United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Nat. Register of Historic Places National Park Survice

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property		
historic name Webster Grange No. 436		
other names/site number Harmony House		
2. Location		
street & number 58 East Main Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town Webster	N/A	vicinity
state New York code NY county Monroe code 055	zip cod	e 14580
3. State/Federal Agency Certification		
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination request for determination of eligibility meet for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the proce requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _X_ meets does not meet the National Register Criteria be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide X_local	dural and	professional
Ruffled Reupont Signature of certifying official/Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	_	
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.		
Signature of commenting official Date	-	
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal C	Government	ti.
4. National Park Service Certification		
I hereby certify that this property is: determined eligible for the	National Re	gister
determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National	Register	
other (explain:) Garage Casan House Beautiful Garage Ga	16	

Webster Grange No. 436 Name of Property		Monroe County, NY County and State			
5. Classification					
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)	Category of Property (Check only one box.)	Number of Res (Do not include pre	sources within Proviously listed resources	operty in the count.)	
		Contributing	Noncontributin	ıg	
x private	x building(s)	1	0	buildings	
x public - Local	district	0	0	sites	
public - State	site	0	0	structures	
public - Federal	structure	0	0	objects	
	object	1	0	Total	
Name of related multiple pro (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of	operty listing a multiple property listing)		ntributing resource ntional Register	es previously	
N/A			0		
6. Function or Use					
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)		Current Functi (Enter categories fr			
SOCIAL/grange		SOCIAL/meeting hall			
Recreation & Culture/hall		RECREATION & CULTURE/ hall			
7. Description					
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)		Materials (Enter categories fr	om instructions.)		
Colonial Revival		foundation: b	rick		
		walls: wood, a	aluminum siding		
		roof: asphalt			

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(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Webster Grange No. 436 (Harmony House) is located on a 1/3-acre site at the northwest corner of East Main Street and Kircher Park, near the center of the village of Webster, at the eastern edge of the central business district. Webster is in the northwest portion of Monroe County, east of Irondequoit Bay and south of Lake Ontario. The building is sited on East Main Street, an east-to-west route that parallels SR 104. Like most grange buildings, it has a rectangular footprint, low-pitched hipped roof, and is two-stories tall above grade level at its primary (south) façade. The primary façade of this otherwise simple building is accentuated by its recessed barrel-vaulted entrance and prominent central oriel window; its longer east and west sides are more simply executed. It is the only building on its site; most of the rest of the site, which slopes downward to the north, is paved for parking. The interior of the building reflects the traditional uses by the grange with some minor modification by the Chorus of the Genesee, which acquired the building in 1974. The entrance opens into an auditorium space that retains its original ceiling and wall surfaces, wainscoting, door trim and ticket booth. The top floor of the building was originally used by the Grange and also retains much of its original fabric and layout, including door and window surrounds, ante rooms, toilet rooms, and stage/platform, which has been enclosed for storage space. Although the building is clad in aluminum siding, the wood clapboarding is extant and the interior is highly intact to its original use as a meeting space. The barrel vaulted entrance, curved parapet and Palladian window are seldom seen in grange design, especially in rural areas of New York State, making the Webster Grange No. 436 an unusual example of this building type.

Narrative Description

Webster Grange No. 436, now known as Harmony House, is located at 58 East Main Street, Webster (Monroe County), New York, one block east of the intersection of North Avenue and Main Street, which forms the village of Webster's principal intersection and center of the central business district. East Main Street west of the grange is lined by one- and two-story historic and neo-traditional commercial buildings; east of the grange, most buildings on East Main Street were built as two-story frame single-family houses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Situated on a corner lot, the building is set a few feet back from the sidewalk on the east and south sides of the building, with grass to the east of the building and grass and foundation shrubs south of the building. A parking lot along the north side of the building wraps around the northwest corner; south of the parking lot, a grassy area along the west side of the building slopes steeply upward to the East Main Street sidewalk.

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Exterior

Because the site slopes downward to the north, the building is two stories tall above grade at the front (south) and three stories tall above a partially exposed basement level at the rear. The building has a rectangular footprint and simple massing consisting of a rectangular, hip-roofed original building with a hip-roofed rear addition. The addition is easily distinguishable from the original building by its lower height (the addition roof is one full story below the original building's roofline); it also has a concrete block foundation, as opposed to the fieldstone foundation of the original building.

The building's notable exterior decorative features are on its primary (south) façade, which has a three-bay, symmetrical configuration. The center entrance consists of double doors (new in 2015) with sidelights and a half-round fanlight, all set within a barrel-vaulted recess whose arched surround is accentuated by bulls-eye blocks. The doors more closely match the original doors than a previous set. There is one one-over-one double-hung window to either side of the entrance. The second-floor center window, set in a slightly projecting bay embellished by scrolled brackets, panels, and pilasters, consists of a central fixed window with a half-round fanlight flanked by two one-over-one windows; these windows are all wood. To either side of the center projecting bay is one, one-over-one window, each with a half-round transom. A wide, windowless dormer with blank panels, pilasters, and an arched pediment tops the façade. In the pediment is a medallion with a barber pole and harp motif, bearing the letters S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A. (Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America).

