

Stonyford Creamery, Odd Fellows Lodge 456 and Grange #686—

What is the Common Element?

By Roy Stewart and Joyce Bond

Question: What do these three subject organizations—one a corporation and the other two fraternal organizations—have in common. Answer: the building in Stonyford, California, at the corner of Market and 1st Streets, which is now the Stonyford Grange #686. The 100+ year-old building began as a creamery, to service the several dairies located in Stonyford. It was organized and incorporated on April 30, 1913, by five men who were its first directors: A.T. Welton, F.M. Kesselring, W.E. Whitcher, G.T. McGahan, and Bruce H. Sutliff¹. Sutliff sold the property to the creamery². A. T. Welton was its first president and had the building constructed in 1914. Two of its builders were George Mason and Les McGahan³.



Figure 1. *Stonyford Creamery in 1914 (from Back in Time, Stonyford Community History, p. 279, photo courtesy of Clayton Moore.)*

Arthur Thomas Welton was an Australian by birth (1843) who immigrated to San Francisco, and then Stonyford, in 1868⁴. He was an educated man who taught school and was a land surveyor and notary public. He was related by marriage and fostering to the Morris, Mason, and Walkup families—three of the oldest in the Stonyford area. He was also a large landholder (240 acres in Stonyford and 120 acres in the foothills of what is now the Mendocino Forest.) He was an original stockholder and president of the Stonyford Creamery (aka Snow Mountain Creamery, that name appears in some history books). The first operator of the creamery was Bill Bailey and then a Mr. Laughingwell (both men are lost to Stonyford history).

In 1916, the creamery was taken over by George Lemuel Mason. In a 1918 history book, Mr. Mason was said to be “One of the most enterprising and progressive men in western Colusa County.”⁵ George Lemuel Mason was a na-

tive of the area, born near Little Stony Creek, in 1875, where the East Park Dam now stands. He lost his mother at age five and went to live with A.T. and Ida Welton, who raised him until he turned twenty. He then learned ranching and later married Minnie Robertson, in Stonyford. He joined with her uncle, Albert (A.L.) Robertson, in the butchery business for five years. In 1916, at age 41, he journeyed to the University of California, in Davis, to study dairy-products manufacturing. He was an original stockholder in the creamery, and took over the business upon returning from Davis. He operated the business and produced a “fine grade of creamery butter,” ice cream, and ice “using a DeKalb ice machine of five tons’ capacity.”⁶ From an undated *Willows Journal* article written by Stonyford resident Anita Butler, the ice machine was in the “floor of the building which made 300 tons of ice at a freezing there being no electricity all the machinery was run by gas engines. There was a big demand for ice, so Mr. Mason made ice cream and ice and added a few groceries and meat. He closed the business in the early 20s.”

“*Back in Time, Stonyford Community History,*” indicates that the creamery was sold to the IOOF Lodge 456, by a Mr. Pearson, in 1927. That would have been Charles A. Pearson, who was the corporation’s president.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF), Lodge 456

Odd Fellows—odd name. The origin of that name is shrouded in mystery. The most likely source, according to *Wikipedia*, emanates from the guild system that was important in 17th Century England.⁷ A worker who was not a member of a guild was an “odd fellow.” Some guilds lent their name to social organizations: stone masons to Masons (Freemasonry). It seems logical that these non-guild members—odd fellows—would also lend their name to an organization that became known as the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF). While the origin of the name is murky, the beginning of the organization in North America isn’t. It was started in Baltimore, Maryland, by Thomas Widye, in 1819.

The organization quickly grew in popularity; between 1860 and 1920 it was the largest social organization of its type in North America.⁸ The organization came west with the gold miners and early-day settlers in California. It reached Stonyford, with Lodge 456, on April 1, 1922.

The founding officers of Lodge 456 were M.L. McGahan, Nobel Grand; William McGahan, Vice Grand; Charles A. Butler, Secretary; and Louis I. Morris, Treasurer. To initiate a new lodge, requires five charter members from other lodges. They were Charles Butler, Newville Lodge #321; M. L. McGahan, Colusa Lodge #133; W.W. McGahan, Newville Lodge #321; Harry N. Britton, Yerba Buena Lodge #15; and Charles H. Hanes, Williams Lodge #299.⁹

From 1922 until 1927, or later, Lodge 456 met in “the Library,”¹⁰ which was located in private homes until 1985, when it found lodging in the Indian Valley School.¹¹ IOOF records show that a building was purchased in 1933. Although the dates are inconsistent with other sources, this may have been the subject building. The lodge may have rented the building, before purchasing it. IOOF records indicate they paid rent, either to “the Library” or for the hall.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows became the first fraternity in the United States to include both men and women, when it adopted the *Beautiful Rebekah Degree* on September 20, 1851, by initiative of the

