

**A Brief History of Lionism  
in Connecticut  
1922-1983**

**Introduction**



**Including Chapter 1 & 2**



*This book is dedicated to every  
Connecticut Lion whose labor and compassion  
made life better for someone.*





**MELVIN JONES**  
**Founder of the**  
**International Association of Lions Clubs**



## IN MEMORIAM—MELVIN JONES

Melvin Jones, founder of the International Association of Lions Clubs, was born at Fort Thomas, Arizona, on January 13, 1879. His father, John Calvin Jones, was a captain in the Army. Melvin was educated by private tutors in Arizona and in the public schools of Missouri. He attended high schools in Kahoka and St. Louis, Missouri, and Union Business College in Quincy, Illinois. Later he studied law at Chaddock College in Quincy.

At twenty-one he went to Chicago where he entered the office of Johnson and Higgins, Insurance Brokers. Later he established his own business by founding the Melvin Jones Insurance Agency. He gave up this enterprise in the early 1920s to devote his entire attention to Lions International.

In 1914 while serving as Secretary of the Business Circle of Chicago, he began contacting independent clubs and associations throughout the country in an effort to interest them in the formation of a service-club association. He had the full support of his own club in this undertaking.

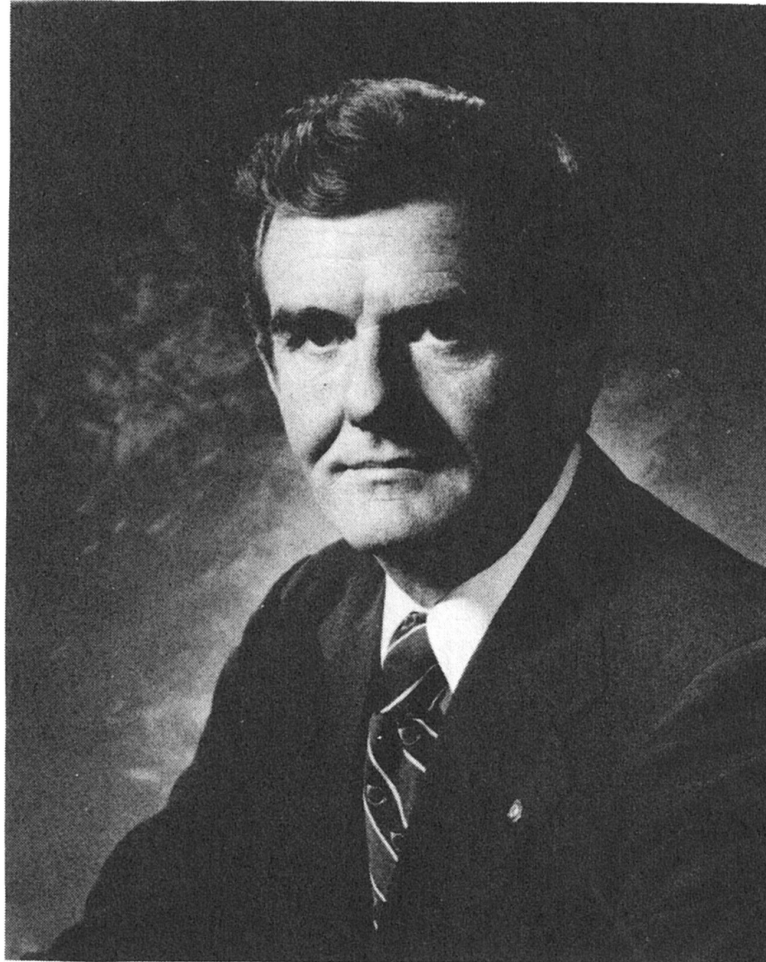
On June 7, 1917, delegates representing many of these clubs met at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago and formed the International Association of Lions Clubs, which was later incorporated in the State of Illinois. At this time Melvin Jones was elected Secretary of the Association and later became its only Secretary-General.

In 1939 he was awarded the National Merit of Carlos Manuel de Cespedes by the Cuban Government, the highest award which can be made to a civilian who is not the head of his nation. He was honored by many other countries with awards and citations of various kinds.

