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Curtis Holbert

Western Oregon University, cholbert10@wou.edu

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**The Farmers' Tool: Changing Values of Rural Oregon
Granges in Benton County:
1938 - 1948**

by
Curtis Holbert

Senior Seminar: HST 499
Professor David Doellinger
Western Oregon University
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Readers
Primary Reader: Dr. Max Geier
Secondary Reader: Dr. John Rector

Introduction

“How may I speak with Urban voice, when I am thrall of any tree?” wrote Elizabeth Yates in a poem submitted to the Oregon State Grange’s bi-monthly newspaper *The Bulletin* in 1936.¹ Seven years into the Great Depression, this quote reflects the mindset of the rural American: still concerned with the transformation of the United States, in the previous century, from a predominantly rural culture and agricultural economy to an urban and industrial society. The Patrons of Husbandry, also known as the Grange, had been born from that transformation as a community organization for helping agricultural producers and rural citizens negotiate the diminishing role of the farmer in the larger political scene.²

Subordinate Granges in Benton County, Oregon such as Mary’s River near Philomath, Mountain View near Lewisburg, and Luckiamute near Monmouth along with their members were focused on the major political and social issues of the early 20th Century. Subjects such as labor unions and government regulation of markets were regular topics at their meetings in addition to agricultural practices like irrigation and pest control.³ The Oregon State Grange also published a periodical twice a month called *The Bulletin* which also discussed these issues. Under the leadership of State Master Ray Gill and the Senior Editor, C.H. Bailey, *The Bulletin* espoused liberal views and often included editorials on the possibility of socialized services like healthcare and power distribution from the soon-to-be-completed Bonneville Dam, as well as regular calls for diplomatic isolation from Europe, and the evaluation of farming practices in areas like Scandinavia.⁴

Subsequent entry into the global theater of war in 1941 gave rise to a dramatic shift in the concerns and values of Grange members. The Patrons of Husbandry styled themselves as non-

¹ “Poetry Corner,” *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, April 5, 1936.

² Alan Furman Westin, “The Supreme Court, The Populist Movement and the Campaign of 1896,” *The Journal of Politics* 15(1953): 6-19.

³ *Meeting Minutes*, Mary’s River Grange, 1936-1939

⁴ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, 1938-1940.

party affiliated, and therefore (in their own words) a non-political entity.⁵ During the war, discussion of social policies was replaced with resolutions and advertisements for the war effort.⁶ *The Bulletin* itself changed in format and content as the priorities of the average United States citizen shifted from what services should be controlled by the government to a discussion of individual patriotism and national duty. The United States exited the war as a true global power with Communism as an ideological nemesis in the Postwar years. The economic and technological changes wrought during the war were not just government policies and budget appropriations, but included significant advances in, and availability of, machinery for the American public. Also, de-commissioned jeeps and tractors from the military were made vehicles cheap and widely available.⁷ Improved technology meant better machinery as well as more efficient and therefore cheaper production.

As the United States moved from the Great Depression into World War Two, and then emerged as a leading global military and economic power in the Post War era, the Grange and its members experienced a transformation of their political and social values. The priorities of the agricultural industry shifted from the economic hardship of the Great Depression to supporting the war effort and maintaining superiority during and after World War Two. The Patrons of Husbandry, as a community institution, experienced a shift in political and social values from liberal concerns and social critiques to espousing conservative ideals such as fervent nationalism, familial and religiously based morality, and defending American society as the ideal status quo.

Historiography

The Granges, as a text-book topic, are largely a footnote of the Populist Movement in the late 19th Century.⁸ Populism, a grassroots political movement, was a response to the growing

⁵ James Wallace Darrow, *Origin and early history of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry in the United States* (New York: Chatham, 1904), 11-12.

⁶ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, 1941-1945.

⁷ William G. Robbins, "Cornucopian Dream: Remaking Nature in Postwar Oregon" *Agricultural History*, 208-209.

⁸ Steven Gillon and Cathy Matson, *The American Experiment: A History of the United States Volume 2: Since 1865*, 3rd Edition, Boston (2009) Wadsworth: 573-576.

industrialization and corporatization of the U.S. economy. Beginning with rural and agricultural citizens, the Populist Movement was a largely political effort that called for government regulations on corporate power and silver-based currency. It also sought to centralize and focus the values and needs of agriculturally tied citizens in an attempt to challenge their continuously diminishing role in the larger national culture and politic.⁹ A part of this larger cultural phenomenon was the Farmers' Movement. In the last decades of the 19th Century farmers and ranchers across the country engaged in radical agrarianism, and, especially in the West, began to form organizations to represent their interests.¹⁰ The Patrons of Husbandry, and their Grange Halls, were an early example of this agrarianism.

Founded in 1867 by O.H. Kelly, a former clerk for the Department of Agriculture, the Patrons of Husbandry began in Minnesota, and the first Grange Hall in Oregon was chartered in Clackamas County in 1873. From there the Granges in Oregon gained a significant following due to the state's predominantly rural and agricultural population.¹¹ Analysis of the Populist Movement usually frames the subject as a short-lived response to industrialization, and commonly places it as a precursor to the Progressive Movement in the early 20th Century.¹² Scholarship on the Grange then, is by-and-large an exercise in framing the change to urbanity and industry, and most studies end in the 1920s.¹³ Scholars like Morton Rothstein,¹⁴ David Brody,¹⁵ and William Robbins give credence to the Farmers' Movement and its place in the development of the Western U.S.¹⁶ However, even these use it more as an example of land-use politics and as evidence of the diminishing influence of rural American culture.

⁹ Alan Furman Westin, "The Supreme Court, The Populist Movement and the Campaign of 1896," *The Journal of Politics* 15(1953): 40.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Edna A. Scott, "The Grange Movement in Oregon, 1873-1900," (MA diss., University of Oregon, 1923), 18.

¹² Morton Rothstein, "Farmer Movements and Organizations: Numbers, Gains, Losses," *Agricultural History* 62(1988): 167, 178.

¹³ Ibid, 178-181.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ David Brody, "Farm-Labor Analysis," *Industrial Relations* 22(1983):141-163.

¹⁶ William G. Robbins, "Cornucopian Dream: Remaking Nature in Postwar Oregon" *Agricultural History*, 208-219.

