

By the Sweat of Your Brow:  
Regulation, Education, and Progress in Oregon Farming Society 1868-1888

Samantha Willden

Senior Thesis

Larry Lipin

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Consider this scene: large swaths of the electorate are unhappy. Their country has been taken over by the economic interests of a select few whose actions could be described unfair and corrupt. Pushing a product that they know is a threat to the economic success of the nation as well as the companies that they work for these select few make huge profits regardless of whether their business ventures succeed, and regardless of whether the national economy is affected badly by their actions. While this scenario may fit well in 2008, it actually took place in 1868, and was led by the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry against the monopolistic threat of railroad corporations.

The first major rail line had been built down the Willamette valley thanks to some underhanded maneuvering of railroad and stagecoach magnate Ben Holladay, owner of the East Side Company, the rail line responsible for the Willamette Valley rail project. Merchants, bankers, and legislators hailed Holladay's success as their success, seeing the railroads as a symbol of an increased flow of goods and information, and with that, higher profits. To them the railroad was the epitome of progress. However, not all Oregonians looked on Holladay's success as a victory for the entire state. For many farmers, Holladay's maneuvering of legislation reeked of corruption and the makings of a transportation monopoly.

According to one Oregon state senator, concerns about Holladay's tactics were well founded. Two years prior to Holladay's completion of the East Side Line, the Oregon legislature offered a five million acre land grant in the Willamette, Umpqua, and Rogue Valleys for the completion of a rail line from Portland to the border of California. This grant also came with two million dollars in state bonds for every twenty miles of road completed, and was awarded to the Oregon Central Railroad. While the Oregon Central struggled to lay the lines on the west side of the Willamette River, Holladay, with the help of Californian backers incorporated another

company under the same name with the intention of wresting the land grant from the West Side line.<sup>1</sup>

Completing the East Side Line first was not a guarantee of receiving the land grant, as the State legislation had already given the grant to the other Oregon Central company. To acquire the grant, Holladay spent his days courting the state legislature in what Senator Houston of the State senate called a yearlong “banquet of song and wine” to the tune of ten thousand dollars.<sup>2</sup> Oregon senators were fond of Holladay’s tune, and revoked the land grant from the Oregon Central West Side and awarded it to Holladay’s Oregon Central East Side.

Holladay’s bribery, disregard for the legislation, and use of “foreign” investment left a bad taste in the mouths of many Oregonians, among them the agriculturalist united represented by the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry, more commonly known as the Oregon Grange. Created under the auspices of the National Grange, the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry was a society created to promote the collective education of the farming class, to foster community among farmers both socially and economically, and to serve as an advocate for the rights and interests of those who made their living from the soil. Local granges became a place to discuss the direction farmers saw themselves and society going. Leaders of these local granges would then meet annually as the State Grange to discuss problems that involved all Oregon farmers. These concerns included freight regulation, the emergence of a market economy, and the role of

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Kolb Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism: Legal theory, political culture and public policy, 1868-1895” (PhD. Dissertation University of Virginia, 1993) 152.

<sup>2</sup> Henry C. Huston, “Fellow Citizens of Lane County” 18-24, Henry Clay Huston Papers, University of Oregon, Eugene. As quoted in Holden’s “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism,” 154. Ten thousand is the low estimation of Holliday’s bribes to the Oregon Legislature. Another senator, John H. Mitchell claims the number is closer to \$35,000. John H. Mitchell to Matthew P. Deady, Portland, Oct. 10, 1868, Mathew P. Deady Papers, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

education in this new, interconnected society. While the grange was not a political actor in and of itself it consolidated the opinions of farmers and encouraged its members to be active in politics.

Patrons claimed that wealth created from the cultivation of earth was superior to all other forms of wealth, and therefore the farmers should have a greater say in the way commerce and politics were run, both nationwide and in the state. This ideal set forth by the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry resonated among the farming communities and influenced anti-monopoly legislation in a way that would best provide for the large farming demographic of Oregon. The position of the Patrons of Husbandry in the anti-monopoly movement is more complex than that of the simple farmer wanting to protect the agricultural way of life. While the writings of the Patrons are steeped in a republican tradition that articulates their ideals and demands for reining in rail barons, in many ways they were a very progressive order that supported educational improvement, unity within the laboring classes (agricultural and mechanical), and a broad, active electorate. The Oregon Patrons of Husbandry's Jeffersonian, yet progressive sense of themselves and the land they possessed shaped the way they fought against transport monopolies, how they depicted themselves and their foe, and the type of legislation that they supported in the Oregon Legislature.

Railroads have held an important position in the history of the American West since their study became a historical field with Frederick Jackson Turner's presentation of "The Significance of the Frontier in American Society" in 1893. Turner's thesis was extremely influential in the way historians viewed the history of the United States and supported the view of exceptionalism in American historical writing. American exceptionalist historians, such as Turner, were very nationalist in nature, celebrating events in American history as a great march to progress, and the reason for American dominance in world politics and economics. To Turner,

the frontier was the “meeting point between savagery and civilization,” where pioneers developed and redeveloped society by overtaking the wilderness.<sup>3</sup> By civilizing the frontier, he stated, the distinct American character was formed, and was embodied in “Coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness... quick to find expedients, that masterful grasper of material things.”<sup>4</sup> This celebration of the American character pervades the early histories of territorial Oregon and its relationship with railroads and rail barons.

To celebrationist historians, the railroad was seen as the final stage of the progression from savage frontier to civilized nation. The railroad was the harbinger of progress, modernity, and economic success. In *The Old Oregon Country* western historian Oscar Osburn Winther felt so strongly about the benefits of Oregon being connected to the other states by the railroad that he likened the completion of it to salvation for the isolated citizens of the state.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, the rail barons responsible for the transport monopolies in the state were the embodiment of Turner’s unique American character. A prime example of such a position is that of James Blaine Hedges’ biography of Henry Villard. Hedges did not see this as being accomplished by the combined efforts of numerous companies, including steam, stage, and rail, but rather by the influence and actions of Henry Villard: “Of all the railway builders, none was involved for so long a period nor exerted so powerful an influence on the trend of events as did Henry Villard.”<sup>6</sup> To Hedges, Villard is a prime example of the character needed to succeed in the civilizing of the frontier: an

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<sup>3</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner. *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (Madison: Silver Buckle Press, 1984), 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Oscar Osburn Winther. *The Old Oregon Country: A History of Frontier Trade, Transportation, and Travel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1950) 152.

