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## Archival Chronicle

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### The Grange: Farmer's Advocate



*The Jackson Township Grange, located in Hancock County, poses for a group picture in the 1890s. Women have been admitted from the beginning as equal members. Gift of Sarah Rosenberger.*

The Order of the Patrons of Husbandry, commonly known as the Grange, is a fraternal organization for farmers which was created on December 4, 1867 as the "National Order of Agriculture." Initially the Grange was formed as a social, cooperative, and educational organization. In later years, though, it became a representative political advocate for nineteenth century farmers.

The first Grange in Wood County, Ohio, called the Prairie Grange, was organized on November 24, 1873 in Weston. Other chapters were organized soon afterwards, more than likely as the result of the economic panic of 1873 and the distressed condition of the farming industry.

A number of Grange organizations in northwest Ohio are represented in the holdings of the Center for Archival Collections. Included are membership rosters, minutes, and descriptions of educational and social activities sponsored by the local chapters. For a more descriptive list of agriculture-related holdings, including records of Grange chapters, see the [Agriculture Manuscript Collections Bibliography](#).

During times of trouble, the Grange served as a morale booster for the farm family. The Grange continues to be an active organization in many parts of the United States. Thanks to this long existence, the records of these local Grange chapters provide a unique opportunity to study the changing conditions of agriculture and especially that of the family farm.

—Stephen M. Charter



By 1912 Ohio farmsteads were fully developed, with water pumped by windmill power, silos to store feed for livestock, and smaller outbuildings for storing and maintaining an array of machinery. CAC General Photograph Collection.



Agriculture remains an important part of the northwest Ohio economy. Pictured here are the grain loading facilities at the Port of Toledo as they appeared in 1963. Photographer, Robert Packo, Toledo, for the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority. CAC General Photograph Collection.

Threshing crews and their engines were a common sight at harvest time. This crew was working in Hancock County in the early 1900s. Gift of Sarah Rosenberger.



Drainage of farmland has always been a problem in the Great Black Swamp. The Buckeye Traction Ditcher (pictured here near Hamler, Ohio in 1905) was a successful attempt to help farmers keep more land under cultivation with less work. CAC General Photograph Collection. For more recent related material, researchers may wish to refer to the William F. Wittenmeyer/Garwood Buckeye Traction Ditcher Collection ([MS 380](#))