Recent scholarship has seldom focused on the Granges. Much of the existing literature that focuses on The Patrons of Husbandry was published before 1950, and the most in depth analyses of Oregon Granges are a Masters Dissertation by Ida Scott at the University of Oregon in 1923 and a Bachelors Thesis by Irene Poppleton, reprinted in 1908.¹⁷ Other scholars have revisited the topic of Granges in the last thirty years, such as Thomas G. Edwards' work on Washington State Granges, but by-and-large do not focus on Grange Halls after the 1920s.¹⁸ While the historical review of the Granges in Oregon throughout the 20th Century remains largely unexamined, there have been economic and sociological studies of farmers' organizations and agrarian culture which are used to give greater context to rural society.¹⁹

Methods and Primary Sources

This analysis of the Granges in Benton County explores largely untapped primary resources. The meeting minutes from Mary's River Grange, Mountain View Grange, and Luckiamute Grange from 1938 to 1948 are one example. These three Subordinate Granges in Benton County will be used to reflect the concerns of agricultural citizens and show their interaction with the rest of the county population. Moving from the local to the state level, *The Bulletin* was distributed to individual Grange members throughout the state. In 1938 *The Bulletin* was received by over 20,000 readers, and by 1948 that number had climbed to over 28,000.²⁰ Its articles and editorials represent the official positions of the senior Grange leadership, such as the State Master Ray W. Gill, State Lecturer G.W. Thiessen, and Senior Editor C.H. Bailey. *The Bulletin* stands as a continuous record of the priorities and values of the Grange community in Oregon.

¹⁷ Irene Poppleton, "Oregon's First Monopoly -- The O.S.N. Co.," reprinted in *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* 9 (1908): 274-304.

¹⁸ Thomas G. Edwards, *Experiences in a Promise Land*, Seattle: 1988.

¹⁹ Gifford Hoag, *The Farm Credit System: A History of Financial Self-Help*, Danville, 1976.

²⁰ Ray W. Gill and Morton Tompkins, "Worthy State Master's Address," *State Grange Convention 1939 and State Grange Convention 1948*.

In order to frame the relation between the local and state Granges and the larger state and national culture of the United States, government publications will also be incorporated. The Agricultural Census by the United States Department of Agricultural details the economic health of the farm and ranch industry in Oregon every five years. The censuses of 1930, 1935, 1940, and 1945 highlight demographic and economic changes in Oregon during the examined time period.²¹ Legislative actions by the federal government and published policies on crop and livestock production during and after World War Two will also help articulate the role that the agricultural community played in shaping attitudes and culture in rural Oregon during this time. Scholarship on the postwar U.S. economy and the agricultural component of rebuilding Western Europe and Japan explain the extent to which the economy had changed from before the entry of the U.S. into World War Two. Additionally, publications in *The Bulletin* and discussions at Subordinate Grange Halls reveal the social dictums that were embraced by farmers after World War Two and how they can be contrasted with the pre-war culture.

The Great Depression and Flirting with Socialism: Infrastructure, Labor, and Education (1938 - 1941)

In 1938 the condition of Oregon's economy was 75 percent agricultural, and its infrastructure was still largely undeveloped. Only 50 percent of farms had access to electric power and even less lived near paved and well-maintained roads.²² The Grange was keenly aware of this lack of modern infrastructure, and topics of developing utilities and increasing access to those utilities were common in both the Grange Hall and *The Bulletin*. One example of electrification efforts in 1938 was the construction of Bonneville Dam on the Lower Columbia River. With the dam nearing completion, the State Grange was issuing regular editorials concerning its construction.

²¹ United States Department of Agriculture, *Agricultural Census: Pacific Western States by County*, 1930, 1935, 1940, 1945.

²² United States Department of Agriculture, *Agricultural Statistics*, 1939.

These articles assessed government publications on the predicted power output of the dam, and called for two goals in relation to Bonneville. First, that ownership of the dam and its produced power be publicly owned. Second, that state and federal funds be utilized to expand power lines into rural areas throughout the Northwest. C.H. Bailey wrote six months before the dam was completed:

The people must own not only generating plants and transmission lines, but also the local distribution systems. National or state governments should build and operate the generating plants located on the waterways which they control. They should carry the current on public transmission lines to the municipalities or communities, which should own their own distribution system.²³

The Oregon State Grange warned that private ownership of Bonneville Power would result in a monopoly much like the shipping industry had five decades earlier, and rates would be based on profit rather than cost of production²⁴ The Grange was determined to make sure that the reverse would be true and that the power from Bonneville would be as accessible as possible to the greatest number of people. This call for public ownership and development of power lines was reiterated several times in the State Bulletin from 1938 until the entry of the United States into World War Two, and then again after the war was well under way.²⁵

Another common topic at this time was the discussion of Labor Unions. *The Bulletin* regularly featured articles on the topic and the opinions of Oregon State Grange leadership in regards to organized Labor. The Patrons of Husbandry always maintained a cautious relationship with Labor. Both the Farmers' Movement and the Labor Unions rose to prominence in the same era and in response to unchecked corporate power. The relationship between the Farmer and the Laborer in the United States during the Great Depression remained as separate as the farm and the factory. They interacted, and rarely denounced one another, but there was no show of open support. When unions campaigned for legislation, the official statement of State Master Ray W.

²³ C.H. Bailey, "Pierce Discusses Columbia River Regional Planning Project," *The Bulletin*, February 5, 1938, 3.

²⁴ Richard White, *Railroaded* (New York, W.W. Norton and Company, 2012), 152-162

²⁵ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, Feb 5, 1938 - Aug 20 1946

Gill was, “I have expressed my desire to keep relations with organized labor on a basis of friendly conciliation.”²⁶ This cautious statement, and others like it, resembles something of a supportive wink towards Labor without being seen as officially allying the Patrons of Husbandry to the political agenda of those unions.

The Grange’s tolerant attitudes towards socialized services and regulated markets were results of the organization’s liberal grassroots origins, and of the harsh realities of the Great Depression. Unemployment hovered around 20 percent nationally, the shadow of the Great War was still felt, and a new war loomed perilously across both the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans.²⁷ For the rural citizens in Benton County this was no less true. While Benton County employment percentage was higher than the national average locals still felt the weight of the crippled economy.²⁸ In 1932 alone there were over 188,000 acres of land that defaulted to Benton County ownership due to tax delinquency.²⁹ The market prices of crops swooned and varied, and while there was no shortage of available laborers, the cost to hire them became a tougher burden for farmers to bear. Farms in Benton County reported paying \$286,000 for farm-hand labor in 1930. Ten years later, despite a growing cost of living and resources, farms in Benton County reported a similar number of \$270,000. Although there were 160 more active farms in 1940 than in 1930, they were only able to pay for \$10,000 less in labor per year.³⁰ As a result, Grange legislative committees worked to help maintain one area where farmers were still enjoying low cost for return -- immigrant labor.

The Farm Bill Act of 1938 enacted several regulations on farms, the shipping rates for crop products, and how much surplus the government would buy in years of good crop yield.³¹

²⁶ Ray Gill, “A Word of Caution,” *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, Feb 5, 1938, 2.