<sup>6</sup> James Blaine Hedges. *Henry Villard and the Railways of the Northwest* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1930) 4-5.

individualistic, opportunistic man was needed to bring the frontier of Oregon into the folds of American civilization.<sup>7</sup>

Writing at the same time as Winther, historian Richard Hofstadter began the discussion of those who, like the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry, opposed the growth of rail corporations: the Populist movement. Though the Patrons predate the Oregon Populist Party, the apolitical Patrons were often affiliated with the movement, and the two groups often shared similar views on government regulation, corporation, and special privilege. Hofstadter does not treat these populists favorably. To Hofstadter, the populist movement did not emerge out of progressive political and economic ideals, but rather as a nostalgic desire to protect an agrarian myth that was quickly evaporating in a society that increasingly relied on farming as a business, rather than a family-run enterprise.<sup>8</sup>

This view of railroads and their relation to Western history was challenged by the work of Patricia Nelson Limerick, who refuted the use of Turner's thesis in shaping the discourse of the history of the West.<sup>9</sup> Limerick pointed out how ridiculous it was for Western historians of the late nineteenth century to still base their research on a hundred year old theory. Not only had the field stagnated on a theory posed one hundred years ago, Limerick added, it was an incorrect theory, which used a poor definition of frontier and was too quick to declare a place 'civilized' when each case was often more complicated than simply looking at population density. Limerick called for a refocus in the subject of western American history, looking at sex, race, and social histories instead of strong personalities like that of Villard.

Given this, the discourse on Oregon's relationship to railroads and transportation

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<sup>7</sup> Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in the American West*, 25.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955) 24.

<sup>9</sup> Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987).

monopolies began to be re-evaluated. In her dissertation “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism”, Margaret Kolb Holden viewed the history of early Oregonian politics through the populist movement of the 1860s through 1890s. Rather than focusing on a single strong figure, Holden focused on the populist movement in general, and the ways in which it affected Oregon society and politics. Holden saw the movement as being ideologically grounded in the traditional nineteenth century political ideals of “a belief in local self-government, equal opportunity, and a distrust of monopolistic special privileges.”<sup>10</sup> In the eyes of Oregon populists as well as the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry, the biggest threat to the sovereignty of the state of Oregon was the special privileges given to rail corporations and their hold on members of state and federal legislatures. Because it was a firmly grounded agrarian society, early historians saw the populist movement as being an antiquated faction out of touch with current politics and the ways of the market (if they mention them at all). Holden portrayed the movement in a more complex way, showing that the movement was much more radical than its agrarian origins may let on:

Far from being conservative, the Populist vision of Oregon’s future included a dramatic redistribution of wealth and power through taxation, railroad regulation, and corporation laws. More importantly, it rested upon the notion that decentralized state government responsive to local preferences and accountable to the popular will could win the battle against what Populists viewed as the evils of monopoly capitalism in the late nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

While Holden saw the Oregon populist movement and the Patrons of Husbandry as progressive and modern, she also recognized the problems with the movement that led to its eventual demise in the 1890s. Despite a very strong showing in the gubernatorial race of 1892, losing out to the Republican candidate by less than a percentage point, the Populist Party of Oregon fell as fast as

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<sup>10</sup> Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism” 2.

<sup>11</sup> Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism” 28.

it rose due to a lack of legislative clout, strong anti-populist rulings by the state courts, and a fracturing of the party that led to it being reabsorbed into the Oregon Democratic Party.<sup>12</sup>

In his book *The Populist Vision*, Charles Postel concurs with this view of Holden's making, where populist sought to use economic and political reform to benefit their interests, not to overthrow the government in favor of a purely agrarian society. It was, Postel claims, the Populists' "firm belief in progress" that oriented their view of society and their part in it: "Because they believed in the transforming power of science and technology, they sought to attain expertise and knowledge for their own improvement. Because they believed in economies of scale, they strove to adapt the model of large-scale enterprise to their own needs of association and marketing."<sup>13</sup> Though Holden and Postel focus on the Populist Party, their writings also fit with the ideology of the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry.

This re-evaluation of the railroad and anti-railroad movements is explored in more depth in Richard White's new book *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*. While White sees the actions of rail barons such as Ben Holladay and Henry Villard as connecting the nation and creating the modern United States, he claims that the modernization came more from their failures than their successes.<sup>14</sup> "Railroads were like bad art," White claims, "they were not accidents. People planned these things; they were purposeful. And insofar as their repeated failures and collapses were part of larger failures and collapses, the railroads also seeded the financial clouds that produced the storms that overwhelmed them."<sup>15</sup> The lack of a market, illogical pricing rates, and self-interest driven practices of Railroad owners

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<sup>12</sup> Holden, "The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism" 512.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 4.

<sup>14</sup> Richard White. *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011) xxi.

<sup>15</sup> White, *Railroaded*... xxvii.



and managers led to a chaotic era in transportation in the west, and shows good reason why residents of the area became frustrated with their business practices and called for stronger local and national limitations on them. When looking at the anti-railroad movements of the Patrons of Husbandry through Whites analysis, the Patrons can be seen as a modernizing force, competent actors in the ways of the capitalist marketplace, not as a traditional, non-progressive group of farmers trying to preserve an antiquated way of life.

Not all recent historians agree with Holden and White's view of the populist movement and the Patrons of Husbandry as being modern. In his dissertation, Ryan Joseph Carey writes of Oregon farmers as being steeped in the Jeffersonian republican tradition, and because of this, sees them as agrarian traditionalists who reveled in an "idealized version of the white male farmer."

Working hard while being taken advantage of by corrupt corporations... The yeoman farmer, the Jeffersonian republican landowner whose ownership of private property gave him an interest in the community... Oregonian farmers who joined the Patrons of Husbandry idealized farm labor, the farm family, and the western landscape. They called on the government to make good on the Jeffersonian promise supposedly inherent in western expansion and the Oregon Country. If the West was an agricultural Eden, then surely corporations represented a fall from grace, a threat to the independence of the yeoman farmer.<sup>16</sup>

Carey describes the Patrons as being irrationally afraid of the market and commerce. To Carey it is this fear that spurred them into action against the railroads, which were a sign of progress and the integration of their agrarian republic into the dreaded market.

Though contrary to the findings of Holden and White, Carey brings up the valid point that Oregonian farmers saw themselves as the product of a Jeffersonian republic. What Carey fails to recognize is the possibility that Oregon farmers could be both Jeffersonian and modern in

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<sup>16</sup> Ryan Joseph Cary, "Building a Better Oregon: Geographic Information and the Production of Space, 1846-1906" (PhD. Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2003) 282-283.

their nature. In the writings of the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry, as well as their official newspaper *The Willamette Farmer*, Patrons used Jeffersonian republican language to describe themselves, their political desires, and the problems of transportation monopolies. These writings do not show a farming society obsessed with maintaining an unattainable agrarian society, but rather a progressive organization with a grasp on the ways of contemporary markets and politics whose goal are to improve society not just for their members, but for all residents of Oregon.

