

Lester Family Papers -- Finding Aid

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Note: Original donation (series 1-5) was not assigned accession number prior to processing. Original finding aid included information about subsequent donation (accession number 2008.21). Entire processed collection has been included in PastPerfect under number 2008.21)

Biographical Information:

David H. R. Lester:

David "Howard" Russell Lester appears to have been born in or around 1905, to parents Whittlesey D. B. Lester and Stella S. Lester, who initially lived in Coeymans, Albany, New York, before moving to Schenectady. Lester eventually became a doctor, and is pictured in the Schenectady County Medical Society's yearbook photograph for 1937, at which time he lived at 905 State Street, Schenectady. David Howard R. Lester was in medical practice with his father, Whittlesey D.B. Lester. Whittlesey D. B. Lester lived at 1852 State Street until his death in 1941.

Catherine Garrison Lester:

Catherine Garrison was born on June 13, 1905, and died on May 14, 2000. Catherine's mother died when she was ten years old. Catherine attended the Ellis School of Nursing. She became a Registered Nurse (R.N.), and was very involved with Ellis Hospital. She was active in the P.T.A. in the public schools. She and David Howard R. Lester were married and then divorced. She was not listed as living on State Street until the mid-1950s. David Howard R. Lester married a second time to a woman by the name of Alice. David Howard moved to Reno, Nevada.

David A.W. Lester:

David Allen Whittlesey Lester was born in 1936, the son of David H.R. Lester and Catherine Garrison Lester. After graduating from Hartwick College in 1958, he earned a Master's degree from the State University of New York at Potsdam in 1962. Lester served as a teacher in the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District for many years. He died on September 30, 2006. His life partner was Linda Post at the time of his death. His sisters were Cathy Meyers and Kimberly Lester Puglisi.

Notes taken during a phone call to Linda Post about her February 2008 donation--

Linda Post was the executor of an estate consisting of a 13-room house full of artifacts. She chose to donate to the Historical Society because the Lester family had been living in Schenectady for several generations and was prominent in the health field in the city.

Scope and Content:

The materials in this collection focus on a broad range of topics and include photographs from all stages of David H.R. Lester's life, including his younger years and middle years as a doctor, but they also include images that precede him as well. Many articles and

documents exist within this collection that detail the time spent at Ellis Hospital by Catherine, and therefore chronicle life as a nurse in that time period as well.

Series 1: Photographs

Lester's life seems to have been well chronicled just based on the numerous and plentiful amounts of photographs available in the collection from his estate. These photographs include ones from his early childhood, as well as when he was a member of the Schenectady County Medical Society, as well as group photographs from the organizations to which he belonged, including one in front of a prominent ivy building. While there are not as many photographs in the collection pertaining to or including Catherine Lester, there are a few that chronicle her sources of entertainment.

- 1) Photograph – of the Schenectady County Medical Society in Anno 1937. It lists the names of all of the members of the society below their yearbook picture, includes a picture of David H.R. Lester.
- 2) Early Photographs of David H.R. Lester – The images in this folder both predate and represent Lester's early childhood, while ranging in location from the greater Schenectady area to Chuttenango Falls, and Washington, D.C.
- 3) Framed Photograph – is a visual of a group of men in front of an ivy wall, the image is specifically posed and likely represents a specific group, organization, or club of some sort. There is a listing of the names of many of the members pictured in the photograph as well as the location from which they came, it is transcribed as follows:

#	Name	Location
3	David Garrity?	Kingston, New York
6	J.J. Krecty?	Arent Park, New York
27	J.W. Ceronell?	Hyde Park, New York
19	H.R. Bentley	Central Bridge, New York
21	William John Mabel	Mechanicville, New York
12	Mr. N. Paurpargie?	Troy, New York
17	Josh H. Flymms?	Troy, New York
7	Guy Huoughton	Canajoharie, New York
5	W.R. Rathbum	Canajoharie, New York
20	Albert J. Read	Glenmont, New York
2	Huntington Willaus	Albany, New York
29	H.D.W. Cormick	Gremeanhous?, New York
11	Est. Orusby?	Auburndale, New York
23	John C. Ranch	Saugerties, New York
28	D.P. Smagg	Stottville, New York
8	Edward D'Elehanty	Albany, New York
3	J. Henry Linden	Cherry Valley, New York
10	Rhasat Birmingham?	Watervliet, New York
18	Wyman D. Jacobs	East Poestenkill, New York
16	Louis Wagert	Amsterdam, New York
4	Howard P. Pshshan?	Waterford, New York
15	Elbilton Brown?	Albany, New York
22	Breestone Henneyford?	
9	Majiwski, Dr. Waclow E. Chelm	Poland
24	Dr. Dirtz	Birve, New York?