²⁷ *Benton-Linn Trends*, Oregon Employment Office, May 2013.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ William H. Dreeson, “Rural Tax Delinquency Study of the State of Oregon,” *Station Bulletin*, 371, Oregon State College Agricultural Experiment Station, June 1940.

³⁰ United States Department of Agriculture, *Agricultural Census: Pacific Western States by County 1930*, 510, and *Agricultural Census: Pacific Western States by County 1940*, 622.

³¹ United States Department of Agriculture, “History of Price-Support Agricultural and Adjustment Acts 1933 - 1984,” 1985.

One area that the Patrons of Husbandry worked hard to alter on the bill was the stipulation of minimum wage for all farm hands and that farm laborers must be documented citizens. The Farm Bill passed with a stipulation that allowed for continued immigrant labor from Mexico. Wages for these immigrant workers were not addressed, and this left farmers and ranchers free to continue to enjoy significantly reduced labor costs.³²

The discourse on farm labor took a more positive tone when it came to earnings of farmers themselves. In 1938 and 1939 the National Grange's agenda included a National Agriculture Program to run alongside the Farm Bill.³³ The lobbying factions from the Grange pushed for federally enforced market controls for crops in lean years. The concept was that the United States government would ensure a minimum price at which crops could be sold, so that if supply was higher than demand and crops, such as wheat, sold below their average the government would subsidize the sale.³⁴ This stipulation came with a cry from the Grange that farmers deserved to be on equal income footing with their urban counterparts.

Additionally, Grange leadership was painfully aware of the continuously diminishing proportion of farmers to the rest of the population. From 1930 to 1950 the population in Oregon nearly tripled from just under one million residents to a bit less than three million. Benton County doubled in the same time frame, growing from 16,000 residents to over 31,000. In 1930 slightly over half of Benton County's population was farmers, but by the Post War era would account for approximately 25 percent. The population of farmers in the state, and specifically in Benton County had a negligible difference from 1930 to 1940 and had actually decreased by 1945.³⁵ While the disproportion in 1938 was less dramatic, the Grange leadership understood where the wind was blowing, and saw legislation like the Farm Bill as a means to maintain influence and

³² Ray Gill, "State Master's Address," *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, June 20, 1939, 1.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Agricultural Census: Pacific Western States by County*, United States Department of Agriculture, 1930, 1935, 1940, 1945.

cultural legitimacy in comparison to urban culture. An official resolution by the State Grange calling for this was published in early 1938:

As a basis for agricultural aid the family-size farm should have first consideration, and the program should function so the family-size farm will yield a good living and provide a surplus for future security and old age. Highly commercialized or corporation farming should receive no help, but instead should be discouraged in any measure for the relief of agriculture. . . . the farmer is entitled to just as good wages for his labor as others . . . His children are entitled to as good education [sic] advantages as other children . . . He is entitled to just as much liberty . . . for selling his products . . . as other classes . . . He is entitled to taxation tariff and transportation policies which will deal . . . as fairly with agriculture as other business . . . He is entitled to a civilization, culture, education system -- literature, art, drama . . . which will recognize, reflect, and utilize the cultural influence of country life . . . in the same degree in which present-day culture recognizes . . . urban life.³⁶

Landowners felt they should be federally guaranteed to provide for the subsequent year regardless of market conditions. They campaigned for this subsidy in the continuing tradition of the many subsidies that had helped establish family farms in the Western United States such as the Homestead Act, Morrill Act, and tax breaks for certain livestock and crops being raised.³⁷

Additionally, Grange legislative committees called for tax breaks for family farms and ranches as well as increased taxes on large-scale corporate agricultural operations.³⁸ Grange leaders hoped to keep the agricultural industry under the control of independent family farms, and dissuade corporations from attempting to enter the market. Other demands came in the form of increasing the revenue available for small rural schools, and for agricultural and technical

³⁶ C.H. Bailey, "Helping Agriculture," *The Bulletin*, January 5, 1938, 4.

³⁷ United States Department of Agriculture, "History of Price-Support Agricultural and Adjustment Acts 1933 - 1984," 1985.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

colleges in the hopes that they would not only produce more and better farmers, but so that rural American culture could maintain an equal footing with the urban population.³⁹

Beyond the concerns of urban groups, the farmers of Oregon were also interested in adapting the section of the economy that they dealt with directly as well. While the call from one article to put agricultural production under complete government control and treat food production like a public utility garnered no response, there were several strategies that the Grange began to employ that helped make the economics of farming more communal and less an individual trial.⁴⁰ Beginning in 1937 the Oregon State Grange began to establish cooperative warehouses in Portland to purchase farming resources directly from manufacturers. They also encouraged Pomonas (county level Granges) to establish their own co-ops in each county, as stated in *The Bulletin*, “1. The encouragement and development of producer-owned cooperative associations . . . The establishment of a sound monetary system which will raise and maintain commodity prices at their 1921-29 purchasing and debt paying levels, as outlined in the Council’s resolution of 1936 and 1937.”⁴¹

These co-ops would purchase materials, resources, even tractors straight from the manufacturers in large bulk. Grange members that wished to be a part of this would be a small annual fee, and would then be able to purchase from the co-op either at-cost or with a significantly reduced price from the standard commercial market. While only several hundred Grangers took part in late 1937 at the Portland warehouse, by the end of 1939 several thousand farmers and ranchers purchased needed items from eleven state and county cooperative stations across Oregon.⁴²

If topics about unions and farm labor were addressed by the Grange in the terms of the past, and the co-operatives helped farmers and ranchers in the present, then it was education that

³⁹ “1939 State Convention Program,” Oregon State Grange.

⁴⁰ “Program or Agriculture,” *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, Mar 5, 1938, 10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

kept Grange members looking towards the future. In Oregon the State Grange had maintained a particularly strong relationship with the Agricultural College in Corvallis. Originally a Methodist institution, it benefited from the land-grant stipulation in the Morrill Act of 1862 that expanded it as an educational institution, and provided it with a new agricultural department.⁴³

From the beginning of its role as a public institution, the Agricultural College enjoyed strong patronage and support from the Grange. The Grange helped secure it as a state institution when the Methodist Church tried to reclaim its control of the institution in 1912, thus earning the State Master of the Grange a permanent position on the Board of Regents for the college.⁴⁴ The relationship continued to become closer through the period of World War Two. The Grange often lobbied the state legislature for increasing financial support for the college, and authorizing the development of new departments. Throughout its development and many name changes the Oregon State Agricultural College gained a Forestry Department, offered degrees in Land/Resource Management, and expanded the agricultural curriculum all at the behest of the Grange.⁴⁵ Several prominent department faculty were members of local Granges including six college presidents by 1942.⁴⁶ Also, the annual State Grange Convention was held at the college six times between 1870 and 1940.⁴⁷

These conventions were a three or four day undertaking of multiple committees featuring members from all the Grange Halls around the State. The committees included state and federal legislative, public relations, urban-rural relations, individual crop types, water usage, forest management, and conservation amongst many others. The 1939 State Grange Convention held on June 12th - 16th, included over 22,000 Grangers representing 377 Granges and over 70 Grange-sponsored youth organizations.⁴⁸ The mission statement for the convention included

⁴³ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, August 20, 1940, 5.

