



*American Values.  
Hometown Roots.*

# VALLEY GRANGE #144 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

For 2023 – 2024

Certificate of Appreciation

awarded to

*Adam, Stephanie, and Shelley*  
*of Bangor Rise Private Wealth Management*

for your generous support of the  
Valley Grange Words for Thirds Dictionary Program  
providing a personal printed dictionary to third graders in the area.

Given this 19th day of January, 2024



<http://valleygrange.com/>

*James B. Annis*  
James B. Annis, President

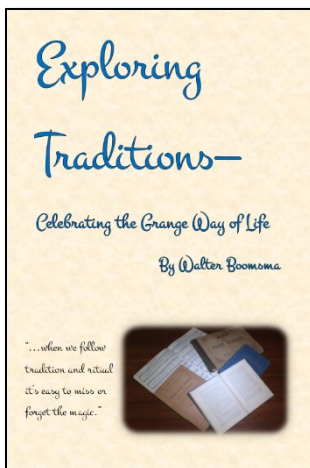
*Walter Boomsma*  
Walter Boomsma, Program Director

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**Please note this membership directory has been prepared to support the fraternal nature of our organization. Use of the information for any other purpose is strictly forbidden. Please correct or add any missing information with Mary Annis, Valley Grange Secretary.**

## Exploring Traditions – Celebrating the Grange Way of Life a book by Walter Boomsma



“These essays by Walter Boomsma unpack the teachings of the Grange and relate them to today’s world and our everyday lives,” writes Betsy Huber, National Master (President) of the Grange. Many people, including Grange members themselves seem to be wondering about the relevance of this 150 year old organization in modern society. They may find some answers in this series of essays encouraging readers to understand the basis of the “Grange Way of Life.” This is not a “guide to the Grange,” it truly is an exploration of some of the words and actions found in the Grange Ritual and tradition. Readers will discover a new and deeper understanding of the Grange—not merely as an historical organization, but as an organization that teaches a way of life that aligns us with nature and creates community.

Order your copy today!

- From the author’s online store at <http://wboomsma.com/>
- From Amazon at <http://amazon.com/author/mrboomsma>
- From Barnes and Noble at <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/>



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## The Officers of our Grange

The Order of Patrons of Husbandry, commonly known as the Grange, is a great, family-oriented fraternity. The lessons of its ritual are expressed by use of symbols drawn from the field and farm home. The axe, the plow, the harrow and the spade are used in the preparation of the soil in spring, and teach us the lesson of faith. The hoe and the pruning knife teach us to keep our minds and thoughts on the pure and honorable. The sickle is used to gather the good crop, so that we might, from our abundance, dispense charity to the needy. The agate is hard and firm, a lasting example of faithfulness, and fidelity. Some of the officer positions and titles are drawn from the old-time English estate: Master, Overseer, Stewards; some from mythology: Ceres, Pomona and Flora; and some from the world of business: Secretary, Treasurer, and Executive Committee or Board of Directors. The following information was gleaned from a program developed by the National Grange.

### Master

The Master of the estate assigned work and maintained order. The Master of the Grange presides at meetings, represents the Grange at community functions, and facilitates the work of the officers, committees and action teams. The gavel is the symbol of the Master's office.

### Overseer

The duty of the Overseer on the estate was to see that the orders of the Master were faithfully transmitted to the laborers. In the Grange the Overseer, or Vice President, assists with the opening and closing ceremony, and takes the Master's place when he or she is absent. He or she also helps the Master in appointing committees. The symbol of office is also the gavel.

### Lecturer

The Lecturer directs the entertainment and educational work of the Grange. It is the lecturer's challenge to present a program that makes every meeting inspirational and meaningful for all who attend. As we share our talents, our interests, and our knowledge with each other, we all grow into better individuals and more informed citizens of this community. The symbol of the office is the scroll.

