HARVEST OF ACTIVISM:

A History of Grange in
Kalamazoo County, Michigan, 1872-1877

By

John V. Polomsky II

Kalamazoo College
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FOREWORD

A number of individuals have contributed in a variety of important ways to this study. Among these, the author expresses his particular gratitude to Drs. Charles Kim Cummings and Constance McGovern for vital suggestions and encouragement throughout the quarter when the research on this topic was done. Particular gratitude is due Dr. Cummings, Director of the Local History Research Program, and Kalamazoo College for providing the author with a Local History Research Grant, an opportunity for intensive research and writing, of which this study is the final project. Thanks also to Harry Hochman for informal editorial suggestions. Of course, all of the above are absolved from any responsibility for what I have done with those suggestions.
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Part One:

The National Grange
Progressive movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been, pre-eminently, the focal point of disaffection with both the political institutions of laissez-faire capitalism and the relentless product of those institutions, urban industrialism. In the last half of the nineteenth century, the prodigious pace of industrial expansion in the United States was to be matched by the compelling vitality of agrarian discontent. The industrialization and the urbanization of America wrought fundamental changes in the patterns of economic life which had been familiar to America's farmers. In this instance, the term "fundamental changes" illustrates its classic affinity with the terms "dislocation" and "discontent"; for as these changes occurred, American farmers became increasingly discontented. In the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, local and national farmers' organizations were formed to improve the economic, political, and educational status of the nation's farmers. One such organization was the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, or the Grange, as it is more commonly referred to. In large measure, one man was responsible for the Grange.

On January 13, 1865 Oliver Hudson Kelley, a clerk in the United States Department of Agriculture, began a trip through the southern states in order to survey agricultural conditions. The consensus of historical opinion is that the depressed condition of the rural Southern economy inspired Kelley to conclude that a national organization to promote and to protect the interests of farmers was needed. The
traditional interpretation also holds that Kelley was equally impressed "by the adherence of Southern farmers to outdated practices and their indifference toward improved techniques."\(^1\) Indeed, evidence suggests that Kelley's entire notion of promoting agricultural interests assumed that the intellectual and educational improvement of farmers must be the focus of any attempt at improving their status.\(^2\)

After his Southern trip, Kelley returned to his farm near Itasca, Minnesota. While working his homestead throughout the summer of 1866, Kelley made two conclusions, according to Charles M. Gardner.\(^3\) First, his membership in the Order of Masons and his familiarity with the procedures of this secret fraternity convinced him that a farm organization should be a secret society—not a loose association. Second, Kelley decided to seek federal employment in Washington in the Post Office Department. This position would both allow Kelley to escape what he increasingly came to consider the "dull and routine"\(^4\) life on his farm and would give him the time to devote to his plan for farmers.

In Washington, Kelley discussed his plans with other government clerks who expressed their interest in forming some organization to promote farming interests. In December, 1867 Kelley and five other clerks launched the organization Kelley had been planning. In a formal meeting they declared themselves the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry. Having thus established a national body, on January 8, 1868, the original founders organized the first subordinate grange.
in the nation, Potomac Grange No. 1. Shortly thereafter, Kelley remarked that the Grange,

... will accomplish a thorough and systematic organization among Farmers and Horticulturists throughout the United States and will secure among them intimate social relations and acquaintance with each other for the advancement and elevation of their pursuits with an appreciation of their true interests. By such means may be accomplished that which exists throughout the country in all other avocations, and among all other classes—combined co-operative association for individual improvement and common benefit.  

The general structure of this "systematic organization" was composed of distinct organizations on the local, state, and national levels. Two types of local bodies existed. The most important of these, the subordinate grange, was the smallest; they included a minimum of nine and a maximum of thirty persons with legitimate interests in agriculture. As Grange theoreticians argued, only farmers could have "legitimate interests" in agriculture. By definition then, only farmers could be Grange members. An annually elected official, known as the master, headed each subordinate grange. The other local body was the pomona or county grange. All grange members residing in a particular county were eligible to participate in annual county-wide elections. In these, they would select representatives to the pomona grange from among their fellow grangers. At the state level, granges were composed of the masters and past masters of subordinate and pomona granges. Similarly, the National Grange was composed of the masters and past masters of the various state granges. At all three levels, local, state and national, officers were elected by secret ballots. Local granges selected officers annually,
state officials held their posts for two years, and national officials were elected for three year terms.6

Granges at all levels were governed by a structure of thirteen officials—master, overseer, lecturer, steward, assistant steward, lady assistant steward, chaplain, treasurer, secretary, gatekeeper, ceres, pomona, and flora. All of these officials were generally charged with upholding and applying the laws of the organization. They were each given more specific duties. The master served as the presiding officer at grange meetings. He also filled vacancies in appointed positions where such positions existed at the state and national levels. The overseer generally assisted the master and served as presiding officer when the master was absent. The planning and the presentation of that part of the meeting devoted to the cultivation and enlargement of the mind, to use Kelley's phrase, were the responsibilities of the lecturer. His specific duties included giving lectures, reading essays, and leading discussions about the various topics treated. The steward, the assistant steward, and the lady assistant steward were charged with caring for the furniture and the regalia used in grange meetings (e.g., podiums, song books, flags, and sashes worn by officers). The chaplain led prayers and gave holy readings, while the secretary kept a record of the events at each meeting and of grange activity in general. The secretary also made quarterly reports to the master. Depending upon the level at which the secretary was serving, his reports could include information on the size of the membership in his grange, business transactions between
other granges and/or merchants, and the number of new granges in a particular locale. The treasurer kept records on the financial affairs of the grange which he also supervised. Since grange meetings were held in secret and closed to all but members, a gatekeeper guarded the entrance to the grange hall and requested the "password" from all entering the meeting. No specific duties were assigned to the positions of Ceres, Pomona, and Flora. A stipulation held that while all positions were open to both men and women, only women could hold these last three. In any case, they were generally powerless and merely symbolic.

Consistent with its professed intention of instilling farmers with a sense of what was considered cultured, educated, and progressive, the Grange maintained an elaborate—if somewhat quaint—ritual of seven degrees. Derivatives of Christian morality with images from Greek and Roman mythology, these were called: Faith, Hope, Charity, Fidelity, Pomona, Flora, and Ceres. Subordinate granges conferred the first four of these. State granges bestowed the fifth degree on local masters and their fourth-degree wives. They would also award the sixth degree, Flora, to state masters, their wives, and members of the Executive Committee of the National Grange. Ceres could only be given to sixth-degree members who had served the National Grange for one year.

With a sophisticated governing structure and an elaborate ritual the Grange was ready to be introduced to the farmers for which Kelley had intended the organization.
to serve. In 1869, Kelley completed an organizing trip through the Middle West. Kelley was much less successful in establishing granges than he had hoped; as 1868 drew to a close only ten granges had been established.