⁴⁴ Oregon State University, "Chronological History of Oregon State University," accessed online June 4, 2014.

⁴⁵ "1939 State Convention Program," Oregon State Grange, 1939

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

specific goals of establishing a rural education plan to take to the state legislature, an analysis of import-export tariffs and their effects on individual farmers, and further development on the fight to make Bonneville power the province of the public. Two other specific goals of the Grange were the increase in scholarships offered through 4-H and juvenile Granges, and increasing the agricultural curriculum at Oregon State College. One special guest on the latter committee was a member of the student Grange at the state college, which was chartered at the Oregon State College in 1937, and was one of only two student granges in the entire country.⁴⁹

Of course, many other topics graced the pages of *The Bulletin*, and were heard in the Grange Halls. Issues concerning the agricultural industry, the condition of Oregon, and the economic state of the United States of America were all discussed by Grangers. Socialized healthcare was one in particular that regularly came up, and in one instance *The Bulletin* specifically cited Norway for their socialized services, “Progressive Norway is so far ahead of the United States . . . State-owned hospitals provide free care for the poor,”⁵⁰ and applauded Sweden’s socialized healthcare in an article title “Sweden’s Has Done It -- So Can We,” where C.H. Bailey highlighted Sweden’s successful efforts to eliminate syphilis.⁵¹ When the editors of *The Bulletin* were not praising progressive countries, they were calling for isolation from the conflicts in Europe and Asia. While several articles throughout 1938, 1939 and 1940 expressed sympathy for the plight of China in the face of Japanese imperialism, by-and-large the Oregon State Grange leadership called for neutrality when it came to the wars of other countries. Bailey wrote in the spring of 1938, “So far as this writer is concerned, he is for open, unashamed isolation from the troubles not only of Europe but of Asia as well. We have troubles enough at home.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Ray Gill, “Master’s Address,” *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange Bulletin, June 5, 1939.

⁵⁰ “Progressive Norway,” *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, March 5, 1938, 5.

⁵¹ “Sweden Has Done It -- So Can We,” *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, April 5, 1938, 6.

⁵² C.H. Bailey, “The Spanish War,” *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, April 20, 1938, 14.

The Bulletin, as a voice of the Grange, was a voice of agrarian society in the predominantly urban United States in the early 20th Century. It promoted the values of hard work, scientific method, and capitalism. It still maintained some of its radical origins and consistently called for greater legislation to prevent corporate monopolies and prices of necessary services being increased for profit. The values of Oregon Grange leadership had been shaped by witnessing wanton stock trading erode the national and global economy, and the successful organization of labor unions that fought and won against companies in the houses of legislation and in the courts.⁵³

The Bulletin was a left-leaning newspaper. The farmers of the United States, of Oregon, and of Benton County questioned the validity of unregulated economies and private ownership. Their editorials called for the improvement of the American society by utilizing legislation that limited corporate influence and insulated farm income from the fluctuating market. *The Bulletin*, and many of its readers, viewed FDR in a positive light, supported the Conservation Crew Corps, and was a supporter of agricultural and technical colleges at a level that bordered on aggressive.⁵⁴ The president, the government, and the culture of the United States in the late 1930s leaned left, and the Patrons of Husbandry in Oregon and Benton County leaned left too.

World War Two: Supporting the War Rank-and-File (1942-1945)

When Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7th, 1941 the international priorities of United States citizens changed dramatically. For obvious reasons most discussion of isolationism went out the door after the news of the attack spread. *The Bulletin* took an immediate stand in the first issue following the attack; State Master Ray Gill's opening address was an impassioned call for action and support:

The war, so long remote, is here . . . All America is incensed by this outrage in the Pacific, but she must temper her anger with restraint that she may, with studied determination, move to the

⁵³ Alan Furman Westin, "The Supreme Court, The Populist Movement and the Campaign of 1896," *The Journal of Politics* 15(1953): 45 - 50.

⁵⁴ C.H. Bailey, "What Do They Want?" *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, 4.

successful completion of the task before her . . . Where before there was indecision and where before there was divided opinion, today there is unity and a will to act in attaining our well defined objective. Those of us at home must lend our every energy to produce those things which our armed forces and the armed forces of our many allies need -- ships, planes, tanks, guns, and FOOD. Production of this food is the job of American farmers. We have quotas set up for agricultural production -- with these we are all familiar. Let us see that these quotas are met and exceeded.⁵⁵

Six editorials in the December 20, 1941 issue of *The Bulletin* endorsed the war effort, with a call on all Grange members to do their utmost to aid as well. This initial aggressive discussion of joining the war effort dislodged most all other topics. Amongst the editorials and addresses from State Grange leadership only one article discussed education, two focused on Oregon affairs, and three discussed the agricultural industry.⁵⁶ Even most of these were related to the war effort and how producers in Oregon were going to be meeting expected demand.

By 1942 the fervor expressed in *The Bulletin* had calmed down significantly. Non-war related topics not only found their way back into the bi-monthly publication, but were by far the majority. The two publications in June 1942 showed over 20 articles relating to larger national and state issues that were not war related, with only three articles discussing the war itself or how it related to agricultural issues. July and August were the same with 15 to 2 and 22 to 4 respectively. These non-war articles related to agricultural production, economic conditions, legislation, national policies, and local issues in the State of Oregon.⁵⁷

The Bulletin, by 1942, had undergone a significant physical change and been reduced from being a 16 page publication to only a 12. Even more interesting, is that it had almost a third of its content devoted to home economics under the section "Better Cookery and Homemaking," which featured topics such as thrifty ways to repair clothing, and how to stretch small amounts of

⁵⁵ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, Dec 20, 1941, 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 2-10.

