

James Luther Snyder

Name: James Luther Snyder **Date of Birth:** April 24, 1929 **Place of Birth:** Born: Fairview Township, York County, Pennsylvania **Date of Death:** December 22, 1987 **Place of Death:** Camp Hill, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania **Residence as an adult:** Camp Hill, Pennsylvania



Biography:

James Luther Snyder was born on April 24, 1929 at the family farm in Fairview Township, York County in South Central Pennsylvania. He was the son of James and Mary (Shuey) Snyder. He was the fifth of nine children and was raised in the Grange. Luther was a third generation Grange member; his grandfather was a charter member of Valley Grange #1360 in York County, Pennsylvania. He was a graduate of the New Cumberland High School and worked for the US Air Force at Middletown and for the US Postal Service. Luther married Fae Yetter on October 24, 1954. As Fae recalls, joining the Grange came hand-in-hand with her marriage to Luther, and from that point on, she was Luther's partner in life and in the Grange. The couple had five children: Anna May (Nauss), Lou Ann (Boose), J. Luther, Jr., Joyce (Merritt), and Jennifer (Kane). Like Luther, the Snyder children were Grange members from the start. Luther Snyder was a life-long Granger who gave much of himself and his time to the Order that he loved. He served as a leader of both his Subordinate Grange, Valley Grange #1360, and his Pomona Grange, York-Adams Pomona Grange #40. He was named the Deputy State Master for York-Adams Counties and was elected Secretary of the Pennsylvania State Grange. As Secretary, he began a Secretary's Award to encourage, support, and honor Subordinate and Pomona secretaries across the State. In 1974, he was elected to the office of Pennsylvania State Grange Master, a role that he did not take lightly. In his 5 years as PA State Grange Master, Luther worked tirelessly for the Grange, clocked more hours than could be counted, and traveled extensively throughout the state. He strongly believed in building and nurturing leadership skills in others. He enthusiastically led Instructional Regional Meetings for Subordinate and Pomona leaders across the state and rejuvenated this program through his leadership, beginning with nine meetings in 1975 and increasing to sixteen regional meetings in 1978. He expected much of those officers and department chairs who served with him, but expected no less of himself. It was a great honor for Master Snyder that he was highly respected among his peers at the National Grange. He was elected Priest Annalist in 1976 and served in that position until his death in 1987, having been reelected to another term a month before his passing. He was also appointed by his peers to chair a special Trial Committee to handle charges against another State

Master. Master Snyder was faced with a difficult decision in 1979, when he was appointed Deputy Secretary of Agriculture for the State of Pennsylvania. He resigned his position as State Master that year, but continued to enthusiastically serve the Grange at all levels. Master Snyder was an avid supporter of and believer in the Youth and Junior Programs. He regularly attended the Pennsylvania State Grange Youth and Young Marrieds Camps, as well as the Pennsylvania State Junior Grange Camp where he was the Ritual Leader. He was a strong supporter of the Youth Ritual Teams that competed across the state, lending his expertise and knowledge. Master Snyder was a strong believer in the importance of family and the fact that the whole family could participate in the Grange was one of the primary reasons he loved the organization. As State Secretary and State Master, his travels across the state always included his wife and children. Outside of the Grange, J. Luther Snyder was an active member of his community. He served in the US Army during the Korean Conflict and was stationed in Germany for several years. He was active in his home church, Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lewisberry, PA, where he served as President of the Church Council. He served as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Pennsylvania State University, as Secretary of the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations, and on the Board of Directors for Farmers and Traders Insurance Company. In 1979, he was faced with a difficult choice between continuing to serve as Master of the Pennsylvania State Grange and accepting an appointment as the Pennsylvania State Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. Master Snyder saw an opportunity to influence the State of Pennsylvania beyond the Grange organization and accepted this appointment. He continued to serve as Deputy Secretary of Agriculture until his passing in 1987. Similar to his involvement in the Grange, Master Snyder gave much of his time and talent to the State of Pennsylvania to support farmers and others living and working in rural Pennsylvania through his work with the State Department of Agriculture. Master Snyder was named "Man of the Year" by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (REA) in 1979 for "his pioneering efforts and outstanding contributions to rural Pennsylvania. Your life-long devotion to helping provide a quality of rural living to rural residents has resulted in the end of second-class citizenship for countless families." Master Snyder continued to serve the Order that he loved until his death on December 22, 1987. His family continues their involvement in the Grange and now includes a generation of Luther and Fae's grandchildren. The Snyder family continues their membership at Valley Grange #1360 in York County, Pennsylvania. Many of his children and grandchildren have served, and continue to serve, in leadership roles at all levels of the Grange. Master Snyder's work and legacy live on in the young people he mentored and whose leadership skills he nurtured. He would be especially proud of his family's continued active membership and leadership in the Order that he loved and gave so much of his life to serving.

Bibliography:

- Pennsylvania State Grange Journals of Proceedings (1966-1979)
- Pennsylvania State Grange website – Historical Highlights of J. Luther Snyder's Term as State Master.
- Pennsylvania State Grange Newsletter Publications (1966-1987).
- Personal Recollections of J. Luther Snyder's Family – Fae Snyder (wife), Anna May Nauss (daughter)
- National Grange Journals of Proceedings (1976-1987)