Historians attribute Kelley's initial failure to a variety of causes. Most important, Shannon argues, is that "farmers had not yet felt the pinch of hard times." It was true that a consistent trend of increasing production rates for such major crops as wheat, corn, and cotton had been operating since the 1850's and exerting a significant downward pressure on the prices farmers received for these crops. In the late 1860's however, the situation was not so urgent that farmers were willing to organize on the basis of some vaguely felt plight. Further, Kelley had stressed the fraternal and educational benefits of the Grange. Many an isolated, suspicious farmer was inevitably wary of the strange designs of an Easterner who seemed to be offering nothing with pecuniary or tangible benefits for the farmer. In his concern for rural America, Kelley had not recognized the ascendancy of some basic economic issues there.

The panic of 1873, with its unprecedentedly low prices for farm products, brought farm incomes to seriously low levels. As the position of the farmers deteriorated, Kelley began a renewed effort to motivate interest in the Grange. Grange membership increased dramatically as educational benefits were increasingly considered secondary to economic phenomena, as attacks on the exactions of railroads and middlemen increased,
and as Kelley's plan for organizing farmers' co-operatives was disseminated. One thousand one hundred and five granges were established in 1872, 8,400 in 1873, and at least 9,000 in 1874. At last, Kelley's organizational efforts were successful. The organization of granges in Kalamazoo County, Michigan were a part of that success.
Part II:

Grange Activity in Kalamazoo County
In 1871, Edwin Jones of Dallas County, Iowa arrived in the hamlet of Burnside in Lapeer County, Michigan. A farmer and a Grange member, Jones persuaded Burnside farmers to organize a subordinate grange. Having secured a "special deputy's commission" from the National Grange, Jones was authorized to dispense founding charters to those interested in establishing granges. He did so, and on January 10, 1872, Michigan's first subordinate grange, Burnside Grange No. 1, was established.

Grange procedures attached numbers to subordinate granges in the chronological order of their founding. Shortly thereafter, farmers in Jackson County organized Eureka Grange No. 2 under the leadership of special deputy Burtis N. Sweet. Farmers in Kalamazoo County followed suit shortly thereafter.

J.C. Abbott, a General Deputy of the National Grange, arrived in Michigan early in 1872. As Jones had done, Abbott intended to travel through rural districts aiding groups of farmers who expressed some interest in establishing granges. In the township of Oshtemo, Kalamazoo County, Abbott found such a group; on November 25, 1872, Oshtemo Grange No. 3 was organized. Primary evidence indicates that Orrin Snow and T. Buchout served as first Master and Secretary respectively in the Oshtemo Grange.

Abbott continued his organizational efforts in southern Michigan and met with continued success. On November 27, 1872, at a schoolhouse in Waukeisha Township, Abbott met with a group of farmers and explained the "benefits, aims, and objects of the order." On the same day, Waukeisha Grange No. 4 was
eventually organized—but not, it appears, without some hesitation on the part of the future grangers. An article in the *Grange Visitor* reports:

... it was very difficult to get names enough to form an organization and officer it. After many assurances from Brother Abbott that none would regret their connection with the Order, the Grange was finally instituted.16

Ultimately, most of those present did join, whereupon they elected officers to fill the thirteen-position structure of the grange. A report lists the early leadership:

- **Master:** D.J. Fritz
- **Overseer:** R. Matthews
- **Lecturer:** L.V. Lyon
- **Steward:** S.P. Marsh
- **Assistant Steward:** Thomas Hope
- **Chaplain:** S. Rosenbury
- **Treasurer:** D.F. Bartshe
- **Secretary:** Henry Copley
- **Gate Keeper:** Thomas Carr
- **Ceres:** Mrs. L. Marsh
- **Pomona:** Mary Fitz
- **Flora:** Angeline Matthews
- **Lady Assistant Steward:** Sarah A. Carr

Shortly after the election of the officers, Waukesha grangers began building a two-story meeting hall. With that, Brother Abbott moved on to help with the establishment of other grange chapters. Again, his efforts met with success.

On November 29, 1872, in Comstock Township, Maple Grange No. 5 was established. Abbott addressed a farmers' gathering as the local schoolhouse and explained the goals of the order. It is possible that he explained them persuasively; a charter membership roll was signed by twenty persons. Thereupon the following officers were elected:

- **Master:** C.B. Mitchell
- **Overseer:** H. Gray
- **Lecturer:** M. Milham
- **Steward:** J. Youngs
- **Assistant Steward:** E. Goodrich
- **Chaplain:** J.J. Howlett
Treasurer: Phillip Goodrich  
Secretary: H. King  
Gate Keeper: Wesley Stowell

Members of the Maple Grange met initially in a local school house; within two years they had built a two-story frame hall.

The next grange established in the county was on December 18, 1872; this was Schoolcraft Grange No. 8. Evidence suggests that D. Duncan served as the first Master and O.H. Fellows as the chapter's first Secretary. The year 1872 had seen important organizational successes for the Grange in Kalamazoo County. A trend had been initiated.

In the Spring of 1873, five more granges were organized in the county. During March and April the following were established: No. 11, Texas Township; No. 15, Alamo township; No. 16, Portage; No. 18, Galesgurg; and Summit No. 20, Oshtemo Township. Statistics offered by Buck indicate that by August 2, 1873, forty granges existed in Michigan; nine of those were in Kalamazoo County. That Kalamazoo County played a significant role in this early period of grange organization is suggested by the fact that nearly twenty-five percent of these early granges were established in that county.

At the national level, the organization of granges continued with similar vitality. The Kalamazoo Daily Telegraph reported on the growing number of granges in the United States. The statistics it presented are summarized in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TOTAL NUMBER OF GRANGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>1,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>1,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>9,989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the statistics accurately reflect the nature of the trend which was then operating, they are almost certainly too conservative. Buck puts the final 1874 total at 20,365. This was the second highest number of granges which would be recorded at the end of any one year. In 1875, a total of 21,597 granges had been organized; thereafter the number of granges began to fall. The period from 1873 to 1874 was a watershed of sorts in national grange activity. It was an even more important period in the activities of Kalamazoo County grangers.

