

Permanent Perry Valley Grange Historical Marker Dedicated at Fairgrounds

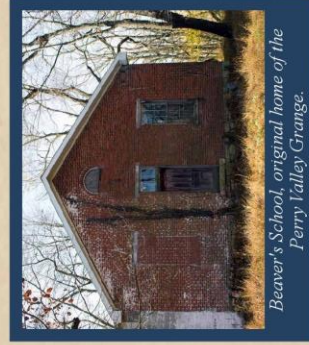


Perry Valley Grange #1804 was organized in July, 1919, with 86 charter members, primarily rural residents from Greenwood and Liverpool Townships. As part of its 100th anniversary observance during 2019, the Grange purchased this permanent historical marker, installed beside the stage at the Perry County Fairgrounds and dedicated at a brief ceremony held during the fair. This site was selected because of the Grange's long-time involvement in the fair, which included providing the initial funding in 1980 to build the fair stage and more recently a \$10,000 grant for water and sewage installation. Arrangements for the marker were done in cooperation with the Fair Board and the Perry County Bicentennial Commission which is promoting the installation of such markers throughout the area as Perry County moves toward its 200th anniversary in 2020. Participating in the dedication were (left to right): Perry Valley Grange members Doug Bonsall, Cathy Morrison, Carl Landis, Linda Byers and Renee Hetrick; Bicentennial Commission representative Frank Campbell and State Grange President Wayne Campbell. A close-up of the marker is shown on the next page.

THE PERRY VALLEY GRANGE #1804

Ongoing Service to the Community

In 1866, the U.S. Department of Agriculture sent Oliver Hudson Kelley, regarded as the father of the Grange, to survey farm conditions of the South following the Civil War. He envisioned a fraternal organization for farmers that would heal scars caused by the war and improve the economic and social position of rural populations. With the support of six other men, the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry, better known as the Grange, became a reality in 1867. It was the first organization of its kind to admit women on an equal basis with men. Within a few years, nearly a million Grange members became a strong force against railroad monopolies and advocated for rural free mail delivery, public education and rural electrification.



The Grange spark came to Pennsylvania in 1871 and to Perry County in 1874. Since then, 26 Granges, many of which later disbanded or consolidated, were formed to serve all parts of the county.

Perry Valley Grange #1804, serving Greenwood & Liverpool Townships, was organized July 29, 1919 in Beaver's School near Millerstown. The Grange met in various locations before building a large hall in 1988 at the

intersection of West Juniata Parkway & Owl Hollow Road, Millerstown, where it developed a fine reputation for catered meals and community service work. Recent major projects have included:

- *Perry County Fair capital improvements, including construction of the covered stage*
- *Fort Hunter Park historical permanent signage*
- *Elementary school Ag Day*
- *Financial/volunteer support for Newport Public Library summer reading program*
- *Free "Concerts in the (Millerstown) Park"*

Since 2014, the Perry Valley Grange has met in the Millerstown Community Park building and has continued to support such Grange initiatives as protecting the livelihood of farmers through efficient agricultural legislation/regulation and advocating the build-out of affordable access to high-speed broadband. The

Grange also promotes affordable, sustainable health care and high-quality education in rural schools.



Photographs courtesy of private collectors.



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Sponsored by: The Perry Valley Grange #1804.