### Steward

The Steward had charge of the tools and supplies on the estate. Similarly, it is the steward's duty to keep

the property of the Grange safe and in proper order. The emblem is the spud, an ancient implement used by Stewards in passing through the fields on the estate to eradicate weeds that might have escaped the notice of the laborers. It serves to remind all of us to remove dissention and strife in our lives.

### Assistant Steward

As the name implies the duty of the Assistant Steward is to assist the Steward in his/her labors. The duties include the opening of the Bible on the Altar, presenting the flag, and escorting visitors and dignitaries. The emblem is the pruning hook. The spear, beaten into the pruning hook, is emblematic of peace. It serves to remind each of us to assist in preserving peace in our Order.

### L.A. Steward

The lady assistant steward's duties also include opening of the Bible on our altar, presenting the flag, and escorting visitors and dignitaries when recognized by the Master. The emblem is the Shepherd's Crook, a symbol of caring for those who might be in distress or need.

### Chaplain

The Chaplain provided spiritual leadership for the families living on the estate. The Chaplain of the Grange participates in the opening and closing of the Grange with prayers, prepares an annual memorial service, and if asked to do so, conducts services to honor our Brothers and Sisters as they are laid to their final rest.

### Treasurer

Keys symbolize the trust placed in the Treasurer of the Grange. The treasurer's responsibility is to accept the funds paid, deposit them in a timely manner, and disburse them according to the direction of the membership.

### Secretary

In addition to taking the minutes of each meeting to ensure a record of the history of this Grange, the secretary is to communicate with community organizations and others as directed by the membership. Duties also include the collection of annual dues from each member, and the reporting accurately of the membership to the State Grange each calendar quarter.

### Gate Keeper

On the estate the Gatekeeper's position was at the main entrance, to prevent enemies from entering. In

today's Grange the gate keeper's responsibility is that of the official greeter for members and guests alike. Some Granges have changed the title to Greeter. The symbol of office is the owl.

**Pomona**

It was believed by some in Roman mythology that Pomona presided over the production of fruits, and so growers appealed to her for protection of their trees and bushes for an abundant yield. No tree bears fruit unless it blossoms. Pomona reminds us that the good fruits of life, wisdom and usefulness, result from the blossoms of observation and study.

**Flora**

Flora reminds us that the beauty and fragrance of flowers make life pleasant and teaches us that there is another and better world where everlasting spring abides and never-fading flowers bloom.

**Ceres**

In ancient times it was believed by some that Ceres presented to mankind the great gift of grain upon which we depend to such a large extent for our daily living. The symbols of the office are the bundled wheat and the sickle; both are a reminder of God's bounty, and our duty to gather that bounty, carefully and gratefully.

**Musician**

Music touches the mood of people, increasing joy and happiness in good times, and providing solace in times of trouble and despair. The Grange musician assists the Lecturer by presenting musical portions of the programs, playing for the opening and closing ceremonies, and creating a warm and cheerful atmosphere for each meeting.

**Executive Committee:**

The Executive Committee is responsible for the custody of the invested funds of the Grange, and in conjunction with the Master, is authorized between regular meetings, in time of emergency or need, to act for and in the name of the Grange itself.

**Agriculture Chairperson**

The Agricultural Committee furthers the cause of agricultural pursuits and provides information to increase our understanding.

**CWA Chairperson**

The Committee for Women's' Activities focuses on domestic skills such as cooking, sewing, handcrafts. These are skills not just for women!

**Community Service Chairperson**

The Community Service Committee plans, organizes and promotes our service to the community.

**FH&H Chairperson**

The Family Health and Hearing Committee promotes healthy lifestyles and practices and provides information and education to our members and the community.

**Junior Chairperson**

The Junior Committee promotes activities for and with junior aged members and non-members.

**Legislative Chairperson**

The Legislative Committee is challenged to keep the membership aware of legislative issues at all levels of our government. While the Grange is not partisan, our heritage includes political involvement and grassroots efforts to promote our communities and agriculture.