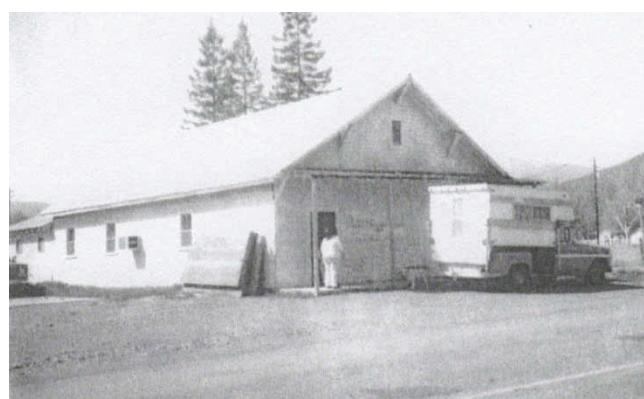


Figure 2. IOOF Lodge 456 in 1969 (photo from Rene Ross, Colusa County Appraiser)

Honorable Schuyler Colfax. The Stonyford lodge instituted the *East Park Rebekah Degree* lodge on April 21, 1923, by Mrs. Fanny M. Clancy, Past President of the Rebekah Assembly.¹²

The first officers of this Rebekah lodge were Noble Grand, Mrs. Kate Ciley; Vice Grand, Mrs. Nora Morris; Secretary, Mr. Charles Butler; Treasurer, Mr. Rufus Stites; Warden, Mrs. Anita Butler; Conductress, Miss Mildred Ciley; Right Supporter of Noble Grand, Mrs. Edith Haynes; Left Supporter of Noble Grand, Mrs. Lily Lyons; Right Supporter of Vice Grand, Mrs. Addie Edwards; Left Supporter of Vice Grand, Mrs. Della Fellow; Inner Guardian, Mrs. Nellie Farris; Outer Guardian, Mr. William Lyons; Chaplain, Mrs. Ollie Taylor; Charter Members: J.W. Morris, Charles Butler, William McGahan, Minnie Crumley, Mildred Ciley, Mrs. Nora Butler, Mrs. Charles Butler and Mrs. Kate Ciley.¹³

IOOF records show that the lodge “started strong,” in 1922, but within 20 years membership had dropped below twenty members. The 1958 annual report showed there were only eight members.¹⁴

Lodge 456 was re-instituted (reactivated) on January 11, 1959. The officers were Richard Moore, Nobel Grand; Phil Shimmel, Vice Grand; John McCluer, Secretary; John Adams, Treasurer; Murray McGahan, Warden; George Evans, Conductor; Willis Wilson, Chaplain; Earl Moore, Right Supporter to Nobel Grand; Charles Butler, Left Supporter; Arthur Schaefer, Right Supporter to Vice Grand; Carl Soeth, Left Supporter; Lawrence Moore, Sr., Inside Guardian; Pat McDaniel, Outside Guardian; and Robert Bazilias, Right Scene Supporter.¹⁵

In 1975 Lodge 456 merged with the Monroe Lodge #289, in Willows. At that time, Lodge 456 reported a membership of seven: Kingman Reynolds (Booneville), Dick Moore (Willows) John Adams (Willows), James Callahan (Elk Creek) Melvern Hanes (Elk Creek), Earl Moore (Stonyford) and Lawrence Moore (Stonyford). Also in 1975, the last three to leave the lodge were Phil Shimmel, Art Schaefer and Carl Soeth, who had died.¹⁶

The building was sold to the Stonyford Grange #686 in 1976¹⁷. (The deed for the property is dated Aug. 10, 1977; it was recorded on Nov. 20, 1980.)¹⁸

The Grange, # 686

Stonyford Grange #686--whose official title is Grange Patrons of Husbandry, 686 Stonyford--came to Stonyford in April 1940¹⁹. It is part of the Granger Movement that was founded by Oliver Hudson Kelley, in 1867, to give farmers a voice in the sale and distribution of their production. It is a uniquely American organization that was formed to fight the tyrannical and monopolistic practices of railroads and grain-elevator operators who charged farmers exorbitant rates for transporting and handling their goods. The organization came to California in 1872. On June 10, 1873, the Sycamore Grange was formed in Grand Island and became

