

**Shepherd's Star Lodge No. 10, Frenchtown, NJ**

[1863-1967]

HUNTERDON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

114 Main Street

Flemington, New Jersey

(908) 782-1091

[hunterdonhistory@embarqmail.com](mailto:hunterdonhistory@embarqmail.com)

Finding Aid prepared by Diane Kinney

## **DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY:**

Creator: Shepherd's Star Lodge No. 10 [likely Rhoda Belle (Stahler) Nestley]

Title: Shepherd's Star Lodge No. 10, Frenchtown, NJ

Collection Number: 76

Date of Process: August 2009

Volume: 0.5 linear feet in 1 container

Restrictions: None

Access: During open library hours of the Society (12 PM to 4 PM every Thursday; 10 AM to 4 PM every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month; and by appointment.)

Abstract: The Shepherd's Star Lodge No. 10 of Frenchtown, New Jersey was a subordinate lodge of the Order of Shepherds of Bethlehem and operated from 1898 to 1967. This collection includes lodge correspondence, financial and membership information, constitutions, by-laws, and rules of order; written materials and artifacts likely gathered by the organization's accountant and treasurer, Rhoda Belle (Stahler) Nestley; a large number of poems and newspaper clippings; two regional newspapers; two almanacs; and dress patterns. It is rich in information regarding the functioning and interests of twentieth-century benevolent orders, New Jersey local history, World War I, and popular poems of the early twentieth century.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL NOTES:**

Per the Constitution of the Supreme Lodge found in the collection, the Order of Shepherds of Bethlehem was a "secret fraternal, beneficiary and benevolent Order" for protection to the needy founded and instituted in Trenton, New Jersey on November 9, 1896. According to its 1898 Constitution, By-Laws and Rules of Order, the Shepherd's Star Lodge's membership was restricted to white males and females believing in God and aged 18 to 55. By the 1919 lodge constitution, membership age eligibility had been changed to between the ages of 16 and 50. The undated Directory of the Order of Shepherds of Bethlehem located in the collection notes the Shepherd's Star Lodge as meeting on Tuesday evenings at Frenchtown's Hoff's Hall on Bridge Street.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT:**

The Shepherd's Star Lodge No. 10 collection consists of 19 folders of handwritten, typed, or printed documents and three artifacts. About half the materials directly relate to the lodge's

operation, while the other half is perhaps more representative of the social environment in which it functioned.

### **ARRANGEMENT NOTE:**

All documents and artifacts were transferred into acid-free folders and arranged and labeled according to subject matter. Within individual folders, undated material is typically located behind dated material, which is ordered chronologically from earliest to latest date.

### **CONTAINER/FOLDER LIST:**

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
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| 1.1 | <p><b>Constitution of the Supreme Lodge, Order of Shepherds of Bethlehem (1933-1938)</b></p> <p>One 125-page booklet dated 1938 containing the Supreme Lodge and Subordinate Lodge Constitutions and Shepherds' Home Laws, Charter, and Articles of Incorporation; two typed pages of articles and amendments; one blank, illustrated letterhead paper dated 1933 from the office of The Shepherd's Home in Haddonfield, New Jersey.</p> |
| 1.2 | <p><b>Directory of the Order of Shepherds of Bethlehem (Undated)</b></p> <p>One small 40-page booklet listing lodge names, numbers, locations, meeting nights and places, and scribe names and addresses.</p>  |
| 1.3 | <p><b>Lodge Constitution, By-Laws and Rules of Order (1898-1919)</b></p> <p>Four small printed booklets of the Lodge Constitution, By-Laws, and Rules of Order. One booklet was published in Frenchtown in 1898 by Man's Friend Print and was issued to Belle Stahler upon her admission to membership in 1903. The other three booklets were published in Frenchtown by Hunterdon Independent Print and are dated 1919.</p>             |
| 1.4 | <p><b>Lodge Record Book (1896-1941)</b></p> <p>One bound record book containing lodge member lists, a mortuary list, an initiated list, information on the formation of the lodge and funeral benefit association, and four unused coin wrappers patented 1921.</p>  |
| 1.5 | <p><b>Lodge Financial Information (1935-1967)</b></p>  |

Includes one typed balance sheet dated 1935, a 1936 list of petty cash receipts, two small spiral handwritten bookkeeping notebooks of account information and member names (1960-1964, 1964-1967), a 1966 treasurer's report, three bank statements with three checks in envelopes postmarked 1967 addressed to treasurer Belle Nestley by the Hunterdon County National Bank of Flemington, and miscellaneous handwritten account information.

