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**Lions Club of Trenton
Collection, 1921-2005**

**By Kyle Zaczek & Laura M. Poll
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History

The Lions Club was organized in Chicago in 1917 by insurance agent Melvin Jones to be dedicated to worldwide issues. Camden was the first club in New Jersey to be chartered (December 1920) and is still active as of this date. Trenton was the second, chartered in April 1921, and had 108 members. Eventually, there were also groups in Chambersburg and North Trenton (chartered May 1954). West Windsor (chartered November 1952), Lawrence Township, Mercerville, and Ewing Township, all of which worked with Trenton, are a few of the nearby clubs.

“LIONS” stands for *Liberty - Intelligence - Our - Nation’s - Safety*. The emblem of the club, adopted in 1919, depicts the lion’s head facing in the direction of both the past and the future, showing “pride of heritage” and “confidence in the future.” Colors are purple for “loyalty and integrity” and gold for “sincerity, purity, and generosity.”

Overall the Lions is similar to a humanitarian club, working alongside other well-known organizations such as the Red Cross. The Trenton club was part of district number 16B which helped identify the clubs within the International Lions Club.

According to their 25th anniversary booklet, “The Trenton Lions Club is an organization which donates time, and resources to various civic improvement and community betterment projects.” One of their main projects was assisting the blind and visually impaired, sick, and orphaned

children. Helen Keller had addressed the Lions Clubs International Convention in Cedar Point, Ohio, and challenged Lions to become “knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness.” One of their community services is the eyeglass recycling project, and they have partnered with community groups in hosting Vision Awareness Days to help get eye care and eyeglasses to persons in need.

Some of the local charities that the Trenton Lions supported included Trenton Emergency Medical Services, Canine Hearing Companions, Katzenbach School for the Deaf, and Camp Marcella, a New Jersey camp for blind children. In 1929, they helped sponsor a movement for a new Trenton High School. They also provided coats to the East Trenton Community Center, and participated in parades and memorial rides.

The Trenton Lions reorganized in August 2002. At an emergency meeting held 31 May 2005, it was voted unanimously to surrender its charter due to declining membership. A final meeting was held 28 June 2005, and the Club was officially disbanded 14 November 2005.

Scope and Content Notes

This collection consists of information about the functioning of the Trenton Lions, notably “operating records” which contain monthly membership and activity reports. There is also an extensive run of newsletters which report on various events and news. There are copies of the charter, anniversary programs that contain Club history, various correspondence on donations and fundraising events, district pennants, a welcome banner, and other ephemera and memorabilia.

The collection is divided into 5 document boxes, 1 flat box, 1 artifact box, and several oversized loose items.

Series Description

Series I. Operating Records

This series contains information about the functioning of the club, including lists of members and their addresses, committees, membership and monthly activities reports, board and regular meeting minutes, correspondence, as well as other operational proceedings. The folders within this series contain minutes from 1936-1950, and then skips to 1958-1962, and jumps again to 1971-1975. The earlier records contain a roster type sheet which names the members of the club, and who is active or has resigned. Some of the minutes are from the luncheon meetings held at the Stacy-Trent Hotel mentioned in Series V. Newsletters. These minutes contain the names of club members and prospective members, as well as the president of the club, secretary, and guests at various club sponsored functions.

Box 2, Folder 1 contains a list of presidents (1921-1939). Of note in the minutes of June 1953, the club was asked for sponsorship of “The Chicken of Tomorrow” - a county-wide contest among boys and girls to develop certain breeding. In the 25 February 1957 minutes, it was noted that the meeting was temporarily suspended so that members could watch the game show “Twenty-One,” which was, at the moment, in the middle of the Charles Van Doren winning streak.

Also included in this series are copies of the charter, a list of the original members, and the constitution and by-laws. Other folders contain member handbooks, brochures, blank certificates and membership cards, lists of officers and committees, and material about the 2002 reorganization of the Club and its dissolution in 2005.

Series II. Projects & Sponsored Activities, 1958-2005

This series documents the work the club has done getting eye care to the community, correspondence with the Mercer County Board of Social Services, the Trenton Child Health Clinic where the club writes referrals for persons in need, correspondence and information about the various charitable organizations that received donations from the Lions, and other programs in which the club participated. The series also contains a folder of event programs and certificates of appreciation and resolutions. Please note that folder 4a in box 1 in this series contains personal information about patients and is marked “Confidential” – it is available at the discretion of the Trentoniana archivist.

Also included in this series is a scrapbook [SB313] of clippings concerning club activities (1985), including the clean-up of Mercer Cemetery. It is wrapped and located on the shelf with the oversized items.