It is within the conflicting views of Carey and White that I will place my discussion. Carey portrays Oregon farmers as backwards traditionalists, clinging to isolation and fighting against integration into national markets. Essentially they are as anti-progressive as a society could get. White, on the other hand, frames the rail companies that the farmers fought against as being the true danger to progress. Instead of being beneficial to the public as the common perception would suppose, building too many railroads only harmed the progress of society. White explains the damage done to “the public, to the republic, and even to the corporation as they were profitable to many of the innovators,” by building too many railroads where there was no markets for them, and flooding existing markets with surplus of goods, to the detriment of producers.<sup>17</sup> Following this tract, if railroads hampered progress, then perhaps railroad opponents might be a voice of progress. In looking at the writings of Oregon farmers in the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry, as well as the Grange newspaper, the *Willamette Farmer*, it becomes clear that Oregon farmers were a progress oriented, and their writings on rail regulation, the nature of the marketplace, and the importance of education showed their understanding of their place in a modernizing society.

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<sup>17</sup> White, *Railroaded*, xxvi.

The proceedings of the Patrons of Husbandry account for the majority of my primary sources. Published after the annual meetings of the State Grange, these booklets were the main way that the Order's opinions, declarations, and guidance were disseminated to local Grange members. These proceedings contain speeches by the Masters (president) of the order, as well as the lecturer, whose job was to travel throughout the year on behalf of the State Grange and drum up support for Grange initiatives such as support of regulatory legislation and support for the agricultural college in Corvallis. While the proceedings show the strong opinions of the Order, the Grange's desire to stay out of politics relegates them and their proceedings to an advisory level; they could only advise their members to influence legislation, the Grange itself could not.

My other main source is the *Willamette Farmer*. Based out of Salem, the agricultural newspaper in a combination of national news, local editorials, home and farm advice, and entertainment articles. The *Willamette Farmer* was by the Grange throughout its print run, and member of the Grange would often publish Grange news in it, as well as their own opinion editorials. While some editorials discuss railroad regulation, I used this paper primarily for its expansion of the Granger dialogues on education and the connection between farmers and laborers.

Because the notion of the Jeffersonian Republican figures so heavily in this paper, a definition of the movement is needed. As the name would suggest, the political philosophy of Thomas Jefferson was highly influential in the development of the nineteenth century version of republicanism that would share his name. Classical republicanism is a political system centered on the virtuous, landed, disinterested politician who were believed capable of representing not only themselves, the "talented few" but also the "vulgar many." This was because their economic

stability kept them above corruption that might tempt a lower man.<sup>18</sup> Jeffersonians drew on John Locke's assertion that all men were "equal and independent," and that all men should be protected in "his life, health, liberty or possessions."<sup>19</sup> Jefferson's view of republicanism did not support the disinterested public person; instead Jeffersonian republicans "celebrated the informal, voluntary political life open to all."<sup>20</sup> Closely connected with this new notion of voluntary politics was the large society of independent farmers in the United States, who enjoyed lower taxes than their European counterparts and were able to spend less time toiling in the fields and more time being concerned with politics. Their needs fit well with the Jeffersonian philosophy that government interference should be kept to a minimum, as one member of the movement put it: "improve your roads, clear your rivers, cut your canals, erect your bridges, facilitate intercourse, establish schools and colleges, diffuse knowledge of all kinds."<sup>21</sup> In the eyes of Jeffersonian Republicans, government was to be used for the sole purpose of improving the lives of its citizens. It is from this political philosophy that the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry articulate their anti-monopoly movement.

To speak of the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry of the 1870s and 1880s is to speak of a large proportion of Oregonians of the time. The state Commissioner on Immigration described the territory as being comprised of a fairly homogenous group of families originating from Ohio and surrounding areas with "some means and inclination to cultivate the land," and that Oregon was not a place for "mechanics, professional men, and laborers dependent upon employment

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<sup>18</sup> Joyce Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1984) 12.

<sup>19</sup> Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order*, 20.

<sup>20</sup> Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order*, 67.

<sup>21</sup> From Thomas Cooper's *Political Essays* as quoted in Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order*, 89.

when they arrive.”<sup>22</sup> These settlers came in hopes of finding what Margaret Holden describes as “a ‘middle landscape,’ a rural place between isolated and self-sufficient” where they could create a farming homestead that could interact with society and the market when beneficial, and be secluded when desired.<sup>23</sup> Eventually, a more diverse population of merchants and laborers took up residence in Portland and Salem, but the make-up of rural Oregon stayed much the same through the latter half of the nineteenth century.

It was in the wealth that came from the soil that Oregon farmers put their trust in, which led to the distrust and opposition to the “progress” brought by corporations, particularly railroad corporations. This wariness of transport monopolies and other corporations, combined with the Jeffersonian notion of an agrarian republic created a political philosophy among Oregon farmers that emphasized the importance of a strong local self-government open to all that benefitted all, and a distrust of the special privileges given to transport monopolies. It was only through self-governance at the state level that focused on the needs of its constituents that Oregon could possibly fight against the monopolistic tendencies that came along with a capitalist society.<sup>24</sup> Oregon farmers did not want to do away with the market-based capitalist system, they just wanted to rein it in to make it more equitable considering where they thought that wealth was being generated: in the agricultural sector.

The grange served three purposes in Oregon farming society. First and most superficially, local granges served as meeting halls where members could socialize and cement community bonds through dances, threshing and quilting bees and other activities. Second, it promoted the

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<sup>22</sup> Report of the State Commissioners of Immigration (1887) as quoted in Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism,” 91.

<sup>23</sup> Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism” 86. The idea of the “Middle landscape” comes from David Alan Johnson’s *The Founding of the Far West* (California: University of California Press, 1992).

<sup>24</sup> Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism,” 2; 28.

economic interests of its members. Third it served as a place of education, where farmers could share practical information on farming techniques, as well as receive guidance and encouragement for furthering their educations in higher learning establishments. It was these second and third goals that showed the modernity of the Grange, and shaped the ways in which they dealt with railroad corporations, which they saw as corrupt monopolistic ventures that disregarded the needs of the marketplace and halted economic progress.

The Patrons of Husbandry held a progressive concept of how the markets worked and how they should work. Their support of unity between farm labor and mechanical labor under the notion of the laboring class, as well as their view on education can also be considered rather progressive.

