

What Is The History Of The Grange?

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There are six granges in Santa Cruz County. But most local residents, even the ones in mid-county, where most of the granges are located, don't know what the grange is or what it does.

So we asked Earle Jones of Aptos, grange district deputy for Santa Cruz County.

Jones reported that the grange is a farm fraternity, probably the only one ever established in this country. Unlike many farm organizations, the grange framework is based on ritual like a fraternal lodge. Jones thinks that might be why the grange has continued to exist over the past 103 years when so many other farm organizations have folded.

The grange was organized in 1867 at a time when Oliver Hudson Kelley was working for what then was the equivalent of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The South had been rent asunder by the Civil War, so President Andrew Johnson sent Kelley into the South to see to see about mending the land itself and the feelings of the people.

Kelley found that Yankees weren't overly welcome in the South. So he hit on the idea of a farm fraternity embodying a ritual of brotherhood as a means to ease feelings between the north and south.

He returned to Washington and got six other men interested in the project. One of them was of English descent, and he suggested the name Order of Patrons of Husbandry. It was adopted and continues as the group's official name.

But they wanted a shorter name for the individual units of the organization. They called them "granges" after the Eng-

lish word for a large farm. A number of the job positions on the big English farms, such as master, overseer, steward and gatekeeper were designated as the various office titles of the fraternity.

Completion of the organization process came Dec. 4, 1867, in Washington. The fraternity had been intended for men only, but Kelley had a niece taking notes during the organization period. She wanted to know why women couldn't be included. The men thought about it, couldn't come up with a good reason, and so women were brought into the organization.

Now women may hold any grange office, and there are four offices—Ceres, Pomona, Flora and lady assistant steward—which must be held by women.

The admittance of women came many years before the ladies got the vote in the United States, so present-day grangers like to think their group was a forward-thinking outfit from the very beginning.

The organization started out as a definitely farm-oriented group. No one was admitted to membership who was not engaged in a farm activity of some type. About 1950, however, restrictions were loosened to admit anyone who was interested in farming.

"And everybody eats," Jones smiled, "so everybody is interested in farming."

The grange national organization and some of its committees in Washington serve as sort of a farm lobby in the Capitol. In the past the group has had a strong influence on laws affecting agriculture and rural living in general, such as rural mail delivery and electrification and farm rail rates.

The organization long has been a strong backer of the

Future Farmers of America and 4-H. It's real purpose and operation has not changed, Jones insisted. But objectives have been broadened so they include local community affairs and laws only indirectly connected with agriculture.

"It's a real grassroots organization," Jones maintained. He said even the actions taken at the national level originate somewhere along the line in a local grange.

He recalled that the Aptos Grange some four years ago passed a resolution asking the banning of cigarette advertisements from prime TV time. The resolution was passed on to the county grange and the state organization. Ultimately, it came to the national grange for action and Jones thinks it may have had something to do with congress' recent efforts to curb TV cigarette ads.

A typical grange meeting begins with an opening ritual followed by various committee reports. The reports deal almost exclusively with various aspects of community life and agriculture.

Next comes the lecturer's program which consists of educational features, entertainment and sometimes inspirational messages. A requirement for holding an official meeting is the posting of the American Flag and the presence of an open Bible.

The six local granges, called subordinate granges, in Santa Cruz County are the Aptos, Corralitos, Santa Cruz, Live Oak and Soquel Granges, Roache Grange at Freedom and Madonna Grange, which meets at the fairgrounds in Watsonville.

The subordinate granges are empowered to confer four degrees—named after the seasons of the year—on their members.

The Pomona Grange is the county or district-level organization. In this area, its boundaries happen to be the county line. It may confer a fifth degree on its members.

All members of the subordinate granges are eligible to join the Pomona, but are not obligated to do so. Activities of the Pomona are geared to legislation on matters suggested by the subordinate granges.

The state grange meets only once a year. Its voting delegates are the masters and their spouses of the subordinate and Pomona granges. At each of its annual conventions, the state group votes on an average of 100 or more resolutions.

The state group, by the way,

has been invited to meet in Santa Cruz in 1971.

The state grange confers the sixth grange degree, and the national group confers the seventh—the highest degree. The national grange also meets once a year, with masters and spouses of the state granges as voting delegates.

The state grange also sponsors a rather loosely knit youth organization for persons 14 to 25 years old. Its members deal with items of their own interest. Each year during the Easter vacation they gather for a youth conference at California Polytechnic College in San Luis Obispo.

Picked locally to attend this year's session were Theresa Donovan of Aptos Grange and Nancy Bevans of Roache Grange.

The grange also sponsors a junior group, but until a few days ago Santa Cruz County was without a Junior Grange organization. Aptos Grange

launched one recently with an organizational meeting. Children from 4 to 14 are members.

They will hold meetings similar to those of the adults and conduct their own activities. Officers will be elected and installed April 9.

Patricia Thompson will serve as matron, assisted by Dinah Knight.

Masters of the local granges are George Donovan, Aptos; Earl Lemon, Corralitos; Jim Nielson, Madonna; Owen Bevans, Roache; Vonda Caldwell, Live Oak Santa Cruz, and Martin Rickard, Soquel. As it happens, the master of the state grange also is a neighbor. He's Chester Deaver of Prunedale.

Russell Spain is master of the local Pomona Grange.

Jones characterized the grangers as "folksy, down-to-earth people who enjoy visiting each other." He said the grange is "a little bit of Americana in the jet age left over from another time."

County High School Students In Achievement Zone Contest

Two adults and 16 students from Santa Cruz County will participate in the Bank of America's annual Achievement Awards competition Tuesday at West Valley Junior College in Saratoga.

The adults, who will serve as judges, are Mrs. Dorothy Eller, owner of Far West Trailer Sales in Santa Cruz, and James A. Kennedy, county treasurer-tax collector.

The Students, representing high schools of the county, include Marie Faggiano, Holy Cross High, fine arts; Jeffrey Mueller, Harbor High, fine arts; Mori Sampson, Soquel High, fine arts.

Competing in the science and mathematics contest will be

Gary Dahl, San Lorenzo Valley High; Carl Magagnosc, Soquel High; Kathleen Marini, Santa Cruz High; and Thomas Matheson, Aptos High.

Liberal arts contestants will include Michael Gruber, Aptos High; Gregory Lewis, Soquel; Mard Naman, Harbor; Kim Orrett, San Lorenzo Valley; and Pamela Westing, Santa Cruz.

Competitors from Santa Cruz County in the vocational arts category are Suzanne Castro, Santa Cruz High; Evelien Pawkat, Soquel; and Pamela Restituto, Aptos.

Winners of Tuesday's zone contest will compete next month in the area finals in Monterey.

TO: THE CITIZENS OF THE PAJARO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

OF COURSE PVFT supports the bond issue and tax override as we have ACTIVELY done in the past.

We DO support:

1. a board which commits itself to quality education in the classroom.
2. a nine (9) per cent cost of living adjustment for teachers.

We DO NOT support:

1. budget cuts which directly affect the classroom teacher and student in a teaching-learning situation.
2. increases in pupil/teacher ratios at any grade level in any school.
3. elimination of needed class offerings.
4. unnecessary removal of teachers from classrooms.

Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers

John B. Sargent, President