25	Hiros Isaway?	Albany, New York
26	Chaz Durgee	Schenectady, New York
1	Dr. Gimhaur	Albany, New York
14	W.D.B. Lester	

- 4) Collection of Ellis Alumnae – photographs of David, CLASS OF 1925
- 5) Photograph – of Geo V.V. Warner of 201 Madison Avenue, Albany, New York
- 6) Christmas Cards – contain images of a home and of the “Aleutians” which is an island in 1943
- 7) Photograph – of Dr. H. Lester
- 8) Photograph – of women in an envelope addressed to Mrs. Lester - 1927

Series 2: Legal Documents

There are many different variations of documents within this collection, including loans, last wills and testaments, as well as mortgages. Each pertains to a member of the Lester family, including Catherine, David H.R., and Whittlesey D. B. Lester. Many of these documents are issued by the Surrogate Court, but they also branch out to other venues as well, including documents from the State Legislature of New York.

- 1) Schenectady Savings and Loan Association – Mortgage Discharge for Catherine G. Lester.
- 2) Bond and Mortgage – between Richard L. Fink and Catherine A. Lester – March 3, 1981
- 3) Deed – from September 15, 1948
- 4) Estate – of Carleton H. Lewis – May 6, 1939
- 5) Deed – October 1950
- 6) Bond – September 15, 1948, for \$85,000
- 7) Purchase and Sale of document – October 2, 1950
- 8) Statement of Sale – from Ketchum to Lester
- 9) Discharge of Mortgage – September 8, 1959
- 10) Mortgage – September 16, 1948
- 11) Purchase Offer – May 2, 1936
- 12) Certificate of Letters Testamentary – Nicholas I. Veeder – May 3, 1948
- 13) Surrogate Court Record – from Roy W. Peters to Mrs. W.D.B. Lester – Last Will and Testament of Whittlesey D.B. Lester (Stella S. Lester, Executrix)
- 14) Small Accordion File – Stocks & Personal Receipts + Letters – Charles L. Seal (jeweler) → D.H.R. Lester, M.D. – 1934

Series 3: Drama Festival Playbills

The year 1939 had quite a few interesting shows being done on the Union college campus throughout the summer, and one of the Lesters seems to have been quite the avid drama fan. There is a collection of five handbooks/playbills/guides to the summer’s festivities that year, detailing the different events.

- 1) Playbill – Final Production Plans of the Fifth Annual Mohawk Drama Festival – Union College, Schenectady, New York – July 11 to August 26, 1939

- 2) Handbook – Mohawk Drama Festival 1937 – Union College campus – July 6 – August 14
- 3) Magazine – Mohawk Drama Festival 1939 – Union College campus – Schenectady, New York – August 1 – August 5
- 4) Magazine – Mohawk Drama Festival 1939 – Union College campus – Schenectady, New York – July 18 – July 22 (2)
- 5) Magazine – Mohawk Drama Festival 1939 – Union College campus – Schenectady, New York – July 25 – July 29
- 6) Magazine – Mohawk Drama Festival 1939 – Union College campus – Schenectady, New York – July 11 – July 25
- 7) Stickers – Mohawk Drama Festival – 1936 – July 21 – August 29

Series 4: Hospital Paraphernalia

It appears that both Catherine and David Lester were not only members of the hospital realm, but also avid participants within and around the hospital community. As an early member of the RN Club, and later of the Schenectady County Medical Society, Dr. D.H. Lester was clearly immersed in his trade. Catherine too, serving as a nurse held on to many paraphernalia from her time as such, including the handbooks she received, the Florence Nightingale oath she had to take, as well as many newspaper clippings that surrounded her work.

