

Inquiring Reporter Easily Chases Down Information About Central Oregon's 'Secret' Farm Organization

Fred Shepard Tells Grange History, Aims

By DON H. HIGGINS
Bulletin Staff Writer

This summer Bend was the host city for one of the largest conventions in point of attendance in its history. It was the convention of the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry, commonly known as the Grange.

An inquiring reporter asked 15 or 20 people during the convention to tell him about the Grange. He had heard the name often during his life and had read news about it every once in a while. About all he knew was that the members were farmers and had halls.

And that is about all he found out in his 29 casual interviews with persons he met at restaurant counters, on the street and in an evening group or two.

A large percentage of those who had been asked at random said the Grange was a secret organization and no one except the members knew anything about it. Others had an idea it was strictly social. They had read about parties given at this or that hall. Some said it was a body of farmers who traded information and work among each other.

All of the activities of the organization were reported and published, of course. But there was little information about the history and aims of the order.

McAlister Points the Way
The reporter happened to meet Jim McAlister, the county agent. He figured he'd find pay dirt there. "Sure, I know a lot about the Grange," said Jim. "But there's somebody in your own town that knows more. You ask Fred Shepard."

The original purpose of the reporter was not to find out about the Grange, necessarily. It was to learn whether he was more ignorant about it than the average run of people. He had accomplished that purpose. He was right with



FRED AND EDNA SHEPARD
Grange veteran and wife

them. So he had wrung the sweat out of his shirttail, as the saying goes, and had gone to the movies. Ignorance wasn't bliss but it seemed to be popular.

Some time later along came the job of gathering material for the annual fair edition of The Bulletin. This edition always has information in it about agriculture and other prime industries of Central Oregon that are important in the lives of the people here. He remembered what Jim had advised and he went to Fred Shepard, a Granger from way back.

Kelly Started the Grange
Shepard is a county commissioner, along with "Penny" (The Reverend D. L. Penhollow) and Charlie Allen — County Judge C. L. Allen, that is. Fred has lived some years, 33 of them as a member and officer of the Grange. With his

wife, Edna, he farmed in the Tualo area. They raised a family and took an active part in community life and welfare before and after coming to live in Bend.

In their white home set well back in a green lawn at 1175 Roosevelt avenue Fred Shepard readily gave information about the history, purposes and accomplishments of the Grange. What he didn't recall off-hand from an unusually good memory, Mrs. Shepard supplied.

The National Grange was started back in early reconstruction days following the Civil War, during the administration of President Andrew Johnson. Its founder was Oliver Hudson Kelly. He found rural conditions pretty bad while he was journeying through the South. The idea came to him of starting a fraternity for farmers.

Kelly was a 33rd degree Mason. He got his friends together and they worked out a farmers' fraternal organization that was named The Patrons of Husbandry. It is still the official name. Americans don't go for several words where one will do, so they began calling it the "Grange," an English word used back in feudal times to mean, simply, a farm with an outer and an inner moat or gate, a house and outbuildings.

The influence of Masonry inspired Kelly to write some ritualism into the ceremonies of the order. This included poetic symbols of beauty and idealism which had special significance for those who joined.

There were four degrees, each representing a season of the year, for initiates in the local or subordinate granges, a fifth for those in the governing county organization, called Pomona, the name in Roman antiquity for the goddess of tree fruits; a sixth for the state and a seventh, and last, for the national Grangers.

Two Dollar Bills Flood City
Local Granges in each county meet twice a month. Pomona holds quarterly sessions and the state Grange meets annually. This year the state meeting was in Bend. The city was flooded with \$2 bills.

Kelly's inspiration was a productive one. The fractional mysticism of the order was a powerful puller-in of members, as it is in other organizations. Any child who remembers a neighborhood kid chanting, "I know sumpin you don't know," can understand. He coaxed, wheedled, fought and even worked until he found out.

Along with this esoteric comradeship went the real value of working together for improvement. The Grangers profited socially in enjoyable meetings. They helped each other grow better crops. They worked out co-operative buying and selling. They launched insurance benefits for their members.

Also they promoted laws of advantage to themselves and even to the town and city dwellers. They are given recognition for getting parcel post into U. S. life, the direct election of senators, land grant colleges, cabinet status for

the secretary of agriculture, rural free delivery, the Pure Food and Drug act, and fairer railroad freight rates.

Grangers Influence Legislation
Today, the Grange property in Washington, D.C., that houses its national headquarters has increased in value to several millions of dollars.

In Oregon, Fred Shepard said the Grange has had more influence on legislation than any other organization. The State Grange has a delegation that meets with various committees of the legislature. A program for farmers is worked out at the beginning of each session.

Special licenses for farm trucks, laws on developing hydro-electric power, and tax and school enactments are a few of the items in the long record. Shepard says the Grange believes in the principle of an income tax based upon ability to pay. It takes a middle course in policy between those of the National Farm Bureau and the National Farmers' union, the latter devoting itself principally to a campaign for public ownership.

