



VALLEY

Colorful History Follows Founding of Grange in '02

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MILLERSBURG (Special)—On February 18, 1902, the late Cyrus H. Walker called a meeting at Conner school house to organize what became Morning Star grange No. 311. The first regular meeting was held Feb. 25, 1902, beginning at 1 p.m. and meetings thereafter were held on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month at the Miller or Conner school houses. There were 127 charter members and by the end of 1902 there were 199 members.

J. B. Davis, grandfather of Mrs. Albert Harnisch and Mrs. Walter Harnisch, was the first grange master. Other officers were overseer, Charles Cox; lecturer, O. E. Haley; steward, George Birtchet; assistant steward, Fred Farlow; chaplain, John Asche; treasurer, H. M. Truax; secretary, W. A. Buckner; gatekeeper, Jessie Davis; Pomona, Nora Davis; Flora, Lillie Skelton; Ceres, Iva Conser; lady assistant steward, Elizabeth Farlow.

The officers were installed by Walker. Old records tell us that the name Morning Star was suggested by William Bowman. The first delegates to the council, which takes the place of Pomona grange today, were George Birtchet and F. M. Miller. John Conser, W. H. Bowman and O. E. Haley were the first delegates to the county convention with alternates J. B. Davis, Jane Conser and Lester Conser.

Site Selected

At the second meeting, a committee of five was appointed to select a site for the hall. On the committee were O. E. Haley, George Birtchet, W. A. Buckner,

hailed by team and wagon from Stayton, rocks for the foundation from the Frank Libby place northeast of Jefferson. Sills, joists and shingles were hauled from Jefferson.

\$300 Given to Fund

The contract for the building was let June 28 to Austin Crowder of Albany. George Alphin was named to canvass the neighborhood and at the next meeting he turned in more than \$300 for the building fund. On Sept. 27, 1902, Morning Star held its first meeting in the new hall. A large crowd was present and Morning Star launched its long career of usefulness. The following Wednesday members gathered to clean up the grounds and built a fence around the property.

On Jan. 14, 1905, when M. M. Myers was elected master, it is recorded, he wanted the members to send him back to Washington, D. C., so he could help pass a law to stop automobiles from running on the highways—as they “scared horses, cows, chickens and everything else.” That was about the time the first cars came out on these western roads.

It was during 1905 that the trustees were instructed to purchase five dozen chairs, some of which are still in use. Up until this time, benches and anything else available had been used. This same year John Asche was appointed to oversee the work of building a shed for the horses which theretofore had been sheltered only by the fir trees on the grounds. This shed was used until the last horse was gone and automobiles had taken their places.

George Birtney, W. H. Bowman, W. E. Fisher and John Conser. Another committee consisting of W. H. Bowman, Fred Leverich and John McNeil was appointed to draft plans for the hall and estimate the cost of the building.

Occasionally an all-day meeting would be called when families would arrive in lumber wagons or on horse back with well-filled baskets and the women would boil coffee on the heating stove, as there was no kitchen at that time.

On March 8, the site committee reported that Isaac Meeker would donate sufficient ground for a hall, but no action was taken. The committee on building reported plans for a 30 by 60 foot hall which was later built on the present site, donated by W. H. Bowman and his wife, Mary Bowman. The deed for one acre of ground was recorded April 12, 1902.

The committee to solicit funds for the building was Josie Crooks, Elsie Groshong and Elizabeth Farlow. The lumber for the hall was

Improved Over Years

In 1931 the building was raised and a cement basement was poured. Gus Gefeke supervised this work. Through the years the hall has seen many improvements, money being raised by holding country dances, selling dinners, turkey shoots, basket socials, lunches for farm sales, cooked food sales and rummage sales, besides the many donations.

The present master of the grange is Walter Shelby and Mrs. L. W. Drager is secretary, as she has been for the past 27 years. Mrs. Edith Miller and Lester and Iva Conser are said to be the only charter members still in the grange. The grange still meets on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month beginning now at 8:30 p.m.

In about the year 1931, the women of the grange organized the Home Economics club which meets once a month, the first Tuesday after the fourth Saturday. These meetings are potluck luncheons beginning at 1 p.m. either at the home of the hostess or at the grange hall and followed by a business meeting and other activities of the club. Mrs. Walter Shelby is president of this group and Mrs. Philip Yagelski is secretary-treasurer.

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