Please stand by."
6. Wait on the line for the meeting to begin. You'll begin to hear others talking as they also join the meeting.

TO JOIN BY COMPUTER (You DO NOT need to create a Zoom account.)

1. Copy/paste or type the following link into your web browser:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84960443585?pwd=RHpLUU9uU1dLaDBFSktkcFVhVnJNUT09>
2. You may need to enter a Meeting ID and Password.
Meeting ID: 849 6044 3585
Password: 592701
3. You will be asked how you wish to join your audio. Select "Join Audio by Computer" or "Join with Computer Audio".
4. You may next see a window asking you if you wish to join by video. Select which option you would prefer – "Join with Video" or "Join without Video"
5. Now you should have joined the meeting!
6. In the bottom left corner of your screen, you will see a microphone – you can mute and unmute yourself by clicking on that button. You will also see a videocamera – you can start and stop your video by clicking on that button.

Please notify Jenn Nauss at 717-512-1261 in advance if you plan to join by phone or computer so we know to expect you for this meeting.

Don't Miss these.....

Coming Events

January 5 – Grange meeting @ 6:30 p.m.;
Program - planning for anniversary activities
Hosts – Fred & Joann Murray

February 2 – Grange meeting @ 6:30 p.m.; If pandemic permits, FFA program and presentation of Blue Jackets postponed from January

Possible Change - Valentine's Gala

In the last newsletter a form for this special event on 2/13/2021 was included. The gala was planned as an social evening out for Grange members – a nice meal, musical entertainment and a fun “escape room” game. Now in the face of a pandemic such a group meal may not be a good or safe idea!

We'll discuss changing this to a “Share the Love” takeout meal. This could be promoted as: **Eagle Grange provides 150 meals in thanks for 150 years of support from the community.**

A specific amount would not be charged for the dinner but rather we'd do this as an anniversary service project.... and likely receive generous voluntary donations from the community.

Dues for 2021

\$50/member payable now

The small annual contribution from every member helps fund Grange work at the local, state and national levels. See the article on the next page to learn how the National Grange is speaking up for rural America and its citizens.

Make Luncheon Reservations

The kick-off for the State Grange's 150th anniversary celebration is scheduled for Saturday, April 17, 2021, beginning with an open house brunch at Eagle followed by a luncheon and program at Country Cupboard. As the first Grange in the state, Eagle members will have an important part in the program at this luncheon to spread the Grange light just as it happened 150 years ago. Reservations will be made as a group for all members provided they are received by the 1/5/2021 meeting; the price of tickets is \$25.

Have you bought your 150th T-shirt yet? Wear it with pride!



Contact for Use of Eagle Grange Hall

David Troutman 570-220-1685

More Improvements

- Light fixtures in the first floor dining room area have been upgraded to LED units, providing brighter light at a cheaper operational cost
- President Troutman has devoted many hours to painting the stairwell and second floor ante room area; this work continues
- The outdoor lighted sign has been ordered and should arrive shortly. With its interchangeable letters, the sign will advertise Grange events to the hundreds who drive by the hall every day.
- An anonymous donor wishes to underwrite the cost of a brand new commercial refrigerator for the kitchen and delivery is expected within the next month

At the last meeting, Secretary Jenn Nauss reported on her search for grants that might become available to Eagle Grange for continued renovation work. It is imperative that the Grange decide very soon which project(s) are the highest priority, secure estimates of their cost and then we can proceed to apply for grant funding. President Troutman volunteered to research the following suggested projects and hopes to have information in time for the January 2021 meeting:

- Installation of “split” units for year round climate control in the Grange Hall – air conditioning and improved heating (*this is much needed to minimize expansion and contraction of the new laminate flooring*)
- Building of a pavilion on the grounds to provide some protection for additional outdoor activities that “take the Grange out to the people” (*especially the proposed Community Day discussed for sometime this summer*)

At Age 153, the National Grange confronts the Pandemic

Written by Peter Coy of Bloomberg Businessweek (published December 7, 2020)

The historic organization promotes the welfare of rural America.

Since its founding in 1867, the National Grange has grappled with some tough challenges for rural America, including monopolistic railroads and the deflationary gold standard. Now the venerable group is taking on Covid-19.

On Dec. 4, its 153rd birthday, the National Grange released a copy of a letter to U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Stephen Hahn warning that the pandemic has stretched rural hospitals in many parts of the country “to the absolute breaking point.” The letter urged Hahn to support work on vaccines that “could be distributed rapidly and administered in the safety of Americans’ own homes.” It doesn’t name names, but that means alternatives to vaccines under development that require special handling in medical settings. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has to be stored at -70C, then thawed and injected within five days, followed by another shot a month later.



I interviewed National Grange President Betsy Huber (left), who signed the letter to Hahn, about Covid-19 and other issues the organization is involved in. Now 73, Huber says she has been involved in the organization since age 5, when she joined the Junior Grange. She’s halfway through her third two-year term as president.

“We were founded in 1867 to reunite the North and South through agriculture,” she said. The full name of the organization was and remains the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry. (“Grange” meaning farmhouse and “husbandry” meaning farming.) Members are Grangers and call each other brothers and sisters.

The Grange started as a social and mutual-aid organization for farmers but became political in the 1870s and 1880s, when farmers fought railroads, which overcharged them for grain storage and transportation, and the gold standard, which made their debts unupportable by pushing down the prices they could fetch for their products. Other priorities in the early days were women’s suffrage (voting rights), temperance (banning the sale of alcohol), and free rural mail delivery. Membership peaked at close to 1 million.

There are still about 150,000 dues-paying Grangers in 1,700 local Granges, Huber says. Being from a farm family is no longer required for membership. Activities include potluck dinners; charitable work such as crocheting caps for premature babies; and annual Grange fairs with judging of livestock, vegetables, flowers, and needlework. During the pandemic, Grangers have made Covid masks and distributed meals to the less fortunate.

I asked Huber if she has a message for America. “I think that people are taking a new look at their lives and how they spend their time and energy,” she said. “I’d like them to know that the Grange is well worth their time and effort. We do great work in the communities.”

NOTE: Sister Huber will be coming to Eagle Grange on 4/17/2021 for our anniversary open house.