

ACADEMY HALL

Recalling our origins

By JOHN A. WATERHOUSE

GLASTONBURY — On June 29, 1975, approximately 125 patrons and friends of the Grange braved heat, thunder and rain to attend a dedication ceremony to mark the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Connecticut State Grange on June 24, 1885 in Academy Hall, South Glastonbury.

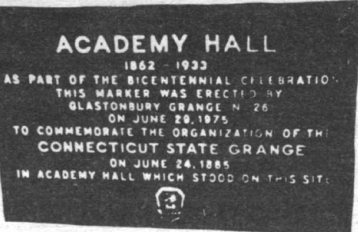
The honored guests included Connecticut State Grange Master Frank Prelli and his wife Peggy; Lady Assistant Steward of the National Grange Bernice Bagley and her husband, Maine State Grange Master Ronald Bagley.

Representing the town of Glastonbury was Vice Chairman of the Town Council Robert B. Basine, and representing the State of Connecticut was Representative from Glastonbury Jean T. Thornton, a Grange member. Also attending were the masters or representatives of most of the 14 Granges now in existence who sent delegates to the original organizational meeting.

The program opened at the Masonic Hall in South Glastonbury with the opening of the Bible and Pledge to the Flag. The Invocation was offered by The Rev. George E. Hall of St. Luke's Episcopal Church of South Glastonbury. A welcome was extended by Richard G. Williams, Master of Glastonbury Grange and Master of Ceremonies.

Elizabeth W. Williams read the Bicentennial Proclamation from National Grange Master John C. Scott. The greetings of the National Grange were delivered by Sister Bagley. A short historical talk titled "June 24, 1885" was given by

Glastonbury Grange Overseer John A. Waterhouse. The program closed with the closing of the Bible and a Benediction by Glastonbury Grange Chaplain Elizabeth Shenstone.



ACADEMY HALL
As part of the Bicentennial
Celebration
This marker was erected by
GLASTONBURY GRANGE
No. 26
on June 29, 1975
To commemorate the
organization of
THE CONNECTICUT STATE
GRANGE
on June 29, 1975
In Academy Hall
which stood
on this site

The guests traveled by bus to the site of Academy Hall where a bronze plaque was dedicated by State Grange Master Prelli, after greetings of the town and state had been delivered. A prayer of dedication was offered by State Grange Chaplain Carlton H. Platt Jr. A very beautiful floral arrangement was placed at the site by Brother Prelli on behalf of the Connecticut State Grange.

All returned to the hall where refreshments were served.

The members and officers of Glastonbury Grange 26 felt honored and privileged to have taken part in this historic event in the history of the Grange in Connecticut.

On Monday, June 24, 1885, the Connecticut State Grange was organized in Academy Hall. Representatives from 16 Granges came to Glastonbury at the invitation of J. H. Hale.

It is recorded that "There were fair skies" with a dinner served by Glastonbury Grange on the front lawn of the Hall.

The organizational meeting was held in the hall with Sherman Kimberly of West Torrington being elected Master of the Connecticut State Grange.

The building was first used as St. Luke's Episcopal Church when it was built about 1813. In 1860 it was purchased by a group of citizens from South Glastonbury and moved to become Academy Hall, used as a school in 1862.

The year 1884 saw the end of the school and the hall became a social center, with the first floor as the home of Glastonbury Grange 26 for many years.

The building was razed in 1933.