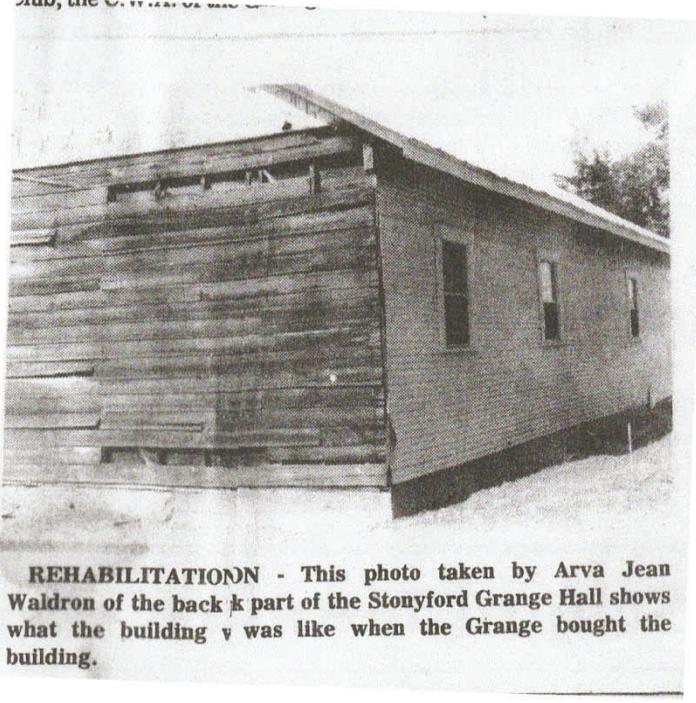


Figure 3. L-R, 1st row: John H. McClure, Dick Moore, Phil Shimmel; 2nd row: Unk, Unk, Willis Wilson, and John M. Adams

the “vehicle for spreading the Granger Movement throughout Colusa County which included the territory that is now Glenn County.”²⁰

From its formation in Stonyford in 1940, lodge 686 met at odd locations until it found a home of its own, in 1976, in the former IOOF building at 101 Market Street (corner of Market and 1st streets). The building was a mess and the Grangers had a lot of work to do before it became useful. The work was costly and often had to wait until funds could be raised. The work included installing water and drain lines and a septic tank, removing the back wall and installing bathrooms and a kitchen, replacing three outer walls and removing an old lean-to, adding windows and an entrance hall—in other words, an extensive remodeling of a then-63 years-old structure that was nearly in ruins. The work took five years, or more, to complete.

Daryl Bond was Master when the hall was purchased. In a recent interview, he remembered²¹ going over to Willows that day and paying the Odd Fellows \$1,000 for the building. Daryl was the Stonyford Postmaster. He and wife, Joyce, moved to Stonyford in 1974 and became Grange members that same year. Neither remembers where meetings were held prior to the purchase of the building. Daryl remembers that the building had badly deteriorated and that there was a large hole in the middle of the floor. This hole was likely where the creamery’s ice making machine had been located. It is unclear as to whether the ice machine was still in place when the Odd Fellows took possession from the Stonyford Creamery. If it had been removed, then the Odd Fellows must have temporarily patched up the hole, and the patch had deteriorated along with the rest of the structure? Otherwise, they removed the machine and left the hole behind.



REHABILITATION - This photo taken by Arva Jean Waldron of the back part of the Stonyford Grange Hall shows what the building was like when the Grange bought the building.

Figure 4. This picture and caption appeared in the *Willows Daily Journal* article referenced in Note 17

Unfortunately, most of the Grange’s pre-1976 records no longer exist and the early history has been lost. The history that remains is from a selective group of newspaper clippings, most undated, that have been gathered into two scrapbooks (SB1 and SB2) that are presently located in the Stonyford Museum. These articles are from the early 1970s through the mid-‘80s; the meager history recorded in *Back in Time, Stonyford Community History*, ends with the book’s publication in May 1993. The Grange building is currently managed by Chuck and Shirley Burnett. Grange and building history for the years 2015 and 2016 is from them.

Stonyford Grange 686 was chartered April 23, 1940 (see Figure 5).²²

Past Masters of the Grange are: 1940, George Mason, First Master when the Grange was Chartered; 1944, George Mason; 1945, Gladys Stites; 1946, Earl Moore; 1947 and 1948 not listed; 1949, George Mason; 1950, Earl Moore; 1951-1957, not listed; 1958, Willis Wilson; 1959-1968, not listed; 1969, Eleanor Morris; 1970-9/8/70, Frank Hartley; 10/70-12/70, Eleanor Morris; 1971-8/72, Earl Moore; 9/72-10/72, Lee Gardner; 10/72-73, Earl Moore; 1973-74, Lee Fisher; 1975-‘76, Eleanor Morris; 1977-‘80, Daryl Bond; 1980-‘81, Ruth Curtis; 1981-‘84, Walter Allen; 1984-‘86, Gloria Lessard; and Phil Shimmel, 1986-‘93.²³



