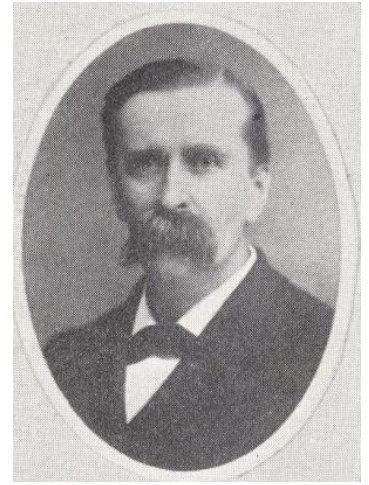


# WILLIAM T. CREASY

## 5<sup>th</sup> MASTER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE GRANGE (1908-1914)



### *The Person:*

- Born in Catawssa Township, Columbia County and graduated from Bloomsburg State Normal School. He was a teacher for a number of years before becoming a farmer by choice.
- He married Jane Weaver at the age of 20.
- Mr. Creasy joined the Grange early in life and served in many capacities. His son, Charles, served two terms on the State Executive Committee.
- In 1894 he was elected to the State House of Representatives serving with distinction for 16 years. He became known as “Farmer” Creasy for the battles he fought on behalf of agriculture.
- Prior to becoming State Master at the age of 52, he was a member of the Legislative Committee and served on it until his death. He fought to the end for equality for agriculture and for the cause of good government.
- After serving as Master he was chosen as Secretary of the National Dairy Union in Washington, DC. In the position it gave him the opportunity to fight against the oleomargarine interests. He was one of the leaders in the 1917 establishment of the National Board of Farm Organizations.

### *Of Note:*

- In 1909 the Executive Committee reported there were 29 Grange Banks in the State. Congressman John G. McHenry, who headed the Committee that promoted the Banks resigned. Some opposition to the Grange Banks developed and the Grange Banks were discontinued.
- A. Nevin Detrich, an experienced newspaper man, served as Managing Editor and Business Manager of the Pennsylvania Grange News. He reported that the paper had paid its own way and showed a profit in 1909. The circulation of the Pennsylvania Grange News in 1910 was 30,000 and still paying its own way.
- In 1910 active Granges numbered 700 of which 636 were paid in full through the September quarter. The net increase in membership was 2,956 with a total membership of 53,423 as of September 30, 1910.
- During 1911 300 field meetings were held in all parts of the state with a featured speaker on matters of importance to the Grange members and farmers. Many of the gatherings were addressed by members of Congress from both branches.
- Master Creasy along with other State Masters banded together to initiate amendments for proportional representation of delegates to National Grange, but the effort failed.
- September 30, 1912 showed 50 new Subordinate Granges organized with a net gain in membership of 3,301 and a total membership of 58,456.
- The Keystone Grange Exchange, sponsored by the State Grange was organized August 13, 1912. E. B. Dorsett became the first Director of the office which opened in Mansfield and became the principal agency of Granges throughout the state for cooperative buying.

- As of September 30, 1913 43 new Granges were organized making the total in the State 800. The net gain in membership was 3,499.
- Morris Lloyd became the Business Manager of the Grange News which continued to be self-sustaining.
- December 1914 there were 45 new Granges organized and a net gain of 2,300.

### *Legislative:*

- In 1909 the State Legislature passed an act for increased State assistance in the building of roads which the State Grange requested that the appropriation be raised.
- The State Grange had previously advocated for the establishment of a parcel post system and was renewed at the 1910 session.
- In 1911 the Legislative Committee of the State Grange was active in presenting views of the farmer on legislation pending in Washington, DC. John A. McSparran, Secretary of the Committee, appeared before the Senate Finance Committee stating opposition to ratification of the Canadian reciprocity treaty. He also represented “Progressive” State Granges of Maine, Kentucky, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. These states disagreed with many of the policies supported by those in control of the National Grange. Mr. McSparran presented an argument that the treaty was unjust to the farmers to remove the tariff from commodities sold while returning a duty on the things he had to buy. The treaty was ratified by the Senate which was supported by President Taft. The Canadian people rejected it in the election of 1911.
- The Legislative Committee also appeared before the House Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads in establishing a parcel post system. The Parcel Post system was enacted in 1912. No other development of the postal service has had the dynamic effect on the economy and industrial life of the Nation.
- Both State and National Granges were giving thought to establishing a sound and workable system of farm credits. David Lubin, CA. and founder of the Internal Institute of Agriculture at Rome was interested in this issue. A movement was launched to have each State send two delegates to Europe in 1913 to study the systems of rural credits in various European countries that would be suited to the needs of the farmers in the United States.
- The State Legislature appropriated \$2,400 to send delegates from the state to pay their expenses. Master Creasy and the State Grange Legislative Committee requested that the Governor permit the Grange to name one delegate. Due to the criticism by the Grange of the State Legislature in 1911 which reflected on the Governor’s administration, the Governor made a savage attack on the Grange. He made it plain that any man the Grange would select would not be appointed.
- The Philadelphia North American publication criticized the Governor’s insults of the Grange stating that “The PA Grange is made up of the most intelligent and progressive of the State’s farmers. It has been for years one of the most valuable forces in the Commonwealth for the promotion of policies of improvement. It has accomplished immeasurable good in educating the public mind upon objects of governmental reform, advanced farming, economy and scientific efficiency.”
- The State Grange decided to send a delegate to Europe at Grange expense. An appeal was made to the Granges to contribute \$1,300. James G. McSparran was selected as the delegate. He made a formal report at the Annual State Grange meeting in December 1913. The findings of the delegation helped in drafting the Federal Farm Loan Act approved by President Woodrow Wilson in 1916.

- The Grange led the opposition of adoption of an amendment in 1913 authorizing a \$50,000,000 bond issue for highways. It was rejected at the November election by a large majority of voters. The Grange was in favor of improved highways, but advocated a pay as you go system of equal taxation with corporate and personal property paying their fair share of taxes.
- The Legislative Committee had to rewrite the platform on National issues since many of the issues had become law. However, many of the state issues remained to be solved.
  - Equalization of taxation
  - Local option with reference to liquor traffic
  - Home rule in local affairs
- John A. McSparran, Lancaster County was elected as Master in 1914.