The sides of the original building are similarly arranged, with evenly spaced twelve-over-one first-floor windows directly below four-over-one second-floor windows with arched transoms. The east side has one extra set of windows at the south end; the first-floor window matches other first-floor windows, but at the second floor in this location is a pair of wood one-over-one double-hung sash with no transom, the only such windows in the building (these light the original bathrooms). Almost all windows are replacement sash with simulated divided lights. The exceptions are wood windows at the front bay window, the paired one-over-one windows on the west side, and fixed basement windows. The northernmost openings on the west side, both at the first and second-floor level, originally contained window openings matching the rest, but now contain doors leading to fire escapes. The exterior of the rear addition is similarly simple, with evenly spaced six-over-one double-hung windows and one door on the east side. The building is clad in aluminum siding, which conceals the original clapboarding, original window and cornice trim, but it is otherwise similar in appearance to the original exterior cladding due to its similar reveal.

Interior

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For clarity, floor levels are identified by current use as follows: workshop level, which is the lowest level,

consisting of a full basement beneath the addition and a partially excavated basement beneath the original building; dining room level, which is partially below grade at the original building and fully above-grade at the addition, and contains the dining room, kitchen, and small meeting room; auditorium level, which is at street level on the Main Street side and contains the entry vestibule, auditorium, and backstage area; and rehearsal room level, which is the uppermost floor and contains the original grange meeting space, now a rehearsal room, associated anterooms, and storage space in the attic of the addition.

Workshop level

This is a utilitarian area used for mechanical equipment, storage, and workshop functions. It consists of two spaces: a full, high-ceilinged basement beneath the addition, with exposed concrete block walls, concrete floors, and exposed floor joists at the ceiling; and, a few steps up, a space beneath the kitchen that has stone walls and a raised wood floor.

Dining room level

Partially below grade, this level has a meeting room at the north end, kitchen, and dining room, with stairs to the upper floors located at the south end. The meeting room has wood-paneled walls (likely mid twentieth century), a carpeted floor, and dropped acoustical tile ceiling with fluorescent ceiling lights. There are two doors in the east wall, one of which leads to the stair hall, the other to a closet. Originally used as a meeting room for the Juvenile Grange, this room is now the main meeting space for the Webster Grange.

South of the meeting room is the kitchen, which is a rectangular space with commercial appliances and food preparation areas. It is separated from the adjacent dining room to the south by a partition wall with three arched pass-through spaces. The kitchen has a stamped metal ceiling, including metal decoration along the central ceiling beam, and a concrete floor.

The dining room occupies most of this level. It has a stamped metal ceiling, linoleum floor tiles, and center support beam running the length of the room supported by metal posts. At the south end of the room is a bar area, to the west of which are men's and women's restrooms; east of the bar is a staircase with a wood handrail leading up to the auditorium level.

Auditorium Level

The main entrance to the building leads to the auditorium level, the first fully above-ground level in the building. The main front doors lead into an entry hall, which has a fifteen-foot ceiling and original, unpainted

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wood trim, including wainscoting, door trim, and board ceiling. Double doors on the north wall, opposite the entrance, lead to the auditorium. Doors to the west lead to a space that originally housed the kitchen, which was removed in 1910; it now houses a coat room and storage area, with a door connecting to the auditorium. An original grange-era ticket booth is centered on the east wall of the hall, between the stairs that lead down to the basement, to the right (south) of the ticket booth, and up to the rehearsal room level, to the left (north).

North of the vestibule is the auditorium, the main space on this level. This room has a fifteen-foot ceiling and spans the entire width of the building. The auditorium has maple flooring and unpainted American chestnut trim, which includes wainscoting, window and door surrounds, ceiling beams (actually steel girders with wood veneer), and diagonally laid ceiling boards. This room remains highly intact to its original construction. At the north end of the auditorium is an elevated stage with a simple wood surround; an early or original painted curtain is stored above the proscenium arch. Matching doors to the left and right of the stage lead to narrow passages connecting to the ladies' restroom and a secondary exit (west side of the building, left of the stage) and to the men's restroom and (right of the stage); these passages also provide access to doors at the sides of the stage and to the backstage room directly behind the stage.

Rehearsal Room Level

The top floor of the building originally housed the meeting hall for the grange and associated anterooms. The staircase at the southeast corner of the building opens into a room originally known as the reception room, now a meeting and display space for the Chorus of the Genesee. This room is lit by the Palladian window described above, which occupies most of the south wall of the room. Unpainted wood trim includes bullseye door and window surrounds, baseboard, and plate rail. There is also a painted chair rail. The ceiling is a modern paneled ceiling system above a simple painted crown molding. The room has wall-to-wall carpeting over tongue and groove wood sub-flooring.

East of the reception room, next to the stairs, is a small room that was originally used as a committee meeting room and is now used as an office. This room has a plaster ceiling, modern shelving system, and a hexagonal pendant light fixture that appears historic. There are two doors on the west wall, each leading into a storage room with sheet linoleum flooring; each of these, in turn, has a door to a narrow toilet room. Each toilet room has a narrow wood window on its west wall. These rooms, described in a 1903 *Rural New Yorker* article that described the original layout of the building as "two retiring rooms, with toilet rooms," retain their original configuration and original trim, notably their tall door surrounds with bullseye corners.

