



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name American River Grange Hall #172

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2720 Kilgore Road not for publication _____
 city or town Rancho Cordova vicinity X
 state California code CA county Sacramento code 067
 zip code 95670

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide, _____ locally. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Harriet Abeyta _____ 9/9/96
 Signature of certifying official Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
 State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 Signature of commenting or other official Date

 State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is: Elson H. Beall 10-10-90
 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): _____

Signature of Keeper Date
 of Action

=====

5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing

N/A

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Social</u>	Sub: <u>Meeting Hall</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Social</u>	Sub: <u>Meeting Hall</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century: Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation cast concrete block

roof asphalt shingle

walls wood

other wood

Narrative Description (See continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance
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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- 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.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY
AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance 1882-1946

Significant Dates 1882

Significant Person N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Rodman (Grange member)
Harvelson, Carl (carpenter and Grange member)

Narrative Statement of Significance (X See continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Bibliography. (X See continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: American River Grange Hall # 172

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 0.8

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>10</u>	<u>650270</u>	<u>4273693</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (X See continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (X See continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Gary Reinoehl
organization Sonoma State University date 5/17/96
street & number 9156 Linda Rio Drive telephone (916) 363-9156
city or town Sacramento state CA zip code 95826
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Additional Documentation
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name American River Grange #172
street & number 2720 Kilgore Road telephone (916) 363-1494
city or town Rancho Cordova state CA zip code 95670
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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate proper ties 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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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American River Grange Hall #172
Sacramento County, CA

Description

The American River Grange Hall is a two story, "T" shaped, Greek Revival building with an intersecting gabled roof. The wood sided building rests on a cast concrete block foundation with an asphalt shingle roof and a single metal chimney and vent apparent on the north end of the roof. The interior maintains most of the original features, a dining area and kitchen on the lower floor, and the main hall, surrounded by wood wainscot, on the second floor. The 1882 building is in the east end of Sacramento County. This part of the unincorporated Rancho Cordova area has changed from an agricultural area to a developing commercial area. The hall remains on the original open lot with a dirt parking area on its north. The property is in good condition with few alterations to the building.

The Grange Hall is located on Kilgore Road, about 450 feet south of its intersection with Folsom Boulevard.¹ Kinney High School is just north of the hall, although this is not the historic Kinney School of the late 1800s. Highway 50, a six lane highway, dominates the view to the northwest even though an open field is between the highway and the building. A new commercial building is south of the property, hidden by a row of trees. Although there is an open field across Kilgore Road, the area is a developing commercial area, with several new commercial buildings evident in the distance. The property has a few young trees growing in the back, but is mostly dirt or grass. The trees on the south side of the hall appear to be ten to twenty years old, but look much like the size of trees in a photograph of the hall from the last century. Between 1903 and 1924, horses were sheltered in sheds on the property. One outhouse is visible in the old photograph to the rear of the hall.

The cast concrete block foundation supports the original portion of the two story, "T" shaped, wooden building. A five-foot wide concrete foundation/wall has been added around the front of the building, with a narrow walk extending east to the sidewalk. A short ramp with unobtrusive aluminum rails has been

¹ Audrey Ridenour, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form," May, 1996.

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added to allow handicapped access. Three wooden steps have been added from a first floor door on the rear of the building and a flight of steps added from a second floor door on the south side of the building.

The front of the building is 24 feet wide and fifteen feet deep, with a five foot wide single story addition on the south side. The main part of the hall is 55 feet in length and 30 feet deep. The building is covered with a nine inch high, lapped horizontal wooden siding, painted white. For the most part, the building is very symmetrical.

The front of the "T" has a central door. The ground floor windows are equally spaced between the door and the corners of the front, the second floor windows located directly above the ground floor windows. An open attic vent is centered in the gabled end. A pole is anchored at the base of the vent and extends to the roof. A historic photograph shows this is a pole that originally extended through the roof and into the air at least ten feet. This was probably a flag pole.²

The north side of the "T" has one door on the ground floor, one foot east of the intersection of the main part of the building. The second floor has a single window, centered in this side.

A 1953 addition to the south side of the "T" obscures the original configuration of the ground floor. The shed addition, five feet by fifteen feet, contains the bathrooms, and appears to rest on the concrete sidewalk that surrounds the front of the building. The addition is covered by the same horizontal lapped siding as the rest of the building. Two small windows on the south side of the addition have been covered with plywood. A single second story window is centered in this side.

