

3089

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 05 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bear Valley Grange Hall
other names/site number Chester Township Hall

2. Location

street & number Off County Highway 3 not for publication N/A
city, town Chester Township Zumbro Falls vicinity
state Minnesota code MN county Wabasha code 157 zip code 55991

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	_____ objects
			_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Nina M. Archabal 11/28/88
Signature of certifying official Nina M. Archabal Date
Minnesota Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____
Helena Byrne Entered in the National Register 1/5/89
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/city hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Front Gabled Form

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Weatherboard

roof Shingle

other Wood shutters

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Bear Valley Grange Hall is approximately 22 x 40 feet in area, one story high, consisting of a single room. The original plan appears to have been for a slightly larger two story space. This simple frame building sits alone on its slightly elevated site, surrounded by acres of productive farmland. The spare, rectangular wooden balloon-frame building rests atop a foundation of local limestone rubble. The weatherboard walls hold ten wood-shuttered large windows, four on each side elevation and two on the front. There is a centered door on the front-gable end and a side door on the rear-gable end. A wood shingled moderately-pitched gable roof tops the hall. The Front Gabled form used here was often chosen in the Midwest for churches, commercial structures, halls and schools. (See Vernacular Forms in Wisconsin. Historical Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, July, 1984.)

All windows are covered with multi-board shutters, held in place by T hinges. It is not known if these are original to the hall. Wooden lintel trim rises to a shallow center peak and is topped with simple rain cap molding. The single corbled brick chimney at the rear has been plastered over with cement. The foundation has been patched and filled with cement mortar. The front door is a recent replacement with a filler board between door top and lintel. A new stoop leads to this door. The rear (south) wall contains a small shuttered opening in the gable of unknown origin. The wide board siding and deep fascia boards, in need of some small repair, appear to be original. The hall is devoid of decorative trim. A treeless open space surrounds the hall, blending it historically with the landscape of croplands and farmsteads.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Period of Significance

1874-1880

Significant Dates

1874

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Bear Valley Grange Hall, No. 50, Patrons of Husbandry, is the only surviving grange hall in Wabasha County, and is one of few known to remain in Minnesota. It dates from the period of widespread and early rapid expansion experienced during this first nation-wide farmers' movement. Minnesotan Oliver H. Kelley, principal founder of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry, began organizing the first subordinate granges in 1868. The Bear Valley Grange, chartered in 1870, was the fiftieth subordinate grange launched in Minnesota - the state that built the first grange hall and organized the first state grange. Bear Valley Grange built their hall in 1874 on the property of farmer C. M. Boutelle, in a corner of Bear Valley (later Chester) Township. This property was adjacent to a principal early road extending between Mazeppa and Lake City. The hall provided the focus of grange activities and interests. The Bear Valley Grange Hall is uncommon because it is one of a minority of Minnesota subordinate granges to erect a hall for their exclusive use. It was, instead, common for many granges to utilize a public school for meetings. The appearance of grange halls, beginning in the early 1870s, chronicled the transformation and agitation that occurred in American farm life following the Civil War.

The second historic context applicable to Wabasha County development - Railroad Construction and Agricultural Development - is integrally linked to the grange movement that gave rise to this hall. American agriculture was rapidly transformed after the 1860s by the availability of mechanized farm implements and the increasing complexity in agricultural practices; changes hastened by the widespread construction of railroads. The first railroad in Wabasha County was constructed in 1870-1871. In that decade rural population in the county doubled, and farmers were soon producing over a million bushels of wheat annually. Shipping their products and receiving durable goods via the railroads, they became participants in a vast economic

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bear Valley Grange Hall, Chester Township, Wabasha Co., MN

Section number 8 Page 1

network the management of which was not under their control. The opportunity for greater economic control was one of the grange movement's aims which helped foster the order's rapid growth in Minnesota during the 1870s. By 1876 the grange was functioning in virtually all states and territories with an aggregate total of three quarters of a million members. The organization consisted of a national, state and subordinate granges, the latter being required to meet at least monthly. Membership was open to adult males and females engaged in agricultural pursuits.

The several interrelated activities promoted by the grange were both a reflection of the times and in part an explanation for the rapid rise and decline in Minnesota of the Patrons of Husbandry. Advancement of the welfare of farmers - socially, intellectually, economically - was the primary purpose of the movement. Grange membership promoted sociability, relaxation and amusement, scarce commodities in the 1870s outside of religious membership. The recorded minutes of Grange No. 41 (Greenwood Prairie), held by the Wabasha County Historical Society, illustrate the frequency and attention paid to social aspects of membership. Typical at Bear Valley Grange Hall, too, agricultural education, information, advice and encouragement were disseminated through lectures and tracts paid for with member dues. Discussions followed over potluck suppers in the hall. The goal of cooperative buying and selling of implements and other goods by the subordinate granges in the hope of saving middlemen's profits was an important offering of the grange movement. Many of these efforts, through over-enthusiasm and lack of good judgement proved to be failures. Partly for this and other reasons the grange went into a decline in Minnesota.

Two years after Oliver Kelley began his work in Minnesota, Mr. T. A. Thompson of Plainview, later National Grange Lecturer, began to organize the first subordinate granges in Wabasha County. In 1870 the first six were chartered including #41, #46, #50 (Bear Valley), #53, #54, and #56. By the end of 1871 another five were begun, and by the mid 1870s a total of eighteen had been chartered. The number of state subordinate granges peaked in 1874 at some 540 charters. The 1874 Andreas Illustrated Atlas of the State of Minnesota showed only two Wabasha County 'grange halls': #50 (Bear Valley) and #63.

During its brief existence in the 1870s, Bear Valley Grange Hall, one of the largest in the county, had over 100 members connected with it. By the 1880s it had dissolved. Subsequent building use as Chester Town Hall sustains this early remnant of the Grange.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"(Bear Valley) Grange has been organized". Wabasha (MN) County Herald, June 2, 1870.

Kelley, O. H. Origin and Progress of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry in the United States. Philadelphia: J. A. Wagoner, 1875.

Minnesota State Grange (list). (St. Paul): Minnesota Historical Society, (c. 1876).

History of Wabasha County. Chicago: H. H. Hill and Co., 1884.

Buck, S. J. The Granger Movement. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913.

History, State Grange of Minnesota. N.P., 1947.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.5

UTM References

A 15 542630 4906680
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies all of Auditor Lot 1 of the northwest quarter of the southeast quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 23 of Chester Township, Wabasha County, Minnesota.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire township lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Erpestad
 organization Independent Contractor date July 8, 1987
 street & number 2612 Humboldt Ave. S. telephone (612) 374-5510
 city or town Minneapolis state Minnesota zip code 55408