

SINKING VALLEY GRANGE HALL #484



Built in 1929 and razed in December 2021, the building shown here served as the meeting hall of the Sinking Valley Grange #484, over 90 years. The Ellenberger home pictured at the left and the Sinking Valley Farm Show Bldg in the background to the right.

History of the Sinking Valley Grange Hall

On February 24, 1875, the Sinking Valley Grange #484, Patrons of Husbandry, the oldest subordinate Grange in Blair County, was organized. For the last 147 years, the Grange has been a great influence in the social, agricultural, church and community activities in Tyrone Township, Blair County.

Following discussion of organizing a Grange in Sinking Valley in February of 1875, little time was lost in securing 20 charter members. On February 24, 1875, 16 of the 20 persons who signed the application for the charter met on the second floor of the large spring house on the Ephraim Burket farm. The first election was conducted by Thomas Bell, Deputy Master from Huntingdon County. The first officers were elected as follows:

Ephraim Burket, <i>Master</i>	Thomas M. Fleck, <i>Overseer</i>	J.C. Stryker, <i>Lecturer</i>
W.W. Stryker, <i>Steward</i>	George W. Bridenbaugh, <i>Asst. Steward</i>	Eli F. Fleck, <i>Secretary</i>
J.T. Stryker, <i>Chaplain</i>	H.H. Bridenbaugh, <i>Treasurer</i>	James Roseberry, <i>Gatekeeper</i>
Ella A. Bridenbaugh, <i>Ceres</i>	Mrs. Eli F. Fleck, <i>Pomona</i>	Mrs. J.C. Stryker, <i>Flora</i>
Mrs. Ephraim Burket, <i>Lady Assistant Steward</i>		

Gabriel Fleck, F.W. Bridenbaugh and William Sprankle, *Trustees*. The other charter members were Mrs. Thomas M. Fleck, Miss Clara J. Fleck, A.L. Fleck and Mrs. R.W. Bridenbaugh.

The Grange met on the Burket Farm until increasing membership made it necessary to secure larger quarters. The Grange then moved to the building in Skelp known as the Ellenberger home. The Grange held their meetings here for 42 years. In 1928 the Grange decided to build a hall that was to be used as a grange hall and community center. Mr. and Mrs. Howard C. Lotz donated the land, and the building was completed during the winter of 1929. The first meeting was held January 2, 1930 with 50 members present. The building was officially dedicated at a public "house warming" on March 4, 1930 with 260 people present. A large well-equipped kitchen was added later, where grange members prepared many apple dumplings and ham pot pie over the years.

The first area community farm show was sponsored by the Grange in 1931 and the Sinking Valley Farm Show Association continues to operate to this day.

The Grange: The Grange, officially named The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, is a social organization in the United States that encourages families to band together to promote the economic and political well-being of the community and agriculture.

The Grange is a family, community organization with its roots in agriculture that was formed as a national organization with a local focus. The foundation of the organization is the Community Grange, which can be found in rural, suburban and urban communities. The Grange has four levels, Community, County or District, State, and National to ensure that the membership's voice is heard at the appropriate place. The family is the base of the organization with full membership beginning at age 14. Women have been equal members since the inception of the Grange. A Junior Grange program for children age 5 to 14, that has helped the youngest members of the family learn about community values and citizenship. The Grange Youth program develops the leadership skills of young adults and young married couples.

For over 150 years, the organization continues to grow, chartering several new Granges in communities across the United States. Many rural communities in the United States still have a Grange Hall and local Granges still serve as a center of rural life for many farming communities.



SAFE AREA OF FRAME - 34.5" x 22.5"

VISUAL AREA OF FRAME - 35" x 23"