From May 1873 to January 1874, more granges were organized in the county. A roll of granges published in 1874 reports the names and the leaders of these granges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF GRANGE</th>
<th>MASTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arcadia No. 21, Kalamazoo</td>
<td>F.W. Curtenius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross No. 24, Augusta</td>
<td>A. Inrech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantour No. 49, Scott's Station</td>
<td>G. Snyder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper No. 62</td>
<td>J.W. Walker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richland No. 119</td>
<td>W.S. Logan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brady No. 61</td>
<td>E.A. Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas No. 171</td>
<td>W. Bordan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECRETARY
Moss Kingsley
D.O. Cheney
D.R. Newton
G.H. Ball
J.A. Douglas

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By January, 1875 Climax Grange No. 72 was organized with Enos C. Lovell as its Master. A total of seventeen granges had been established in Kalamazoo County by 1875. While county farmers had been active establishing subordinate granges, they had also figured prominently in the establishment of the Michigan State Grange.24

An account of the establishment of the Michigan State Grange is included in the lecturer's report to the ninth annual convention of the State Grange. On April 15, 1873, twenty-one Masters and four past-Masters of local granges met at the Court House in the Village of Kalamazoo. Apparently, the National Grange had decided that since its deputies such as Jones and Abbott had met with continued success in their efforts at organizing local granges, it was appropriate to develop a governing structure at the state level. T.A. Thompson, a General Deputy of the National Grange, broached the idea of a state organization to several local grange masters. One of them was J.T. Cobb, the second Master of Schoolcraft Grange No. 8. Cobb was elected temporary secretary of the organizing committee. Shortly thereafter, a committee on credentials was chosen.25 Kalamazoo County grangers made up the entire membership of the committee:

C. Bonfoey, First Master of Eureka No. 11
C.L. King, a representative from Oshtemo No. 3
S.F. Brown, a representative from Schoolcraft No. 26

This credentials committee decided that thirteen local granges were entitled to have representatives at the sessions in which officials would be elected to the State Grange.
At these sessions, held on April 15, six of the thirteen delegations were from Kalamazoo County. The county's contingent included representatives from: Schoolcraft No. 8; Oshtemo No. 5; Eureka No. 11; Summit No. 20; Alamo No. 15; and Galesburg No. 18.

At 1:30 P.M. on Wednesday, April 15, 1873, the representatives present elected the thirteen officers of the Michigan State Grange as well as a six-member Executive Committee. Seven of these thirteen officers and half of the Executive Committee were Kalamazoo County grangers. These were:

**OFFICERS**

Master: S.F. Brown, Schoolcraft No. 8  
Chaplain: C.L. King, Oshtemo No. 5  
Secretary: J.T. Cobb, Schoolcraft No. 8  
Treasurer: D.B. Hull, Galesburg, No. 18  
Gate Keeper: C.B. Mitchell, Kalamazoo, Arcadia No. 21  
Ceres: Mrs. C.L. King, Oshtemo No. 5  
Flora: Mrs. D. Duncan, Schoolcraft No. 8

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Delamore Duncan, Schoolcraft, No. 8  
Thomas Buckour, Oshtemo No. 7  
Chauncey Bournay, Eureka No. 11

Kalamazoo County had been a focus of activity during both the initial period of the organization of local granges in the state and during the establishment of the State Grange. County grangers were to continue to play prominent roles in the activities of their organizations.

On the days of January 21, 22, and 23, 1874, in Allen's Hall, Kalamazoo, Michigan, the Michigan State Grange held its first annual session. Representatives dealt with the variety of procedural and organizational details which would be germane
for any organization's initial proceedings. Resolutions concerning the duties of officers, the qualifications for membership, and the patterns of organization for subordinate granges were adopted. Because they provide some indication of the perceived grievances of county farmers and the controversies and public policy solutions to those grievances which were foremost in the minds of these farmers, the most fascinating resolutions are those which were written by the Committee on Resolutions and the Committee on Transportation. The methodological assumption in this regard is simply that the stated grievances articulated in these official Grange resolutions can be accepted as the perceived grievances of county grangers. Since farmers joined the Grange because of its attempt to ameliorate these grievances—as the traditional interpretation asserts—then it can be assumed that county farmers perceived similar grievances. Thus far, no evidence has been found to suggest that county grangers joined the Grange because they were motivated by an alternate set of perceived grievances or some esoteric pattern of motives hidden from the world and historical analysis. The evidence then, does not suggest that the motivations between Grange "elites" and "masses" differed. Nor does this approach uncritically accept the validity of the stated perceived grievances; these grievances could be articulated, widely felt, and incorrect at the same time. The issue of their validity will be taken up in much greater detail in later sections of this study.

Grange orators consistently propounded two major types
of grievances—one political, the other economic. Grange speakers had a basic grievance which suggested the lack of effective organization among farmers at the federal level. One speech argued:

To a large degree our farmers have themselves to blame for the unnecessary and unfortunate condition of affairs. A lack of that organization and cooperation, which exists in other interests, marks the weakness of the farmers' power and influence. Never was the fact more prominent than at present, during all the important discussions concerning proposed changes in the tariff, by congress [sic].

Every great industry is represented in Washington by able counsel, trained experts, or by its representative man. The iron kings, manufacturers of textile fabrics, the miners of coal, the refiners of sugar, the salt boilers, the wire fence monopolists, the lumberers—in fact, the representatives of almost every conceivable industry are organized . . . where are the representatives of the agriculture of America?27

That the grangers felt they, as members of "a great producing class,"28 were excluded from the policy making bodies of the federal government is further reflected in their attacks on class legislation. Legislation reflecting monopolistic and industrial class interests vastly overshadowed policies reflecting the interests of the agricultural class. Grangers used that pre-dominance to justify an attack on class legislation generally understood. At the Kalamazoo session of State Grange, one resolution ran:

Resolved: That in a government like ours the universal good requires that there should be no such class legislation as will give to any one branch of business or industry an undue advantage and power over other interests equally important to the well-being of society; but as far as possible every useful occupation and those engaged therein should enjoy equal advantages in the race of life.29

Grangers realized that individual legislators would be a vital part of any effort to achieve this equalitarian, even
"universal good." Legislators were a logical focus of additional grievances. Granges demanded "competent, faithful, and honest men"\(^{30}\) willing to put down "bribery, corruption, and trickery."\(^{31}\) However honest these ideal legislators would be, grangers still demanded "that they should be held to a strict accountability for all their acts" understanding "that it is the right of every citizen to scrutinize all their official acts, and know at all times the state of their accounts and the disposition made of all sums entrusted to them."\(^{32}\) Grangers made eager use of that modern political cliche, "Let the office seek the man, and not the man, the office."

The economic grievances enumerated at the Kalamazoo convention focused on railroads and middlemen. One resolution declared that farmers had "suffered more by railroad exactions than all other classes combined."\(^{33}\) The reasoning behind this charge was that other classes could more than absorb the costs of rail freight shippage in the commissions they charged others. Farmers could indulge in no such financial featherbedding. Other resolutions held that the railroads had "outgrown legislatures, or defy them"\(^{34}\) and were guilty of violating state railway laws. Grangers concluded by reiterating their belief that railroads were subject to regulation by the legislature.

Middlemen were dealt with summarily. Essentially, these were the merchants and sales agents selling manufactured goods and commodities to the farmers in retail trade. Grangers over complained of being "bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of the middlemen."\(^{36}\) As a policy effort to alleviate this
condition, the convention adopted a resolution which supported the principle of:

... buying more directly from the manufacturer and selling to the consumer, thus avoiding as far as practical the paying of large and unnecessary commissions......

The first attempts Kalamazoo County grangers made at alleviating any of these grievances resulted in a specific policy designed to deal with the problem of middlemen.