T.L Davidson, the Secretary for the Oregon State Grange in 1877 set up the framework through which the Grange called for regulation of transportation. “The Object of the Grange,” he claimed, “is to let all men live; to fraternize them into harmonious action, thereby giving all an equal chance in the world.”<sup>25</sup> Nowhere in his speech does Davidson say that one of the goals is the downfall of transportation companies, he simply makes the argument that in order to protect the wealth producing classes of the state those companies need to be regulated for the benefit of all. The Grange often utilized its official newspaper *The Willamette Farmer* to disseminate its views and goals, and they took the opportunity to explain their view of the relationship between farmers and transportation in an 1886 editorial:

Transportation companies of every kind are necessary to our success, that their interests are intimately connected with our interests, and harmonious action is mutually advantageous... We are not enemies of railroads, navigable and irrigating canals, nor any corporation that will advance our industrial class, nor of any laboring classes... We are opposed to such spirit and management of any corporation or enterprise as tends to

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<sup>25</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1877, 10.

oppress the people and rob them of their just profits.<sup>26</sup>

Grange writers explained what appeared to rail corporations as an attack on their type of business as being a careful consideration of the “greatest good to the greatest number,” particularly the farming and laboring classes.<sup>27</sup> The Grange believed it had to look on any legislation favoring rail companies with suspicion, as they saw themselves, the farming class, as being “more liable than any other classes to suffer from unjust impositions imposed by designing and selfish men who seek unfair legal advantage.”<sup>28</sup> Patrons took issue with the fact that the railroad system was supposed to be a “common carrier” to assist all of society, but had devolved to the point of becoming “more of a curse than a benefit to the masses of the people by centralizing the wealth in the hands of a few.”<sup>29</sup>

Grangers departed from Jeffersonian republicanism in their view of the farmers’ relationship with the non-agricultural laboring class. Jefferson’s view was that agricultural work was superior to any other form of wealth creation, and should therefore be protected by legislation before consideration was made for other industries. “While agriculture is the mother of all industries, and the foundation of prosperity,” a Grange editorial writer acquiesced, “the mere pursuit of agriculture leaves a people only at the threshold of national success. Agriculture alone will not build up a world wide commerce.”<sup>30</sup> A balanced, economically vibrant society required the integration of other forms of wealth. In Granger eyes, this meant an increase in industrial capacity of Oregon. “To make Oregon a great State,” one Willamette Farmer columnist wrote, “it must have skilled labor at work to manufacture nearly everything we use.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Willamette Farmer*, June 18 1886.

<sup>27</sup> *Willamette Farmer*, October 8 1886.

<sup>28</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1885, 14.

<sup>29</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1885, 25.

<sup>30</sup> *Willamette Farmer*, January 14 1887.

<sup>31</sup> *Willamette Farmer*, January 14 1887.

This went above and beyond the Jeffersonian role of government, as the columnist also advocated for direct state intervention to make this rise in manufacturing happen through the public backing of manufacturing ventures.

This realization that a manufacturing, laboring class was necessary for the success of the state as a whole led Grangers to the conclusion that farmers and manufacturers, as the largest producers of actual wealth, should combine their efforts to create state legislation that would benefit them as the producing classes: “The interests of farmers, mechanics, and our laboring classes are too closely allied to admit of any estrangement.”<sup>32</sup> To Grangers, it was clear that the fates of the farmer and the industrial worker were inherently connected. The few monopolists, such as Villard in Oregon and Stanford in California become financial successes on the backs of the producing classes:

These few men have long ago combined to use their wealth to control labor, and fix its rewards and the price of products. If it be wage labor they fix its price, for the poor must work for what he can get, or beg or starve. If it be the products of the labor of the industrious farmer on his own land, a board of trade essays to fix the price of his produce, and the common carrier fixes the price for taking it to market, leaving the farmer no profit. For years it has been the union of the few against the producing classes to get the profits of their labor.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time that the Grange advocated for uniting causes with those of the laboring classes, the Order was also weary of the fragile nature of the labor industry, and the negative effects that could happen if laborers were given unchecked power. The Grange accurately saw that the laboring classes problems were caused primarily by an excess of laborers willing to work a ten-hour shift and not enough ten-hour shifts to meet workers demands. The solution that the Grange agreed with for their producing brothers was the regulatory reduction of the workday from ten hours to eight hours. While they admitted it would be difficult to convince factory owners to

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<sup>32</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1873, 22.

<sup>33</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1886, 18.



“pay eight hours what they have paid for ten,” Grangers and their labor counterpart, the Knights of Labor, saw this as the best course of action to improve the lot of the laboring class.<sup>34</sup> However, the Grange did not endorse labor unions taking over all regulations and means of production, as that could lead to artificially high prices of goods that farmers needed.

To fight their political and economic battles, the Grange necessary to combat ignorance within the organization itself by encouraging farmers to get an education. No longer could farmers be satisfied with simply reading, writing, arithmetic, and the agricultural arts. To be affective actors in political and economic spheres, farmers needed to be as educated as their opponents. “In the struggle for respectability, wealth and influence,” Boise writes, “farmers must lay hold to higher education. It is the mightiest factor in the control of the affairs of the civilized world.”<sup>35</sup> The Grange saw education as a way of improving its members by cultivating their intellect and making them more effective members of society. “We need education,” Grange Secretary N.W. Randall declared, making it one of the goals of the early Grange to become a “school to disseminate knowledge; to elevate the character and social standing of its members. We allow the noblest part of our nature to remain uncared for, seeking at the same time to accumulate wealth, that we may gratify our bodily appetite and adornment.”<sup>36</sup> The education that the Grange encouraged its members to receive was very broad, including not only “knowledge of books alone” but also the arts, agricultural science, business, economics, chemistry, and politics.<sup>37</sup> This diverse education was encouraged, not to turn farmers into an intelligentsia, but rather to elevate the act of farming itself to the place of honor and esteem that the Grange thought it deserved. All education should have some practical application that would improve the

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<sup>34</sup> *Willamette Farmer*, April 2 1886.

<sup>35</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1883, 11.

<sup>36</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1878, 9.

<sup>37</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1880, 14-15.

lives of the farmers who received the education.