⁵⁷ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, June-August 1942.

ingredients over larger numbers of meals.⁵⁸ Some of the largest articles in *The Bulletin* at this time had titles such as “Quick Substitutes for Cake Frosting.” Further additions were the inclusion of a Chaplain’s message in every issue, and only occasional appearance of reader responses to the editor.⁵⁹ The latter transformation stands as an indication of both a change in readership, and of economic realities for rural Oregonians during the war. Wartime rations limited supplies like food that families could purchase. The government directives that changed some textile, automotive, and metallurgical factories to producing largely, if not solely, for the military also meant a diminished market for consumers, as well as higher prices.⁶⁰ Furthermore, with a significant portion of the young male population from Oregon in the military service, the expansion of the Home Economic section might reflect a conscious move to try and appeal more to a female readership than before.⁶¹

These changes were also, at least partially, an effect of the changing of the guard within the State Grange early on in the war. By the middle of the war the Senior Editor for *The Bulletin*, C.H. Bailey, had retired, and the elected positions of State Master, State Lecturer, and State Secretary had all been replaced with new names and faces, including Morton Tompkins as State Master, Ben Buisman as Senior Editor, and Blanche Pickering as State Lecturer. All three had been prominent State Grange members before this time, such as Mr. Tompkin’s role as the head of the Agricultural Committee, but as nationalism and ideological adherence to democracy and capitalism became the standards of promoting American culture, the liberal leadership of the Great Depression was replaced by their conservative juniors.⁶²

Despite all this, the war was still a significant part of *The Bulletin*, even if it wasn’t extensively commented on in each issue. The summer issues of 1942 all feature articles

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Oregon Blue Book, Oregon World War Two. Accessed online May 5, 2014.

⁶¹ George Edmonston Jr. “Chapter 24: World War II,” Oregon State University Alumni Association. Accessed May 4, 2014.

⁶² *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, May 20, 1942, 2 - 8.

discussing the development of the war, and projects or campaigns that the State Grange endorsed in order to raise monetary support, or to begin collection of supplies for soldiers and refugees.⁶³ Advertisements from the government for volunteering or buying war bonds, and from non-government organizations, such as the Red Cross and American Legion filled the pages. The illustrated advertisements called for young men to enlist, for the purchase of war bonds, and for the adherence of every citizen to rations and curfews.⁶⁴

The Bulletin retained this editorial tenor throughout the rest of the war. In 1944 the rates of non-war articles to war related editorials was about the same as in 1942, but with a much greater diversity in the topics that were not solely about the war. In June of 1944 an article was printed that returned to the discussion of organized labor issues, and extensive editorials discussing the economic status of the agricultural industry in relation to national policy.⁶⁵ Those topics alone totaled over 25 articles. Furthermore, the summer issues of 1944 even saw the beginning of articles centered on post-war.⁶⁶ Discussion of market status at the time and projected crop production for the following two years were closely linked to a push for government regulation of market prices in an effort to avoid the economic collapse that U.S. producers had experienced after the end of World War I, due to the problem of overproduction.⁶⁷

One of the more note-worthy postwar topics that was highlighted in *The Bulletin* was the topic of Japanese-Americans. The Oregon State Grange leadership (in tandem with Grange leadership from California, Washington, Idaho and Montana) called for not just the blocking of Japanese-Americans to return to the West Coast after being interred in government camps at the beginning of the war, but the deportation of all Japanese-Americans.⁶⁸ State Master Morton Tompkins shared the resolution in 1944:

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, June 20, 1944.

⁶⁶ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, August 1944, 20.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

That no Japanese be permitted to return to the West Coast areas from which they were evacuated after the start of the war was . . . a resolution adopted by State Grange Masters of five western States . . . The War Relocation Authority was also censured in the resolutions for its current propaganda campaign to arouse public sympathy for persons of Japanese extraction and for its policy of establishing evacuees permanently in American communities. The Grange Masters held that WRA . . . is aggravating rather than solving the problem . . . California, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Oregon. Representing 125,000 members . . .

Tompkins went on to present the official resolution of the Grange Masters of these states and their desire to obstruct an entire ethnicity:

Whereas, this government agency is carrying on a program of locating Japanese in our Western military areas and also establishing them permanently in American communities . . . Whereas, the Japanese people . . . have failed to assimilate themselves, it is our firm conviction that they can never be assimilated into American community life . . . records of jurisprudence show a persistent evasion of American land laws by alien Japanese in collaboration with American-born Japanese and whites . . . [The WRA has a] program of resettlement against the wishes of the majority of our farm people whose interests are most directly affected, Therefore, be it resolved that we protest this . . . being an aggravation rather than a solution to the Japanese problem, and we request . . . that no Japanese be permitted to return to the West Coast area from which they were evacuated by military decree following Dec. 7, 1941.

This resolution was published in June 1944 and was repeated in each successive edition through and past the end of the war. This stands as a testament to traditional white Euro-American racism, but also a peculiar breed of xenophobic discrimination launched by the attack on Pearl Harbor and the war with Japan.

These resolutions, reproduced in multiple issues, stood side-by-side with articles that righteously condemned lynching and Jim Crow laws in the south, and that readily vilified the race-driven persecution that Hitler was conducting in Germany (a stand that the Grange took even

before the discovery of just how monstrous the German internment camps were).⁶⁹ *The Bulletin*, and therefore the Grange leadership, shows a new distinctly conservative and single minded direction when compared to its to its pre-war tone. During the war the section for responses by Grange members to published articles in *The Bulletin* was reduced to one or two responses in an issue, and none at all in most. There was not even a printed challenge to the official resolution to deport Japanese Americans until after the war had finished.⁷⁰

Mary's River Grange, on the other hand, had a decidedly less dramatic shift in their tone and topic after the Pearl Harbor attack. Meeting minutes relate topics that were still largely concerned with local social issues that had been in process prior to the attack. Topics covered include plans for Christmas functions put on by the Grange, and discussing pest control.⁷¹ In the subsequent months, however, the topics of resolutions and lectures that were concerned with the war effort became a regular occurrence. Throughout the war Mary's River voted to raise a small fund for aiding Britain and Chinese relief, they discussed shortages caused by rationing and the shift of the economy to war production, had soldiers who were home for leave or due to injury as guest lecturers, and they officially approved the Federal Government's issued agricultural plans for the war.⁷²

As the war progressed the members of Mary's River continued to integrate larger issues such as national legislation and the war into their meetings. In June of 1942, a resolution was sent up to the State and National Granges to address soldiers' pay and campaign for legislation that would help ensure that soldiers were justly compensated.⁷³ Additionally, Mary's River Grange, as a whole, purchased War Bonds from the federal government, discussed the national war debt, and in 1944 voted in favor of the State Grange's position on the deportation of Japanese Americans.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ "Reader Response," *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, July 20, 1946, 12.