In 1909 Melvin Jones married Rose Freeman, the famous golfer. She won the North-South Amateur Tournament at Pinehurst in 1925 and was president of the Women's Western Golf Association in 1938 and 1939, in which organization she remained active until her death in June, 1954. On June 21, 1956, he married Lillian M. Radigan, who survives him.

At the age of eighty-two Melvin Jones died on June 1, 1961, in Flossmoor, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, and was interred there in Mount Hope Cemetery. As a tribute to this great Lion and the life of service he lived, the Board of Directors abolished, for all time, the office of Secretary-General, which he held with such honor and distinction.





**JOSEPH M. McLOUGHLIN**  
**PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT**  
**1977-1978**



## **JOSEPH M. McLOUGHLIN**

### **PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT**

Joseph M. McLoughlin, of Stamford, Connecticut, served as the 61st leader of The International Association of Lions Clubs after being elected at the Association's Convention held in June, 1977, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

President of both a lumber company and a real estate development firm, Past President McLoughlin also serves as President of the Lions International Foundation (LIF), a worldwide relief agency administered by a Board of Trustees of Lions. Both he and his wife, Bette, have been honored as Melvin Jones Fellows by LIF. A member of the Springdale (Stamford) Lions Club since 1956, he has held every major office on the Club and District level, and in 1970 was elected to serve a two year term as an International Director of the Association.

For his outstanding service on behalf of Lionism, Past President McLoughlin has received thirteen International President's Awards, three Extension Awards and the master Key Award. He has also received the coveted Ambassador of Good Will Award for his commitment to the Association and its worldwide service efforts.

International President McLoughlin's theme for his term, "Lionism: People Caring for People," motivated Lions across the globe to extend the hand of friendship and service to people everywhere.

He and his wife, Bette, have two children.





# **A Brief History of Lionism in Connecticut**

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Editor, Francis Segesman  
Project Manager, Otto Strobino





*Connecticut Lions History Ad Hoc committee. Seated left to right: PDG Otto Strobino, Co-chairman Curtis Jennings, Co-chairman Kenneth V. Olson, Keith Wuerthner. Standing: Everett Clark, PDG Richard Case, John Kromish, John J. Murphy, PDG Edward Hagerty. Missing from photo, PDG Joseph Ganim, deceased.*

## STATE COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR PUBLICATION OF HISTORY

Year	District	District Governor	Council Chairman
1981-1982	A	Thomas Valerio	Clifford Randall
	B	Otto Strobino	
	C	James Mackey	
1982-1983	A	William Phillips	James Mackey
	B	George Precourt	
	C	Joseph Pescatello	
1983-1984	A	Theodore Beauregard	William Phillips
	B	Edward Dillon	
	C	William Allen	
1984-1985	A	Gene Poulos	Edward Dillon
	B	George Lomnitzer	
	C	Donald Fuller	
1985-1986	A	Philip G. Flaker	Donald Fuller
	B	Ronald Jones	
	C	Morris Smith	

## PREFACE

In the fall of 1979, Kenneth Olson of the New Britain Evening Lions Club decided to act on an idea that had been on his mind for some time. He wanted a history of Lionism in Connecticut. He discussed the idea with Curtis Jennings, also of the New Britain Evening Lions Club, who agreed to work with him on the project. There were two purposes in writing the history. First, it would record the work done by Lions to help others, and to make their communities better places in which to live. Second, it would contribute to the literature of voluntaryism, and thus be a part of the social history of Connecticut.

The proposal had the strong support of Past District Governor Howard Wry, and of Otto Strobino, who became District Governor in 1981. Both were members of the New Britain Lions (Host) Club. It was necessary to obtain the approval of the Lions' State Council, as this project would require cooperation of all clubs in the State.

The Council gave its approval in 1980, and appointed an *ad hoc* Committee to assist and advise. Olson and Jennings were designated Co-Chairmen. Other members of the Committee were the following:

From District 23A:

Past International Director Joseph Ganim  
Past District Governor Edward Hagerty  
Lion John J. Murphy

From District 23B:

Past District Governor Nunzio Rosso  
Otto Strobino, District Governor  
Keith Wuerthner, President, New Britain (Host) Club. Keith served as Secretary to the *ad hoc* Committee.