The process of educating farming society was a multi-step endeavor, starting in the home. “Parents,” the Grange Committee on Education asserted, were “responsible to a great extent for the moral tendency of the growing youth and should choose with care the papers, books, monthlies, etc., for home reading. The parents or patrons of our schools should also have a care of the school where his children are to be educated.”<sup>38</sup> Education of children was the duty of both parents, and as such, the committee also advocated for the education of women and girls, “recognizing the fact that the teachings of the mother makes the most lasting impression on the mind of her child.”<sup>39</sup>

Education was continued outside the home in the Grange, or the recently founded Agricultural College at Corvallis, later renamed Oregon State University. An article in the April 6, 1872 *Willamette Farmer*, the newspaper editor explained how the Agricultural College was an opportunity to improve the lot of future generations of farmers. Just as the Portland Public High School had become an educational outlet for “mechanics’ sons and daughters,” the college provided an outlet for the children of farmers to be educated outside the home.<sup>40</sup> Endorsing the college in 1879, the Grange saw the school as an opportunity to combine a classical education with the scientific study and experimentation needed to keep the agricultural community of Oregon vibrant and successful.<sup>41</sup>

Articles and advertisements in the *Willamette Farmer* also comment on the quality of education offered in local colleges. A September 7, 1877 editorial shows that farmers didn’t want to send their children to school to learn facts and other people’s theories, they wanted the schools

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<sup>38</sup> *Proceeding of the Oregon State Grange*, 1883, 27.

<sup>39</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1882.

<sup>40</sup> *Willamette Farmer*, April 6, 1872.

<sup>41</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1879.

to sculpt their pupils into intellectual, forward thinking members of society. To the editor, the simple passing of knowledge from teacher to student was not enough, calling it “flat and insipid.”<sup>42</sup> Instead teachers must be creative and encourage the intellectual process, fostering “a little independent, honest thinking and acting” in their students.<sup>43</sup>

Advertisement in the paper give insight on the type of courses farmers hoped to benefit from. Though most colleges at the time had agriculture departments like the Agricultural College at Corvallis, those were not the programs they advertised to the subscribers of the *Willamette Farmer*. Instead schools including Albany Collegiate Institute, San Jose Institute, Willamette, and Pacific Universities emphasized the breadth of courses available including mathematics, natural sciences, drawing, music, rhetoric, and business.<sup>44</sup> The variety shown in these advertisements would suggest that the farming community didn’t want a purely agricultural education, as the schools could have played up that aspect rather than the variety of courses available. This fits with Oregon farmers being part of a progressive community, wanting to better themselves through a liberal education so that they could fully function in a society where adequate education could not be attained just through the home.

The Grange made a concerted effort to maintain a connection with the school, sending a commission to observe and evaluate the curriculum to make sure that it fulfilled the educational purposes of the Patrons of Husbandry. “The students are thoroughly taught and have learned their lessons well,” one such commissioner wrote, “I will further say that in my opinion the objects of the Order will be advanced by putting ourselves more fully in connection with this

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<sup>42</sup> *Willamette Farmer*, September 7, 1877.

<sup>43</sup> *Willamette Farmer*, September 7, 1877.

<sup>44</sup> *Willamette Farmer*, September 7, 1877. Also February 28, 1874; January 18 1878.

school.”<sup>45</sup>

The Grange’s writings pertaining to education show a society that strongly desired its members to improve themselves intellectually. This required not only an education centered on farming techniques, but also on history, literature, chemistry, economics, and politics. Such lofty educational goals demonstrate the Grange’s forward thinking, supporting a liberal education of its member that would improve not only their farming yields, but their interactions with a likewise educated populace in the political realm of Salem, and the economic realm of Portland. This educated group of farmers would then be able to act politically in the interests of not only themselves, but for all those who labored for their profits, such as mechanics and manufacturers.

Among its aims to improve the lives of Oregon farmers, the Patrons of Husbandry strived to use their political influence to fight against the “insidious system of taxation, supported by fine-spun theories and mysterious systems of legislation by which gigantic monopolies [were] built up.”<sup>46</sup> While their goal to hamper monopolies through legislation was inherently political, the Patrons of Husbandry (or Grange) was expressly not affiliated with any political party, as the National bylaws stated “political questions will not be tolerated as subjects of discussion in the work of the Order.”<sup>47</sup> Instead, the Grange’s official aims, laid out by Worthy Master of the order Daniel Clark, were social, educational, and economic. The Grange, he claimed, created a “social culture so much needed in [farmers] isolated condition... to strengthen social ties, without which life is shorn of those enjoyments which vitalize existence, and make labor more ennobling and honorable,” as well as a “fund of thoughts and study... brought into common store, and ALL,

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<sup>45</sup> Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange, 1882.

<sup>46</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange of the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry* (1878), 18.

<sup>47</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange* (1874), 6.

according to their capacity, receive a full measure of benefit.”<sup>48</sup> This elevation of education shows the progress orientation of the Grange.

An editorial in the *Willamette Farmer* explains the Order’s view politics and its’ role in them quite well:

It is true we have no partisan politics, and their discussion is prohibited in our meetings, yet the principles we teach underlie all true politics, all true statesmanship, and, if properly carried out, will tend to purify the whole political atmosphere of our country, for we seek the greatest good for the greatest number. We must bear in mind that no one, by becoming a Patron of Husbandry, gives up the inalienable right and duty which belongs to every American citizen, to take a proper interest in the politics of his country.<sup>49</sup>

The Grange encouraged its member to participate in outside of actual Grange meetings, as it was seen as their civic duty. Because of their virtuous nature as tillers of the earth, Patrons thought of themselves also as the perfect political citizens, and expected their members to:

Do all in his power, legitimately, to influence for the good action of any political party to which he belongs. It is his duty to do all he can in his own party to put down bribery, corruption and trickery; to see that none but competent, faithful and honest men, who will unflinchingly stand by our industrial interests, are nominated for all positions of trust and to have carried out the principle which should characterize every Patron, that the office should seek the man and not the man the office.<sup>50</sup>

This view of Grangers as perfect political citizens is at the same time Jeffersonian and progressive in its nature. They sought to root out corruption and wanted competent men in positions of power, but the reason they give for their political superiority is their connection to the land, a Jeffersonian notion.

Another progressive action of the Grange was the creation of an economic support system for farmers by the “co-operation in buying and selling,” and the use of Grange influence

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<sup>48</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange* (1874), 7.

<sup>49</sup> *Willamette Farmer*, October 8 1886.

<sup>50</sup> *Willamette Farmer*, October 8 1886.

to reduce the price of goods and services for its members.<sup>51</sup> Imperative to the success of these institutions was favorable legislation, which was lacking prior to the Grange involving its members in politics: “we have no voice in those laws which so vitally affect our prosperity and happiness as a class... [laws] operate to our disadvantage and in favor of the classes in whose interest and for who whose benefit, they are made.”<sup>52</sup> Clark foresaw the inevitable entrance of Grangers into the political arena as a necessary burden on the part of all Grangers to uphold their way of life.

