

Squires Minutes 7/11/2024

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY SQUIRES

Minutes for the Meeting of July 11th, 2024

Art Scutro opened the Meeting.

Rick Marsh provided the Words of Inspiration by leading the assembled in a rousing rendition of God Bless America in honor of our Nation's 248th birthday.

Art then recognized Steve Ensign. He was saluted for his contributions to New London and the New London Historical Society.

Bill Helm introduced his guest Peter Nichols who was voted in as a new member by the assembled.

Last month's Minutes were approved.

Thanks to Garry Keane for his work on the website.

We need volunteers for the Words of Inspiration in August.

Annual Dues collection period is in effect and Dues need to be in by August 31st.

Dave Wood introduced our featured speaker, Steve Taylor, former Agricultural Commissioner, who spoke on the creation and history of the Grange movement in New Hampshire.

The Grange also known as the Order of Patrons of Husbandry is the oldest American agricultural advocacy group with a national scope. It was founded by Oliver Hudson Kelley in 1867 with the idea of bringing farmers together to discuss agricultural practices and correct inefficient methods.

Many of the ceremonies of the Grange appear to have been borrowed from the traditions of Masonic Order. The motto of the Grange is "Faith, Hope, Charity and Fidelity". Women were included as members and could serve in executive positions. Besides being an advocate for the agricultural community, the Grange was also locally important for its social dimension. Grange meetings became locally important as an venue for promoting cohesiveness in small communities and were valued for the gatherings that brought neighbors together. The Grange also became politically active and sponsored legislation to cap railroad and grain storage rates. The movement in NH was responsible for the creation of an agricultural college within UNH, free libraries and Rural Free Delivery (mobile Post Offices). The national Grange promoted the creation of the Department of Agriculture as well as Rural Electrification. The power of the Grange waned in the 20th century with the consolidation of the farming industry and the social aspects of the meetings supplanted by the encroachment of modern entertainment options. The Grange, however, was an important element in the social and business development of rural American Agriculture after the Civil War.

Steve did his usual wonderful job in bringing to life a part of Americana that few outside the farming community know about today.

Next month on August 8th two LSPA members Kirk Bishop and Stu Greer will speak on Watershed and the effect on our local lakes.

Submitted: Tom Flynn, Secretary