Subseries III. Anniversary Celebrations

This series contains programs and letters related to various anniversaries. The Lions were located in the city for a number of years and celebrated many anniversaries while in Trenton. There are a few resolutions and proclamations by Mayor Douglas H. Palmer, as well as the Board of Chosen Freeholders which congratulated them on their 75 years in the city. The state senate also acknowledged this celebration with a State Resolution put forward by Senator LaRossa. Governor Christine Todd Whitman sent a letter of congratulations. Also included in this series are a number of other celebration pamphlets, cards, newspaper clippings, and booklets which celebrate the 25th, 50th, 65th and 75th anniversaries. Oversized Proclamations and Resolutions for the 75th are located in flat Box #7.

Series IV. Newsletters, 1929-1970

This series contains newsletters that were published as a one-page weekly and distributed to members over the course of the year. They contain information about proceedings and meetings, brief announcements, speakers, members' doings, and general chit-chat. The newsletters would also bring attention to upcoming events and fundraisers, and describe weekly luncheon meetings usually held at the Stacy-Trent Hotel. The 20 June 1929 issue of "The Cat's Meow" contains a glued-in photograph of Al Homan, president at the time. According to the letterhead of "The Cat's Meow," the information was "rebroadcast weakly by the Secretary, W. C. H, to the Lions of Trenton NJ." The newsletter was renamed with the 28 July 1930 issue as "The Lion Lyre," and usually contained some form of poem or story. After a few years without a bulletin, "The Trenton Lion" began on 22 August 1939. It became the "Lions Club Bulletin" in July 1961, and then "Trenton Lions Bulletin" on 3 May 1966. "The New Jersey Lion" was published for members of New Jersey Multiple District 16.

Series V. Memorabilia & Artifacts

This series contains member window decals, member lapel pins, a small calendar (1978), White Cane Day stickers, a bumper sticker, a jacket patch, pocket name tags, and several lion figurines made from various materials. This series includes silk banners from districts within the Lions territory. The District banners have an outline of the state of New Jersey, which is divided into 5 areas with the names of the District Governors listed (8½" x 11"). Also included in this series are a Welcome banner, parade banner, aprons, and a standing bell. The member lapel pins are in a small box within Box #6.

Series VI. Miscellaneous

This series contains material related to Multiple District 16 and District 16B, including copies of "Lions Pride" (2004) and "The New Jersey Lion" (2004, 2009), and information for the Past District Governors Association, as well as other Lions clubs in the area. There is a memorial publication on the death of Lions founder Melvin Jones, first day covers for the 35th anniversary of Lawrence Township (1980) and 50th anniversary of West Windsor (2002), a program for the 22nd annual meeting of Multiple District 16 held at the Stacy-Trent Hotel (1943), and a Past District Governor jacket patch for District 16B. Of note is a letter from the Boosters Club of the New Jersey Lions about their first dinner-meeting in Asbury Park on 14 July 1925.

Provenance: Material originated from Edward Ahrens, Leonard T. and Joan A. Pope, and other sources. Several items were removed from the Trentoniana vertical files and placed here. Three pennants were received October 2017 and have accession #2017.29.

Restrictions: Folder 4a in Box 1 is marked as "Confidential" since it contains referrals and information related to persons in need of eye exams and other medical procedures.

Container List

Box / Folder / Title

1 / 1 / Organizational Information
1 / 2 / Membership
1 / 3 / Reorganization (2002) and Dissolution (2005)
1 / 4 / Projects and Donations
1 / 4a/ Projects - Eyeglasses [confidential]
1 / 5 / Event Programs
1 / 6 / Correspondence
1 / 7 / Certificates of Appreciation
1 / 8 / 25th Anniversary (1946)
1 / 9 / 50th Anniversary (1971)
1 / 10 / 65th Anniversary (1986)
1 / 11 / 75th Anniversary (1996)
1 / 12 / Memorabilia
1 / 13 / Multiple District 16 / District 16-B
1 / 14 / Past District Governors Association
1 / 15 / Local Clubs & International Lions
2 / 1 / Operating Records, 1936-1938
2 / 2 / Operating Records, 1938
2 / 3 / Operating Records, 1939
2 / 4 / Operating Records, 1940
2 / 5 / Operating Records, 1941-1943
2 / 6 / Operating Records, Dec. 1945-June 1950
3 / 1 / Operating Records, July 1950-Dec. 1957
3 / 2 / Operating Records, 1958-1959
3 / 3 / Operating Records, 1960
3 / 4 / Operating Records, 1961-1962
3 / 5 / Operating Records, 1971
3 / 6 / Operating Records, 1972
3 / 7 / Operating Records, 1973
3 / 8 / Operating Records, 1974
3 / 9 / Operating Records, 1975
3 / 10 / Operating Records, 1976
3 / 11 / Operating Records, 2000-2005
4 / 1 / "The Cat's Meow", 1929-1930
4 / 2 / "The Lion Lyre", 1930
4 / 3 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 1, 1939-1940
4 / 4 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 2, 1940-1941