The rehearsal room was originally the grange hall. Like the auditorium below, it spans the width of the building, and originally had a raised stage at the north end; this has been enclosed by a partial-height partition to create

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storage space. This room has unpainted wood trim at window and door surrounds, baseboards, and a chair rail. The crown molding is painted. The room has a decorative stamped metal ceiling and is lit by fluorescent ceiling light fixtures. With the exception of the partition at the north end, the room retains high integrity and continues to function as an open meeting space. The storage space in what was originally the raised stage for the grange hall is a utilitarian area, but contains a historic safe that is likely original. There is also access from this space to an additional storage area in the attic of the north addition.

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8. Sta	tement of Significance	
	cable National Register Criteria " in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.)
	onal Register listing.)	Social History
x A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Architecture
В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
x C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high	
	artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	Period of Significance 1899-1966
D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	Significant Dates
		1899, 1939, 1966
	ia Considerations (" in all the boxes that apply.)	Cignificant Bareau
Prope	rty is:	Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
A	Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	N/A
В	removed from its original location.	Cultural Affiliation
c	a birthplace or grave.	N/A
D	a cemetery.	
E	a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	Architect/Builder
F	a commemorative property.	W. C. Walker & F. H. Briggs, architects
G	less than 50 years old or achieving significance	

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Period of Significance (justification)

within the past 50 years.

The period begins with the construction of the building in 1899 and ends with 1966, signifying its continuous use by the Grange.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Webster Grange No. 436, also known as Harmony House, is historically and architecturally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of social history and Criterion C in architecture. For social history, the building is significant as the home of local grange chapter, one of the largest and most important local ritual-based organizations in a rural/agricultural community (the town and village of Webster). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Webster was primarily an agricultural community, the grange served an important role in bringing farm families together for education, entertainment, and social gatherings. The grange also served as an advocate for improvements to farmers' lives at the local, state, and national level. The Webster Grange is said to have been the largest grange in the country when its membership peaked at over 1,000 members. The building continues to function as the headquarters for the Webster Grange, now sharing the building with the Chorus of the Genesee. Under Criterion C, the Webster Grange is architecturally significant as exemplifying its type, as providing separate social and ritual spaces required by the national grange organization. Unlike most rural grange buildings, the Webster building had a more ornate façade, indicating its importance for the community. The building was recognized in state publications as a model for other organizations. Its design and layout remain virtually unchanged, and continue to reflect the values and activities of the grange.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Webster, New York: Overview of Town and Village History

The first European-American to make a permanent home in what is now the town of Webster was Caleb Lyon, who arrived in 1805. Settlement was slow at first in comparison to surrounding areas, with new residents arriving primarily from Vermont, New Hampshire, and eastern New York State at a slow, steady pace. The town of Webster was established in 1840; it was previously part of the town of Boyle, established in 1806, then Penfield, established from part of Boyle in 1810. By 1840, the town had 2,235 residents.

Webster's early residents were attracted by the town's excellent agricultural soil, which was sandy loam north of Ridge Road (an early road located on the natural ridge of Lake Ontario's prehistoric shoreline) and clay/clay loam south of Ridge Road. Conditions in Webster proved ideal for fruit production; other important early agricultural products included spring wheat, potatoes, livestock, and dairy products. The village of Webster was located at the juncture of Ridge Road and Webster Nine-Mile Point Road, significant historic east-west

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and north-south transportation corridors. The area was referred to as a village for several decades before its official incorporation in 1905, because it was the primary center for commerce and trade.

Webster was primarily an agricultural community throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, experiencing slow but steady growth from a population of 2,235 in 1840 to 3,976 in 1920. Suburban development began to intensify after the turn-of-the-twentieth century, when the Rochester Sodus Bay Trolley linked Webster with the city of Rochester. New neighborhoods were built in and around the village to accommodate commuters. The 1924 *Plat Book of Monroe County* shows the beginning of subdivision activity outside the village, with the establishment of small residential neighborhoods including Forest Lawn, Browncroft on the Lake, and Summit Beach along the Lake Ontario shore. The rest of the town outside the village still consisted of large farm lots with farmhouses dotting major roads.

After World War II, Rochester's population increasingly spread into Monroe County. Webster became a bedroom community with new auto-oriented subdivisions and commercial complexes developed on former farmland. From 1950 to 1960, the town's population exploded from 7,174 to 16,434, being the decade that saw the largest increase in population both in numbers and in rate of growth. The construction of a 1,000-acre industrial complex for the Xerox Corporation in the early 1960s both reflected and accelerated residential growth in the town. Since then, while the numbers have not been quite so dramatic, the population has continued to rise due to ongoing development of new housing. As of 2015, about eight percent of land in Webster was in agricultural use, mainly in the eastern and northern portions of town.¹

The National Grange

The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, commonly known simply as "The Grange," was organized in 1867. The effort to establish the organization was led by O.H. Kelley, a farmer from Minnesota who, while working as a clerk in the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1866, was assigned to assess the conditions of farms in the southern states restored to the Union after the Civil War. According to his description of the origins of the grange, during his travels in the south, he discovered that because he was a Mason, he was "cordially received" by his fellow Masons despite being from the north. As a result, he concluded "that politicians would never resolve peace in the country; if it came at all, it must be through fraternity." Kelley also realized that although important advances had been made in the field of scientific

¹ Eastern Agricultural District #6 Monroe County, New York, 2015 Agricultural District Review, prepared for the Monroe County Legislature by the Monroe County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. Available online at http://www2.monroecounty.gov/files/0%20E%2715%20REPORT.pdf.
² O.H. Kelley, Origins and Progress of The Order of the Patrons of Husbandry in the United States: A History from 1866 to 1873 (Philadelphia: J.A. Wagenseller, 1875; reprinted by the New York State Grange, 1987), 13-14.