**1.6 Lodge Address Book (1955)**

One small address book dated 1955 containing member names and addresses.

**1.7 Discontinuation of Lodge Operation (1967)**

One typed letter from Belle S. Nestley to John S. Halpin, Supreme Scribe of the Supreme Lodge, regarding her withdrawal from the accountant and treasurer positions; a memorial announcement for Bertha G. Worman; John S. Halpin's reply permitting the remaining members to become Members-at-Large, a Beneficiary Form, a newsletter, and a letter to Members-at-Large from John S. Halpin.

**1.8 Lodge Envelopes (Undated)**

Three blank envelopes of lodge stationery.

**1.9 Miscellaneous Artifacts (Undated)**

One stamp of Belle S. Nestley's signature, one small leather coin purse, and one ribbon.

**1.10 Rhoda Belle (Stahler) Nestley Materials (1914-1965)**

Three copies of Ms. Nestley's 1914 marriage announcement, two newspaper clippings regarding a kitchen shower given to her by lodge members, her 1938-issued Social Security card, one 1964-1965 W.S.C.S. program, one of Walter Stahler's calling cards, and one lodge envelope containing a handwritten themed menu.

**1.11 Handwritten Poems and Song Lyrics (1863-1911)**

Handwritten copies of "I Want to Be a Soldier" (1863), the lyrics and a brief background of "Lord Ullin's Daughter" (likely 1863), two untitled poems (1880, 1909), "The Gay Preacher" (undated), and "Tell Me Ye Winged Winds" (1911).

**1.12 World War I Newspaper Clippings (1914-1919)**

One newspaper clipping describing a young boy and his mother's experiences caught in Germany when the war began (undated), one clipping of letters to two

mothers of sons killed in France (1918-1919), and one 1919 clipping detailing memorial services for deceased soldiers.

1.13 **Miscellaneous Newspaper Clippings (1895-1918)**

Twelve newspaper clippings regarding state government, WWI bonds, Thanksgiving Day celebration ideas, an unusual tea party, an anti-Democratic Party political cartoon, an epigram about Teddy Roosevelt, the discovery of a conductor's watch 18 years after his death in an 1877 Milford railroad accident, the golden anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. John J. Nissley, a memorial sketch of Methodist Reverend Silvanus D. Decker, the origins of Memorial Day, a naval officer's nervous breakdown, and the inspiration for the poem "Old Grimes."

1.14 **Delaware Valley News (May 10, 1940)**

1 copy of the Delaware Valley News dated May 10, 1940 and stamped "Mrs P S Nestley."

1.15 **Delaware Valley News (Oct. 9, 1942)**

1 copy of the Delaware Valley News dated Oct. 9, 1942 and stamped "Mrs P S Nestley."

1.16 **Published Poems, Song Lyrics, and Sayings (1905-1916)**

Seventy-two miscellaneous newspaper clippings and magazine pages of poems, song lyrics, and sayings, plus one yellow cloth sock accompanied by a sock social poem.

1.17 **R. H. McDonald Drug Co. Publication (Undated)**

Ten pages of advice, sayings, health advice, advertisements, an essay on the importance of women working, rhymes, decorating tips, an astrological fortune teller, recipes, and a dreamer's dictionary.

1.18 **Agricultural Almanac (1925)**

One copy of the centennial edition of the 1925 Agricultural Almanac printed by John Baer's Sons, Inc. and stamped by Opdycke's Novelty Store of Frenchtown.

1.19 **Patterns (1907-1953)**

One envelope dated March 26, 1947 and addressed to Mrs. P. Nestley containing a pattern from "The Evening Bulletin," two packages of Simplicity Pattern Co. patterns, sewing directions handwritten on cardboard, one newspaper clipping of a baby shoe design, and one newspaper clipping of a dressing sacque pattern.