By 1873, a County Council of Grangers had been organized. This was not a pomona or a county grange; indeed it appears to have been an ad hoc, extra-legal body designed to provide some co-operation and communication between the local grangers in the county. It was governed by an Executive Committee of six members. Two of these were simultaneously Grange officials in subordinate chapters--O.H. Fellows, first Secretary of Schoolcraft No. 8 and Dwight C. Fierce, who had been the first Secretary of Portage No. 16. It is likely that the other four members--James S. Cobb, N.K. Hunt, P.A. Beebe, and Elijah Grover--were regular members of local grangers.

The Council appears to have been suited to a type of economic co-operation which could provide a solution to the problem of middlemen. On October 20, 1873, it issued the following circular:

TO MANUFACTURERS, DEALERS, AND PROFESSIONAL MEN:

Gentlemen: The Grangers of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry of Kalamazoo County have organized an association whose object is united and uniform action in all matters affecting their interests and welfare.

The Executive Committee, therefore, desires to make a business arrangement with for one year, offering on our part that all transactions be upon a cash basis and strictly confidential, and that we will give our influence to induce a general acceptance of any offer we may recommend.
We ask you to respond, making a statement in writing of what inducement you are willing to offer to secure our patronage.

The Executive Committee—38

This was to be only the first such Grange effort to bypass the middlemen.

An 1876 edition of The Grange Visitor, the state Grange organ, indicates that a "Co-operative Association of the Patrons of Husbandry"39 was legally organized in Kalamazoo in June of that year. A co-operative store specializing in manufacturer goods, it was located on Rose Street across from the Lawrence and Chapin Company.

County grangers also participated in co-operative buying ventures sponsored by the State Grange. In Schoolcraft on October 6, 1874, the Executive Committee of the State Grange met with E.R. Shankland, a National Grange official with duties in the area of co-operative buying ventures. Committee Chairman Delamore Duncan of Schoolcraft No. 8, was instructed by a decision of the committee to pay Shankland $200.00 for the purchase of one Werner Harvester and the right to manufacture additional harvesters. The committee planned to establish some system for the manufacture of these harvesters which it would ultimately sell, at cost, to grangers. Nothing came of these plans. Apparently, the Marsh Harvester Company initiated legal proceedings against the National Grange, charging that the Werner Harvester patent was an infringement upon the Marsh patent. This prevented further production of the Werner machine and voided the committee's plans for the year.
Later they would try and negotiate for other harvesters. In the interim they initiated other co-operative efforts.40

In November of 1874, the Executive Committee of the State Grange made a contract with the firm of Day & Taylor of Grandville, Michigan. Under the terms of the arrangement, grangers could order their supplies of agricultural lime, or plaster, at prices slightly above cost. For instance, Texas Grange No. 171 ordered four railroad carloads in 1877, and at least six in 1878.41 It is most likely that the local grange Masters would collect several plaster orders from individual farmers. They would then forward one bulk order to the business agent of the State Grange who would make arrangements with Day & Taylor for the shipment of the plaster to the locals.42

These attempts to eliminate the middlemen generated various opinions within the country about the Grange and its activities. These provide some indication of how the community responded to the phenomenon of Grange activity.

In late August, 1875, county grangers held a picnic at the National Park in Kalamazoo. The Gazette reported the event and then made various judgements about the Grange.

Referring to co-operative attempts by grangers, it remarked:

There is danger . . . that they will take too much of the world upon their own shoulders, and in attempting to do away with all middlemen and regulate certain things which can only be governed by the great laws of supply and demand, overshoot their mark and fall helpless upon the sober side. There is a chance for the Grange to do much good; there is an opportunity for it to become a huge failure.43

There is some indication that Grange activities were viewed
with much less sympathy by other observers.

In an article originally printed in the *Schoolcraft Dispatch and News* and reprinted in the June 12, 1873 edition of the *Gazette*, a farmer by the name of E.L. Brown gave a long critique of the Grange. Brown felt that their co-operative ventures—which he described as borrowing somebody's back room to divide up a barrel of sugar and sending teams after plaster—had become "foolishly aggressive." The Grange was impudently attempting to absorb or eliminate other legitimate occupations. The services performed by the middle-men, passing along the products of farmers to larger markets and distributing needed manufactured goods, were admittedly vital. Grangers however, proposed to eliminate one set of middlemen with their own. They would erect an elite of their own, consisting of their business agents:

... they propose to make a new set of middlemen, the new ones being salaried, and so, sure of profit, while the others act at their own risk. When these grangers' middlemen are established, then we shall have a true privileged class... a class established at the flat of a secret order consisting of agents selected by that order, and the whole order bound to cruch our competition and sustain this privileged class. Brown's alarmist predictions were never realized. He had incorrectly believed the grangers could maintain a higher degree of cohesion in their co-operative ventures than they ever were actually able to. In another respect, county grangers were unable to maintain the interest and enthusiasm for the order to the extent that they had hoped.

During the middle years of the decade of the 1870's, approximately from 1874-1875, membership in the Grange was
rising at all levels. By late October, 1875, the Grange could boast 758,767 members nationwide; 33,195 of these were Michigan farmers. In the county, Maple Grange No. 5 had grown to a total of fifty-six members in the fall of 1875. This grange had begun with a total of twenty persons. Waukeshma No. 4 grew to ninety members; Arcadia No. 21 in the village of Kalamazoo had reportedly grown to at least one hundred members with a roll sheet that was still growing. 45

In this middle period, county grange organizations flourished. The first grange of this type organized in Michigan was established on June 11, 1877. 47 Kalamazoo County never established a county-wide grange, although it did have the County Council mentioned above. Under the by-laws of the State Grange, each county could hold a convention in order to elect county representatives to the annual sessions of the State Grange. Kalamazoo County was allotted three such representatives, and it held these conventions regularly throughout the decade.

At the end of this middle period Grange membership at all levels fell, the number of Granges decreased, and enthusiasm for the Granged waned. By July, 1876, total Grange membership in the United States had fallen to 588,525—a decline of 170,242 members from the 1875 high of 759,767. In Michigan, membership fell from 33,195 in 1875 to 29,901 in 1876. As a reflection of this membership trend, thirteen local granges in Michigan surrendered their charters. 48 By 1877, thirty-eight granges consolidated on a one-to-one basis, thereby decreasing the total again by nineteen.
During this period, Grange activity in Kalamazoo County remained energetic enough such that no local granges either surrendered their charters or consolidated with others. In fact, by the Fourth Annual Session of the Michigan State Grange in 1876, the eighteenth and the final local grange had been established in the county. This was Charleston No. 203.49 A list of local granges included in the proceedings of that session indicates that all the seventeen granges which had been founded earlier were still in existence. While local granges in other counties were either dying or consolidating, the number of locals in Kalamazoo County actually increased.50

That these Kalamazoo locals were functioning officially and thriving in comparison with the retrogressive membership trends elsewhere is not to suggest that county locals did not suffer periods of lethargy and relative inactivity. In an 1877 letter to The Grange Visitor, Secretary Z.C. Durdee of Galesburg No. 18 reported that his local had "just emerged from a lethargic state."51 Number 18 had established a committee of active Matrons which had visited delinquent Patrons and had encouraged them to become more involved in grange matters. Apparently, the Matrons succeeded; Secretary Durkee reported that No. 18 recovered and was in an "earnest and enthusiastic condition."52

On possible measure of this lethargy is the extent to which granges in the county were delinquent in filing reports with the Secretary of the State Grange. The by-laws of the State Grange required the Secretaries of local granges to file quarterly reports with the state secretary. These
Part III:

The Grangers and the Railroads
reports explained the various activities of the locals over each quarter. In June of 1876 and January of 1877 two local granges in Kalamazoo County were listed as being delinquent in the filing of the reports. These were Alamo No. 15 and Richland No. 119. Nevertheless, they were still considered officially functioning according to State Grange records.