From District 23C:

Past District Governor Richard Case  
Everett Clark, Cabinet Secretary/Treasurer  
Lion John Kromish

Several meetings of the *ad hoc* Committee were held in New Britain at the office of architects Kaestle and Boos and at the office of Otto Strobino. The Committee reviewed material, made corrections and suggestions, and made decisions on procedures. Above all, they added their persuasion to that of officers and clubs in their districts to provide the information needed to develop the history. Collecting the information was the most difficult task. It was necessary to get a two-year extension beyond the three years originally authorized by the State Council for completion of the project. Questionnaires were sent out, but it often happened that a second, and even a third, questionnaire had to be sent followed by letters, telephone calls and personal contacts.

One of the conditions established by the State Council for the project was that no persons or clubs were to profit from the endeavor. All costs were to be recovered from sales of the book to clubs and individual Lions. This policy was strictly observed. For all who worked on the history it was a labor of love. It is with justifiable pride that they offer this record of achievements by the Lions of Connecticut to present and future generations of this State as part of their cultural heritage.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The History of Lionism in Connecticut is truly the work of every club in the State. But some individuals were outstanding in submitting information promptly and assisting in many other ways.

Roy Schaetzel, Executive Secretary of the International Association of Lions Clubs, responded quickly, and in detail to questions about the historical origins of many activities and characteristics of the Association. Connecticut's own Past International President, Joseph McLoughlin, cleared some obstacles and provided information not otherwise available. Past International Director Harold Ashley, one of the grand patriarchs of Connecticut Lionism, gave insights into Lionism around the mid-century.

Past District Governor Howard Wry of the New Britain (Host) Club was a mine of information and always helpful. Lester Hintz of the New Haven Club was also very helpful on a wide range of questions. Ramon Campbell of the Hebron Club came through with the fastest answers.

Special credits go to the following: Lion Francis Segesman for professional editing of the entire manuscript without charge; Alice Arbour for typing a considerable part of the first draft without charge; Past District Governor Otto Strobino without whose help and guidance the book would not have been written, especially as he volunteered his secretary to do the typing; to Otto's secretary, Barbara Manthey, for superior typing of the entire manuscript and for her remarkable patience and good humor in handling the multitude of changes and interruptions; and to Lion John Kromish who took the manuscript into print and solved many problems along the way.

The outstanding work of many Connecticut Lions are recorded along with their names throughout the book, and acknowledgements are understood to include them as they have made this history worth the effort. Unfortunately, circumstances preclude giving credit to every Lion who labored in the pancakes. Without them there would be no history to write.

Finally, credit is due to the State Council for their confidence and trust. The project could not have started without their endorsement and would not have been completed without their support.

The **ad hoc** History Committee



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# Chapter 1

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## Beginning and Expansion of Lionism

Two men were talking, one from a Lions Club, one from another organization. “But what’s in it for you?”, the latter asked. “In a material sense, nothing,” the Lion replied. “Lionism is a commitment to serve others less fortunate than ourselves. We engage in and support many activities that benefit everyone and make life better in our own communities and in all free countries. That’s the sum of it. That’s our reward.”

Service was the compelling drive that led a Chicago insurance man to devote much of his life to the establishment and expansion of the organization which was to become in less than a half century the largest service group in the world, the International Association of Lions Clubs. It is a living and exemplary testament to the dedicated life of one man, ably supported by a great number of other civic leaders and eventually anchored in the concerns of millions of Lions and those they serve.

Melvin Jones was born January 13, 1879, in an Arizona Indian outpost where his father was a Captain of Cavalry. Captain Jones was reassigned, and Melvin went to school, among other places, in Quincy, Illinois. He attended law school but changed to insurance and entered the brokerage firm of Johnson and Higgins in Chicago. In 1913 he had his own successful agency in that city and was invited to join “The Business Circle.” This club was like hundreds of others which brought businessmen together for lunch and conversation about what was new in the marketplace. Their vision was limited to what was good for business, their outlook was inward. This disturbed Melvin Jones and was perhaps what spurred him in his efforts to lead the business community to recognize a social obligation.

Why did Lionism appear when it did and expand so rapidly? Answers to these questions require looking back.

