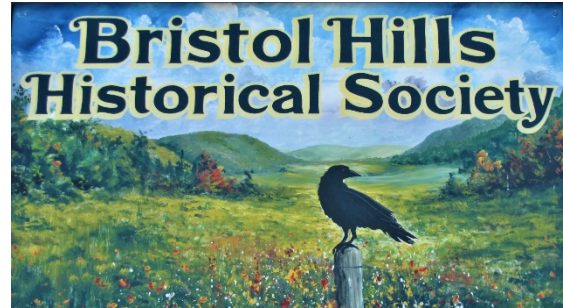


NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 11, 2023



Centennial Celebration of South Bristol Landmark

A South Bristol cultural landmark entered its second century this year. To celebrate this milestone, the Bristol Hills Historical Society will rededicate the Bristol Springs Grange Hall in a ceremony on Saturday, Nov. 11.

“This magnificent structure continues to serve as a forum for this community to gather and celebrate its heritage,” said the Historical Society’s president, Ann Jacobs. “We are proud to be its caretakers and to show off its beauty on its centennial.”

Town historical Beth Thomas and others from the Historical Society will give a brief talk at the rededication event on the place this Grange Hall played in supporting farming and social life in the early days of European-American settlement of the region. Then a new plaque will be unveiled marking the Grange’s place on the National Register of Historic Places, a designation it was awarded in 1997 but never fully commemorated until now.

The Naples Record reported in November 1916 that just one week after the original home of South Bristol Grange No. 1107 burned, a meeting was held on “the need of a suitable hall for holding meetings and for entertainments of various kinds.” It took more than six years to fulfill that wish, but on May 25, 1923, the new Grange Hall was dedicated “with appropriate ceremonies and in the presence of a large number of people,” according to the Record.

The original Grange chapter was formed in 1907 and met in The Knights Of The Maccabees building near the site of the current South Bristol town hall. By the time the new building was finished, the Grange chapter had nearly 200 members. The Naples Record called the new building’s dedication “the successful culmination of one of the biggest events in the history of South Bristol Grange and of the community of Bristol Springs.”

Over the decades, meetings, history lectures, square dances and other concerts have maintained the Grange Hall’s place in our community. In 1969, the Naples Grange ended its 60-year run and merged with the South Bristol Grange. By the end of the century, the South Bristol Grange itself had disbanded, the building had been preserved by the Save the Grange Committee, and the South Bristol Historical Society took title to the building.

Since then, the Historical Society – which in 2020 merged with Bristol’s to form the Bristol Hills Historical Society – has maintained the building and used it for meetings and events. That ownership has turned costly recently. A new metal roof was installed in 2020 and structural work now is needed to preserve the building’s foundation. The Historical Society plans to hold a capital campaign for the preservation of

the Grange and the Society's other building on the National Register, the 1846 Methodist Episcopal Church in Bristol Center, which also needs major preservation and renovation work.

The interior of the Grange, however, remains sound and beautifully preserved, with a downstairs meeting room and upstairs hall, stage, and handsome, original woodwork. It serves as the repository for the Historical Society's extensive collection of local history artifacts, which will be on display on Nov. 11. The ceremony will be held rain (or snow) or shine at 10 a.m., followed by an open house and reception. Historical Society T-shirts and the Society's popular book published earlier this year, *History and Mystery: The Folklore and Legends of the Bristol Hills*, will be on sale.

The Grange Hall is located at 6457 State Route 64 in the heart of Bristol Springs. Limited parking is available in front of the Grange Hall, preferably for those with limited mobility. Additional parking is available roadside and at the South Bristol Town Hall. The second floor lecture hall is not handicap accessible.

There will also be a Veterans Day flagpole dedication at the veterans garden across the road from the Grange, at the South Bristol Town Hall, starting at 9 a.m.

The Bristol Hills Historical Society can be found online at bristolhillshistory.org and at facebook.com/bhhistorical. Both sites provide calendars of upcoming history presentations and other events, articles on local history, and historic photos.

The Historical Society is volunteer-run and members-supported. Annual donor levels starting at \$15 for individuals and \$30 for families can be purchased on the society's website or at any of the society's free events.

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ATTACHED: Photo of 1923 Bristol Springs Grange Hall

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