- 1) Photograph – of the Schenectady County Medical Society in Anno 1937. It lists the names of all of the members of the society below their yearbook picture, includes a picture of David H. Lester.
- 2) “The Hospital Association of the City of Schenectady” – Ellis Hospital Yearbook 1922-1923 – which also contains a copy of the Elliscopes for that year.
- 3) GE Notebook – entitled “RN Club” – by David Lester as a child, which also served as an agenda and calendar as well.
- 4) Pamphlet – Constitution and By-Laws of the RN Club
- 5) Pamphlet – Constitution and By-Laws Schenectady County Private Duty Nurses Association Incorporated – by Catherine F. Garrison
- 6) RN Club – includes a members list, receipts, and paraphernalia from the time period like an Eckel’s Ice Cream Popular Song Book.
- 7) RN Club – Constitution and By-Laws
- 8) Itinerary – The New York State Nurses Association – for a London trip.
- 9) Advertisement – for Ellis Hospital Funds
- 10) Announcement – 50th Year Banquet – Ellis Hospital Alumnae – 1956
- 11) Pamphlet – a copy of the Florence Nightingale pledge that nurses must take (2)
- 12) Magazine – A copy of the February 1985 Elliscopes (100th Year Celebration)
- 13) Booklet – “Names That Will Live” – makes the hospital well-known and visible to the public to attempt to retrieve donations.
- 14) RN Club Folder – contains a growth and development chart (1 mos. to 16 years), and a daily intake and output chart.
- 15) Collection – of Elliscopes magazines and invitations to hospital functions.
- 16) Book – “Your Baby’s Care” – care of Ellis Hospital – baby’s name: David Allen Whittlesey Lester.

- 17) Pamphlet – “Ten Commandments of the Doctor’s Wife”
- 18) Prescription – available from the time period, although it is relatively illegible.
- 19) Pamphlet – “Simplified Parliamentary Procedure – based on Robert’s Rules of Order – for the New York State Nurses Association”

Series 5: Miscellaneous Records

This collection contains letters to and from Catherine and David, as well as a collection of wooden nickels, and some different forms of paraphernalia that are representative of the suburban life that was lead during that time period from which they were collected. A wooden nickel has strict rules, time limits, and redemption times that are purported for its use. The wooden nickels are issued by banks and/or the Chamber of Commerce and they are largely used as a marketing technique to promote a celebration.

- 1) Letter – to Mrs. Lester from Wm. Breeman – July 18, 1936
- 2) Collection – Neighborhood Watch stickers
- 3) Collection – Wooden Nickels – all issued by the Scotia Golden Jubilee Committee:

Issue	Type	Time Period of Usage
First Issue	One Wooden Nickel	June 5-12 (1904-1954)
First Issue	Two Wooden Nickels	June 5-12 (1904-1954)
Second Issue	Two Wooden Nickels	June 5-12 (1904-1954)
Second Issue	Five Wooden Nickels	June 5-12 (1904-1954)
Third Issue	Five Wooden Nickels	June 5-12 (1904-1954)
Third Issue	One Wooden Nickel	June 5-12 (1904-1954)
Third Issue	Two Wooden Nickels	June 5-12 (1904-1954)
First Issue	Five Wooden Nickels	June 5-12 (1904-1954)
Second Issue	One Wooden Nickel	June 5-12 (1904-1954)

- 4) Postcard – General Electric Company
- 5) Map – CDTA Transit Route Map – June 1974
- 6) Pamphlet – by the Town of Tomorrow Committee for the City planning Commission – details ideas for the architecture of the city for the future.
- 7) Newspaper Clippings – found a variety which all appear to be from different time periods, though they lack dates.
- 8) List – of names and address for the Fathers of Fowntown Branch Boy Members
- 9) Newspaper Clipping – from the Schenectady Gazette – January 25, 1973

Series 6: Addendum to Lester Family Papers

These materials are comprised of an addition to the collection received in February 2008. These materials include numerous photographs and photographic negatives. Most photographs are family photographs and portraits, including photographs of David H.R. Lester, David A.W. Lester, Dr. W.D.B. Lester, and Mary Whittlesey Lester (great grandmother of David A.W. Lester). Many photographs contain no identifying information or dates. In addition to photographs, the addendum to the collection contains numerous programs from musical performances at the State Street Presbyterian Church, where David A.W. Lester served as organist and choir director, and the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Junior High School, where he served as the school’s vocal specialist.

Box and Folder Listing:

Box	Folder	Folder Title
1	1	Catherine Lester – Miscellany – 1935-1997
1	2	David A.W. Lester – Correspondence – 1960, 1964
1	3	David A.W. Lester – Newspaper clippings & miscellany – 1953-1962, n.d.
1	4	David A.W. Lester – Programs – Albany/Burnt Hills/Ballston Lake – 1951, 1959-1968
1	5	David A.W. Lester – Programs – Schenectady Protestant church music (First Presbyterian and First Reformed) – 1949-1969, 1980
1	6	David H.R. Lester – narrative of Vermont trip – 1940
OS	OS	David H.R. Lester – Diploma – 1954 [in Spanish]
1	7	Howard Lester, Jr. – Correspondence – 1942
1	8	Photographs – 1901-1962 & n.d. [1 of 3]
1	9	Photographs – 1901-1962 & n.d. [2 of 3]
1	10	Photographs – 1901-1962 & n.d. [3 of 3]