

## Brief History of Rock City and Grange

In the western part of the town of Milan and amid the beautiful rocks and hills far away from the turmoil and bustle of the busy life of the city lies a small hamlet known as Rock City. The name was derived from the many beautiful rocks that surround the little hamlet. The word city was attached later to make it more impressive. This vast tract of which Rock City is now part of was owned by Lady Sepascot, being granted to her by England. The tract comprised the land from what is now known as Elghmeyville to Rock City.

The first settlers of the little hamlet were of the Holland Dutch and French Huguenot type; energetic and eager to succeed in life.

Without a doubt, these first settlers saw an opportunity and had visualized what the future might be if some of the unharnessed water power was harnessed to the manpower. They set foot; used a great deal of time, thought and energy and erected a sawmill. This was the first industry to be attempted. The mill was located about five hundred feet southeast of where the Grange hall now stands.

After a few years of successful labors, a new industry was conceived and the second floor of the sawmill was equipped for making wheels, spokes, and hubs for wagons. In the basement of this same mill was a large fireplace where filies were steamed into the wheels.

Due to the large amount of unused water rushing rapidly away over the rocks and realizing the success if the industries already functioning, one industry led to the opening of another. The results were a carpet and woolen factory or perhaps we should term it a carpet and woolen mill. This mill was located in the valley along the beautiful stream of water, on the farm that is now known as Camp Rising Sun, a boy's summer camp. (This factory was erected by the maternal ancestors of Mrs. William J. Hover). The mill employed twenty persons. The woolen blankets were used in the Army. The mill had made no provisions for marking any articles; therefore, the blankets had to be taken to the neighbors and they, in turn, did the embroidery of the letters U. S. on each one.

Along the banks of the stream, history tells us that some of the deserters of the Army took refuge.

Other mills, such as a grist mill, cider mill, harness shop and shoemakers shop consisted of the few industries Rock City in the past could be proud of having.

Another interesting note, the barn on the farm owned by the late Lee G. Pultz has the original hand hewn timbers that were in the barn during the Revolutionary period. British soldiers were kept in captivity in this same barn.

The old stone house located on the farm of Benjamin Collins has a bit of history linked with it. Tradition tells us that it was in this old land mark that Washington made his headquarters over night.

As time elapsed, a need for a place of educational purpose was found necessary. It was where the stage of the present Grange hall is that the first little red school was built. It was located here for a number of years, until the people felt the need of a better place for religious instruction. It was then that the people voted to move the building and add to it more room for religious work. This was done. The new building was erected on the site just west of the present home of Robert Pells. This place sufficed the needs for a number of years. Through the generosity of the late John G. Shultz, The little chapel which still stands in the vale and is



used each Sunday was erected in 1870.

Many years have elapsed. Due to the many changes and the progress made by science, the needs for larger and better factories existed. One by one these industries became extinct. To-day, one could scarcely realize such industries did exist in this little hamlet. The minds of the people were turned to other lines of work. Their interest in fruit raising, dairying and agriculture became apparent.

The community turned from manufacturing to the agricultural center. Due to the growth of the community, and the increasing interest in agriculture, it was deemed by some of the people that possibly an organization such as the Grange might be started. It was not until March of 1905, that some of the pioneers of other Granges set foot and assisted in organizing Rock City Grange. Those who were interested and willing to give of their time and talent built the foundation for our Grange of to-day.

The first meeting place was Pink's hall, owned by Henry Pink. This was the home of the Grange from the time of its organization until December 1917. In the first year of its existence only seventeen persons had the courage to join. However, the first meeting of 1906, ten were initiated. During the year forty-five were added to the membership roll. In January 1918, the Pink hotel and hall was abandoned and meetings were held at the member's homes. In March 1918, the Grange was incorporated. Soon after, the "Little Red House" was donated by Elizabeth Morehouse. Bonds were sold to finance remodeling the building.

In January 1921, the hall was too small due to an increase in membership. It was voted an addition be made. In December 1921, the hall was dedicated.

In 1927 we received our Grange Honor Certificate and in 1931 became a model Grange.

Again in 1930 it was voted the hall was too small. Another addition was made with a home room for the Juveniles. Thus the present hall. The success of the Grange in the past and present is due to the untiring labors and co-operation of each and every member working to-gether for the good of all.