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agriculture, most farmers were not adopting progressive methods; he sought a more effective and engaging method of disseminating information about modern techniques.

Over the following months, Kelley, working with a small number of like-minded people, developed the idea of a secret society, with rituals based on those of the Masons, specifically for farmers. Kelley believed the ceremonies and rituals associated with a secret order would attract members and help them form bonds. A degree system, by which members could advance through the ranks, would not only hold their interest but would be a way of demonstrating trustworthiness, which became important as the organization increased its focus on providing practical benefits (primarily insurance) to members. He envisioned a close partnership between the organization and the Department of Agriculture, which, in his concept, would send accomplished speakers on a lecture circuit to disseminate modern farming ideas via the local chapters of the organization.

When Kelley mentioned the idea of a secret society of agriculturists to his niece, she suggested full membership for women, an idea that was incorporated into the organization from the beginning, which contrasted with the exclusionary practices of most of the fraternal organizations of the period, such as the masons. The grange emphasized family values and the participation of entire families, with boys and girls eligible for full membership at age 15; in 1890 the national organization adopted a framework for juvenile grange chapters (later called junior grange) for children ages 5 to 14.

After several months of discussion and planning, the national organization of the Patrons of Husbandry was officially organized in November 1867. By then the organizers had settled on the name "grange" to describe the individual branches (as opposed to "lodge," used by the masons). The first local grange was established in Fredonia, New York, in 1868. During that year Kelley traveled the country encouraging the formation of local granges and state grange organizations; although he was not initially as successful as he expected in organizing new granges, he learned during his travels that farmers were less interested in the fraternal and educational aspects of the organization and more interested in the potential of a national organization to be a source of political and economic power, and to provide direct financial benefits to its members. He expanded his vision of the organization, arguing that each grange "is of itself a Board of Trade, and by the system of communication between Subordinate, State and National, they can market their produce independent of the Chambers of Commerce, Millers and Wool Growers Associations, which are gotten up to control the markets." This idea evolved into the establishment of farmers' cooperatives by which farmers ran their own stores and set their own prices.

⁴ Kelley, 113.

³ D. Sven Nordin, *Rich Harvest: A History of the Grange 1867-1900* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1974), 18.

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As it matured, the grange became seen as a movement rather than a fraternal organization and increasingly focused on advocacy for agricultural interests in areas such as transportation costs and policies, rural health care, and roads. The organization also developed an extensive insurance plan, an important consideration for farmers whose livelihoods were subject to uncertainty year-to-year due to weather and other factors. Some of these ideas were developed and tested in New York State; for example, the first large Grange Cooperative (the Union Grange Trade Association) was launched by the Monroe County council; the Farmers' and Traders Life Insurance Company also began in New York State in the early twentieth century.⁵

The first period of growth for the grange movement was during its first decade and was concentrated in the western and southern United States. Membership then declined after 1876, due to a variety of factors including the group's encouragement of temperance, opposition to secretive societies from some religious denominations, legislative resolution of some issues that had initially propelled membership growth, and financial overextension. A second phase of growth came in the last two decades of the nineteenth century that was focused in the northeastern United States and the eastern Midwest. It was during this period that the Webster Grange was established.

The Webster Grange

In 1880, a group of progressive farmers and their wives in Webster met to discuss community affairs and concluded that their town would benefit from the organization of a local grange. On May 6, 1880, they met in the basement of the Baptist Church with a County Grange Deputy, who officially organized the Webster Grange No. 436. The original 15 members initially met at various houses, then established a regular meeting house at the tenant house of one of the members. By 1890, the Webster Grange outgrew the tenant house and began meeting in the second floor of a building on Main Street in the village. The rapid growth of the group continued, reaching 100 members by October 1893, requiring that they move again in 1891 and 1894.

In December 1898, the members of the Webster Grange voted unanimously to build their own hall, with a budget of \$5,000. Construction was financed by a transfer of \$250 from the treasury to a new building fund, plus the sale of \$10 bonds to members, and an increase in annual dues from \$1.20 to \$2.00. The building committee hired the Rochester architectural firm of W. C. Walker & F. H. Briggs to design the new building; George Sage was the contractor. The site was purchased from Daniel B. Harris for \$450. In order to keep construction costs down, grange members provided volunteer labor and brought stone from their fields. Sand

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for the mortar was obtained on site. The cornerstone for the new building was laid on May 6, 1899 at a ceremony attended by some 800 people. Another gala event marked the dedication in December 1899. Both were attended by Elliott Norris, master of New York State Grange.

The first meeting in the new hall was held in January 1900. By this time Webster Grange's membership had grown to 322. The new hall had a dining room and kitchen on the ground floor, lodge room and associated chambers on the second floor, and a basement. A description of the hall was published in *The New York State Granger* in 1900:

The dimensions of this elegant hall is [*sic*] 26x82 feet. On the first floor is a hall 34x65 feet, with an entrance 10x15 feet. To the left of the entrance is the kitchen which is 12x15 feet; to the right is the ticket office, 9x12 feet; included in the hall is a large, commodious stage, equipped with beautifully painted scenery and large, convenient dressing rooms. The scenery was designed and painted by Frank Anderson.

