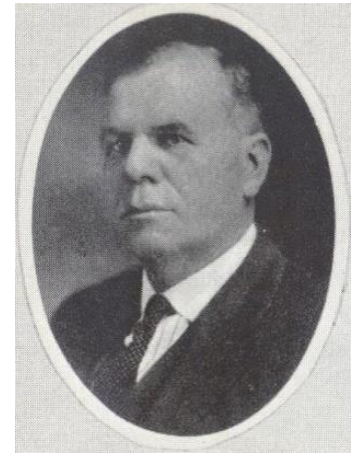


EDWARD B. DORSETT

8th MASTER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE GRANGE (1927–1932)



The Person:

- Son of Heckman and Harriett Shaw Dorsett born February 28, 1868 on a farm near Mansfield, Tioga County. He worked on the family farm and attended local public schools. He graduated from Mansfield State Normal School and following graduation he taught in Tioga County for three years and later was elected sheriff of Tioga County.
- He married Katherine M. Cruttenden, also of Tioga County and they had three sons and two daughters.
- He joined Grange early in life and served as Master of his Subordinate and Pomona Grange as well as being appointed State Deputy.
- In 1906 he was elected State Lecturer serving with distinction until 1912 when he was elected Overseer and served until 1914.
- He had a prominent role in the establishment of the Keystone Grange Exchange organized in 1912 and served as the first Manager.
- Mr. Dorsett was elected in December 1927 to fill the unexpired term of P. H. Dewey. He was re-elected Master twice serving for a period of five years.
- Mr. Dorsett was known for his great ability to organize and his forceful and pleasing public speaking. He was responsible for organizing many Subordinate Granges and was proficient in the ritualistic work of the Order. As a public speaker he was much in demand and was a lecturer at many farmers' institutes throughout the state. He was friendly and genial and able to be at home with any group. He was noted as being fearless in expressing his convictions on public issues and did not back down from a fight if it was in the best interest of what he believed in.
- In addition to being a Grange member, he was a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Masons, and lifelong member of the Methodist Church. For two years prior to his death on July 3, 1941 he was a chief analyst of the bureau of markets for the PA Department of Agriculture.

Of Note:

- The 1928 State Session at Williamsport, the campaign for the fund raising for the dormitory at State College had raised nearly \$94,000 and the construction contract had been awarded. This project had been launched at Williamsport in 1922 and nearly completed six years later.
- At the 1929 Annual Session held at Indiana, the minimum Subordinate dues was raised from \$1.50 to \$1.60 per year. Subordinate dues to State Grange was raised from \$.56 to \$.66 per year. The National Grange also raised dues from \$.08 to \$.12 per year.
- Under a contract with Farmers & Traders Life Insurance Company, the Grange received commissions on renewals in excess of \$22,000 over a period of years. This was a factor in not making Subordinate dues higher.
- The Grange Memorial Dormitory project was completed and the Committee discharged with thanks. More than \$100,000 was raised and the balance was used to establish a scholarship fund in home

economics. The scholarship was limited to Pennsylvania girls who had been Grange members for at least two years.

- Governor Pinchot selected John A. McSparran as Secretary of Agriculture receiving overwhelming support of Grange members and the farm people in general.
- July 1, 1931 Master Dorsett became Editor of the Grange News and John Light became the Business Manager.
- At the 60th Annual Session held in Williamsport, it was announced that income from agricultural products had been reduced to about \$5 billion/year and farm mortgage debt was approximately \$9,500,000,000.
- During the previous five years, thousands had left the farm in Pennsylvania which made it difficult to organize and reorganize Granges, and also made it impossible to retain members. The number of farms dropped between 1920-1930. There were 829 Subordinate Granges as of September 30, 1932 and the total membership was 67,205.
- There were 26 Golden Sheaf Certificates issued and 973 Silver Star Certificates issued.

Legislative:

- Upon Mr. Dorsett's election as Master he appointed a new Legislative Committee. The Committee recommended that the future State Grange Association with the National Board of Farm Organizations be left to the discretion of the Executive Committee.
- The delegates approved full cooperation with the Joint Committee on Rural Electrification and authorized a contribution defraying expenses of the Committee.
- Projects favored by the Grange regarding the work of the State Legislature in 1929 included:
 - Obtained \$6,000,000 for township roads, largest sum granted under the Reward Act.
 - \$6,250,000 granted to State College, largest ever appropriated
 - \$1,340,000 appropriated for a Farm Products Show Building
 - Appropriated \$3,000,000 for eradication of bovine tuberculosis
- The 58th Annual Session held at Pottsville was addressed by Governor Gifford Pinchot. Governor Pinchot advocated that the State should take over and improve 20,000 miles of township dirt roads which would also ease the burden on local taxation.
- President Herbert Hoover signed the Hawley-Smoot tariff act on June 17, 1920. He called on Congress for a special session to revise the tariff for the benefit of agriculture and to secure the enactment of legislation to assist agriculture in marketing. President Hoover stated that any increase in rates should depend on employment in any particular industry and whether American producers were meeting insurmountable competition from abroad. Eventually the higher tariff rates on agricultural products were nullified by the increased rates on industrial commodities. It is felt that the Hawley-Smoot bill helped to deepen the depression following the 1929 stock market crash.
- The 59th Annual Session was held at DuBois with the Rural Electrification Committee reporting that during the six years since the Grange and the farm groups became active in obtaining electricity to rural areas at fair rates 7,746 miles of rural electric lines had been built in the State. These lines brought service to 22,500 farms in addition to 74,500 rural homes. At this time 40,000 farms were receiving service from central stations and 10,000 more farms were equipped with home plants. There were still 122,000 farms without any electric service.
- J. Audley Boak was elected Master in 1932.