



*Our Community* celebrates the varied people, organizations, and institutions that make up the rich tapestry that is Tompkins County. These displays highlight the diversity of our people past and present, at work and play, and in service to each other.

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# The Grange Movement in Tompkins County

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# Our Community



1880 Grange building, 1880



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**The Grange Movement in Tompkins County**

The Grange movement in Tompkins County was a significant part of the rural reform movement. It aimed to improve the lives of farmers by providing them with a place to meet, discuss their problems, and seek solutions. The Grange also provided a variety of services, including a library, a school, and a place for social gatherings. The movement was led by Oliver Howard, who was elected as the first Grand Master of the Grange in Tompkins County in 1849. Under his leadership, the Grange grew rapidly and became a powerful force in the community. The Grange movement in Tompkins County was a testament to the power of community and the importance of rural reform.



Two men standing in front of the Grange building, 1880



Group of people, 1880



Person plowing a field, 1880

1880 Grange building, 1880



**Our Community** celebrates the varied people, organizations, and industries that make up the rich tapestry that is Tompkins County. Every five months we will exhibit a new display highlighting the diversity of our people and the power of music and play, which serves to unite them.

Following the end of the Civil War in the 1860s the federal government encouraged the development of the **Grange Movement**. Designed to “promote the social and economic needs of farmers in the United States,” local granges spread throughout the nation. At the high point of their development, there were more than 20,000 granges.

Between 1873 and 1874, at the height of economic depression of the 1870s, the number of granges in New York State grew from 21 to 150.

A number of Tompkins County communities had granges, including Groton, Ithaca (Forest City Grange), Ulysses, Enfield, East Lansing, Lansingville, Dryden and South Lansing.

Former Ithaca City Historian Jane Dieckmann wrote, “The Enfield Valley Grange no. 295 organized in February 1875, at the home of John Theall. Members of this grange were offered discounts on household goods and farm and family insurance, and they provided a place where families could gather for social events. The group participated in county fairs, showing everything from vegetables to livestock. In 1925 the Enfield Grange built a grange hall in Enfield Center, and the hall has served as a place for grange meetings, town election dinners, and harvest festivals. The Enfield Grange is still in operation today, and by 1995 it was the only Tompkins County grange to own and maintain a building.”

Today, the Enfield Grange hosts grange meetings, pancake breakfasts, and craft clubs.



This lithograph depicts members of various professions and their influence on society. In the center, the larger image of a farmer exclaiming "I feed you all!" emphasizes the importance of the farmer and his crops.

American Oleograph Co., Milwaukee, ca. 1875 (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)



**East Lansing Grange Hall, 1907**

Photograph by Verne Morton (N1.1776-M #1882)



**Two boys visiting the East Lansing Grange Hall with produce. 1907**

Photograph by Verne Morton (N1.1776-M #1883)



## Enfield Grange Hall dusted with snow, 1926

Photographer Unknown

On loan from Enfield from Historian, Sue Thompson.





## Farmers planting asparagus, 1905

Photograph by Verne Morton (N1.1002-M #1109)



## Enfield Valley Grange

Gift from Enfield from Historian, Sue Thompson, 2016.



**Enfield Grange Hall 100 Year Celebration- Back row: Roger Brown, George Stark, Raymond Carpenter, Doris Specht, Millicent Carpenter, Roger Ballard, Dale Laue, Carol Laue, Joyce Laue. Front row: Charlotte Ballard, Mildred Stark, Warena Ramsey, Bridgette Brown, Elizabeth Rumsey.**

Photographer Unknown

The History Center in Tompkins County would like to give a special thank you to Sue Thompson, the Enfield Town Historian, who provided all of the information and photographs on the Enfield Valley Grange.