Having ascended the stairway you find yourself in an ante room 16x25 feet, off from which are two reception rooms, each reception room having connected with it a toilet room. To the right is a committee room, then we enter the lodge room which is 34x55 feet and nicely equipped.

The building is situated on the ridge road and one has a fine view of old Lake Ontario from the north windows of the lodge room.

There are but few Grange halls in the state, owned by the Grange occupying them and when one is erected, especially as fine a one as the Webster hall, there is cause for rejoicing throughout Grangedom.⁶

In February 1903, the weekly newspaper *Rural New Yorker* invited subscribers to submit photographs and floor plans of either existing or imagined grange halls, with a prize of \$5 to be awarded for the best design.⁷ The winning building, announced in the June 20, 1903 issue, was that of the Webster Grange. A photograph of the building was published, along with sketch plans of all three floors and a description by Dufay Wright, Master of Webster Grange, providing additional details about the original design:

The picture on first page, Fig. 162, and diagrams shown in Fig. 163, show an ideal Grange hall, owned by Webster Grange. It is 82 feet long and 36 feet wide, two stories high. Lower hall is 15 feet between floor and ceiling; upper or Grange lodge room is 12 feet. You will see from the diagram that it has all of the necessary conveniences for a first-class hall; two retiring rooms, with toilet rooms, also a committee room at the right of reception room. The cost of this hall to build at the present price of material would not be less than \$6,000. The lower hall is fitted up

⁵ Leonard L. Allen, *History of New York State Grange* (Watertown, NY: Hungerford-Holbrook Co., 1934), 80, 107-109.

⁶ "A Good Example of Grange Prosperity," New York State Granger 1, No. 17 (31 January 1900).

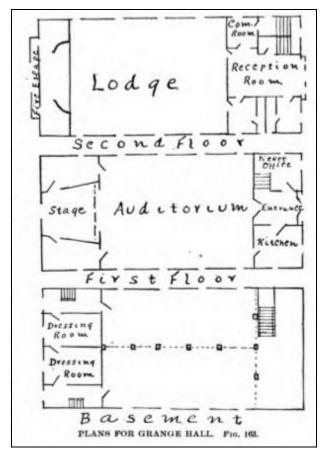
⁷ "Best Plan of a Grange Hall," *The Rural New-Yorker*, Vol LXII, No. 2767 (February 7, 1903).

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with a large stage with a 20-foot opening, and has six scenes and two drop curtains, one an advertising one that paid for the whole of the scenery and curtains; dressing rooms under stage. There are no posts in the lower hall; the upper floor is carried by four steel girders 23 inches high, leaving the lower hall clear from all posts, making an excellent floor for dancing, etc. The floor itself is hard maple. At the left on entering, as shown by the diagram, is a kitchen; on the right is a ticket office and store room. The hall has an immense cellar, and in it is located a steam boiler for heating the whole building, and it does its work to the satisfaction of all. There is also in the basement an acetylene gas machine which lights the whole building, with a large outside lamp in [the] front arch over the doors, also a cistern that holds about 150 barrels of water in the cellar. The roof is covered with old-style tin.⁸



Sketches of the Webster Grange published in Rural New Yorker, June 20, 1903

⁸ "The Prize-Winning Grange Hall," *The Rural New-Yorker*, Vol. LXII, No. 2786 (June 20, 1903).

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GRANGE HALL AT WEBSTER, N. Y. Fig. 162.

Photograph of the Webster Grange published in the Rural New Yorker.

The Webster Grange flourished during the first few decades of the twentieth century, growing from about 300 members around 1900 to over just 700 by 1917; by 1930 the organization had 1,046 members (in a town with a population of 4,778) and was said to have been the largest local grange in the world. Grange records and newspaper accounts from the period portrayed an active social organization that kept its members busy year-round, meeting at least twice a month for dinners, picnics, card parties, dances, minstrel shows, festivals, lectures, visits to and from other granges, and contests, in addition to regular ceremonies to confer degrees and honor long-time members. Members' birthdays and milestone wedding anniversaries were celebrated, as was each anniversary of the establishment of the Webster Grange. Members cooperated on entries into county fairs and pooled their resources to make charitable donations to local causes, particularly to support U.S. soldiers during wartime. When the hall was not in use by the membership, it was available for rental by other local organizations, providing a source of income for the grange; in this capacity it became an important

⁹ "Grange was world's largest," *Webster Herald,* 16 July 1997; and Bert Reisman, "The Woodhulls – Grangers for 60 Years," n.p., n.d. [1955], clipping provided by Webster Grange.

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venue in the town's social life, where non-grange members were welcome to enjoy movies, dinners, and dances put on by various organizations.

The Webster Grange participated in local, state, and national advocacy on behalf of farmers' interests. The Webster Grange was a key advocate for local Rural Free Delivery service, an issue championed by the Grange at the national level; the Webster chapter sent a petition to Congress in favor of Rural Free Delivery in 1896, and charter member Edwin Warner led efforts to explore the possibility of implementing the service in Webster. Rural Free Delivery service was established in Webster in 1900, providing an important communication improvement for residents who no longer had to travel to the post office pick up mail. The local chapter took positions on issues including local water service, rerouting of the Erie Canal, control of the local pheasant population, improvements to the Webster telephone service, funding for the agricultural college at Cornell, and fare rates on the trolley between Rochester and Webster. In 1913 the grange won a contest sponsored by the State Charities Aid Association by selling the most Christmas Seals; the prize was two months of the services of a public health nurse. A 1955 article noted, "Her work showed conclusively that public health nursing was needed in the country districts and since that time Webster has enjoyed the services of a Public Health Nurse."