The front of the main part of the main building has one ground floor and one

² Ridenour.

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second floor window on each side. All of the windows are centered in the side. An air conditioner has been installed in each of the ground floor windows.

The north end of the building has a door on the east side and a window on the west side of the ground floor. The upper floor has two windows. All of the openings are centered between an imaginary vertical center line and the sides of the building. An open attic vent hole is centered in the gable end.

The rear of the building originally has three window on the ground floor and five windows on the second floor. The window on the north end of the ground floor has been replaced with a door. The door is 9.5 feet from the north corner of the back. The south window on the ground floor is the same distance from the south corner. The middle window is centered. The upper windows are evenly spaced along the back.

The arrangement of the openings in the south side of the main part of the building is symmetrical with the north end. The south end, however, originally had four windows. The western second floor window was probably replaced with a door in 1926 when a stairway was added as fire escape. The stairs were rebuilt in 1986.³ The lower east side window is covered with plywood and the stairs cover a portion of the opening. The upper east side window houses an evaporative cooler. An open attic vent hole is centered in the gable end.

All the windows in the building are 34" by 69", double hung with two-over-two sashes, except for the two 19" by 32" windows in the bathrooms. The windows on the lower floor have either been replaced or covered with plywood or are behind shutters. The shutters appear to be original including the metal security bars. All the doors in the building are 36" by 84". Both the front and back doors are obscured by security screen doors. The door in the north end of the main building is covered by plywood. The door in the north side of

³ Ridenour.

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the front of the building is a single panel door. The door in the south side of the building is four vertical panel door. The doors and windows have a simple flat 6" wide trim on the sides and top of the opening. There is a simple cap over the top piece of trim.

All the outside corners of the building are trimmed with end boards and have a small cap at the top. A 12" frieze board extends around the building, with a small cornice molding. The rafters are enclosed by a soffit board. The medium pitched roof is covered by asphalt shingle roofing. The roofing appears new. It is not possible to determine the roofing material from the old photograph.

The lower floor contains the kitchen and dining hall. The appliances and storage cabinets are along the north wall. The floor is covered with linoleum in the kitchen area. The major portion of the lower floor is open space filled with portable tables and chairs. Electric lights were added in the early 1920s, and the kitchen remodeled in 1929. A new hardwood floor was installed at this same time. A natural gas line was added in 1965. The kitchen was modernized again in 1994-95. The restrooms were added in 1953 and remodeled in 1989. A chair glide to assist the handicapped was installed adjacent to the stairs in 1988.⁴

The upper floor is still dominated by the large open space. A three foot high natural finished wooden wainscot covers the west south and most of the east wall. Anterooms have been added to the north end of the room, with two sets of sliding double doors closing off the rooms. Fluorescent lights are mounted on the ceiling, and grills for heating ducts can be seen on the upper part of this wall.

⁴ Ridenour.

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Statement of Significance

The American River Grange Hall #172 is significant under Criterion A for its association with the historic Order of Patrons of Husbandry (Grange) and use as a meeting hall and its influence in community formation between 1882 and 1946. The Grange began in Washington D.C. in 1867, and spread to California in 1872. The movement spread quickly, with the California State Grange forming in 1873, and 104 Subordinate Granges forming the same year.⁵ The American River Grange incorporated in January of 1873, meeting in the Fifteen Mile House until they built their own hall in 1882. The American River Grange Hall #172 has remained in continuous use as a Grange Hall since that time. Today, eight Granges are still active in Sacramento County. The American River Grange Hall #172 is the oldest continuously used Grange hall in the county. It is significant for its role in galvanizing a community in the Rancho Cordova area.

During the early 1870's, farmers joined the Grange Movement in droves. Their economic security was threatened by dropping crop prices, high labor costs, high costs of machinery, and the fluctuating prices of rail freight. Initially farmers believed the cooperative organization provided by the Grange would solve their economical instability. After a few failed economical ventures, it was apparent that the organization would not be a great financial boon. However, the Grange did provide a forum for discussion of common problems, educational lectures, and social events, as well as an escape from the isolation of their farms.

The Granger Movement continued to push its legislative agenda, fighting monopolies, working for tax relief for farmers, and establishing rural mail delivery and a parcel post system. The Grange has always worked to improve the social, economical, intellectual, and political lives of its members and community.