If all the original local granges in the county were still in existence after a bout with lethargy of sorts in the middle of the decade, then one is naturally curious about the number of individual grangers in the county before, during, and after the period 1874-1875. Evidence on this point is, as yet, far from conclusive. At best, it is suggestive and impressionistic. Data from an 1874 census indicate that, in that year, there were 3,963 farmers in the county. Thus far, membership data from 1875 are available on only three of the eighteen granges in the county: Arcadia No. 21 had one hundred members; Waukesha No. 4 had ninety members; and Maple No. 5 had fifty-six members. This is an average membership of eighty-two persons. If this represents the average size of a county grange in 1875, then at that time there would have been 1,476 grangers in the county or thirty-seven percent of all farmers—and a somewhat smaller percentage if the total number of farmers in the county increased from 1874 to 1875. At least one scholar has estimated a membership percentage of thirty percent in Champaign County, Illinois, which like Kalamazoo, experienced significant grange activity.
Perhaps the most important issues which concerned county grangers in the period from 1872 to 1877 were the variety of railroad abuses which they alleged, were faced with. These can be defined more precisely. From the perspective of a county granger, railroads were guilty of three things: first, they charged exorbitant rates for shipping the products of the farmers; second, they engaged in a practice of charging higher rates for shipping the same products to local points than they did for longer distances, (the so-called "long-haul short-haul" discrimination); and third, the railroads were able to flaunt even the first feeble attempts at regulation with their insidious and illegal influence in the state legislature.

That these grangers perceived a situation in which the railroads were charging exorbitant freight rates is evident from some of the resolutions passed at the First Annual Session of the Michigan State Grange, 1874, in Kalamazoo. One resolution charged that the farmers had suffered more from "railroad exactions" than "all other classes combined." Another asserted that, "there is no limit to their exactions but the ability of the people to bear them." Their view was that the railroads were charging them excessive rates in southern Michigan to enable the same railroads to compete with other railroads which maintained extensive trunk lines in the West.

Specifically what constitutes an 'exorbitant rate' is not readily clear. The answer depends, in part, on the biases of those who seek to provide a definition. Any definition must take into consideration the evidence we have describing
the prices and the price trends of freight rates during the relevant time period.

Voters of Michigan had approved an amendment to their constitution in 1870 which gave the state legislature the power to regulate freight and passenger rates. This law had established the Michigan Railway Commission to which railroads were required to send an annual report of their operations. These reports will provide basic evidence as to the precise nature of freight rates and any price trends in these rates. The first report of the Commissioner of Railroads was published in 1872, covering that year.

Statistics will deal with the six railroads which had the most extensive operations in Kalamazoo County in the period of this study. These are:

- Grand Rapids and Indiana
- Lake Shore and Michigan Southern
- Kalamazoo, Allegan, and Grand Rapids
- Michigan Central
- Kalamazoo and White Pigeon
- Kalamazoo and South Haven

The first information these reports provide is that the total earnings of these railroads were falling in the period 1873 to 1877. This information is summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Railroads</th>
<th>1873</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1876</th>
<th>1877</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gr. Rapids &amp; Ind.</td>
<td>1,119,700</td>
<td>1,175,883</td>
<td>1,143,741</td>
<td>1,137,539</td>
<td>1,097,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lk. Shore&amp;M.S.</td>
<td>19,414,509</td>
<td>17,148,130</td>
<td>14,434,198</td>
<td>13,949,176</td>
<td>13,305,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kal.,Alle.,&amp;G.R.</td>
<td>155,200</td>
<td>87,975</td>
<td>143,611</td>
<td>135,566</td>
<td>125,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kal.&amp;W.Pigeon</td>
<td>113,408</td>
<td>64,097</td>
<td>104,554</td>
<td>98,197</td>
<td>91,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mich.Central</td>
<td>6,089,534</td>
<td>6,129,253</td>
<td>5,408,573</td>
<td>5,475,475</td>
<td>5,323,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kal.&amp;S. Haven</td>
<td>85,745</td>
<td>73,248</td>
<td>59,515</td>
<td>53,563</td>
<td>49,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>26,981,095</td>
<td>24,679,187</td>
<td>21,294,293</td>
<td>20,849,513</td>
<td>20,192,078</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While such evidence is suggestive, i.e., that freight earnings and rates might have been falling, it fails to identify the price trends of specific rail services. Without further clarification one could conclude, or at least assert, that during the period earnings from freight rates were increasing and earnings from passenger service were falling. If earnings from passenger service were a larger percentage of total business than were freight earnings, then the actual trend could exist without the presumed downward trend in freight earnings and rates.

An investigation of the total freight earnings of these six county railroads indicates that their total freight earnings were falling in the period 1872 to 1878, excluding 1873 for which data were not available. This table follows on the next page.

The phenomenon of declining freight earnings depicted in the table becomes conclusive when it is also noted that freight rates themselves were also falling. Specific data are not available for all the six representative lines cited in this study, but evidence of a general tendency is found in the various statements of the Commissioner of Railroads. In each of the reports of the Railroad Commission from 1872 to 1879, mention is made of a "general and steady reduction in rates of freight during the year." In 1872, the Commissioner reported:

... and in continuation of my discussion of this subject, in my report of 1874, I have to report that the then unprecedented low rates at which our corporations were doing business, have been still further reduced until rates have been reduced so unremunerative as to furnish, in most cases, no return upon the stock investment, and in the case of twenty-two out of our thirty-five
companies, not even sufficient to cancel the obligations constantly accruing upon their indebtedness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Railroads</th>
<th>1872</th>
<th>1873</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th>1875</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gr. Rapids &amp; Ind.</td>
<td>600,604</td>
<td>600,604</td>
<td>634,072</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lk. Shore &amp; M. S.</td>
<td>12,618,499</td>
<td>9,639,038</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kal., Alle., &amp; G. R.</td>
<td>94,591</td>
<td>79,529</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kal. &amp; W. Pigeon</td>
<td>65,812</td>
<td>57,590</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mich. Central</td>
<td>8,555,700</td>
<td>3,463,383</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kal. &amp; S. Haven</td>
<td>49,250</td>
<td>30,930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>21,987,556</td>
<td>13,904,542</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Railroads</th>
<th>1876</th>
<th>1877</th>
<th>1878</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gr. Rapids &amp; Ind.</td>
<td>639,201</td>
<td>622,007</td>
<td>699,557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lk. Shore &amp; M. S.</td>
<td>9,405,528</td>
<td>10,048,951</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kal., Alle., &amp; G. R.</td>
<td>78,386</td>
<td>74,346</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kal. &amp; W. Pigeon</td>
<td>57,752</td>
<td>53,837</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mich. Central</td>
<td>3,570,200</td>
<td>1,918,608</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kal. &amp; S. Haven</td>
<td>28,484</td>
<td>31,035</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>13,779,681</td>
<td>12,826,334</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific rate evidence for some years indicates that the two largest railroads of the six under consideration, the Michigan Central and the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern, experienced the phenomenon of declining rates. For example, average rates on the Michigan Central line were 1.99 cents per ton per mile in 1877, 1.578 in 1878, and 1.35 in 1879. More evidence is available for the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern. It is summarized below.
Year | Average Freight Rates (per ton per mile)
--- | ---
1854 | 3.510
1857 | 2.740
1861 | 2.092
1865 | 2.903
1869 | 1.714
1870 | 1.564
1871 | 1.391
1872 | 1.374
1873 | 1.335
1874 | 1.180
1875 | 1.010
1876 | .817


Popular or casual accounts of the agrarian discontent in the second half of the nineteenth century often hold that farmers did suffer from "exorbitant" freight rates, as farmers and grangers themselves said they did. The data suggest that county grangers did not suffer from a railroad policy of steadily increasing freight rates, whether this policy was thought deliberate or otherwise. Clearly, farmers may not have meant a railroad policy of deliberately extortionate freight rates when they employed the term "exorbitant."

As Barton argues, "whether the farmers realized it or not, the local freight charges were the focal point of their attacks upon the rail companies." Page 28 of the same source indicates that county grangers would agree with the charge that the railroads charged them proportionately larger rates for a short haul than a long haul from a point where there was no competing railway. One granger remarked in a letter to The Grange Visitor, "We have to pay three cents a bushel more on wheat shipped to Detroit than..."
Evidence indicates that the railroads often did charge county farmers rates which reflected a long-haul-short-haul discrimination. Dunbar cites instances in which a railroad charged eleven times its normal rate for hauls of five to twenty miles and only five times that rate for hauls of fifty to one hundred miles. In 1875, the Michigan Central line charged 0.88 cents per ton per mile for long or "through" hauls and 2.02 cents for short or "local" hauls. Conclusive evidence is not yet available but one can safely accept the phenomenon of long-haul-short-haul discrimination as having been a "valid"--or a quantifiably legitimate component--of the grievances of Kalamazoo County grangers. The somewhat emotional connotations of the adjective "exorbitant" mask a valid grievance.

The grievance was valid in that it described a real situation. That its effects were significantly detrimental to the farmer is another issue. Barton suggests, High freight rates did not necessarily mean less income for the farmer nor did low rates indicate that the farmer would receive more from the sale of his products. Actually freight costs could be added to
the selling price of the product and passed on to the consumer in a non-competitive market. They would not materially affect the basic selling price but would be a cost of distribution. Thus the impact of freight cost's upon the farmers' economic income would fall in his role as a consumer and not as a producer.\textsuperscript{70}

There are a number of fallacies in Barton's assertions. First, that freight rates could be added to selling prices does not prove that they actually were. There is no evidence that county grangers enjoyed such a sensible pattern of financial redistribution. Second, even if they had been added to selling prices, there would be no assurance that this increased cost of distribution would have been reflected in an increased price level at which the farmer could have sold his products. The process appears to have worked in reverse. Barton himself points out that after the wheat crop of 1879 "began to move onto eastern markets, the railroads raised freight charges 30 cents on each 100 pounds. This resulted in an additional freight bill of $360,000.00 for Michigan alone."\textsuperscript{71} After it was clear that wheat would be selling at prices acceptable to the farmers, the railroads decided to "charge what the articles would bear." Grangers would point to similar abuses:

There has been a recent advance of fifteen cents a bushel on clover-seed, making the freight on a bushel of that product to New York one dollar. Why is this? Western clover seed is wanted on the Eastern market, and the advance in the market price there is added to the freight and pocketed by the railroad companies, thus robbing the Western farmers of their just profits . . . the present high tariffs have been added simply because the freight agent decided that 'the article would bear it, and the Western farmers would stand it'\textsuperscript{72}

It appears that the short-haul long-haul discrimination was a real practice with real and damaging consequences for
Kalamaoo County grangers.

If county grangers were indigant about this particular discrimination they were equally as concerned about the general pattern of more minor discriminations which they suffered at the hands of the railroad companies. A special committee at the Michigan House of Representatives revealed a variety of such abuses. These included: "making better rates to large shippers than to small; extending privileges to some and not to others; changing rates from those posted in tariff schedules; neglecting to care for perishable goods; excessive car service charges; discriminating against non-competing points; trouble in settling claims; illegal charges for services; and a tendency for products to weigh more at the terminal point than they did at the shipping point." 73

In 1877, the Commissioner of Railroads referred to a "guerilla warfare" 74 among railroads in the setting of their freight rates. The Commissioner's analysis demands that it be quoted at length. He argued:

The farmer ought to be able to know, with reasonable certainty, the cost of placing his products in the seaport markets. The dealer in these products ought also to be able to purchase with reasonable knowledge of the cost of delivering the same in market; but under the system adopted for the last few years, this cost has been in a great degree speculative, brought about by combinations and agreements between the freight agents and managers of the trunk lines to increase and regulate rates to-day, to be broken to-morrow, under one and another pretense, frequently and usually, that some of the roads that entered into the combination have 'cut under' and not adhered to the arrangement. Almost any system of management would be better than the present and past. 75

In their support of demands for uniform rates and increased governmental regulation of the rail lines, county granges can again be seen as having acted on the basis of genuine
If county grangers were angered by all the abuses over what they saw as the inordinate influence of railroad interests in the state legislature. At the Kalamazoo convention, the State Grange passed a resolution which read:

WHEREAS: The railroad corporations have outgrown Legislatures, or defy them, and have made the chosen representatives of the people a matter of barter and sale. They also opposed the practice whereby railroads issued free passes to state legislators.