A Juvenile Grange was organized in 1912 to offer programming to youth under the age of 14. This was the second Juvenile Grange established in New York state, after one on Long Island. The Junior Grange remained active until about the late 1960s.

Two notable grange members who played important roles in promoting the organization throughout its most active period and who were considered personally responsible for its rapid and sustained growth, were Robert and Elizabeth Woodhull. The Woodhulls had a chicken farm on Phillips Road, joining the Webster Grange around the time of their marriage in the early 1890s. They were among the grange's most active members for some 70 years, until their deaths in the early 1960s. Mr. and Mrs. Woodhull frequently hosted grange events at their home and were responsible for recruiting over 800 members. With no children of their own, they were known as "Aunt Lib" and "Uncle Bob" to their fellow grangers, and were described in a 1955 article as "the most tireless, dedicated and enthusiastic Grangers in Webster–possibly anywhere, for that matter–for more than 60 years." ¹²

¹⁰ "Thru the Years," Webster Herald, 22 September 1955.

^{11 &}quot;Jr. Grange Hits Fifty Year Mark," n.p., 18 April 1963. Clipping at the Webster Museum and Historical Society.

Bert Reisman, "The Woodhulls – Grangers for 60 Years," n.p., n.d. [1955], clipping provided by Webster Grange; see also L. B. Skeffington, "Grange Gets Warning on 'Cheap Food Policy," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 27 October 1955.

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Evolution of the Grange Hall

Eleven years after it was completed, the Webster Grange Hall was remodeled. Kitchen and dining functions were moved from the first floor to the basement, leaving the main hall to be used solely as an auditorium. Other improvements made in 1910-11 included upgrades to the heating plant, installation of a line to carry village water to the building, and installation of electric wiring and lights. The grange also acquired a lot behind the building around this time, and in 1911 grange members graded and seeded the lot. A committee investigated options for installing fire escapes in 1909; according to a history of the grange these were installed "at a later date," probably around the same time as other 1910-11 improvements.

The next major change to the grange building occurred in 1938-39. Webster Grange membership peaked in the 1930s, and in 1937 the membership voted to add a room for the use of the Juvenile Grange, which was established in 1912, as well as dressing rooms behind the stage. In 1938, fundraising for the project began, with most funds raised via the sale of \$10 bonds to members. The addition at the north end of the building was completed in 1939. Work done after the 1938-39 addition consisted mainly of repairs and minor upgrades; a history of the Webster Grange mentioned a new roof in 1952 and restrooms added off the dining room in 1963. Declining membership in the second half of the twentieth century made it impossible for the grange to invest in substantial new renovations to the building.

The Grange Hall Becomes Harmony House

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Webster's farms and orchards increasingly gave way to subdivisions, commercial development, and industrial facilities, including a 1,000-acre research and manufacturing complex built by Xerox just northeast of the village during the company's period of rapid growth. As Webster's farm population dwindled, so did membership in the grange; from a high of 1,046 in 1930 to about 650 by 1967, then fell to 159 by 1979.¹⁴

This decline reflected a general trend in grange membership at the national level; nationally, grange membership fell from a high of 858,105 members in 1952 to 539,163 in 1968, and to 160,000 members in 2005. The decline in membership was largely a result of "the changing population and diminished vitality of rural America" and specifically the decline in the number of farm families, especially in towns like Webster that

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¹³ Mae E. Ross, "The First 100 Years: Webster Grange #436," manuscript in the records of the Webster Grange, circa 1980, 34, 48.

¹⁴ Ross, 61.

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transformed from agricultural communities to bedroom suburbs with only a handful of active farmers. ¹⁵ Grange membership patterns were consistent with those seen in similar organizations like the masons and odd fellows, which also experienced declining, aging membership in the second half of the twentieth century as changing lifestyles and priorities made it difficult to recruit younger members to sustain the organizations.

By the early 1960s, the Webster Grange also faced increasing development pressure due to the building's prime location in the village. Starting in March 1963, Xerox rented the main floor of the building, first as a drafting center, then as a research testing center. Xerox vacated the building in 1967 and returned it to its previous condition. Also in the spring of 1963, grange members unanimously rejected a developer's offer to purchase the building for \$45,000 for construction of a motel. Members believed that the offer was both too low for the value of the building and insufficient to allow them to build suitable replacement quarters, and passed a resolution stating that the building was "not for sale at any price." Another development proposal in 1967 to build a shopping mall stretching along Main Street from North Avenue to Kircher Park also fell through.

In 1969, the grange began meeting in the junior room as result of the decline in active membership, a space designed to hold a couple of dozen members rather than the hundreds who had previously attended. Although rental of the hall for a weekend flea market brought in some income starting in 1971, by 1972, when the building was due to be painted, the grange could not afford the \$1,156 cost, and a committee began actively pursuing selling the building. After other potential opportunities fell through, the members accepted an offer in 1974 from the local chapter of the Society of the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Singing in America, Inc. (SPEBSQSA), a group devoted to preserving and promoting barbershop-style music. The local chapter, known as the Chorus of the Genesee, renamed the building Harmony House. Their purchase offer included provisions for the Grange to retain use of the junior room and the kitchen.