⁵ Clarke Chambers, California Farm Organizations. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), p. 9.

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The American River Grange formed when the movement was rapidly growing in California. Thirteen other Granges incorporated in Sacramento County between 1873 and 1877. For the first nine years, the American River Grange rented the hall in the Fifteen Mile House, originally a Pony Express stop, from one of their members. In 1882, another member, James Cornell donated a piece of property to the Grange, with the stipulation that a hall valued at \$1000 would be built within five months. Through donated materials and the labor of the members, the hall was completed.

Membership grew from the original 30 members to 47 members by 1889. The regular meetings, debates, dances, parties, and community events continued to draw the farmers together. The grange not only had an organization that pulled people together, but they also had the hall that could be used by other community groups. Occasionally, the Grange would donate the use of the hall for an event. In addition, the Grange allowed the Kinney School to use their horse sheds when school was in session. The hall is still used by the Masons and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The Rancho Cordova area remained an agricultural area until suburban growth began to spread out from Sacramento. The supporting commercial development for the suburban community has encroached on this rural scene in the last forty years. Still, the American River Grange continues to be a community oriented organization, providing services for children and adults.

The period of significance for this building is 1882 through 1946, the arbitrary fifty year criterion. During this entire period, the Grange was the organization that bound the sparsely settled agricultural area together, The Grange Hall is the physical remains of the influence this organization had on the area. Although the setting is diminished, the integrity of design, materials, location, workmanship, feeling, and association is very good. The outside of the building appears as it did during the period of significance, and the interior still maintains the large open rooms on both floors. This is the oldest Grange Hall in Sacramento County, and is an excellent example of Grange Halls.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

Numerous factors in the latter part of the nineteenth century placed many farmers in such a serious economic bind that it led to a period of farmer protest. This protest period was characterized by the formation of numerous farmer organizations, and the alliance of some farmer's organizations with political movements. The National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry (Grange) was one of the first such farmer's organizations, incorporating in 1867. It grew quickly in the 1870s, and again in the 1930s, when economic times became difficult. The local organization, the Subordinate Grange, is the foundation of the Grange. Local members meet and discuss farming issues that are then proffered to the Pamona Grange, or are directly proposed at the State Grange Convention. The State Grange presents agricultural information and farmer's issues to state legislators and, in turn, takes its issues forward to the National Grange Convention. The National Grange maintains a headquarters in Washington D.C., where it provides agricultural information and relays farmer's issues to the legislators. The Grange differed from many of the other organizations in that it was non partisan, chartered as a fraternal organization, emphasizing social, educational, and cooperative activities. As part of their cooperative functions, they built meeting halls, schools, grain elevators, and other types of buildings. Grange halls became the focal point of local activities, and held the membership together. Many of the local Grange Halls, such as the American River Grange Hall with an active Grange organization, remain as physical symbols of the Grange movement.

FARMER PROTEST

The latter part of the nineteenth century was a transition time for farming. More and more land was being developed for farming. Competition heightened as railroads expanded and crops were shipped more easily and sold to distant markets. Rail freight prices were inconsistent, frustrating farmers. Sometimes it was cheaper to ship to distant points than a neighboring town. Farmers complained that shipping costs fluctuated, reducing their profit margins from little to nothing. Farmers blamed the high prices and the erratic prices on the monopolistic nature of the railways and they worked vigorously to see that changed.⁶

Along with the high freight costs, labor costs increased for farmers because they had to compete with higher wages paid in factories. High labor costs were somewhat offset by reduced dependence on labor and the increased

⁶ Solon Buck, The Granger Movement. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1913), pp. 9-19.