**Membership Chairperson**

The Membership Committee coordinates efforts to increase our membership through programs and individual efforts.

**Publicity Director**

The Publicity Director is responsible for working with the media and community organizations to ensure the Grange receives recognition for its work and is viewed favorably. He or she also promotes internal communication within his Grange and with other Granges.

**Youth Chairperson**

The Youth Committee promotes activities for and with youth aged (13 and up) members and non-members.



## The History of our Grange

*Portions of this section adapted from a "short history of Valley Grange" written by Vi Lander and Laura Pratt for Valley's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1975*

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The Grange was born of vision and necessity in the years following the American Civil War to unite private citizens in improving the economic and social position of the nation's farm and rural population. Founded primarily as a fraternal organization, the example of the Masonic Order was the model for much of the ritualistic and fraternalistic underpinning.

A declaration of principles adopted in 1874 included this important concept: *United by the strong and faithful tie of Agriculture, we mutually resolve to labor for the good of our Order, our country, and mankind.* This principle has served the Grange well, attracting people who desire a sense of community and feel a need to contribute to the greater good.

Valley Grange was first organized on April 10, 1875, in the schoolhouse at Lowe's Bridge with 32 charter members present. A committee was appointed to choose a name, and after much discussion, the name "Valley" was chosen since the grange was located in the valley by the Piscataquis River.

At their second meeting, members voted to meet at the Town House in Guilford Center. Records show those first meetings were very busy as members bought materials to build an anteroom, the altar and Bible stand, and a dozen songbooks. The meetings were well attended, and degrees were conferred at almost every meeting. Guests often attended from East Sangerville and Abbot.

In 1885 the Grange bought the Town House for \$100 since the town of Guilford had centered in its present location near the river where the mills operated.

Construction of a new (current) Grange Hall was begun in the spring of 1906 and the first meeting was held in the new hall in November of the same year. What a busy and rewarding year it must have been! The "new hall" of course did not stay "new" forever, and over the years, many improvements and changes were made as money allowed.

Early records indicate the challenges were not too much different. Our earliest members were buying kerosene and lamps instead of light bulbs and paying an electric bill. They had to form a committee to deal with the stabling of horses, instead of plowing the parking lot and parking cars. One record of interest shows that members voted to spend

\$25.00 to buy a cow for a poor family. As we teach the children during our "Words for Thirds" presentation, the Grange is about providing support to individuals and the community.

Today's Valley Grange represents the trend towards communities organized more by area and opportunity than simple town boundaries. Our membership now includes folks from Monson to Milo. Regular monthly meetings are held on the third Friday of each month, supplemented by the educational, entertainment and literary programs. All Grange activities are centered on the purpose of developing leadership, improving community life, and expanding opportunities for all people.

Records indicate that early programs dealt with questions like:

- What is the best method for making butter and cheese?
- It is better to keep butter in firkins or jars?
- Which is the most profitable to raise, cattle or sheep?

Recent programs deal with agricultural and household questions, with special programs like:

- An evening of music and memories
- Special "Community Citizen" Awards
- Suicide Prevention among today's teens
- How kids learn

Some have suggested that the Grange has outlived its usefulness, but others feel strongly that now more than ever, we need **"...to labor for the good of our Order, our country, and mankind."**



## Declaration of Principles

### Preamble

Profoundly impressed with the truth that the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry should proclaim to the world its general objectives, we hereby unanimously make this Declaration of Purposes.

### General Objectives

United by the strong and faithful tie of an agricultural fraternity, yet welcoming all of good moral character to membership, we mutually resolve to labor for the good of our Order, our country, and mankind.

We heartily endorse the motto, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

### Specific Objectives

We shall endeavor to advance our cause by striving to accomplish the following objectives:

To develop a better and higher manhood and womanhood among ourselves; to enhance the comforts and attractions of our homes; to strengthen our attachments to our pursuits; to foster mutual understanding and cooperation; to maintain inviolate our laws, and to emulate each other in labor, in order to hasten the good time coming.