The Chorus of the Genesee continues to own the building, utilizing the former grange hall on the top floor as its main rehearsal space. Alterations since 1974 have included installation of aluminum siding over the original clapboard and replacement of the original wood windows with new, simulated divided-light windows (replaced first in the original building, circa 1990, then in the rear addition, circa 2010). The interior has remained almost entirely intact, with the exception of the partial enclosure of the original stage in the lodge room to create a storage space.

¹⁵ David H. Howard, *People Pride and Progress; 125 Years of the Grange in America* (Washington, D.C.: The National Grange, 1992), 237.

¹⁶ Ross, 48; and "Four New Faces of Xerox," *Webster Herald* 21 August 1963.

¹⁷ "Grange Nixes Sale for Motel," n.p., 11 April 1963, clipping in the records of the Webster Historical Society and Museum.

¹⁸ Joyce Wilson, "Grange Stands in Way of \$3 Million Mall," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 20 January 1967.

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Architecture of the Webster Grange

The Webster Grange is architecturally significant as a highly intact turn-of-the-century grange building that was considered a model of its type when it was built. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century granges were commonly built in accordance with a standard layout, including a kitchen and dining hall on a lower level (basement or ground floor), with the formal meeting space for the grange above. Reflecting the populist nature of the organization, architecture tended to be simple, with minimal formal exterior and interior detail. The layout of the meeting space, the most important space in a grange building, reflected the secretive and ritualistic nature of the organization. Non-members were not permitted to attend ritual meetings and members were not allowed to attend meetings above their "degree." Access to the meeting hall was controlled by the use of secret knocks to gain entry to the anteroom and to the hall, with a formal gatekeeper and steward assigned to manage entry.

As noted above, the design of the Webster Grange was acclaimed in both the *Rural New Yorker* and the *New York State Granger* as an exemplar of its type. The exterior design is closely associated with typical grange architecture, with a rectangular plan, front-gabled roof, architectural emphasis on the primary entrance in the gable end, and simple side walls with rows of regularly spaced windows. The primary façade is somewhat more elaborately ornamented than was common for grange halls, featuring an arched entry and projecting bay window accentuated by a dormer.

The interior of the Webster Grange was laid out in accordance with the standard grange plan, with a kitchen and auditorium, which doubled as a dining room and could be used by other organizations, at the level of the primary entrance, and lodge meeting space at the second floor. The Webster building also had a full basement, which was converted to the dining room and kitchen in 1910, allowing the auditorium to be used as a performance and meeting space with meals served in the separate dining room. The arrangement of anteroom, reception rooms, and hall on the top level was typical of grange spatial organization.

Another former grange building in Monroe County, the former Irondequoit Grange built in 1910 (now housing a music store) at 645 Titus Avenue, appears to have been modeled on the Webster Grange, with the same exterior dimensions (36' by 82') and a very similar façade featuring a central entrance and second-story central bay window with dormer above. Like the Webster Grange after its 1910 remodeling, the Irondequoit Grange had a kitchen and dining room on the basement level, assembly room with stage on the ground floor, and lodge room and anterooms on the top level. Unlike the Webster Grange, the Irondequoit Grange was built

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of concrete block. Given the many similarities, it is very likely that the Irondequoit building was closely modeled on the acclaimed design of the nearby Webster Grange.



Irondequoit Grange, photo from Thomas Cole Richens and Patricia S. Wayne, *Irondequoit* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 92. Note the strong similarity to the Webster Grange.

Integrity

The Webster Grange retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association, as well as integrity of materials in interior spaces. While the addition of aluminum siding over the original clapboard and replacement of most original windows detract from integrity of exterior materials, the replacement materials were chosen to closely match the appearance of the original materials, and do not significantly alter the building's historic character. The arched entrance, projecting second-floor bay window, and dormer retain their original design and most original materials, and remain the most prominent character-defining features of the composition.

The interior retains a remarkably high degree of integrity, including all elements of the original floor plan and of the 1937 addition. All major spaces and most secondary spaces retain most or all original materials, including wood floors, wainscoting, window and door trim, ceiling boards (auditorium level), and metal ceilings (dining room and rehearsal room levels). The original lodge and auditorium spaces, plus all their anterooms, survive in

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their original configurations, in a fully intact traditional grange layout. Although no longer owned by the Grange, the spaces themselves still retain strong integrity of feeling: they readily convey their historic uses as private lodge space, public event and performance space, and (after 1910), dining room and kitchen.

The building was used solely by the Webster Grange from 1899 to 1974, when it was sold to the Chorus of the Genesee. During this period, the Webster Grange served as a vital source of community cohesion for Webster's scattered farm families, who enjoyed a full program of social, educational, and ritualistic activities throughout the year. The building's original construction and compatible alterations made by the Grange in 1910 and 1939 accommodated heavy usage by a growing membership that peaked in the 1930s. Because the Chorus of the Genesee bought the building fewer than 50 years ago, their ownership and activities are yet to achieve significance as part of the history of the building, but may do so as time passes.

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Name of Property	

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"Thru the Years." Webster Herald, 22 September 1955.

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Wilson, Joyce. "Grange Stands in Way of \$3 Million Mall." Democrat and Chronicle, 20 January 1967.