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mechanization of farming. However, equipment prices were high, requiring the average farmer to go into debt to buy the equipment. Combining these factors, with high transportation fees and high interest rates, the cost of growing a crop and getting it to market was escalating. When crop prices dropped in the late 1860s and early 1870s, the fragile economic stability of farmers became threatened with collapse.⁷

In response, local farmers formed clubs and other organizations, banning together to find new ways to deal with the rail monopolies and erratic transportation rates. As a group, they hoped to find a way to purchase farm equipment at lower rates. Farmers complained that they were paying inordinate prices, blaming railroads and other middlemen as the culprits responsible for indiscriminate rates. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the numerous farm organizations, and new political parties, tried to combat capitalist control and exploitation.⁸

In an effort to have some control, farmer organizations tried several tactics. They united in cooperative ventures, pushed for regulations to relieve their economic burden, and allied with political parties, but relief was slow in coming. Many of the cooperative ventures were unsuccessful, regulations met with little success, and alliances with political parties frequently splintered groups.⁹

The National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union of the South was one of the largest cooperatives. Although their constitution is very much like the Grange's, they frequently made lengthy lists of demands. Corporations, merchants, and the government were unresponsive to their complaints. As a consequence, by 1890, they actively supported and conducted political campaigns, even though they had originally avoided partisan politics. They were so successful in electing numerous candidates that they began to be absorbed into the reform movement. The Populist Party drew in many of the alliance members, and were, in turn, assimilated into the Democratic Party by the elections of 1896.¹⁰

⁷ Buck, 27-34; Vernon Carstensen, Farmer Discontent, 1865-1900. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974), pp. 2-7, 14; Lowell K. Dyson, Farmers' Organizations (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 145-146, 233-234; Paul W. Gates, The Farmer's Age: Agriculture, 1815-1860 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. 277-279, 283-285.

⁸ At least ten major farm organizations formed between 1867 and 1888. The Populist Party and the Greenback Party were part of the farmer protest movement. Carstensen, p. 14; Dyson, Appendix 3; Irwin Unger, The Greenback Era. (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 4.

⁹ Carstensen, pp. 14-15, 69.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 69-70, 72-78.

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CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE

As an industry, agriculture in California was stimulated by the influx of people during the gold rush. The quickly growing towns and cities provided eager markets for farm products. As mining declined, many of the miners shifted to agriculture to maintain a livelihood.¹¹ Nearly nineteen thousand farms, and twenty thousand farmers, were recorded in the 1860 census, an increase of 1200% from the fifteen hundred farmers recorded in the 1850 census.¹²

Wheat farming grew rapidly in the late 1860s, and by 1870, wheat production neared seventeen million bushels, a surplus that allowed export.¹³ California remained a major wheat producer until 1900.¹⁴ Increased mechanization allowed for increased growth in the size of the farms, leading to the formation of "Bonanza Farms." These large farms began to monopolize wheat production as railroads began to serve the central valley farms.¹⁵

Orchards, vineyards, and other crops began to expand in the late 1850s, continuing into the early 1870s. In 1859, California produced \$754,236 in orchard products, and \$1,161,855 in garden products.¹⁶ When grain prices dropped in the early 1870s, these crops rose in importance. The development of the refrigerator railway car, and expansion of the canning and drying industry, transformed California's agricultural businesses. Fresh produce could be shipped to the people in the eastern markets. The fruit and vegetable crops continued to gain importance throughout the late nineteenth century, playing a significant role in the agricultural economy of the early twentieth century.¹⁷

¹¹ Kenneth S. Moore, Jr., "Fate of the California Gold Rush Miner, 1848-1870" (Masters Thesis, Sacramento State College, 1965), p. 38-39.

¹² Ibid.; Gates, p.272-273.

¹³ Richard Allen Eigenheer, "Early Perceptions of Agricultural Resources in the Central Valley of California," (PhD. Dissertation, University of California Davis, 1976), p. 298; Lawrence J. Jelinek, Harvest Empire, A History of California Agriculture (San Francisco: Boyd & Fraser Publishing Company, 1979), p. 33.

¹⁴ Jelinek, pp. 39-40.

¹⁵ Carey McWilliams, Factories in the Field (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Press, 1971), pp. 49-53.

¹⁶ Gates, p. 270.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 49; Jelinek, p.49; McWilliams, pp. 59-63.

