

## Heirloom Program

With more than 150 years of tradition and culture, it can be difficult for new members and new Granges to acclimate and truly become part of the organization. While our ritual and language are beautiful, they are often cited as unattractive or barriers to entry for those without a deep Grange background – yet without them, we lose our identity and the thing that bonds us as a fraternity. Change is a constant aspect of life, as our ritual tells us, but retaining what makes us Grange is essential to fulfilling the charge from our founders – for the Grange to be perpetual.

For us, the Grange traditions and values are our heirlooms – inseparable pieces of the Grange that are passed down through our membership over generations. These valuable cornerstones of what it is to be a Grange and Grangers are part of our identity and tie us to our roots while preparing us for success in the future.

### Imparting Lessons through Values Readings

One of the biggest disconnects with new members – especially members of younger generations with less of an orientation toward formal ritual work – is the sometimes obscure language and archaic presentation of these foundational lessons during Degree Days or Installations. Many new members are never given or read the Declaration of Purposes or see degrees because we infrequently hold exemplifications, and as such our Grange heritage and identity becomes compromised.

This program is designed to impart these lessons to new Grange members in a way that meets them at a modern level of comfort and attention span while creating meaningful connection to the lessons themselves that are the most important piece of the ritual work. Values readings are just that – short one or two sentence snip-its that communicate a lesson or a value. As attention spans wane, even in older adults, they offer a new way to incorporate our most basic and fundamental lessons to new and seasoned Grangers to encourage thought and reflection and application to daily life, no matter your age or occupation.

Including these readings as part of your work does not change the way in which a Grange functions, the formalities of a Grange meeting or any other part of the work of an active Grange. These suggested readings come from our degree work and other ritual and foundational documents. They fit easily into the order of business of a Grange meeting in the Good of the Order section or can be used to inspire the occasional Lecturer's program or at another appropriate time during the course of your meeting.

Change is inevitable, as our founders told us through the ritual work they left us. Even as we change, evolve and grow, it is essential that we retain and impart upon new members our most sacredly held values – not only those of faith, hope, charity and fidelity, but also of civility, respect for others, nonpartisanship, lifelong education, the reverence for those who allow us to meet our most basic of needs (agriculturalists and others that produce our food and shelter), and more.

By providing direct quotes from these ritual and essential documents as part of our meetings, all members are part of the journey and new members become more familiar with our culture and traditions and form a deeper bond with the organization as a whole. Having heard several of the phrases from the degrees and installation as well as the Declaration of Purposes over the course of a year or more prior to seeing the degrees or installation in full form, members are much more likely to be more attentive, better understand the teachings and welcome the experience to see Grange heritage on display. This focus on a slow introduction to the lessons is key to connecting them with the Grange of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

The program provides one reading for each monthly meeting.

## 2024 Heirloom Program Readings

Winter B.2 (January) – “Encourage improvement; remember that Nature’s motto is onward; she never goes backward.” (Installation Ceremony; Installing Officer’s charge to President)

Winter B.3 (February) – “In old age we enjoy the fruits of a well-spent life, surrounded by friends, and in a happy Home, noted for fidelity.” (Fourth Degree; Steward)

Spring C.1. (March) – “We proclaim it among our purposes to continue our historical appreciation of the abilities and equality of women.” (Grange Declaration of Purposes)

Spring C.2. (April) - “In our fraternity there is work for all and those reap the most abundant harvest of Grange benefits who contribute most liberally of their own time and talent.” (Official Grange Obligation Ceremony; Secretary)

Spring C.3. (May) – “For in our fraternity there is work for all, and the idler has no place among Patrons of Husbandry.” (First Degree; Vice President)

Summer C.1 (June) – “Grangers are likened to Shepherds. Our flock is our Grange and our neighbors. We are taught to keep ‘those within the fold, and to reclaim the wandering.. Be patient with the wayward, carefully instruct the erring, diligently seek and bring back the straying and those that are cast out.’” (Second Degree; Chaplain)

Summer C.2 (July) – “Changes and transformations are constantly passing before us.” (Second Degree; Ceres)

Summer C.3 (August) - “Wherever you go, whatever your calling, aim to do good. Good deeds are ever fruitful of yet more good.” (Second Degree; Lecturer)

Autumn C.1 (September) – “It is delightful to acquire knowledge, and much more so to diffuse it.” (Third Degree; Lecturer)

Autumn C.2 (October) – “We desire a proper equality, and fairness; protection for the weak; restraint upon the strong; in short, justly distributed power. These are American ideals, the very essence of American independence, and to advocate the contrary is unworthy of the sons and daughters of our Republic.” (Grange Declaration of Purposes)

Autumn C.3 (November) – “That you may enjoy your rewards dispense Charity, the flowers of brotherly love, as freely as Nature spreads her flowery carpet over all the earth. And let your Charity extend to all humanity.” (Third Degree; Flora)

Winter C.1 (December) - "Patrons, carry with you a feeling of compassion for those who strive to make the world a better place." (Installation Ceremony; Installation Officer)