

Charles M. Gardener

Charles M. Gardener began a dynamic career in journalism when he was seventeen years of age, which included successfully managing several chains of weekly newspapers for several years. He also established a large publication and printing plant in Westfield, Massachusetts, along with a trade paper agency covering many New England activities. He was also associated with well-known trade magazines in Boston and New York City.

Mr. Gardener was very active in the Westfield Grange and Western Hampden Pomona Grange, holding many offices in both. He served as a Massachusetts State Grange Deputy and State Lecturer. He was then elected State Master from 1909 to 1913. Following that, he was elected High Priest of Demeter. He held that office until 1947, a period of thirty-four years, which was the longest time anyone has ever served in that position. His accomplishments during that time include making extensive revisions to the Seventh Degree, and issuing a new Seventh Degree Manual, which included the appropriate modifications he had made in the degree itself. He had an important part in issuing a complete cipher code for the unwritten work of the Grange. He also developed a complete set of rules for governing the Assembly of Demeter. He likewise created a new Sacred Record in 1915, which included well-needed and concise explanatory features of its unwritten work.

Certainly, to most people, his most impressive work is one that we can still readily access today. That is his book, "The Grange - Friend of the Farmer." It contains his very detailed record of the first eighty years of the Grange throughout the land. It is truly one of the greatest and most complete Grange reference books of its kind.