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The shift from wheat to fruits and vegetables also meant a shift in water management. These new crops depended upon irrigation to survive. The irrigated land produced more product per acre, so that the average size of farms became slightly smaller, although large farms tended to stay the same size. The problems accompanying this transition from grains to fruits included the cost of irrigation, an increased need for labor and it's high costs, and the cost of transporting the product to market.¹⁸

Effects of Railroad Transportation

The rapid transport of fruits by rail was a boon to the producers, but they paid a high price for its benefits. The cost of transporting their products to market by railroad fluctuated considerably because of monopolization. The owners of the Central Pacific railroad began their domination of the California rail lines as early as the 1860s. While the transcontinental railroad was being constructed, the Central Pacific was also negotiating for the purchase of waterfront properties to connect their railroad with port facilities. The Central Pacific did not stop with their efforts to control access to the waterfront. They also bought out the development company for the California and Oregon Railroad and began construction on its northern line. By 1870, they had finished plans to construct a southern line through the San Joaquin Valley and their monopolization of California transportation was well on its way.¹⁹

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 not only allowed the possibility of shipping products out of California, but also allowed products to be shipped into California. This increased transport of products into California produced a glut on the market, precipitating a drop in prices. This shift in prices began an adjustment in California's economy. Artificially high land prices, driven up by speculation, also began to drop.²⁰

The change in prices of land and products was the advent of uncertain economic times. The national depression of the 1870s kept prices unstable and the economic situation in California paralleled that of the nation.

In the 1880s, California's agricultural exports had increased, but the harvest of a single crop would mean the market was flooded, forcing prices down. Farmers sometimes found their crops sold at an East Coast market at NPS

¹⁸ McWilliams, pp. 62-65.

¹⁹ James J. Rawls and Walton Bean, California: An Interpretive History (San Francisco: McGraw Hill, Inc., 1993) pp. 158-168.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 165.

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such a low price that their shipping costs were not covered. The volatile markets continued to leave farmers with little economic security.²¹

THE PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY

The National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry (Grange) was one of the earliest farm organizations. Oliver Kelley, a well-educated Minnesota farmer conceived of a farm organization whose membership would treat each other with fraternal respect, overcome sectional differences, and work for advancement of farming. Kelley's niece, Caroline Hall, provided many ideas for the organization, including equal membership for men and women. Oliver Kelley, with several of his friends, founded the National Grange in 1867.²²

The purpose of the Grange differed from most of the other organizations, and was incorporated as a fraternal, social, and cooperative organization. The organization is oriented around the idea of cooperation and education for "mutual protection and advancement," opposing the "tyranny of monopolies" and "excessive salaries, high rates of interest, and exorbitant profits in trade". Although the 1874, "Declaration of Purpose of the National Grange" promotes farming, it suggests that it is for the betterment of society as a whole. It states, "Faithful adherence to these principles will insure our mental, moral, social, and material advancement."²³

Initially, the primary function of the National Grange was the formation of local Granges. Kelley worked to form local Granges without much success for the first few years. With the worsening economic conditions, Kelley began to find many followers. Membership grew quickly in the early 1870s, boasting roughly 800,000 members by 1875.²⁴ After several failed economic ventures, the Grange lost membership, hitting a low in 1889. Membership gradually grew from 106,782 members 1889, to 745,096 members in 1946.²⁵

The Grange has always promoted the interests of the small farmer. Beginning with the depression of 1873, the Grange contributed funds to financially depressed areas. In the mid 1870s, it worked with legislators to establish a

²¹ Rawls and Bean, p. 190; McWilliams, pp. 63-64.

²² Buck, pp. 40-42.

²³ Charles Gardner, The Grange - Friend of the Farmer. (New York: J. J. Little & Ives Company, 1949), pp. 517-519.

²⁴ Buck, (758,767 members) table between pages 58 and 59; Gardner, (858,050 members) p. 497.

²⁵ Gardner, p. 497.

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Bureau of Commerce, and to elevate the head of the Bureau of Agriculture to a Cabinet level position. During the early 1880s, the Grange emphasized educational lectures and greater community service. Near the end of the century, it promoted the reduction of the tax burden on farmers, rural mail delivery, and the creation of the Postal Savings Bank. The Grange also tried to persuade the Department of Agriculture during the early 1900s to open foreign markets to agricultural products. It moved to include the teaching of agriculture in public schools, to have equal tariffs, and to create a Parcel Post System. It steadfastly opposed monopolies and the growing power of trusts. During the Great Depression, the Grange continued to fight for the lessening of taxes for the farmer. The Grange actively supported the adoption of a graduated land tax, the Federal Farm Loan System, the Federal Social Security System, Unemployment Insurance, and Workmen's Compensation.²⁶