Just now the Oregon Grange is promoting a referendum to prevent the recently enacted bill providing for the reorganization of school districts from becoming a law. The Grangers decided against the bill chiefly because it

Daily Increase On Dial Phones

Pacific Telephone's \$1,200,000 dial telephone system in Bend — in

would take existing authority from some of the outlying districts.

Locals Own Meeting Halls
In Central Oregon, as elsewhere, nearly every Grange owns its own hall. Here, the Little Deschutes grange, formed in 1953, acquired land upon which to build its own meeting place.

The granges are like such service clubs as Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions in helping and originating worthy causes. They also have a wider scope in their continuous educational and legislative programs and their ownership of halls. In their service phase they aid churches, 4-H clubs and other organizations.

At state meetings the Masters and their wives, or husbands, are the delegates. The whole thing is a family affair, said Shepard. There is a juvenile Grange for children under 14. Some granges have women masters.

service just over eight months — is handling about 27,500 local telephone calls a day.

That's 2,500 more calls per day than were handled by the manual telephone system before it went out of service last December 15, according to Manager Jack Kerrom. The increase is about normal for an exchange that has been changed from manual to dial. "People seem to place more calls with their dial phones," Kerrom added.

Even with this increase in the numbers of calls, the heart of the new dial system in the new central office on Kearney Avenue is feeling no strain.

Chief Switchman T. O. Livingston, who is responsible for the mechanical switching brain known as the "No. 5 Crossbar Switching Machine," says the device is doing well and "is capable of handling a great deal more calls per day than are going through it at the present time."

This switching equipment, the first of its kind to be placed in Oregon by Pacific Telephone, is amazing in the way it handles a call being made; counts the impulses when the number is dialed; remembers the impulses and examines the equipment available to

handle the call. Then it sets up the connection to the telephone being called and rings the bell.

All that is done in less than a second. And to make things complete, the switching equipment takes down the connection when the call is completed.

"Brain" Handles LD Too
In addition to handling local calls, the equipment is as capable at handling long distance.

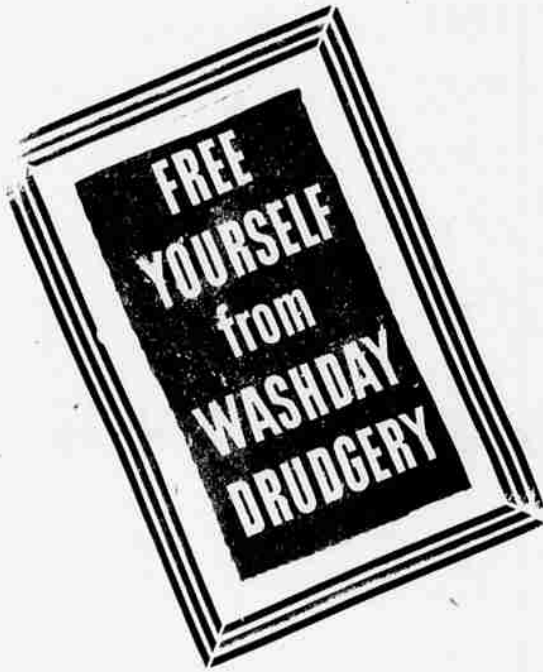
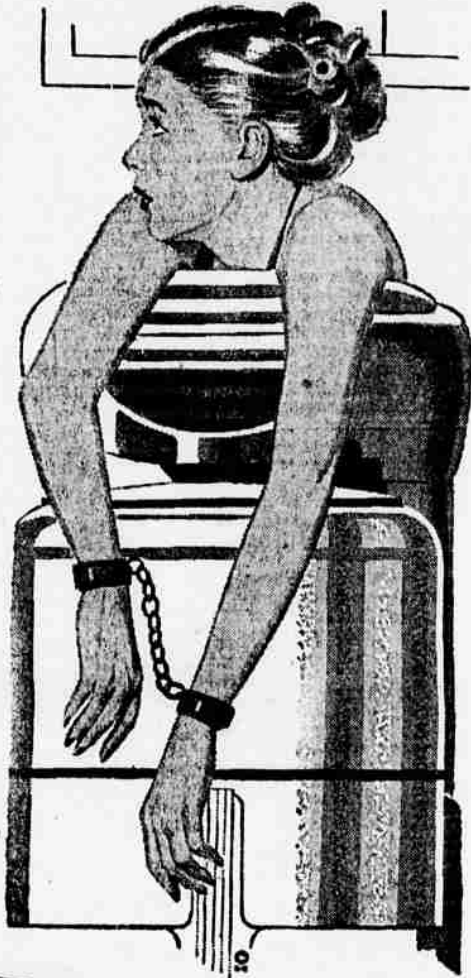
When a long distance call is placed with the operator, she plugs it into the brain. Then she taps three adding machine-like buttons to select the area of the country being called (if it is out-of-state), and also taps the number of the far-off telephone being called.

That's all. The equipment does the rest of the work, and in a matter of seconds the telephone starts ringing in a distant city.

The machine is sometimes called "the working girl's friend." Chief Operator Louise Pettit says her 49 operators like their new working quarters and conditions, and the way in which the dial system makes their work easier.

The operators now handle only long distance calls in addition to a minimum of local calls such as requests by the customer for information or assistance in placing a call.

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