⁷¹ "Meeting Minutes," Mary's River Grange, Dec. 1941

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid, June 1942

⁷⁴ Ibid September 1944

Other Granges in the area maintained similar conscientious civic attitudes towards the war. Luckiamute (previously Kings Valley) and Mountain View Grange both held drives to raise funds for the Red Cross, and the Mountain View Grange even sent up to the State Grange a resolution to pay or absolve all past dues of Grange members who were serving overseas.⁷⁵ As the war progressed into its latter half returning soldiers, marines, and seamen from Europe and the Pacific were often featured lecturers to explain the duties and experiences of living in a theater of war.⁷⁶

This active interest in the war effort still remained a secondary topic in the local Subordinate Granges. By far, the majority of the topics at their meetings covered were still primarily concerned with the local communities they were a part of and the activities of Granges across Benton County. Such issues included scarcity of farm labor, pest control (including vermin, insects, and the use of poisons), Grange sponsored insurance, comparison of wheat and corn for livestock feeds, land conservation and stocking up on wood for winter months.⁷⁷

Despite the wealth of local community concern shown in each meeting at Mary's River, the Grange was apparently somewhat incongruent with individual lives in the community of Philomath and Benton County. Throughout 1942, 1943, and 1944 Mary's River continuously lost members who either failed to pay dues, or who actively and consciously withdrew from the Grange.⁷⁸

Mountain View and Luckiamute also experienced a general aging of their Grange members, and the loss of others because of either failed dues or voluntary withdrawal of their Grange membership.⁷⁹ Luckiamute, though the reasons are not given in existing record, closed its

⁷⁵ "Meeting Minutes," Mountain View Grange, June 1944

⁷⁶ "Meeting Minutes," Mountain. View Grange, Jul 1942, Mary's River, Aug 1941, Luckiamute Grange, Jul 1941.

⁷⁷ From 1939 to 1944 the State Grange helped sponsor contests at subordinate Granges for the most rats individual farmers/farm families could kill.

⁷⁸ "Meeting Minutes," Mary's River Grange, 1941-1944

⁷⁹ "Meeting Minutes," Mountain View Grange, 1941-1944, Luckiamute 1941-1942

charter in 1942.⁸⁰ The Agricultural Census of Benton County in 1934, 1940, and 1945 all relate this trend as most young men became absorbed in the war effort either in the armed forces or in other services, and the average age of farmers in Benton County rose from just under 40 years of age to ranging from 55 to 60 years of age.⁸¹ Most motives for individual members are not noted, but the combination of dwindling membership at a time of enforced rationings, a limited market, and the depletion of labor and youth from the area all point to people having to utilize their time the most for their own family's interest as opposed to community efforts. Some members did join during this time, but the ratio is far from balanced.⁸²

While dues might have been a contributing factor for several (or even many) Grange members leaving; the overall economic health of the agricultural industry in Benton County and across Oregon was greatly improved from 1940 to 1945. The Agricultural Census taken by the Oregon Department of Agriculture shows that in 1945 there were fewer farms and ranches but that those were producing significantly more amounts of each product at a higher total value. Fruits and vegetable farms, for example, decreased in Benton County by nearly a third from 909 in 1940 to 687 in 1945, but more than doubled their gross product value from just under \$900,000 in 1940 to over \$1.8 million in 1945.⁸³

World War Two encompassed the globe, and it therefore required the adaptation of various government and non-government institutions in order to adequately attend to its drain on resources. For the American public, it forced practices and policies that were centered on the military efforts in the Pacific and across the Atlantic. It was a "command economy," that simultaneously enforced rigorous restrictions on the U.S. market, but at the same time provided

⁸⁰ "Closed Granges," Oregon State Grange, 2009

⁸¹ *Agricultural Census. Pacific Western States by County*, 1935, 1940 and 1945, United States Department of Agriculture.

⁸² "Meeting Minutes," Mary's River Grange and Mountain View Grange, July 1944.

⁸³ *Agricultural Census. Pacific Western States by County*, 1940 and 1945, United States Department of Agriculture.

an immense amount of demand for both industrial and agricultural production.⁸⁴ The State and Subordinate Granges in Oregon adapted in both policy and culture by standing staunchly behind the war effort via developing resolutions to conform to federal and state agricultural war policies. They also engaged their members in fundraisers and shows of support for the armed forces by way of care packages, paying membership dues for deployed Grangers, raising funds for the reconstruction of U.S. allies such as Britain. Additionally, the Granges in Oregon furthered U.S. nationalism with Anglo-American centered rhetoric and continuous criticism of Fascist and Communist regimes.

The Post War Era: Reaping the Nationalism of Victory (1945 - 1948)

When Victory in Europe finally happened on May 8, 1945, and then Victory over Japan on September 2, 1945 the United States stood as a completely transformed national entity. Where it had been in great economic difficulty before the war, it now sported a robust economy. Where it had been an equal or even sub-power of western European nations, with many of its citizens and leaders calling for isolation; it now stood as a leading global power helping to rebuild other war torn countries. Where the economic trials of capitalism had brought the debate about socialized services to the lips of many voters, now nationalism, capitalism, and democracy stood as paragon ideals that must battle the onslaught of Communism.

U.S society and the world had changed with the Second World War. Technology had advanced rapidly via military research and the shadows of the atomic bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima loomed over the world. For the Grangers in Oregon, this shift was just as evident. After the war *The Bulletin* resumed many of the topics that had diminished or disappeared when the war had started. Discussions on agricultural production and policy, of state and national legislation, and analysis of markets all took on the larger roles in the periodical

⁸⁴ Robert Higgs, "Wartime Prosperity? A Reassessment of the U.S. Economy in the 1940s," *The Journal of Economic History*, 52, March, 1992. p41-44.

similar to the proportions before the war.⁸⁵ Editorials on education and healthcare re-appeared, and the State Grange published a resolution in July of 1946 to form a Grange Research Department in collaboration with the Oregon State College experiment stations the Grange had helped establish.⁸⁶

Discussion of the economy, both globally and locally, increased dramatically. In June of 1946, *The Bulletin* printed ten articles about the U.S. and State of Oregon economies and the role played in those economies by agricultural production. In July and August of 1946 *The Bulletin* showed show similar interest by Grange leaders in these themes with nine articles published in both months on the condition of the economy.⁸⁷

The Bulletin did not, however, return to either its pre-war physical format, or the left-leaning tone that had been so well ingrained in the late 1930s. The enlarged Home Economics sections continued to occupy a sizeable portion of the periodical, as well as the Chaplain's Message, and in May of 1945 a "History of Oregon" section was added that amounted to roughly a quarter of a page.⁸⁸ This discussion of international relations in the latter half of the 1940s centered mostly on obtaining supply contracts through treaties and the goal of perpetually increasing the rate of exports of U.S. agricultural products.⁸⁹ In one of the most flagrant rejections of Pre War ideals, State Master Tompkins' address at the 1946 state convention stated, "I felt our nation must, without hesitation, assume to a greater degree than ever before her responsibility of world leadership towards peace. We can not, we must not fail in our responsibility to those who gave their all in the winning of this war. We who live on **must** assume that responsibility. **We can not isolate ourselves and have peace** (emphasis added)."⁹⁰ Additionally, the joint resolution

⁸⁵ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, 1945-1948.