The California State Grange

The State Grange, organized in 1873,²⁷ still functions today as a fraternal and cooperative organization. Its priorities included, "the establishment of Co-operative systems of trade"; "establishment of Banks"; "purchase of farming implements, equipment, and sacks"; sale of grain and other farm products at highest value, direct shipments, and storage at lowest rates; "establishing of Grange Stores"; "substitution of the cash for the credit system"; and "introduction of shipment in bulk". It would accomplish these goals through legislation, as well as the cooperative work of the Grange. They supported the reduction of fares for railroad freight, reduction of port charges, and coordination with ship owners for timely shipment of the farmer's freight.²⁸

The Grange grew rapidly, with over 15,000 members by 1875. In the next five years, membership dropped almost as fast as it had grown, losing about 14,000 members. Between 1880 and 1931, the grange membership slowly increased. The membership rose dramatically between 1930 and 1938, and then the increase slowed to several hundred new members each year. Membership grew quickly in the past World War II years. These fluctuations coincide with economic recessions, depressions, and booms, significant times of major social and political change.²⁹

²⁶ Gardner, pp. 46, 57, 61-68, 82-83.

²⁷ Clarke Chambers, California Farm Organizations. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), p. 9; Gardner, p. 44.

²⁸ Chambers, pp. 10-11; California State Grange, "Journals of the Proceedings of the Annual Sessions". pp. 10-11 (1873), transcribed by Naomi Fletcher.

²⁹ Chambers, p. 205; Edwin Koster, "Grange History," n.d., California State Grange, Sacramento, CA, pp. 25-27.

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Cooperative Ventures and Legislative Agenda

The California Grange was very active in its first few years. It established cooperative stores, the Grangers' Bank of California, the California Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and the Granger's Business Association. It pursued legislation regulating railroad pricing. The Grange sought an investigation of the state universities, resulting in the exposure of a lack of agricultural teaching, and the mismanagement of funds. It made a failed attempt to escape the monopoly of wheat purchasers by hiring Morgan's Sons as their the shipping agent in 1873.³⁰

The loss in members after 1875 did not deter the Grange from furthering its purposes. At the annual meeting in 1878, the delegates drafted a list of reforms, including equal suffrage, that were presented for incorporation into the proposed new constitution.³¹ The Grange also pushed for reform of the railroad monopoly and managed to influence the constitutional convention to include a railroad commission in their 1878 constitution.³²

Between 1930 and 1938, the California State Grange became very politically active again. The California Grange News (CGN) started in 1932, as an independent venture. Although the programs advocated in the CGN were more liberal than the policies of the grange, it was an effective tool of communication among the members.³³

The grange supported relief efforts during the Depression, but wanted certain restrictions. It wanted relief to be given in kind (not cash), as well as relief being denied to workers that quit their jobs voluntarily or refused to work for a reasonable wage. It believed that work should be more attractive than relief, and that the relief agency should work with employers to maximize employment opportunities. They opposed laws regulating union organizers at the same time as they opposed the unionization of farm workers. They proposed mediation for settling strikes, and were opposed to the use of violence or retaliation. The grange supported a graduated income tax, a limited sales in 1932, and the Riley-Stewart Plan for tax revision in 1933.³⁴

³⁰ Buck, pp. 197-198, 250-251, 264, 271-272, 291-292; D. Sven Nord'n, Rich Harvest: A History of the Grange, 1867-1900. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1974), p.163; Koster, p 4-5.

³¹ Donald Marti, Women of the Grange. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), p. 41.

³² Chambers, pp. 11-13.

³³ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 66-69, 86-89, 93, 111, 116-120, 123, and 128-132.

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The grange fought passage of the Proration Act. The act required market control by groups of farmers to prevent over-production, and the accompanying unprofitable drop in price. After the Proration Act passed, the grange continued their efforts to repeal, or amend, the act. In 1939, they succeeded with an amendment that changed several significant parts of the Act, believing that these changes supported the small farmers rather than the large corporate farms.³⁵

The Grange embraced public ownership of the California Valley Project (CVP). They strongly believed private ownership would cause a monopolization of water and power, and would not waiver in their stance. When the bill authorizing construction of the CVP passed, it contained provisions for power to be sold to private companies only. With support by the Grange, an amendment passed which gave preference to sell power to state and non-profit agencies, to build public power lines from Kennett Dam to the Sacramento delta, and to assure public access to water and power in the future.³⁶

Education

From the beginning, the California State Grange promoted agricultural education. Members of the education and labor committee endorsed vocational training in schools, including the universities.³⁷ The Grange adopted a feasibility plan for providing inexpensive state printed textbooks for schools. The state adopted the Grange plan and printed textbooks that were sold at cost. The Grange also established their own schools and did not let up on their initial efforts to improve the university system. About twenty years after exposing the inadequacies in the state university, it requested the regents to appoint a full time expert as an instructor. At their next meeting, the regents accepted the proposal and appointed a professor.³⁸

³⁵ Chambers, pp. 133-145.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 155-157.