The funds in the treasury were insufficient to finance the last addition. A mortgage of \$3600 was taken. Each year some was paid. The past three years have been harvest years. It was the kindness and generosity of our auctioneer, Brother Burton Rhynders, (Charter Member), that helped. He graciously suggested that the Service and Hospitality Committee cater at his auctions. In that way, possibly we would be rewarded. During this period of time \$1086.46 has been earned by the S & H under the chairmanship of Sisters Battenfeld, Shook, Finney and Battenfeld. The results of their arduous task is exemplified by the burning of the mortgage we have carried at a high rate of interest since 1930.

The youth of the Grange take their obligation seriously. With God's will and the motto "Hope and Persevere" ever before us, greater things than ever can be accomplished.



## March 9, 1938--34th Anniversary of Rock City Grange

Early in the year 1904 a group of farmers decided a form of organization was desirable in this vicinity. The neighboring towns of Rhinebeck, Red Hook, Jackson Corners, Pine Plains and Stanfordville already had Granges, and these seemed to meet the needs of farmers financially, socially and educationally. The County Deputy was invited to meet those interested at Pink's hall on March 14. At that time Rock City Grange, No. 1012 was organized with the following Charter Members: Mr. & Mrs. Jeremiah Link, Mr. & Mrs. R. J. Link, Mr. & Mrs. B. H. Owens, Mr. & Mrs. M. J. Fingar, Mr. & Mrs. I. Stoutenburg, Mr. Wilson Sitzler, Mr. Emory L. Wildey, Mr. B. E. Rhynders, Mr. John Battenfeld, Mr. Wellington Decker, Mrs. Mary Fingar, Clara Morehouse, Bertha Holaling, Bertha Link, and Sarah Link. F. A. Halbroder and W. G. Wright joined them by bringing demits from Jackson Corners Grange.

The first officers to be elected at this meeting were: Master-F. A. Halbroder; Overseer-A. J. Link, Lecturer-Wilson Sitzler, Steward-Emory Wildey, Asst. Steward-M. J. Fingar, Chaplain-Bertha Holaling, Treasurer-B. H. Owens, Secretary-W. G. Wright, Gate Keeper-B. E. Rhynders, Ceres-Mrs. Stoutenburgh, Pomona-Bertha Link, Flora-Clara Morehouse.

The first meeting was held on March 30 when the officers were duly installed and instructed in the secret work of the Order by Worthy Master Fulton of Red Hook Grange. As the roads were muddy and so many sink holes, County Deputy Hall could not make it from Amenia. That was in the horse and buggy days, before State roads were even thought of in this vicinity. The Grange met with strong opposition and were even advised to disband and join near-by units. This opposition only made them more earnest and determined in work.

The meetings were always interesting and well attended. The members were benefited in many ways and many lasting friendships were formed by these associations. In the years 1904-5 only seventeen had courage enough to join but at the first meeting in 1906 ten were initiated and again that year forty-five more were added to the membership.

Feelings toward the Grange became more friendly. Meetings were held in Pink's Hall until December 1917 when it was decided to meet at the homes of members. At the March meeting in 1918 the Grange was incorporated. Soon after, the "Little Red House" was purchased. Some necessary alterations were made and the Grange had a home of its own.

In January 1921 the membership was ninety-two. The hall was too small so it was voted to build an addition. In December 1921 the new hall was dedicated with State Master Manning in charge of the ceremony.

In 1927 we received our Grange Honor Certificate. In 1931 we became a Model Grange, the first one in Dutchess County to receive that honor. In 1927 the Degree Team was organized. Among the first in the County, they are still very active and in great demand by other Granges.

In March 1929 the Juvenile Grange was organized. It has been doing fine work in instructing its members in Grange work. We now have two if its graduates as officers in the Subordinate Grange.

In 1930 it was again decided the hall was too small, voted to enlarge it and add a room for the Juveniles. Even now, on special occasions we are somewhat crowded.



We have a membership of 189 and more than 500 have joined this Grange in the past thirty-four years. Many have passed on to their reward; others have become careless and dropped out. Some have become affiliated with other Granges. It is a pleasure to visit those other Granges to meet these former members and see them occupying important positions. They do honor to Rock City Grange No. 1012 and the obligation they have taken.

With "Hope and Persevere" as a motto great things can be accomplished.