This perceived grievance also was a valid perception of a situation in which the values and policy norms of the railroad industrialists and sympathetic legislators meshed—at least in so far as the basic issue of the proper scope of governmental attempts at regulating various sectors of the economy. Both groups maintained an essentially free-market, capitalistic outlook. This situation need not have included a bold pattern of naked influence-peddling, though such doubtless occurred, since both groups were compatible on fundamental economic issues. To the extent that county grangers supported state railroad regulation their outlook was compatible with the railroad industrialists and sympathetic legislators.
Part IV:

Agricultural Conditions
A Grange pamphlet has said of Michigan:

There is no other equal area of God's good earth that comprises in its domain so many and varied, rich and powerful factors of civilization . . . Its fertile soil, its famous forests and farms, its mines so rich, its gas, oil and salt, its lakes and rivers, its healthful climate, copious and well distributed rain fall . . . There are few states, indeed, with resources so varied, and at the same time, so rich.78

Grangers in Kalamazoo County, in fact, farmed one of the best regions for general farming in the state.79 Lush groves and wood lands became rich pasturage. The county's six major prairies were cultivated with wheat primarily as well as corn, rye, oats, buckwheat and potatoes. Population figures rose, as did the production totals of basic farm products. By the 1840's and 1850's the county was experiencing these fundamental trends in its economic development. Data for these trends are summarized in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acres of Wheat</th>
<th>Acres of Corn</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>20,880</td>
<td>17,317</td>
<td>15,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>51,741</td>
<td>22,471</td>
<td>25,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>72,591</td>
<td>29,203</td>
<td>32,284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ultimately these patterns of development were repeated elsewhere—in the Upper Mississippi River Valley, the lower Middle West and the Great Plains. The regularization of crop patterns, mechanization, and immigrants from the East aided a process whereby an entire agrarian economy was created. Finally this economy would suffer serious strains.

As mentioned earlier in this study, county grangers would contend that members of this agrarian economy were
receiving increasingly smaller portions of the growing wealth of the national economy. Hicks has summarized these sentiments which can be taken as a fuller description of what was a major economic grievance of county grangers:

More and more the conviction settled down upon the farmer that he was the victim of 'some extrinsic baleful influence.' Someone was 'walking off with the surplus' that society as a whole was clearly building up and that in part at least should be his. He was accustomed to regard himself as the 'bone and sinew of the nation' and as the producer of 'the largest share of its wealth.' Why should his burdens be heavier every year and his gains . . . more meager?' Why should he face to face with a condition of abject servility?'

To the grangers, their plight was a consequence of the fact that the prices which they received for their products were persistently declining in the period from 1864 to 1880, and even beyond, to the last years of the century. Empirical evidence verifies the validity of this price trend. This information is summarized in the following table.

Wholesale Price Indexes for Farm Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific evidence of the behavior of the market prices of farm products in the village of Kalamazoo can be gleaned from the market listings in the *Kalamazoo Gazette*. This information is summarized in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wheat</th>
<th>Corn</th>
<th>Oats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period Average</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The evidence clearly indicates rising, if erratic, average prices. The high average for wheat occurs in 1873, for oats in 1874, and for corn, in 1876. This would mean the prices of three of the county's staple crops—certainly grown to varying extents by all county grangers—were rising before and during the initial periods of Grange activity in the county. Is this to suggest that the general price trends quoted earlier are false? Were the grievances of county grangers somehow false?

In both cases the answer is no; in fact, the data can be reconciled with the grievances of county grangers. First, no average price in the period surpasses the prices of $2.00 per bushel and even higher which county farmers received in the mid 1860's. Within the context of a longer time-span,
the quoted period represents a situation of deteriorating prices. Second, the county's major crop, wheat, represents a declining average price during the middle period of Grange activity--a period when granger activity within the county retained its vitality despite growing disinterest in such activity elsewhere in the state and in the nation. This decline would continue throughout the 1880's and 1890's.

This study demonstrates the vitality of granger activity in the county to the end of the 1870's. Third, the statistics give no indication of the average annual incomes which the sale of these staple crops provided county grangers. State officials estimated,

'A farmer in the southern counties... on a farm of average value, and who raised... average crops of wheat corn and oats... would receive for them only a sufficient amount to pay the wages of labor and other expenses... and less than one-half of one percent interest on the value of the land on which the crops were grown.'

As this suggests, county grangers acted on the basis of economic grievances which were real--and significantly so.
Part V:

The Tone of County Grangerism
To what extent did Kalamazoo County grangers subscribe to a unitary philosophy about the political and economic worlds? This is always a peculiarly delicate, and often intractable, question for the analyst: To what degree was a group substantially in agreement about the fundamental media of its discontent?

As it was explained earlier, this study presumes that to the extent that county farmers joined the Grange they subscribed to the policy criticisms and the policy prescriptions which were articulated by Grange orators or passed as resolutions by official Grange bodies. What may be derogated as a "common sense" assumption—although historical analysis demands that very little be taken for granted—has been accepted in the absence of evidence to the contrary. Nonetheless, evidence exists to prove that various fissures existed in this "common view" of Kalamazoo County grangerism. These fissures—which do not represent dissent with the basic grievances of the grangers—are more a variation in tone; they suggest that some county grangers wanted a moderation of the tableaux of discontent pointed by Grange orators. Others took an abnormally radical bent. Still others demonstrated a moderate dissent with Grange customs and procedures.

**Moderation**

A salient component of the philosophy or ideology of grangerism for county grangers was the problem of monopoly. A "surplus of middlemen" existed. These middlemen prevented a direct interchange between the two great producing classes—
the farmers and the manufacturers. This surplus was harmful to the farmers since all middlemen engaged in a system whereby they could exact virtually unearned wealth from farmers in the form of the commissions which they took from the sale of manufactured goods. Grangers "did not need them" and demanded that "the lifeblood of commerce" flow freely. Co-operative stores, buying directly from the manufacturers and selling directly to grangers at cost, were an important Grange solution to the middlemen. At least one county granger dissented from this general view.

In a speech before a gathering of grangers in Texas Township on November 28, 1877, granger Lafayette Hill articulated a generally dissenting view. Hill argued that Grange co-operative stores, such as the one in the village of Kalamazoo, were directly "opposed to the interests and welfare" of the grangers. His reasoning was that co-operative stores sent "money away from home"—money which went to manufacturers located outside the community. This money would not be funneled into local trade. Local trade would not expand and so, small agricultural communities such as Schoolcraft would not grow. If the community did not grow, then the farmers would lose a base for their efforts at intellectual and social betterment. Besides, an attractive and fairly developed community would enhance the value of the surrounding farms.

Hill made two additional arguments. First, Grange "warfare" against the middlemen could drive away all middlemen. If co-operative efforts then failed, farmers would be in a commercially perilous situation. Second, Hill argued that
co-operative efforts violated the principle of the division of labor, the "first law of political economy." Farmers were engaged in the economically unsound practice of doing labor meant for others. These "others" were paid a just wage to do what the farmers really had no time to do. Hill rejected the idea that the middlemen exacted large commissions. Farmers experienced financial difficulties too often because they could not control their purchases on credit. The related issue of interest on mortgage loans was taken up by another county granger.

Grangers were commonly opposed to a system of what they considered high rates of interest." The deteriorating economic condition of the nation's farmers was due, in part, to the high rates of interest on mortgage loans which they were forced to pay to unscrupulous creditors. The dissent of one granger on this issue echoed Hill's position.