We propose meeting together, talking together, working together, and in general, acting together for our mutual protection and advancement. We shall constantly strive to secure harmony, goodwill, and brotherhood, and to make our Order perpetual. We shall earnestly endeavor to suppress personal, local, sectional, and national prejudices, all unhealthy rivalry and all selfish ambition. Faithful adherence to these principles will insure our mental, moral, social and material advancement.

### Business Relations

For our business interests we desire to bring producer and consumer into the most direct and friendly relations possible, remembering that "individual happiness depends upon general prosperity."

We are opposed to such spirit and management of any corporation or enterprise which tends to oppress people. We long to see the antagonism between capital and labor removed by common consent, and by statesmanship worthy of an enlightened people.

We are opposed to wages and salaries that exceed productive efficiency. We recommend that farmers buy wisely and produce efficiently to make their farms profitable; to make maximum use of the innovations of science and technology;

to systematize their work and to calculate intelligently on probabilities.

To all we recommend sound money management that we may avoid insolvency and bankruptcy.

### Education

We shall advance the cause of education by all just means within our power.

Influenced by our strong beliefs in the institution of the family, we are convinced that education begins in the family circle. Discipline is an essential part of education. Self-discipline comes with maturity.

Until such time as this level of competency is reached, families and schools have a responsibility for enforcing adequate discipline.



We recognize the necessity of experimentation to develop new and better methods of education, but we caution against the widespread adoption of these innovative and experimental methods until they have been proven effective.

We recognize that education is a continuing process. We encourage all to continue their education through adult education classes, by continued reading, observation and such other methods as may be available, including radio and television.

We recognize the valuable contribution made to education by the printed word, especially in newspapers, periodicals and books, and will continue to advocate their widespread availability.

### Outside Cooperation

Our Fraternity, being agriculturally based, family oriented and dedicated to the pure principles of equality under Constitutional Law, we appeal to all good citizens for mutual cooperation and assistance toward reform that we may remove from our midst the last vestige of inequity and corruption. We believe that harmony, equitable compromise and earnest cooperation are essential to future success.

### The Grange—Not Partisan

We emphatically and sincerely assert the oft-repeated truth taught in our Constitutional Law, that the Grange—National, State, Pomona, or Subordinate—is not a partisan or party organization.

The principles we teach underlie all true statesmanship, and if properly carried out, will tend to purify the whole political atmosphere of our country; for we seek the greatest good to the greatest number.

We must always bear in mind that no one, by becoming a Patron of Husbandry, gives up that inalienable right and duty which belongs to every American citizen, to take a proper interest in the politics of one's country.

On the contrary, it is right for every member to do all in his or her power, legitimately, to influence for good the action of any political party to which he or she belongs. It is reserved by every Patron, as the right of a free citizen to affiliate with any party that will best carry out his or her principles.

We acknowledge the broad principle that difference of opinion is no crime, and hold that "progress toward truth is made by differences of opinion," while "the fault lies in bitterness of controversy."

We desire a proper equality, and fairness; protection for the weak; restraint upon the strong; in short, justly distributed power. These are American ideals, the very essence of American independence, and to advocate the contrary is unworthy of the sons and daughters of our Republic.

We cherish the belief that sectionalism is, and of right should be, dead and buried with the past. Our work is for the present and the future. In our agricultural fraternity we shall recognize no North, no South, no East, no West.

### **Conclusion**

It shall be an abiding principle with us to relieve any of our oppressed and suffering members by any reasonable means at our command. We proclaim it among our purposes to continue our historical appreciation of the abilities and equality of women. Imploring the continued assistance of our Divine Master to guide us in our work, we pledge ourselves to faithful and harmonious labor for all future time; to advance by our united efforts, to the wisdom, justice, fraternity and political purity so earnestly sought by the wise and courageous men and women who founded our noble Order.