There can be no doubt but that this Order will to a very considerable extent influence legislation. Organizations, associations or parties, will be formed, whose aim and purpose will be to restrain by political action, the oppressive power of capital; to war in every legitimate manner against corruption in high places, and to restore our government to its original simplicity.<sup>53</sup>

Clark clearly sees the inevitability of Grangers being involved in politics, however, it is not for the purpose of petty party politics, but rather to protect the agrarian way of life that the Grange held so dear.

While the political influence of Grangers was always recognizable, the Grange was always careful to emphasize what set them and the farming class apart from other politically motivated agendas: “Love and fidelity to the good work, each and all doing their part as true Patrons to advance our material interests, to improve ourselves mentally and socially, striving to bring about a wiser and better manhood and womanhood.”<sup>54</sup> Time and time again, the Masters of the Order reminded their members in their yearly addresses to stay grounded in these virtues, keeping themselves separate from other political movements, showing their cause to be a

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<sup>51</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange* (1874), 7.

<sup>52</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange* (1879), 6.

<sup>53</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange* (1874), 6.

<sup>54</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange* (1877), 5.

superior one. “Our order is based on agriculture,” stated Master A.R. Shipley, “the most important of all industries- the foundation and support of all others—the true basis of our national prosperity,” and when that basis of prosperity was jeopardized, its members must become politically active to save the nation from ruin.<sup>55</sup> While this philosophy of politics seems inherently self-interested, the Order believed that their farmer led initiatives would not just benefit fellow farmers, but rather “help all people.”<sup>56</sup> If agriculture was the foundation of national prosperity, then farmers were acting altruistically when they advocated for their own interests.

To protect their interests, the Patrons of Husbandry made demands of the Oregon legislature against the emerging transit monopolies of Ben Holladay, and the later, larger transit web controlled by Henry Villard. Holladay’s completion of the Oregon Central East Side Line was seen as a threat to Willamette farmers, as it showed how corporations were able to influence politics and legislation much more effectively than any single citizen could.<sup>57</sup> Already accustomed to the practices of a river transportation corporation (Oregon Steam and Navigation) controlling the bulk of transportation on the Willamette and Columbia rivers, Grangers did not think there would be much difference whether their products were shipped by rail instead of boat. Because both industries were controlled by one company each, neither the East Side Line or the Oregon Steam and Navigation thought it necessary to undercut the other, and shipping rates for farmers were kept artificially high while freight rates declined in the rest of the nation. Such high rates of transport “hindered the flow of traffic of resources from farm to market.”<sup>58</sup>

To the eyes of Master R.P. Boise, head of the Grange for nearly ten years, “the great

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<sup>55</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange* (1879), 10.

<sup>56</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange* (1874), 12.

<sup>57</sup> Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism,” 6.

<sup>58</sup> Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism,” 78; 98.

fundamental principle on which our farmer forefathers built our republican government—equal justice to all, special privileges to none,” was being grossly neglected by the government, state and national alike, “unless speedily checked, we need no prophet to tell us that ere another decade has passed the bulk of transportation of this vast country will be in the hands of less than one hundred men, and practically controlled by one-tenth of that number.” Grangers and the merchants of Portland alike hoped for increased competition through the building of more railroads to take care of the monopoly problem without much intervention from the legislature or the courts.

With the merger of the Oregon Central line with Henry Villard’s Oregon Steam and Navigation Company to form the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company (OR&N) in 1876, one company came to have control over most transportation on the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, as well as nearly a majority of rail lines in the state; Oregon had its first case of an “oppressive monopoly.”<sup>59</sup> Yet, it became clear to the Grange that an increase in competition would not be the benefit they had hoped it would be; it would either tax “the people to create more corporations with special privileges,” or create fodder for Villard’s hungry transport empire.<sup>60</sup> Master Boise explained the futility of increased competition as a means of reining in rail barons in his 1881 address to the Grange.

If railroad princes were to purchase other roads, they have only to levy an additional percentage on the freights they carry, and the people pay into the treasury the price for the new purchase. Almost every article we use on our farms or in our households, except the productions that are raised and consumed on the farm, are subject to be handled by these monopolies and arrive at their will.<sup>61</sup>

Instead of supporting land grants that would instigate competition, they decided to fight the rail

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<sup>59</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1876, 16.

<sup>60</sup> Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism,” 170.

<sup>61</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1881, 7.



system in the legislature: “It is our duty to endeavor to secure by all legitimate means such legislation as will best protect us against all ills of which we may justly complain.”<sup>62</sup> Included in these legislative goals was getting maximum freight rates put in place, and by encouraging funds to be set aside for public improvements on both the Columbia and Willamette rivers such as locks and harbors to make them more accessible to Patron supported transports, thus circumventing the power of the Oregon Steam and Navigation’s monopoly of the state’s transportation industry.

In the third year of the Patrons of Husbandry, the Grange published a resolution to “influence congress to make such appropriations as will construct a canal and locks at the Cascade Falls,” a major obstacle on the Columbia river that allowed the river above the falls to be controlled by one navigation company, “enabling them to charge unreasonable freights, thereby crippling industry and preventing the natural development of the resources” of the Columbia river valley.<sup>63</sup> Even in their argument for an improvement to the river that would economically benefit the farmers of the region, the Patrons were careful to present their case in a way that showed the benefit and progress it would provide for all Oregonians. The Oregon state legislature listened, and in their next session passed legislation, not funding a new locks project, but rather creating a commission regulating the rates of passage through the locks. This legislation met with great resistance from the company that maintained the only passage through the Cascade Falls.<sup>64</sup> The courts favored the transit corporations and no regulations on rail shipments were put in place at that time. By 1881, the OR&N had gained control of the pass connecting the The Dalles with Portland by way of Mount Hood. This caused the Grange to

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<sup>62</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1873, 22.

<sup>63</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1875, 29.

<sup>64</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1877, 12.

“urge upon our Senators and Representatives in Congress the passage of a law by that body regulating the rates of charges by inter-state railroads” to control the company, which had “a power of extortion and oppression over the productive industries of the valley of the Columbia river, which cannot be safely entrusted to private interests.”<sup>65</sup> The next year, regulation still had not been put in place, and Grange member D.S.K. Buick added to the Grange’s plea to Oregon legislators:

The prime interest in any country devolves on the intelligence, perseverance, and faithfulness of the cultivator of the soil. And that unreasonable exaction for transporting the products of the farm by water and rail, can only result in poverty to the producer; and that further persistent action is demanded... in working for a far and more equal system of freight charges by our transportation companies.<sup>66</sup>

Upon Further consideration, Granger’s concluded that all the legislation that they could get passed in Oregon might not necessarily improve their economic situation. Many rail companies, including the OR&N and the Oregon and California line, had lines connecting their rails in Oregon to California and the territories of Washington and Idaho; rail regulation became an inter-state problem, meaning the Patrons of Husbandry had to extend their sphere of influence, partnering with the national grange to help improve their situation. The Congress held more power and would be able to restrain, by just laws, their managers, and hold in check their inordinate greed of gain and lust for power, for they now dominate with almost every sovereign sway over the people of the great West and this coast, turning into their coffers revenues more princely than are enjoyed by the crowned heads of Europe.<sup>67</sup>

The Grange’s call for government regulation hearkens back to the Jeffersonian theory that government should be a facilitator. It should protect the interests of producers, in this case

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<sup>65</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1881, 13.