³⁷ Marti, pp. 82-83.

³⁸ Nordin, pp. 48, 56, 99.

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Women's Rights

The Grange is the first secret order that allowed women to be full members.³⁹ A couple of years ahead of other state granges, the California State Grange had ruled in 1873, that all members were eligible for all offices, clarifying the rights of the members. It remained a leader in the movement for equality for women. In 1876, Jeanne Carr ran for the position of Lecturer for the California State Grange, the first woman to run for a working office. Although she was not elected, she remained an important figure in the Grange, holding the offices of Chaplain in 1877, and Lecturer in 1879. Carr spoke for equal suffrage before a committee of the state constitutional convention as a member of the grange delegation. In 1878, the National Ranch Grange, in National City, elected Flora Kimball to the position of Master. She was the first woman to hold the office in California, and one of the first in the nation.⁴⁰

Subordinate Grange Halls

Several authors make the point that the political influence of the Grange was an important force during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. However, the social aspects of the organization were equally as important. Chambers notes, "For many farmers, especially in isolated rural areas, the Grange was the center of social and educational community life."⁴¹ The Grange not only brought farmers together at the local level, but provided a state and national connection for the individual members.

Social gatherings of the members followed the meetings to unite farmers in an amiable atmosphere. The Grange provided rural families with a meeting ground for discussion, education, refreshment, and friendship. The local Grange Hall was a place where new friends were made, and members worked together on their mutual interests. The construction of the membership hall represented a major commitment by the members. Time, energy, and money were required. Their mutual sacrifice, and their efforts to complete the hall, helped unify the members. The social relationships were continually reinforced. Nordin commented on the tight bond between members, saying that the "best evidence of the effectiveness of the Grange as a socializing institution was the statements

³⁹ Buck, p. 281.

⁴⁰ Marti, pp. 25, 41-42, 59, 110-111.

⁴¹ Chambers, p. 17.

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made in behalf of expired brothers and sisters at subordinate, state, and national sessions by friends of the deceased."⁴²

Being a family oriented organization was a foundational premise of the Grange. Children were not only encouraged to participate, but the Grange had its own juvenile branch, and sponsored other youth organizations.⁴³ The California Grange was one of the few states that established primary granges for the "entertainment and instruction of children of Patrons."⁴⁴ This exemplifies the member's commitment to their community, and their children, not only by establishing these Grange schools, but by their continuing effort to promote agricultural education through all levels of the public education system.⁴⁵

Local Grange meetings always included a social hour and meals were a major feature of the gathering. There were Grange fund raisers and anniversary celebrations. Privately owned Grange halls could be rented for private or civic events, and the rent was sometimes donated to help support friends and neighbors in need.⁴⁶

⁴² Nordin, pp. 110-115.

⁴³ Koster, pp. 6-7, 9.

⁴⁴ Buck, p. 291; Nordin, p. 48.

⁴⁵ Nordin, p. 99.

⁴⁶ Audrey Ridenour, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the American River Grange Hall #172," March, 1996, Office of Historic Preservation, Sacramento, CA.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Sacramento County Assessors office recorded this property Parcel No. 072 221 006 0000. The land was described by a title insurance company in 1968 as 163 feet in length on the north, by 118 feet on the west, 144 feet on the south, and 144 feet on the east (fronting on Kilgore Road).

Boundary Justification

The property boundary is the same as the land given to the Grange in 1882 by James Cornell. The land is much as was pictured in an early photograph of the Grange Hall. Since the hall and the land are historically linked, the boundary should be the same as Parcel No. 072 221 006 0000. These are the boundaries historically associated with the property.

