

Francis M. McDowell:

Francis M. McDowell's background was banking and brokerage, in which he was very successful. However, illness caused him to leave that profession and return to his home and engage in grape horticulture. It was at a fruit fair in his home state of New York where he met William Saunders, and the two became very good friends.

Upon learning of the pending Grange movement, he traveled to Washington, DC, met the other Founders and worked with them in establishing the Grange. Wanting to see the Grange succeed, he provided a significant amount of his own finances in order to support it in its formative years. He was the third Treasurer of the NG

It was his idea that the National Grange be the centralizing factor of the Order to prevent its fracturing. This vision was made real in the creation of the Seventh Degree. It was his idea to link agriculture to the mystical symbolisms of ancient mythology. He worked closely with John R. Thompson in developing the Seventh Degree. Because of this, he was elected the first High Priest of the Assembly of Demeter.