

# What's Your Pleasure?

## Today

The Ohio Lily Society will be meeting at Kingwood Center today at 2 p.m. Besides that, there's always more than enough at Kingwood for anyone to take in in one afternoon. Ending today is the Brush and Palette Club's art show.

Mansfield's sixth annual sale and showing of antiques will be today, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus building on State Route 430. Thirty - seven dealers will be offering antiques.

At the Mansfield Fine Arts Guild today, 50 paintings are making up the 101st annual Watercolor Society Exhibition. The show is open to the public until Oct. 30, daily except Mondays, noon to 5 p.m.

## Monday

The second program on safe driving on thruways and interstate highways is tonight at the Main Street United Methodist Church, sponsored by the Mansfield Business and Professional Womens Club, aided by Ohio State Highway Patrolmen. No operator's license is required to attend the free talks, and teens and women are encouraged to hear a few more tricks of the trade of staying alive on the highways. It starts at 7 and there will be a leg - stretching break.

The Carriage House on Sturges Ave. starts out the week's free do - it - yourself demonstration schedule at 7 tonight with a session on plaster casting.

## Tuesday

The Ice Capades bring their icy fantasies and music to the Cleveland Arena starting today and lasting through Oct. 27. Show times will be 8 p.m. Tuesday through Fridays, Saturday 1 and 5 p.m. and Sundays 2 and 6 p.m. with no show on Oct. 21.

# A Glimpse C

By PAUL L. WHITE

The Rocky Fork settlement area on the present State Route 39 at Mt. Zion Rd. was the site of old Madison Grange Hall which stood there from the early 1880s until the early 1940s.

Madison Grange was organized in Mansfield on June 13, 1873, and met in a building on North Diamond St. north of the First Methodist Church.

One of the early records which reported the meeting on the evening of Dec. 12, 1874, listed help to the grasshopper - damaged areas in the Western states with a \$5 gift as one of the grange's projects.

By 1875, members of the Madison Grange felt a need for combined or cooperative purchasing as a way to aid farmers financially. Minutes of a March meeting show that \$100 was borrowed to get the project under way. In May of the same year, a shipping company was set up with stock selling for \$5 per share.

On May 27, 1876, the Madison Grangers decided to hold all future meetings at 1 p.m. "on the Saturday on or before the full moon."

The rental charge of \$40 per year for the hall in Mansfield appeared to be excessive to the grange members because they moved to another building in the city. A motion to buy a foot - pumped organ failed for want of funds to pay for it.

Grange records uncovered by Madison Grange member Max McFarland, show that by November, 1878, the purchasing cooperative operated by the group was really in full swing. Twenty barrels of salt, quantities of tea, coffee, gloves and mittens were among the items mentioned in the minutes as being available for distribution.

This meeting was also a highpoint in the Madison Grange history for a grange hall in the country as first mentioned as well as a possible union with other granges to accomplish the proposed project.

There had already been a consolidation with Troy Grange in 1877 but in 1879, 39 members dropped out of this consolidation to Centennial Grange.

Apparently some of the commodities handled by the grange cooperative purchases were not of high quality. The minutes list one-barrel of sugar, 10 pounds of Japanese tea, two pounds of ground pepper, and 36 boxes of bluing being returned to the A. A. Coulter Co., by the Grange.

The old Hickory Hall School at the northwest corner of the State Route 39 and Hickory Lane (which is now incorporated in an apartment building at the same site) served as the first country location of Madison Grange. The move was made to the Hickory Hall School in January, 1880.

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An organ was finally purchased in February, 1887, and in May it was decided to reduce grange dues and provide free dues to the organist. It was also decided to pay the secretary one dollar for bringing the cooperative groceries for distribution at the meeting.

On Dec. 10, 1887, the grange officially established its cooperative association to enlarge the scope of buying and selling.

Around the turn of the century a handsome new two story grange hall was built adjacent to the George A. Mentzer Sr. farm just north of the State Route 39 - Mt. Zion Rd. intersection across from the Campbell

# Of The Mansfield That Was



The former Madison Grange Hall was located at the intersection of State Route 39 and Mt. Zion Rd. It was built about 1900, 10 years before this picture was taken.

Mill at the Rocky Fork settlement.

What happened at the grange meetings after the secret rituals?

There were heated discussions on topics of concern of that day. It is interesting to note that many of the topics could apply to the present.

Among the more interesting and intriguing discussions through the late 1800s and early 1900s included: "What earthly use can old bachelors be? In what way can the sisters overcome? What kind of seed corn can we plant to get it to mature the earliest? What position should the farmers take on the Knights of Labor? Which member is the most useful to order — the young or the

old? Does ignorance cause more crime than intemperance?

Will the moral man receive the same punishment as the drunkard or swearer? What age should you break colts? Should we endure trespassing on our farms for hunters, dogs, ferrets and guns? Which is preferred — a good hearted but shiftless neighbor or one who is thrifty but stingy? Are men more addicted to gossip than women? and how much should a woman know of her husband's business?"

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Some of the activities included demonstrations such as that held on the George Moser (now the John Woods) farm on how to use dynamite and other explosives in farm work.

Madison Grange members also engaged in protests such as when they took exception to the government's distribution of free seeds, county employees going to work on county work time, and opposing the hiring of J. W. Palmer as county surveyor.

On Feb. 24, 1912, the Madison Grange sent a resolution to Mansfield City Council asking that body to "substitute the grade crossing at Park Avenue East for one safe for public traffic." This request was accomplished about 22 years later when the present Park Avenue East underpass was constructed.

Social events included the Pioneer Singing on each first Saturday in June. Special events and occasions of

celebrations usually required a speech from John F. Kramer.

The grange building needed roof repairing in 1912. It was put off until a wind decided the issue. In 1913, the hall had a valuation of \$700 placed on it.

The grange dwindled through the early 1930s but the advent of the Grange Mutual Causality Co. handling insurance in 1935 gave the membership rolls a lift.

By 1939 the old grange hall was nearly abandoned as the meetings were sifted to the Woodville School building on East Cook Rd. The last record indicating use of the old grange hall was made in 1941.

The Madison Grange was reorganized on Nov. 5, 1942, at a meeting in the old Little Washington School building on Hanley Rd. just south of Little Washington. The grange finally purchased this frame school building on April 8, 1950, for \$2,000 and \$25 for a pump.

Many of the old families of the Rocky Fork settlement and the surrounding area were members of the Madison Grange. These include George Mentzer Sr. John and Frank McFarland families, the Bells, Balliets, Calhouns, Kerns, N. E. Smith, Hammetts, Swishers, and the McCammos.

The old Madison Grange Hall on the Mansfield - Lucas Rd. was truly the center of the community's activities, be they serious matters concerning agriculture, discussions of national and community problems, or the lighter social life so necessary to the families of any community.

(Photo loaned by Lawrence Schmahl to the Richland County Historical Society. Madison Grange Historical records furnished by Max McFarland.)