⁸⁶ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, July 20, 1946, 4.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, Jun-Aug 1946, 6.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, May 20, 1945, 8.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*. June 5, 1946, 4.

with California, Washington, Idaho, and Montana Granges to deny Japanese-American return to the West Coast, and a call for their deportation, was repeatedly printed from 1943 to 1946.⁹¹

One particularly poignant example of ingrained nationalism and the conservative nature of the Grange in the Post War years is the verbiage employed by Grange leadership after the war. The use of the term “American” as an adjective was not only to denote being a United States citizen, but was also employed emphatically to moralize vague discussion of good (American) and bad (not American). Articles throughout *The Bulletin* after 1945 employed “American” in situations such as the argument Japanese-American return to the Western United States. “It is clear that the Japs have failed to adapt themselves to the American lifestyle, and that they never will be able to do so,” wrote Morton Tompkins, the State Grange Master as of 1942.⁹² Another example comes from the voice of Mr. Tompkins, when he wrote an article on creating and enforcing legislation that would restrict the free market, “American farmers deserve American prices in an American market.”⁹³

The term also became a substitute for detailing the need to fight the spread of communism. In lieu of debate over the costs and benefits of socializing services, *The Bulletin* editors began arguing that anything that was not capitalism or had not been a part of the American economy or government prior to World War Two was inherently bad. Topics such as socialized healthcare and the Grange’s traditionally amiable attitude towards unionizing now took disapproving tones, claiming that anything less than a free market was too close to Communism.⁹⁴ One committee at the 1946 state convention argued for the establishment of English as an official language, and later that summer a cartoon was published in *The Bulletin* expressing exasperation with Labor Unions efforts.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, August 5, 1946.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ “I’m getting Kinda Fed up With This!” *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange July 5, 1946.

The Mary's River and Mountain View Granges enjoyed less of a return to robust discourse after the war. Minutes for both Subordinate Granges lack details after 1945, and those things which were recorded have less to do with national or international affairs. Rather, it seems that after the ordeal of the war, the members settled back into discussing and experiencing their livelihoods in their communities. For all minutes from Mary's River for 1945 - 1948 there are only a handful of instances where national or international affairs were discussed, and most of those were centered on either continued production for aid in rebuilding Europe or for the continued support of U.S. veterans returned from abroad.⁹⁶ Especially at the Mountain View Grange, which enjoyed membership of multiple Oregon State College faculty, discussions, when noted, tended to be chiefly concerned with the domestic home, community social events, and processes or problems of only the immediately local farms and ranches.⁹⁷

Both Mary's River and Mountain View Granges in the Post War years did enjoy some much needed boosts in their membership numbers. After almost four full years of Grangers either dying, leaving, or being dropped, by mid-1946 enrollment began to increase.⁹⁸ In fact, though membership in the Patrons of Husbandry across the nation had dipped during World War Two, their numbers grew by approximately 70,000 from 1942 to 1946. This climb continued past the 1940s and peaked in 1956, but then declined precipitously after the 1970s.⁹⁹

One aspect of the Grange and the agricultural community in Oregon that was in keeping with the pre-war era is the continued inversion of farming population to farm output. As the United States continued to advance in technology and infrastructure the ratio of farmers to the total population continued to decline. As pointed out earlier, however, this decline in population coincided with the continuous growth of agricultural output. One economic study in the 1990s

⁹⁶ "Meeting Minutes," Mary's River, August 1947

⁹⁷ "Meeting Minutes," Mountain View Grange, June 1945 - August 1947.

⁹⁸ "Meeting Minutes," Mary's River Grange, June 1946.

⁹⁹ Rothstein, 178.

showed that the postwar agricultural economy rose with a steady annual growth of about two percent in their gross capital value.¹⁰⁰

Many factors contributed to the apparent increase in production despite a decreasing number of farmers. Economic and legislative factors included stiff tariffs on foreign imports from before the Second World War, which continued to help insulate American farmers from competition on the domestic market. Additionally, farm subsidies and price controls played a large role. The Food Conference that FDR called in 1943 established that surplus production in bountiful years would be purchased and stocked by the federal government, and then in later lean years would be used to help float market prices for crops.¹⁰¹

Adding in the destroyed agricultural potential of Europe during and immediately after the war the farmers of the United States were able to move in on foreign markets without competition. Also, the aid plans developed by the U.S. government, such as the Marshall Plan and Point Four, which outlined significant contributions of the U.S. economy to be contributed towards reconstructing Europe and Japan provided American agriculture with long-term contracts. The plans also included tax breaks for farmers who could produce certain crops.¹⁰² It can be readily seen that the Farmer in the United States after World War Two enjoyed a legislatively protected place in both the global and local economy -- one with consistently high market prices, and continuous demand.¹⁰³

Another force that contributed to increased production was the advent of science and technology that helped make farming a more efficient process. Both world wars pushed the country to invest heavily in innovative developments in science and technology. These efforts created dynamic advances in chemical production and increasingly efficient mechanization.

¹⁰⁰ Dale Jorgenson and Frank Gollop, "Productivity Growth in U.S. Agriculture: A Postwar Perspective," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 1992, 747.

¹⁰¹ United States Department of Agriculture, "History of Price-Support Agricultural and Adjustment Acts 1933 - 1984," 1985.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Jacqueline, McGlade, "More Plow Than Sword," *Agricultural History* 83: p.81-83

Though military-focused in origin, these efforts produced products and processes that were quickly adapted to the commercial sectors. After the end of World War Two farmers in the United States, and specifically Oregon, enjoyed a significant increase in vehicular usage for their labors. Machines were becoming more feasible, not just in the size and power of engines, but also in affordability.¹⁰⁴

The infrastructure of Oregon had been completely transformed during the war as well. Federally sponsored development of roads and electricity for military defense of the West Coast turned rural Oregon into a full member of the 20th Century. At the end of the war Oregon founded the Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission, which called for and acquired funds to accomplish significant post war development of infrastructure. By 1949 more than 68,000 automobiles and trucks were owned by farmers, more than twice the amount that was reported in 1945. Mileage of paved and maintained roads nearly doubled from 4,618 miles in 1937, to 7,914 miles in 1948. By 1948 Oregon, as a state, was second only to California in miles of paved roads. Additionally, Oregon was actively repairing more previously paved roads than any other state in the nation-- 1,425 miles from summer of 1947 to summer of 1948.¹⁰⁵ Essentially, 90 percent of all farmers in the state of Oregon lived within one mile of paved roads. Benton County boasted similar numbers with, by 1945, 95 percent of farmers living within one mile of a paved road.