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organization Bero Architecture PLLC			date 22 June 2016				
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city or towr	n <u>Rochester</u>			state N	1	zip code 14607	
e-mail	kcomeau@be	roarchitecture.com					
Additions	I Documentation						

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

• Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Pla NPS Form 10-900	ices Registration Form OMB No. 1024-0018	
Webster Grange No. 436 Name of Property	<u></u>	Monroe County, NY County and State
Name of Property		County and State
Continuation Sheets		
Additional items: (Check with the S	HPO or FPO for any additional items)	

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 2000x3000 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. For districts, key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Webster Grange No. 436

City or Vicinity: Webster

County: Monroe State: New York

Photographer: Bero Architecture PLLC

Date Photographed: 4 May 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

0001 of 0012: Façade of Webster Grange No. 436, looking north from East Main Street.

0002 of 0012: South and east elevations, view looking northwest.

0003 of 0012: East and north elevations, view looking southwest.

0004 of 0012: West elevation, view looking east.

0005 of 0012: Dining room and kitchen, view toward north end of building.

0006 of 0012: Main hall (auditorium level) looking toward stage (north end of building).

0007 of 0012: Main hall looking toward entrance (south end of building).

0008 of 0012: Close up view of stage.

city or town Webster

0009 of 0012: Ticket booth window in south end entrance lobby.

0010 of 0012: Stair to rehearsal level (south end of building).

0011 of 0012: Rehearsal room (former Grange meeting room), looking north.

0012 of 0012: Current Grange meeting room, north end/addition.

Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.) name Chorus of the Genesee street & number 58 E Main St telephone N/A

NY

state

zip code

14580

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Name of Property

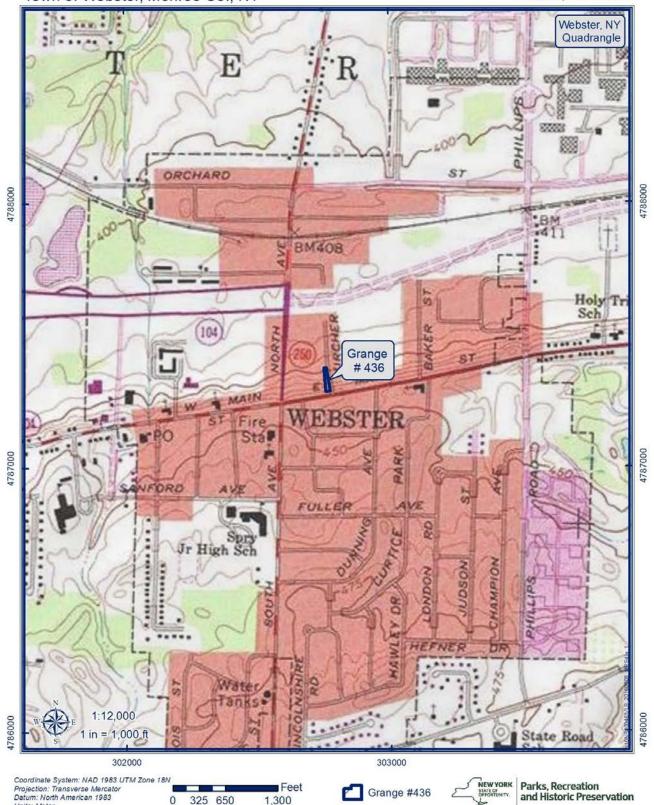
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Monroe County, NY

County and State

Webster Grange # 436 Town of Webster, Monroe Co., NY

58 East Main Street Webster, NY 14580



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Name of Property

Monroe County, NY

County and State



Name of Property

Monroe County, NY
County and State



FIELD SERVICES BUREAU • DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION STATE AND NATIONAL REGISTERS OF HISTORIC PLACES PROGRAM

STATEMENT OF OWNER SUPPORT

Before an individual nomination proposal will be reviewed or nominated, the owner(s) of record must sign and date the following statement:

Section of the following statement.
BOARD Momber 1, Brian A. Moore + Bldg Mgrz, am the owner of the property at (print or type owner name)
(street number and name, city, village or town, state of nominated property)
I support its consideration and inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.
Buin G. Moore 9/20/13 (signature and date)
Bran Moons Care of Rochester Chapter SPEBSOSA P.O. Box 333 Welster NY 14580

Revised 5/08

























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION
PROPERTY Webster Grange No. 436 NAME:
MULTIPLE NAME:
STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Monroe
DATE RECEIVED: 7/08/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/26/16 DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/10/16 DATE OF WEEKLY LIST: 7/26/16
REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000555
REASONS FOR REVIEW:
APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N
COMMENT WAIVER: N ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 8.22. [GDATE
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:
Entered in The National Rogister of Historic Places
RECOM./CRITERIA
REVIEWERDISCIPLINE
TELEPHONE DATE
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N
If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

ANDREW M. CUOMO Governor ROSE HARVEY Commissioner

RECEIVED 2280

JUL - 8 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places National Park Service

5 July 2016

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following nine nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Alton B. Parker Estate, Ulster County
Hepburn Library of Lisbon, St. Lawrence County
Benner-Foos-Ceparano Estate, Suffolk County
Fort Independence Historic District, Bronx County
Old Lowville Cemetery, Lewis County
Haxtun-Tower House, Dutchess County
Orator F. Woodward Cottage, Wyoming County
Webster Grange No. 436, Monroe County
Austin R. Conant House, Monroe County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank

National Register Coordinator

New York State Historic Preservation Office