<sup>66</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, 1882, 25.

<sup>67</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1883), 5-6.

by regulating the means of transport to markets. This desire for regulation also shows how farmers didn't fear the market, as Carey intimated. Rather they wanted to be a part of it, but on fair terms.

Implementation of standard freight rates was not the only concern of Patrons. Also important to their agenda was the prevention of "discrimination in favor or against persons or places."<sup>68</sup> Richard White explains that railroads and other transportation monopolies discriminated in three distinct ways: by offering different rates to different people, charging more to ship to one location than another regardless of the distance travelled, and by offering different rates for different products.<sup>69</sup>

The spatial politics of rate discrimination benefited farmers the least of all those who were involved in the acts of production, retail, and consumption. Master Boise also denounced the practice, by which railroad corporations would "charge three cents per bushel on wheat from Corvallis to Portland, and at the same time charge nine cents from a station ten miles north of Corvallis to Portland... then wheat will be worth six cents more at Corvallis."<sup>70</sup> Richard White explains that anti-monopolists took the view that "when railroads charge more to some shippers than to others and more per mile from one place to another, the equality of all persons is denied by the discriminations of the corporations which the government had created".<sup>71</sup> Some anti-monopoly supporters went farther with their demands, asking for the revocation of unearned land grants, railroad rate discrimination laws at the national level, and the removal of railroad

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<sup>68</sup> Holden, "The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism," 309.

<sup>69</sup> Richard White. *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2011) 328.

<sup>70</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1884), 12.

<sup>71</sup> White, *Railroaded*, 328.

advocates from congress.<sup>72</sup>

As shown, when discussing the necessity of becoming a political entity, and later in their legislative initiatives, the Jeffersonian republican virtues of the Oregon Patrons of Husbandry are evident in their writings. Grangers also embedded these virtues into the language they used to describe themselves, their viewpoint behind their anti-monopolist philosophies, as well as to describe their political/economic foes. For Grangers, honor and respect for their profession were essential, and had to be held closely when dealing with legislators and their opponents. Members of the Grange were constantly reminded to use only “honorable means consistent with the organization of the Patrons of Husbandry to procure proper legislation.”<sup>73</sup> The republican-minded farmers would be ashamed of a political victory won through ill-gotten gains. As “guardians of the interests of agriculture,” Patrons used agrarian and republican terms to espouse sentiment about the traditional Jeffersonian republic that they felt Oregon was supposed to be. For instance, Patrons expected the government to “remove obstructions to the development of the natural resources” of the land, increasing the “comfort, happiness, and prosperity of all its citizens,” showing they believed government should be limited so that it interfered only when its citizens and the land were being misused.<sup>74</sup> Grangers used traditional Roman republican language to further justify their grievances, likening rail lines to Rome’s “Fluminia, via Aurelia, her Appian Way.”<sup>75</sup> These mighty roads of Rome were kept at public expense, just as the rails had been funded through public grants and tax levies. Because the public paid for them, they reasoned, the public should have full, fair access to them.

How could anyone, legislator and railroad manager alike, dispute the tradition of public

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<sup>72</sup> Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism,” 310.

<sup>73</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1875), 42.

<sup>74</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1878), 18.

<sup>75</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1883), 6.

roads set down by Rome, the sacred cow of republican ideology? Supporting a republican philosophy, Grangers saw it as fitting to have the representational government better represent the bulk of its population.

Our Welfare, our prosperity, our safety, imperatively demand that we be fully represented in the law-making bodies of the country by honest, fearless, able men of our own class—practical farmers whose hands are hardened by the labors of the field, whose shoulders are bent by the same burdens that weigh us down, and whose hearts and minds are in full and active sympathy with us. The Agricultural is the great conservative class of the country, it is opposed to... the inordinate greed of monopolists and the heartless exactions of capital, and is always interested in order and good government.<sup>76</sup>

It is the untrustworthy corporation that “has been gradually but surely sapping the foundations of rural prosperity and respectability, and carrying our farmers towards the condition of serfs and peasants.”<sup>77</sup> To farmers, corporate, monopolistic rail companies had “corrupted the original Jeffersonian promise of the region as a land of free, independent yeoman farmers.”<sup>78</sup> Though as farmers Grangers held a tenuous economic position, close to financial devastation because of exorbitant freight rates, the Grange did not see this as a reason to give up all hope that the democratic process might come through for them: “Has the servile blood which made our remote ancestors follow and pay homage to kings and princes appeared again in this generation? Let us shake off the incubus and the shame!”<sup>79</sup> It is within this republican defiance of the new corporate aristocracy that Master Boise rallied Grangers, farmers, and all anti-monopolists together: “No corporation should be allowed to shackle the people or place a barrier across their public thoroughfares.”<sup>80</sup> It is through the people that the government gets power, and thus corporations receiving government funds and approval were supposed to be used for the benefit

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<sup>76</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1879), 6.

<sup>77</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1884), 5.

<sup>78</sup> Carey, “Building a Better Oregon,” 281.

<sup>79</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1884) 14.

<sup>80</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1886), 16-17.

of them.

Besides being economically influential, Boise feared that corporations had control of the ballot box by “furnishing large sums of money to corrupt the voter and purchase special privileges from the government.”<sup>81</sup> What Boise found to be the most haunting implication of this action was “if money can control the decision of the ballot box, it will not be long before it can control its existence.”<sup>82</sup> This corrupt disregard for the democratic process angered Grangers and merely gave them another reason to distrust transportation corporations.