- 4 / 5 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 3, 1941-1942
- 4 / 6 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 4, 1942-1943
- 4 / 7 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 5, 1943-1944
- 4 / 8 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 6, 1945
- 4 / 9 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 7, 1945-1946
- 4 / 10 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 8, 1946-1947
- 4 / 11 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 9, 1947-1948
- 4 / 12 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 10, 1948-1949
- 4 / 13 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 11, 1949-1950
- 4 / 14 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 12, 1950-1951
- 4 / 15 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 13, 1951-1952
- 4 / 16 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 16, 1952-1953
- 4 / 17 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 15, 1954
- 4 / 18 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 16, 1954
- 5 / 1 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 17, 1955-1956
- 5 / 2 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 18, 1956-1957
- 5 / 3 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 19, 1957-1958
- 5 / 4 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 20, 1958-1959
- 5 / 5 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 21, 1959-1960
- 5 / 6 / "The Trenton Lion", volume 22, 1960-1961
- 5 / 7 / "Lions Club Bulletin", volume 23, 1962
- 5 / 8 / "Lions Club Bulletin", volume 24, 1963
- 5 / 9 / "Lions Club Bulletin", volume 25, 1963-1964
- 5 / 10 / "Lions Club Bulletin", volume 26, 1964-1965
- 5 / 11 / "Trenton Lions Bulletin", volume 27, 1965-1966
- 5 / 12 / "Trenton Lions Bulletin", volume 28, 1966-1967
- 5 / 13 / "Trenton Lions Bulletin", volume 29, 1967-1968
- 5 / 14 / "Trenton Lions Bulletin", volume 30, 1968-1969
- 5 / 15 / "Trenton Lions Bulletin", volume 31, 1969-1970
- 5 / 16 / "Trenton Lions Bulletin", 1970-1971
- 5 / 17 / "Trenton Lions Bulletin", 1972-1973
- 5 / 18 / "Trenton Lions Bulletin", 1974-1978, 1985
- 6 / Lying lion figure, ceramic, Sandicast African Lion by Sandra Brue #1883/5000
 (8"x 3½")
 Standing lion, marble (6"x 3½" & 2½"x 1¾")
 Standing lion, black marble (3"x 1¾")
 Standing lion, ceramic, Red Rose Tea (1½"x 1½")
 Standing lion, wood (3½"x 2")
 Standing lion on base with Lions logo, brass (2¾"x 1¾")
 Crouching lion, metal plate (4¼"x 2½")

Lions logo finial for flag pole, metal (3¼” diameter)
Small box – member lapel pins
7 / City of Trenton, Proclamation by the Mayor (1996)
N.J. General Assembly, Resolution (1996)
State Senate, Resolution (1996)
Pennants:
Lions Club Barletta
Lions Club International, District 118-Y Turkey (2000-2001)
International Association of Lions Clubs, District 324-A3 (2000-2001)
International Association of Lions Clubs, District 324-D2 (2000-2001)
International Association of Lions Clubs, District 324-E2 Kerala-India (2000-2001) [2]
Multiple District 16 (1992-1993) [2]; (1993-1994); (1994-1995); (1995-1996);
(1996-1997) [2]; (1999-2000); (2000-2001); (2002-2003); (2004-2005);
(2012-2013)
Cranbury Lions 16-D
Mount Holly Lions #1677
West Windsor Township Lions
Dr. Jean Behar, International President, Lions International (2000-2001)
“Welcome” banner with Lions logo in center, purple and gold with gold fringe (8½’x 3’)
Parade banner with Lions logo in center, smaller patches sewn on (32”x 36”)
Aprons: 50% cotton/50% polyester full aprons with ties and 2 pockets in front; [5]
yellow-orange color with Lions logo and “Trenton” screen printed in navy blue, and
[2] with only Lions logo in light purple

Oversized items:

Scrapbook (SB313), wrapped
Standing bell with Lions logo on top, brass (9”x 6” diameter base)
Presentation plaque, wood (15”x 11¼”)
Molded plastic sign with logo, Lions International – Lions Meet Here
(20-1/2”H x 17-1/2”W)
Duplicate (reproduction) Charter (17-3/4” x 21-3/4” framed)
Cardboard sign for “Fun with the Lions of Leo” (with “From the Private Collection of
Mary G. Roebbling” (22” x 28”)

Processing Notes

Items pertaining to the Oceanport Lions Club, having no information related to the Trenton Lions Club, were removed from the collection and offered to them.

Bibliography

<https://www.njlions.org/who-we-are/> [accessed 25 March 2021]