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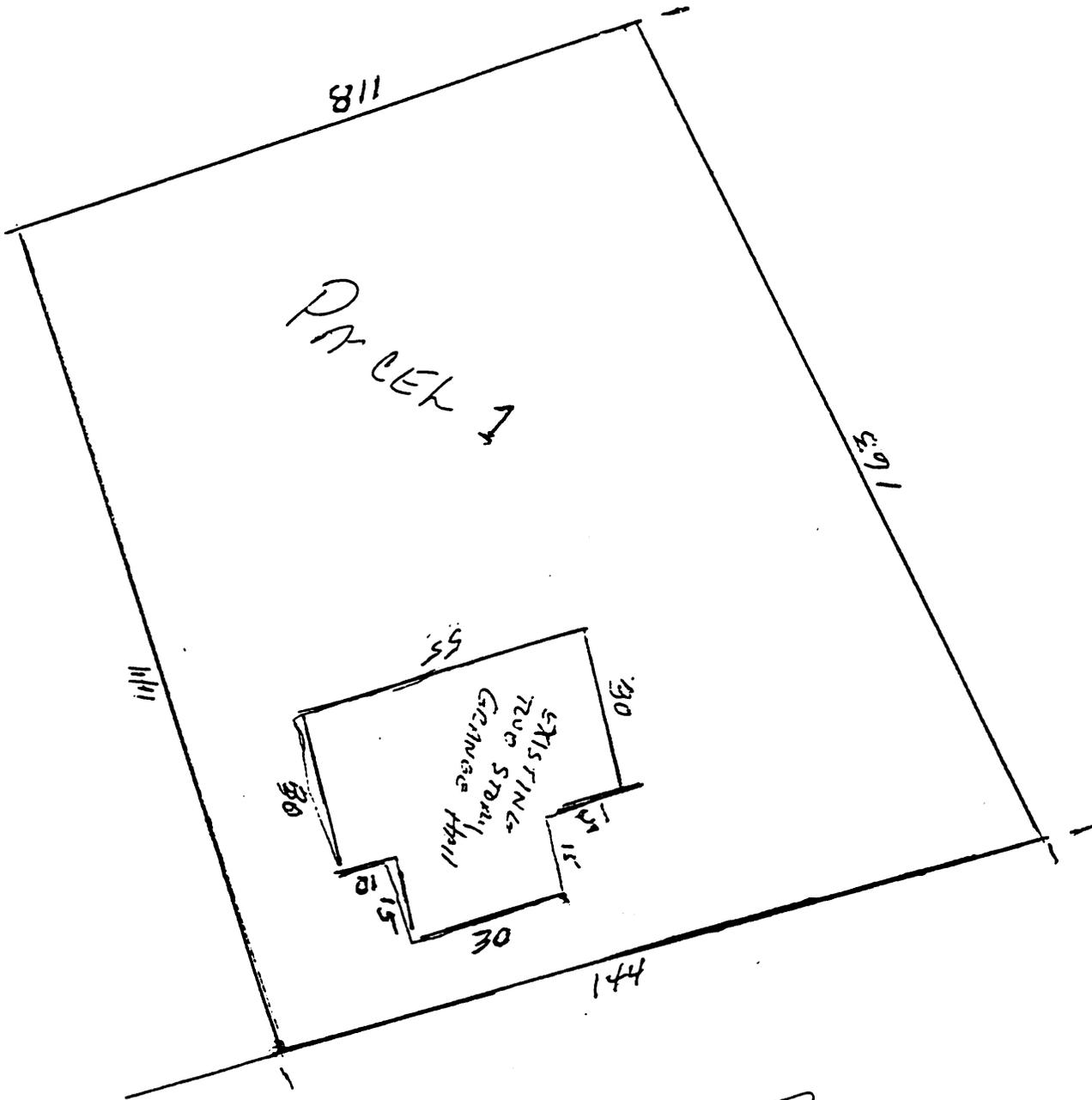
American River Grange #172
Sacramento Co., CA

Photo information

Photos by Audrey Ridenour, 1996 (except historic)
Negatives: 3367 Polaris Drive, Sacramento, CA 95827-2962

Views on backs of photos. Total of 8 photos

DEFICIENCY. TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP
AMERICAN RIVER RANGE #172
PORTION OF RECORD OF SURVEY RECORD OF
SURVEY KINNEY SCHOOL SITE AND ADJACENT
LANDS LOCATED IN RANCHO RIO DE LOS
AMERICANOS BOOK 13 OF SURVEYS PAGE 33



PARCEL No. 072-221 04
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