Figure 5. Photo from Back in Time, Stonyford Community History, p. 281

At the time the money changed hands for the hall (August '77), Daryl Bond was Master. His fellow officers were Phil Shimmel, Overseer; Beulah Vanlandingham, Lecturer; Dolly Swisher, Chaplain; Joyce Bond, Secretary; Grace George, Treasurer; Ila Holden, Steward; Mary Lee Hudson, Assistant Steward; Lucille Moore, Lady Assistant Steward; Herbert Shallenger, Gate Keeper; Wanda Shimmel, Pomona; Gloria Lessard, Ceres; Lee Gardner, Flora; Earl Moore and Brooks McDonald, Executive Committeemen; Laura McDonald and Lynn Murray, Musicians.²⁴

The Grange was very active during the period that Daryl Bond was Master (1977-1980). Scrapbook 1 contains many articles reporting on committee meetings and on meetings by the Grange Women's Activities (GWA) group. The GWA was very active in raising the funds that were needed to complete the restoration efforts on the hall. They sponsored parties, dinners, a fashion show, a Father's Day breakfast, bingo games, a cook-book sale, and an annual Cake Walk. They were a busy group. Most of the collected newspaper clippings in Scrapbook 1 report on GWA meetings and events.

New elections were held and new officers installed in January 1981. The new Master was Walt Allen. Walt was an African-American who owned a ranch six miles south in Lodoga. He was one of several African-American families, most of whom were related, that had moved to Lodoga in the 1960s and '70s. Others who were installed, along with Walt, were Gilbert Schallenberger, Overseer; Etta Knox, Lecturer; Sandy Swenson, Secretary; Berkeley Hudson, Gatekeeper; Janis McCabe, Ceres; and Candy Kaplin and Fred Cooley, to serve with Harless Hendrikson on the Executive Committee.²⁵

Walt Allen's tenure as Master ended in 1984; the scrapbooks are silent on officer listings from then on, except for Masters: Gloria Lessard, 1984 to 1986 and Phil Shimmel, 1986 to 1993. *Back in Time . . .* reports the officers for 1993. They were Master, Phil Shimmel; Overseer, Ed Fullwood; Lecturer, Linda Trombley; Steward, Betty Fullwood; Assistant Steward, Lillian Gaddini; Lady Assistant Steward, Karen Petersen; Chaplin, Dora Cooley; Treasurer, Al Andrade; Secretary, Charlotte Roush; Gatekeeper, Joan Moon; Ceres, Etta Knox; Pamona, Joyce Andrade; and Flora, Jackie Allen. The Executive Committee consisted of Jim Moon, Walt Allen, and Larry Trombley. The Grange Women's Activities committee was: Chairperson and Treasurer, Karen Petersen; Secretary, Charlotte Roush; Social Secretary, Jackie Allen; and Chaplain, Dora Cooley.²⁶

An important award that the Stonyford Grange bestowed annually, beginning in 1981, was Citizen of the Year. Below is a list of the honorees:

Year	Name	Year	Name
1981	Carl Swisher	1992	Charlotte Rousch
1982	Zita Bezio	1993	Don Knox
1983	Kay Fisher	1994-2002	Information not available
1984	Cindy Hester	2003	Bill Dunn
1985	Ruth Hackelberg	2004	Debbie Alloway
1986	Art Schaffer (honored on his 100 th birthday);	2005	Gwen Morris
1987	Gwen Morris	2006	Joyce Bond
1988-'89	None	2007	Mary Quiberg
1990	64-Year Grange members were honored : Earl and Lucille Moore Harold Walkup Elsie Martinez Lawrence "Sharky" Moore Beulah Vanlandingham	2008	Joe Williams
		2009	Stonyford EMT Crew
		2010	Ryan Burt
		2011	Zoe Brandenberger
		2012	Ralph & Sherry Minto
		2013	Stonyford Volunteer Fire Dept.
1991	Harliss Hendrikson	2014-2015	None

Except for 1985's award winner, Ruth Hackelberg, no information survives for why these people were chosen. According to an undated newspaper article, Ruth was chosen for her fourteen years of untiring work in aiding people and in sponsoring and working on community projects and fund raisers. She initiated the hugely popular annual "Oktoberfest," in which beer-drinking, Oom Pah music and Polka dancing were enjoyed by all. The "Oktoberfest" was a fund raiser to build a new town hall²⁸. That fund-raising effort came to fruition in the mid-1990s with the construction of the large concrete-block Community Hall that sits next door to the old, 1899, Town Hall that is now the Stonyford Museum.

