
Bethinking of ⁴⁻¹⁻⁸⁰ Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian



VOL II

Patrons of Husbandry

NO. 13

“WHERE’S GRANDMA?”

Barre Grangers have been perennial producers of skits and plays and they have just completed their 1980 spring offering, “Where’s Grandma?” Since the Barre Grange (Patrons of Husbandry) was established at Barre Center in 1904 they have been noted for their home talent plays. It would be my guess that “Where’s Grandma?” is not unlike the famous Grange plays of forty or fifty years ago. And the amazing thing is, they’re still doing it. Pictured above is such a home talent play of the 1920’s. Aside from having fun with plays, square dancing and other social activities, what is the Grange?

We find that the first genuine Grange that lived was founded and organized in April of 1868 in Fredonia, Chautauqua County, N.Y. Times were hard during the Reconstruction Period following the Civil War and the Grange became a voice for rural people, a legislative representative, an opportunity to develop personal abilities and a force to emphasize family, home and most important, agriculture. Acting as a lobbyist group, many legislative resolutions have been enacted enabling U.S. farmers to become all that they were capable of being.

One of the early services of the Barre Grange was cooperative buying. Farmers could save money by buying binding twine, grain, spray, seeds, flour, coal, fertilizer and paint. In 1911 the Barre Grange did \$7,764.24 of cooperative buying which saved up to 30 percent on some articles. Through the years ritualistic structure has been the lifeblood of the Order, enabling political clout without being partisan or sectarian. Thus the Grange in all its meaning is a patriotic organization.

In Orleans County today the Barre Grange is the only full-fledged one which has survived from the many that were once scattered across our county. In 1928, 372 members were on the roll in Barre but diminishing farms, farmers and interest have greatly reduced that number. Other Granges were located at Knowlesville, Medina, Murray, East Shelby, Clarendon, Gaines, Waterport and East Gaines known as Transit to name a few. How soon our sights have shifted to make relics out of once important institutions in almost every rural hamlet.