America was not discovered by Columbus and civil liberty established by the fathers of the republic to the end that fifty millions of people might be made tributary to a band of railroad magnates, or that farmers, artisans and merchants, by hard work and keen competition, raise up a dozen Vanderbilts, with each several hundred million dollars.<sup>83</sup> Responsible for the millions of dollars made by rail magnates was the unfair system of freight rates, which charged not “on what would afford them a good profit, but what the traffic will bear, thus securing the living share of farmers and stock raisers.”<sup>84</sup> Firm believers in “by the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread,” Grangers saw this disregard for the needs of the honest, hardworking members of society who created a rail magnate’s wealth.<sup>85</sup>

Rail magnates influenced both voters and legislators, using wealth attained through the excessive rate gouging of farmers, adding to their political power and strengthening the special privileges that protected their economic success. “These colossal organizations are becoming stronger and more imperious every year,” Boise maintained, “[they] are riveting their fetters upon our agricultural interests, as fatal as death itself and as unyielding as the grave.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1883), 9.

<sup>82</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1883), 9.

<sup>83</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1883), 9.

<sup>84</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1888), 45.

<sup>85</sup> Genesis 3:19 as quoted in *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1881), 5.

<sup>86</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1884) 13.

Unless restrained, into their unscrupulous hands will pass the scepter of the nation, and standing armies guard their ill-gotten treasures from the hungry millions whom they have robbed of their property and made homeless and hopeless. These Shylocks are the people's worst enemies... The worst enemies of the state are the selfish rich. Avarice cannot be satiated with gain, but increases with every new acquisition, and ever reaches out for more wealth and power. We must keep the greedy hands of mammon away from the throat of this nation, or liberty will be strangled in the land of its birth.<sup>87</sup>

Not only are the actions of the rail magnates harming the farmers of Oregon, the Grange insisted they were harming the country as a whole, which they put in the severest of peril. It is through regulation that the Grange sought to hamper the growth of the corporate class of rail barons and save the nation from their greedy aims.

While the Patrons of Husbandry put a great amount of emphasis on their being members of the farming community of Oregon, and use of Jeffersonian rhetoric to achieve their aims, they were not the traditional, anti-market, anti-progress group that can be connected with the celebration of agrarian values. The progression of the Grange's anti-monopoly movement shows their adaptability and the modernizing aspects of the group. The Grange moved from a position calling for increased funding for road and rail projects to spur economic competition to one of reigning in transport monopolies through the regulation of freight rates and the instituting of a transport board to enforce said regulations. Other anti-monopoly movements, such as that of the Republican party of Oregon, maintained the idea that the best way to curtail inflated rates and the power of monopolies was to continue funding projects to make more railroads, which would then increase competition.<sup>88</sup>

As Margaret Holden explains, Oregon Republicans did not see regulation as the answer

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<sup>87</sup> *Proceedings of the Oregon State Grange*, (1884) 15-16.

<sup>88</sup> It is necessary to differentiate between the Jeffersonian republican ideals that Grangers proscribed to and the Republican Party of Oregon. While they share a name, their politics are very different. Grangers often voted with the Democratic and Populist Parties, as they supported an egalitarian electorate, any of whom could participate in politics if they chose to. The Republican Party, on the other hand, held to a more classical republican notion of rule by an elite group who could afford to be full-time members of public service, keeping the 'rabble' out of politics.

to monopolies, but rather favored “foreign investment, rapid economic growth, and increasing the number of competitive transportation lines.”<sup>89</sup> Firmly rooted in the economic centers of Portland and Salem, Republicans had faith in letting the market regulate itself, and if an injunction was needed, then it should come in the form of economic support instead of economic limitations. Ever fearful of potential foreign capital leaving the state, Portlanders rejected the possibility of regulation, and regulated growth because of their “sentiment of progress, at any cost, is stronger than any prudential considerations and to proceeding with developments at a slower, and perhaps surer rate.”<sup>90</sup>

The republican support of unabashed growth fit directly in with rail corporations desires for unchecked growth, at the cost of more stable progress. To White, this disregard for stability had a negative effect on progress and the ability of Oregon to modernize. Rail magnates were more focused on personal profits than on creating sustainable economic progress. It did not matter if the railroad eventually failed due to lack of a market, as long as they were able to sell enough stock to make a profit before the line went under. Oregon farmers, on the other hand, wanted a slower, more strongly regulated growth of infrastructure that would benefit producers and consumers.

This desire led Grangers to support the Hoult Bill in the Oregon Legislature in 1884. The Populist-backed bill was created with two goals in mind. The first was to establish statewide rates for both freight and passengers to which all rail lines, both transcontinental and local, had to abide by. Second was the establishment of a railroad commission, comprised of one person of note from the railroad corporations, one person representing farmer interests, and one person of a

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<sup>89</sup> Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism,” 150.

<sup>90</sup> *Oregonian*, January 6, 1882.



legal background.<sup>91</sup> The commission would be responsible for the “general supervision over all railroad matters, including rates, accidents, and repairs.”<sup>92</sup> The bill faced Republican opposition, who wanted the commission to be formed on party lines, with one member being a Democrat, another would be a Republican, and the third a lawyer. One of these three also had to have direct experience in the rail road industry. In a state where as much as forty percent of the electorate identified with a third party, many of whom were of the farming class, creating positions based off of party lines left the farmers of Oregon underrepresented in a matter that directly and profoundly affected their livelihoods.<sup>93</sup> Requiring one of three members to be a lawyer and a businessman with railroad experience would also have narrowed the likeliness of a representative of Oregon farmers making his way onto the commission. Luckily for the farming interests of Oregon, the state legislature voted in favor of Hoult’s original bill, which guaranteed a position on the commission for a farmer.

The Oregon Patrons of Husbandry formed with a keen sense of the community that it was intended to represent. Oregon farmers were a fairly homogenous group, who straddled the isolated nature of their profession and a fully integrated, politically active way of life. They believed in a Jeffersonian republican form of government that was in place primarily to protect the land for the productive cultivation of willing citizens, and in the protection of a citizen’s rights and property, educating its member so that they could be more active members of society, as well as a strong connection to the manufacturing and laboring classes who also produced wealth. When the rail and steam companies of Ben Holladay and Henry Villard infringed on the

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<sup>91</sup> *Oregonian*, April 18, 1884.

<sup>92</sup> Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism,” 321.

<sup>93</sup> Holden, “The Rise and Fall of Oregon Populism,” 508. In the 1892 Gubernatorial 40.5% of the electorate sided with the Populist candidate. While the counties surrounding Portland and Salem strongly favored the Republican candidate, rural Oregon farmers favored the Populist James Weaver over Republican Benjamin Harris and Democrat Grover Cleveland.

land, rights and property of Oregon farmers, the Patrons of Husbandry sprung into action to assure the protections afforded to its members by the government. The Grange's strong notions of the nature of government, agriculture, corporation, and education shaped the ways in which they viewed themselves, their adversaries, and the problems caused by said adversaries, and led them to influence anti-monopoly legislation in Oregon that had a distinctly Granger taste to it.

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