Not only could farmers get places more quickly and cheaply, but they were also liberated by the increase of electricity in Oregon during and after World War Two. As of 1948, Oregon boasted 8,817 miles of power lines in the state. These lines provided 95.2 percent of farms in Oregon with access to electricity. This was a substantial increase from before the war; in 1934

¹⁰⁴ William G. Robbins, "Cornucopian Dream: Remaking Nature in Postwar Oregon" *Agricultural History*, 210-212.

¹⁰⁵ *Agricultural Statistics 1939 and 1940*, United States Department of Agriculture, 729.

only 27.5 percent of farms had access, and the majority of those were in the greater Portland area.¹⁰⁶

By the end of the war the United States Government had funded a 65 percent increase in industrial production in the economy, or roughly an additional \$26 billion in value to the U.S. economy.¹⁰⁷ The mass production of mechanical equipment for the war effort quickly translated into high production of commercial equipment when the peacetime military no longer needed such a massive amount of equipment. As such, farming equipment not only became more feasible to produce, but also due to large-scale production, became increasingly more affordable for individual farmers.¹⁰⁸ Benton County farms shrank by almost a full third from 1935 to 1945, but by 1945 they were investing twice as much capital into farm machinery.¹⁰⁹

Military vehicles themselves were also a boon for the post-war agricultural economy. By the end of the war, United States factories had produced over 1.2 million military trucks that were also suitable for commercial purposes and over 34 thousand tractors for the U.S. Army alone.¹¹⁰ While farmers had little use for heavy track-tanks, the sale of military fleet vehicles like trucks and jeeps were exactly the kind of cheap work vehicles that farmers and ranchers were looking for. After the end of the war the United States government was eager to demobilize much of its engorged military, and in addition to releasing draftees, the military advertised nationwide to sell off commercially viable equipment. Advertisements in *The Bulletin* showed fleets of Army trucks and jeeps that were being demobilized for commercial sale.¹¹¹

This flooding of the market with cheap, produced-for-work vehicles made them not only widely available for farmers to find, but also relatively cheap for farmers to purchase. This

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 697.

¹⁰⁷ Gregor Hooks and Leonard Bloomquist, "The Legacy of World War Two for Regional Growth and Decline: The Cumulative Effects of Wartime Investments on U.S. Manufacturing, 1942-1972," *Social Forces* 71, Dec. 1992, p304 -306.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ *Agricultural Census: Pacific West States by County 1945*, United States Department of Agriculture, 100.

¹¹⁰ R. Elberton Smith, *The United States Army in WW Two: The Army and Economic Mobilization*, U.S. War Department, 1959, p 9-10.

¹¹¹ *The Bulletin*, Oregon State Grange, June 5, 1946, 8.

availability of cheap vehicles was combined with increased ease of access for standard wheeled vehicles through the expansion of paved roads. Funded by both the federal government, and the state, these developments coincided with further development of telephone and power lines, as well as established funds for continued maintenance. These improvements eased the farmer's burden of working his or her acreage, accessing needed resources outside of the farm property, and shipping capability of products out of the farm.¹¹²

Conclusion

The changes experienced by the United States from the Great Depression to the Postwar period were various and all-encompassing, from the nation to the individual. The culture changed as well. A population that had been isolationist became globally concerned. The significant lean to the Left of the U.S. population shifted to the Right. Even the day-to-day concerns of individual people changed with the advent of wartime rationing and the significant technological progress from the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s. The Grange in Oregon also experienced this shift from liberal social critique to defensive nationalism.

By 1938, the ninth year of the Great Depression, the agricultural community in Oregon faced limited credit availability, wildly fluctuating (and often unsatisfactory) market prices, and an outdated infrastructure. Farmers were embroiled in open debate on the value of socialized services and Labor Unions. At this time, the Granges in Oregon spoke openly and often on all of these topics in addition to a strong support of legislation on market controls where agricultural products were concerned, and increasing interest in education and healthcare being publicly funded.

Entering the war with minimal modern infrastructure rural farm families in Oregon exited the war with near universal access to electricity, phone lines, and paved roads. They even practiced their farming and ranching in new ways as modern internal combustion-engine machinery became increasingly available and affordable. The State Grange in Oregon, and its

¹¹² William G. Robbins, "Cornucopian Dream: Remaking Nature in Postwar Oregon" *Agricultural History*, 213.

Subordinate Granges in Benton County experienced all of these changes first-hand and in reaction they changed as well. *The Bulletin* changed its format and content in response to diminished resources and a changed demographic of readership. Its focus of topics went from being intent on political, legislative, and economic debate to family values and increased home-economics tips and suggestion. Its leadership, and, therefore its major writers, changed as well. With the new leaders came a shift in the tone of the publication in regards to political and social orientation from liberal to conservative with resolutions that were more concerned with “the American way” than with analysis and discussion of necessary services and possibilities of socialization.

Mary’s River, Mountain View, and Luckiamute Granges all engaged in war support activities from 1941 through 1945. Their members regularly resolved to engage in fundraisers for the Red Cross, service members, and the civilian populations of European countries. They featured returning soldiers, sailors, and marines to speak at their Hall Meetings in order to learn more about their experience and to generally show support. Each Grange, as a community, voted to purchase war bonds, and consistently reiterated the importance of doing everything possible to support the war effort.¹¹³

In the Postwar years the economic woes of the Great Depression seemed to have faded. The technological developments that had been hard-pushed by the United States Government during the war had bled into increased mechanization and available technology to farmers. Development on the West Coast during the war for improved transportation of military forces and equipment left Oregon with a much-strengthened infrastructure by 1945. Furthermore, the Postwar U.S. funded states like Oregon with even more money to continue to develop infrastructure like power lines, telephone lines, roads, and bridges. The demobilized service members and equipment were quickly absorbed by an economy that stood tall with unique health

¹¹³ “Meeting Minutes,” Mary’s River Grange, October 1942.

amongst its global peers and with a pocket full of laws, tariffs, and government policies that helped expand its agricultural economy.

Even the attitudes of the average American citizen had changed. The concept of the United States as a nation that best exemplified human progress had grown and strengthened to a point of calcification. The Grange members, as well as the rest of America, saw Capitalism and Democracy as ideological truisms. Meeting minutes and *The Bulletin* both espoused these ideals as the ultimate goal of civilization in contrast with the fallen Fascism of Germany and Italy, and the all-too-wrong Communism of the Soviet Union.

It might be argued that the Postwar years were the final golden era of Farmers' Organizations such as the Grange. Their numbers peaked to all-time highs in the late 1940s, but continuously shrank through the rest of the 20th Century. Even if this is true, it can be said that during one of the most transformative decades of U.S. History the State and Subordinate Granges, through their own transformations, acted as a gauge of the nation's metamorphosis. From an era that casts its political, economic, and social shadow even on to today, the Granges not only reflected the changing attitudes of their own members, but of the larger cultural shifts of the United States as well.

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