First, the need for private charity was urgent. There was no welfare state. Governments were not supposed to cure social ills. Most of the men who founded Lionism could remember the serious depression of 1893-1897 when millions were unemployed, nearly 20 percent of the work force. Especially hard hit were the South and Midwest. Over 600 banks failed in 1893 alone, and 156 railroads with 30,000 miles of track went into receivership. It should be noted that all the delegates to the First International Convention of the Lions were from the South and West. Throughout that depression bands of the ragged poor marched from town to town begging and looking for any kind of work. They were called “Coxey’s Army” because Jacob S. Coxey, a successful Ohio businessman, organized a group of them and marched to Washington in 1894 asking the federal government to back interest-free loans to towns for road repairs and other public works. The leaders of the march ended up in police court—without getting assistance.

The Lions-to-be knew about the settlement houses in most major cities. These were organized and operated by upper and middle-class women whose special work was among poor immigrants who couldn’t speak English. One of these settlement houses, Hull House, was opened in a Chicago slum in 1892 by Jane Addams. Hull House became internationally famous. Jane Addams was born in Illinois and graduated from Rockford College. She studied in Europe, was later president of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, and of the Women’s International



League for Peace. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Jane Addams died in Chicago in 1935. It is reasonable to suppose that the men in the Business Circle knew her; they certainly knew about her work.

Second, in the years just before Lionism was founded, literary critics engaged in a massive and constant attack on the railroads, the utilities, Standard Oil, the beef trust, banking, insurance, the stockyards, and just about everything America was doing. Many books and hundreds of magazine articles were published. Some magazines were devoted entirely to social problems and reform. Theodore Roosevelt, President 1901-1909, called the critics muckrakers. Yet he himself was labeled a trustbuster, and he ran for a third term in 1912 as a Progressive.

Third, in politics there was no end of agitation for change. There had, for a long time, been demands for civil service reform, an eight-hour day, women's suffrage, enforcement of vice laws, factory inspection, abolition of child labor, regulation of railway rates, etc. Several farm groups merged into alliances to form the Populist movement which elected nine representatives and two senators in 1890 and formed the National People's or Populist Party in 1891. Further to the left were those who formed the Social Democratic Party in 1890 and nominated Eugene V. Debs for President. They supported public works for the unemployed, public ownership of railroads and utilities, women's suffrage and other national legislation. Following on their heels and borrowing much from them were the Progressives. The National Progressive Republican League was formed in 1911 at the home of Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin, who served in the U.S. Senate from 1905 to 1925.

With all these things happening in America it is understandable that businessmen were concerned, not just about the needy, but also about their own images and the roles they might be playing to influence the direction of change.

There is no better evidence of that concern than the fact that the Rotary Club was founded in 1905, the Exchange Club in 1911, the Kiwanis in 1916 and the Lions in 1917. One European skeptic noted this and referred to the "twaddle of service" as "the doctrine of an optimistic Pharisee trying to reconcile success with justice." But even in the direct affairs of business there were those who saw a need for change. In 1907 Elbert H. Gary, a former judge and then board chairman of U.S. Steel, ushered in a new age of corporate responsibility in a series of speeches to the nation's steel producers. The chairman of his finance committee, George M. Perkins, declared that corporations must "peopleize" industry. Profit sharing, social insurance, and pensions were to be the cement of the new order. In 1912 Louis D. Brandeis, U.S. Supreme Court Justice, delivered the commencement address at Brown University on the subject "Business—a Profession." The point of it was that businessmen should consider themselves professionals just as lawyers and doctors. But to do so would require that they think not only in terms of profit but also of service to others, the true measure of a professional.

The fourth and greatest factor in its influence on Lionism was religion. There had always been the Protestant Ethic in America. In colonial New England, Cotton Mather preached that "a Christian should spend most of his time in a settled business so he could glorify God by the doing of good for others and getting of good for himself." Russell Herman Conwell, Yale graduate whose Baptist Temple became Temple University, delivered one speech, "Acres of Diamonds," 6,000 times from the 1870's to the 1920's. "I say that you ought to get rich, and it is your duty to get rich," he said. "Money is power and you ought to be reasonably ambitious to have it . . . While we should sympathize with God's poor—that is, those who cannot help themselves—let us remember there is not a poor person in the United States who was not made poor by his own shortcomings or by the shortcom-

ings of someone else.”

