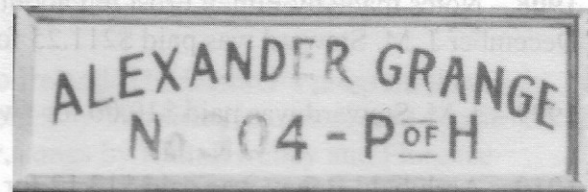


1908 - GRANGE HALL - 2008

HOME OF ALEXANDER GRANGE # 304

This is an article about the Grange Hall and some of the activities that took place there. This is not intended to be a history of Alexander Grange #304. That is the group that makes this building its home and the group responsible for its construction and up-keep of the Grange Hall. Pliney Frost produced a history of the group in 1989, part of its 100th anniversary.

Sources of information used in this article include material collected by Pliney Frost including clippings from the Calais Advertiser, Bangor Daily News and Grange Herald. Several copies of the Alexander Grange Annual Newsletter were in this collection that he gave to A-CHS for safe storage.



The Grange Hall in 2008; its weathered sign, and the granite doorstep marked:

P of H 1908

A bit of history etched in stone!



Three related and necessary events predate the Grange Hall. Alexander Grange #304 was organized on August 24, 1889. Names of the applicants (Charter Members) were J. C. F. Stephenson, Mrs. J. C. F. Stephenson, Albion Keith Paris Berry, Horace Frost, Florence Frost, John Crafts, Isaiah Bailey, Mrs. Isaiah Bailey, George M. Bailey, Mrs. Claudius M. Huff, Augustas Wellington Frost, William H. Brown, Jasper Bailey, Charles A. Frost, Robert Clark C. Brown, Charles L. Brown, John L. Seamans, Merton Scribner and Charles Sidney Hunnewell. A. K. P. Berry was the first Master. (I have written full names here, not just initials that too often were used on the original. Of interest to historians of the state and national scene, Albion Keith Parris (1788 - 1857) was a popular Maine Governor and John Charles Fremont (1813 - 1890), explorer of the American west, carried Maine in the 1856 presidential election, but lost in the nation to James Buchanan.)

For reasons unknown to this researcher, it was necessary to reorganize #304 and that was done on June 23, 1906. Leaders then were True Varnum, Charles E. Tyler, Florence E. Frost, Delmont Dwelley, Wilson Frost, W. L. Bradeen, Frank Flood, Charles L. Brown, Earl Varnum, Edith Varnum, Annie Tyler, Lizzie A. Brown and Lottie Frost. True Varnum was the master.

Finally, on May 29, 1908, Lizzie A. and Charles L. Brown deeded for \$1.00 a lot between his store and the M. E. Church to Alexander Grange #304. The lot was 110 feet by 70 feet. A condition was attached to the sale; that no person shall be allowed to buy or rent the grounds, or building thereon, for trading purposes.

1908 – Notes made by Pliny Frost tell about the construction of the hall. From October through December J. M. Steward was paid \$211.25 for “Building Hall.”

1909 – J. M. Steward was paid \$10.00 for “work on hall.”

1910 – Archibald Beney was paid \$13.12 for “mason work.” Edgar Berry was paid \$13.50 and Stephen D. Frost \$29.75 for “work on stable.” Nails purchased from S. S. Pineo in Milltown came to \$8.54. Lumber, boards and shingles from James Murchie & Sons cost \$58.33. More shingles were purchased from Granville Chase Co. in Baring for \$20.25.

James Murchie had mills and stores on either side of the border. When we go to the Charlotte County Museum in Milltown, NB, we are visiting his home. By 1908 his sons William, George, John, James and Henry were running the business.

1911 - \$50.00 was paid to W. J. Harper for a piano.

William J Harper tuned pianos for a living and did his business out of 17 Monroe Street, Calais.

1912 – Fred Bohanon worked on the hall - \$40.00

This information indicates that the hall cost \$274.37 and the stable \$130.37.

1917 – Miss Blanche Webster demonstrated war bread on Saturday evening, December 15th. Member Josiah Bailey died. Resolutions of Respect were published in the Calais Advertiser and Bangor Commercial.

1924 – James McVay of Calais drove to Alexander to install officers. There was a small attendance because of the cold weather. A baked bean supper followed the installation; 50 were present.

1927 - The Annual Fair was held October 13th featuring chicken supper and home made ice cream. Members voted not to rent the hall to DeWolfe Mann for dances but to hold dances to raise funds for a new stove. New locks were put on the hall and stable.

1928 - Nora Seamans used the hall for an ice cream social to benefit the Church. Mr. Tomkins had free use of the hall for a school entertainment and dance. The town was asked to pay back rent on the hall that was used for town meetings.

1929 - The hall was used for a Pound Party and the Church Circle meetings. New curtains for the stage were purchased and new oilcloth was placed on the tables. Dances were held with a local orchestra; 50 cents for men and 10 for women, Hot dogs were sold. On the 4th of July, Ralph Brown's Orchestra supplied the music. In October, members and town's people cut bushes at the cemetery.

1930 - The roof was patched and the chimney topped. Bob McArthur did the work. A dance was held to raise money to buy new lamps. These electric lamps were run on a Delco type system that generated DC power with a gasoline engine. Members voted to give a day's labor at the cemetery. Should they get a new fence or repair the old?

1931 - May 1 was cemetery clean-up day. A baked bean supper and dance were held to get money for the cemetery fence. The members voted against renting the hall for movies. Harvey Smith was hired to keep order at the July 4 dance. Entertainment at the November 14 meeting was music on the Victrola. Cecil Frost and Cecil Leighton were paid to dig the drain, \$1.60 each for 4 hours work.

1932 - James McVay gave an interesting talk on his trip to Ireland. The lecturer's program that night consisted of readings by Alice Staples and Eva Perkins, songs by Marjorie Hunnewell and Carrie Varnum, readings by Hiram Staples and Bertha McArthur, songs by Ruth Dwelley and Florence Ferguson, and a reading by Linnie McArthur.

1937 - The members voted to postpone setting the cemetery fence until spring. Fannie Dwelley had use of the hall for entertainment to benefit the Red Cross. Olive Edgerly used the hall for a school time and wood was ordered for the cook stove.

1938 - It was decided to shingle the roof and to work on the cemetery in May. The lighting system was not working. Would new batteries solve the problem or did they need a new system from Westinghouse? Cost of the new system was \$232 plus trade in; members voted for the new system. A sack of pulp plaster was purchased to patch the walls. Broken windows were repaired, Friday night dances were held with dogs and rolls; 40 cents for men, 25 cents for the ladies. In August the walls were washed in preparation for a coat of light green paint.

1939 - Eva Flood used the hall for the 4-H club. Paul Dwelley and Ivan Jeffery were in charge of dances. Hale School graduation was held on June 8th with entertainment arranged by teacher Eva Bennett. The annual Pomona Grange supper was baked beans, scallops and the fixings. The chicken supper cost 50 cents, waiters ate free; \$35.00 was taken in. The town owes \$17.00 for rent of the hall and stable. Broken glass was again replaced; Teacher Mary Severance had a Christmas tree and entertainment at the hall.

1940 - New curtains were hung in the upper hall and ½ cord of wood was delivered. (In late January, Charlie Brown's Store burned. The building was only about 30 feet from the Grange Hall and this concerned the members. (See issue 138, page 18 for newspaper account of the fire.) On February 7,