In a letter to the Grange Visitor in 1877, Secretary M. Fosdick of Oshtemo Grange No. 3 warned that grangers should not "engender a communistical hostility" toward creditors "whose hard labor have enabled them to have something to lend or to sell on credit." Fosdick argued:

Some of those who are staggering under debts which they voluntarily contracted with their eyes open, with the probabilities in plain view, now try to gloss over their own blunders by talking of 'high interest.' But the legal rate of interest is but one of the many minor causes of a man up to his neck in debt, being unthrifty and disconsolate. It is not difficult to find men who, having a better faculty for running into debt than for running a farm, have become poor without ever paying but a very little interest.

Radicalism

Some county grangers developed a more radical interpretation of the political and economic systems which caused their
discontent. They couched their arguments in more explicitly class-oriented terms thereby adopting an atypically strident tone. In a letter to the Grange Visitor in 1875, A. Fanckboner, a member of Schoolcraft Grange No. 3 argued that federal legislation had been, for over a decade, "in favor of capital instead of the interest of the people." Fanckboner, unlike most mainstream grangers, made no effort to declare that he was not an enemy of capital. The effort would have been quite out of place. Federal legislation had:

... created, fostered and protected a money monopoly, the most gigantic, the most overbearing and domineering that ever existed in our so-called free republican government. It has enacted laws which dealt out justice between its different citizens, and then, at the command of capital and the money tyrants, it has repudiated its promises and repealed said enactments, so that said monied rings could grow rich from the labor of the toiling masses.

Prominent politicians were no more than base shysters; their aim was to exact increasingly larger shares of wealth from the farmers and laborers which ended up in the hands of "scheming money sharks." Second conspiracies exacted larger interest rates for "useless middlemen." The solution was to send men to the federal government who identified with the interests of farmers and laborers—and not the "rich aristocracy." Dissent

That some county grangers were concerned about the potential danger of the emergence of an eventually unresponsive "ruling elite" within grange organizations is evidenced by a resolution which was passed by the Kalamazoo County Convention of Grangers in 1875 after that body had elected county representatives to the State Grange convention. This resolution read:
WHEREAS, We believe that all degrees and offices that are out of the reach of the masses of our Order, are fruitful sources of discord, and contrary to the genius of the American mind, and are themselves wrong; therefore,

Resolved, That we are in favor of abolishing all degrees above the 4th.

Resolved, That we are unalterably opposed to having any offices within the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, but what each and every member of the fraternity shall be eligible to.

Since this resolution was unanimously passed by the popularly elected representatives of the local granges in the county, it is fairly significant evidence of dissent, at least on this issue.
Conclusion:

The Revisionist Debate
The most important issue which has recently emerged concerning the Grange is the extent to which the organization was an educational and social fraternity as opposed to a quasi-political body with intentions which were primarily political and economic. Solon Buck, the traditional interpreter of the Grange, whose book, The Grange Movement has remained the standard treatment of its subject for over forty years, argues that the Grange was the organizational response of Midwestern farmers to widely felt abuses which were primarily economic and political. The Grange functioned as an educational or intellectual, and social body only secondarily.

D. Sven Nordin, the most prominent of the revisionist historians who have considered this issue, contends that "the Grange adult education program overshadowed every other aspect of grangerism." Nordin insists that there were really two granger movements. The first of these covered the years 1870-1880 and was centered in the West and South; the second lasted from 1880 to 1890, and was most vigorous in New England, New York, Pennsylvania and the eastern section of the Middle West.

Nordin puts particular emphasis on the connection between the alleged primacy of the Grange's activities as an agent of educational and social development and the revival of the organization in the East during the Second Granger Movement. Nordin points out the deficiencies in Buck's treatment and summarizes his own theses:

He [Buck] failed to show why the educational and social features of the society were the order's most important activities. Not only did more grangers participate in them, but these features produced more long lasting results and gave the two nineteenth century
granger movements continued with order activities in the twentieth century. Continued diatribes against railroads and pleas for third parties were not the aspects of grangerism which gave the organization a second breath when death was near in 1880. Members less fickle than those who had quit the organization because it had not transformed rural county-sides into Gardens of Eden had a will to save the Grange from expiring because they cherished the social and educational opportunities afforded by the order.

What initial conclusions can be drawn about this controversy as it applies to grangerism in Kalamazoo County, Michigan? While much remains to be investigated in much greater detail, some things can be said at this point.

It is clear that county grangers were very concerned about political and economic issues. Their concern about, railroads, middlemen, political corruption, and their attempts at economic co-operation illustrate this. It is fair to say that they were perhaps more concerned, more sensitive to these abuses than the granger populism—so often cited in this paper—might suggest. As the sections on the railroads and the agricultural situations in the county have suggested, perceived grievances were in fact valid grievances. In that determinate sphere where social conditions and political motivations merge, one can at least understand that county grangers had very real reasons to make an organizational response to the injustices they felt. The organizational vitality of county grangerism and its concern with the political and economic amid a backdrop of social injustices suggests the importance of public policy issues in county grangerism.

Nordin's particular emphasis on educational activities during the Second Granger Movement in the East after 1880, does not deny this study's conclusion about the importance of policy issues in a Midwestern locale during the First
This study acknowledges the fact that Grange activities included efforts to improve the education, and the intellectual awareness of county farmers at least in so far as lectures on fertilizers, crop rotation, plant diseases, mixed farming, harvesting techniques, botany, gardening, canning, and livestock, could improve the status of county grangers. The available evidence suggests that both political-economic and the educational-social activities were significant components of Kalamazoo County grangerism. At the same time, the initial conclusion must be that county gran ters in the period from 1872-1877, acting on the basis of widely-felt and empirically valid economic abuses, viewed the educational advantages of the Grange as beneficial but secondary aspects of Grange activity. This is the best explanation of granger activism in Kalamazoo County during the latter half of the nineteenth century.
FOOTNOTES


6. Nordin, op. cit., p. 8


10. Ibid., pp. 329-330


12. Ibid., pp.7-8


17. Ibid., p. 6.

18. Ibid., p. 7.


27. Kalamazoo Gazette


33. Ibid., p. 28.
34. Ibid., p. 28.
35. Ibid., p. 28.
37. Ibid., p. 29.
44. Kalamazoo Gazette, (June 12 1873), p. 3.
45. Ibid., p. 3.
47. Grange Visitor, Volume 15, No. 1, (April, 1877), p.3.
52. Ibid., p. 6.

53. This information was found in issues of the Grange Visitor: Volume 2, No. 16, (January, 1877); and Volume 2, No. 9, (December, 1876).


56. Ibid., p. 28.

57. Ibid., p. 28.


60. "Total earnings" can be defined in this context as the pre-tax sum of all revenues derived from the shippage of mail and freight, from passenger fares, and from the sale or lease of railroad property or equipment.


63. Barton, op. cit., p. 42.


68. Dunbar, op. cit., p. 255.


70. Barton, op. cit., p. 45.

71. Ibid., p. 43.


73. Barton, op. cit., p. 46.


75. Ibid., p. iii.


77. Ibid., p. 29.


81. Barton, op. cit., pp. 5-10.


83. Ibid., p. 2.
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