While the years between 1993 and 2015 are dark concerning the historical records, they were far from dark from an activities perspective. The hall itself was a frequent venue for potluck-dinner fundraisers and community get-togethers, and the Grange, as a lodge, sponsored Stonyford-Rodeo-weekend dining events. For most years during this period, dining events included a spaghetti feed on Friday night, breakfast on Saturday and Sunday mornings, and a steak dinner on Saturday night. These dine-ins were usually held at the fire hall, next door to the rodeo arena, or in the new town hall (aka Community Hall). The Grangers cooked, cleaned, served, and collected the money for

Grange uses. The Grange also began a Tuesday night, full-course, take-out or eat-in dinner. This dining event was popular from its outset and is still popular today. Dining-out opportunities in Stonyford are mostly non-existent, so this Grange event answers a need for many people. Wednesday night Bingo was also started during this period. It, too, was popular from its outset and is still so today.

All of these events placed wear-and-tear on the structure. In 2015 a second major restoration effort began with new siding and fresh paint to both the inside and outside. In 2016 a new gravel parking lot was constructed, new shingles were applied to the roof, a new sprinkler system and overhead lighting was added to the inside. The old building looks new again.

The Grangers, 33 members, who did this work, are being led by the following officers: Charles Burnett, Master; Barbara Cook, Overseer; Shirley Burnett, Secretary-Treasurer; John Huttman, Chaplain; Jack Oakley, Steward; and Thomas Adams, Assistant Steward.

Conclusion

The 102-year-old building at the corner of Market and 1st Streets, in Stonyford, is alive and well. It has had a varied and often rough history. It began as the Stonyford Creamery, by a group of investors led by A.T. Welton; it was taken over in 1916 and operated by George L. Mason. It was a focal point in the town and, likely, the only place where residents could get ice and ice cream. In 1925, the building was sold to the International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) and used as their lodge until 1975. Then, it was likely abandoned and was known to have fallen into ruins. It was purchased by the Stonyford Grange #686 in 1976. The Grangers restored it to health with a major remodeling effort that lasted into the mid-1980s. The building again became a focal point for the town and was used for a myriad of meetings and events up until the present day. In 2015, the building underwent a second major restoration that has renewed the structure to a condition that is better-than-new. The building has again become a credit to the town of Stonyford (Figure 6).



Figure 6. The Grange Hall as it looks today. Photograph by Roy Stewart, taken 07/23/16.

NOTES

- 1 – *Article of Incorporation of the Stonyford Creamery*, Colusa County Hall of Records, April 30, 1913
- 2 – *Book of Deeds*, #79, page 234, Colusa County Hall of Records, April 2, 1913
- 3 – Bond, VanLandingham, and Moore; Joyce, Beulah, and Sharkey, *Back in Time, Stonyford Community History*, n.p., May 1993, p. 280.
- 4 – McCormish and Lambert, Charles Davis and Mrs. Rebecca T., *History of Colusa and Glenn Counties California, with Biographical Sketches*, Historical Record Co., Los Angeles, 1918, p.882.
- 5, 6. - Ibid, p. 893.
- 7 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odd_Fellows, “Name,” 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence, “One theory has it”
- 8 - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_Order_of_Odd_Fellows, “19th Century,” 4th paragraph “From 1860 to 1910/1920....”
- 9 – Johnson, Nancy; Grand Marshal of the IOOF, from records and reports on file with that organization (<http://caioof.org/grand-lodge-officers/>).
- 10 – Ibid
- 11 – Bond *et.al* ,p. 212.
- 12 – *Colusa Herald*, April 24, 1923, p. 2.
- 13 – *Ibid*, April 26, 1923, p. 2.
- 14 – Johnson, IOOF records
- 15 – Butler, Anita; *Willows Daily Journal*, n.p., Jan. 15, 1959
- 16 - Johnson, IOOF records
- 17 – Waldron, Arva Jean; *Willows Journal-Press Register*, October 14, 1962, p. 5.
- 18 – *Book 496, Page 331*, Colusa County Hall of Records, Nov. 30, 1980.
- 19 – Bond *et.al* ,p. 280.
- 20 – Colusi County Historical Society, *Wagon Wheels*, 2/1973, p. 9.
- 21`- Author’s interview with Daryl and Joyce Bond on June 20, 2016, Stonyford, CA.
- 22 - Bond *et.al* ,p. 281
- 23 – Ibid, p. 283
- 24 – SB 1, p. 2.
- 25 – Ibid, p. 19.
- 26 - Bond *et.al* ,p. 283
- 27 – Ibid
- 28 - SB 1, p. 36