The thought that the shortcomings of someone else might adversely affect others, even though unintentional, was a bothersome idea. There were cases without number of misfortune and not enough caring by people in a position to do something about it. Social consciousness in religion developed into a great movement in the late nineteenth century and continued its momentum until after the founding of Lionism. This was called the Social Gospel movement and its aim was to plant the ethics of Christ in the factory and the marketplace. Its most eloquent spokesman was a Baptist minister, Walter Rauschenbush, whose ministry from 1886 to 1897 was among the violent poor of Hell’s Kitchen, West Forty-Fifth Street, New York City. In rapid succession he published several books. The first was *Christianity and the Social Gospel*, 1907. *The Social Gospel of Jesus* was published in 1916 and 20,000 copies were distributed by the Chicago YMCA, the city where Melvin Jones had his business, and from where he corresponded with other clubs about a coalition of clubs. *A Theology for the Social Gospel* was published in 1917, the year Lionism was founded.

It has been said that the Lions Code of Ethics is Lionism. The code was developed by C.M. Cunningham, Secretary of the Houston Club, assisted by others, all agreeing that it should be made up of positive “Thou shalt” rather than negative “Thou shalt not.” The code was adopted in 1918 and with one minor deletion remains today as originally written:

To show my faith in the worthiness of my vocation  
by industrious application to the end that I may  
merit a reputation for quality of service.

To seek success and to demand all fair remuneration  
or profit as my just due, but to accept no profit or  
success at the price of my own self respect lost be-  
cause of unfair advantage taken or because of question-  
able acts on my part.

To remember that in building up my business it is not  
necessary to tear down another’s, to be loyal to my  
clients or customers and true to myself.

Whenever a doubt arises as to the right or ethics of  
my position or action towards my fellow men, to re-  
solve such doubt against myself.

To hold friendship as an end and not as a means. To  
hold that true friendship exists not on account of the  
service performed by one another, but that true friend-  
ship demands nothing but accepts service in the spirit  
in which it is given.

Always to bear in mind my obligations as a citizen to  
my nation, my state and my community, and to give to  
them my unswerving loyalty in word, act and deed. To  
give them freely of my time, labor and means.

To aid my fellow men by giving my sympathy to those in distress, my aid to the weak, and my substance to the needy.

To be careful with my criticism and liberal with my praise; to build up and not destroy.

The influence of the Judeo-Christian tradition on the code is unmistakable. If one needed more evidence it can be found in individual affiliations. One example will suffice. In 1981-1982 the International Board of Directors was comprised of 33 members. Seventeen were from the United States; there were three Baptists, two Methodists, two Presbyterians, two Congregationalists, two Roman Catholics, one from the Christian Church, one from the Church of Christ, one from the Disciples of Christ, two Protestants and one of Christian faith, affiliation not identified. Of the 16 board members from other countries there were: five Roman Catholics, three Methodists, one Presbyterian, one Anglican, one Evangelical Lutheran, one Protestant, one Shinto, one Buddhist and one not given. Melvin Jones himself was a Methodist and a Mason.

In 1968 International Third Vice President Dr. Robert McCullough addressed the Connecticut Mid-Winter Conference and said, “. . . When Christ came he said, I come to serve and not to be served. . . and to love your neighbors as yourselves.” Dr. McCullough went on to criticize American government-aid programs on the grounds that they give of what we have but not of what we are. “Lionism does both,” he added. “Lionism is not a religion. It is a great field of opportunity for all of us to fully live our religion.” Within Lionism, one’s beliefs are a personal matter and neither sectarian religion nor partisan politics are to be discussed at meetings or social gatherings. But a minimum core of shared views and experiences are necessary for the success of any organization. The Code of Ethics says it all for Lions.

Such was the American world of Melvin Jones and the men who would join with him to accept the challenges of their day. Jones lost no time in expressing his feelings that business clubs were too much concerned with themselves. “Any association that presumes to leadership in the community will have to offer something more than business reciprocity among its members,” he told them. His personal guiding thought was that, “you can’t get very far without doing something for somebody else.”

The objectives of other clubs in existence did not satisfy Mr. Jones. That he was able to get the “Business Circle” and then others to follow him in new directions confirms various descriptions of the man by those who knew him: energetic, visionary, friendly, jovial, devoted, diplomatic, even a finagler in back room maneuvering. The early leaders sought the membership not only of businessmen but of professionals including clergy, educators, and others in community life. But if everyone had understood where Jones wanted to take them, some might not have followed with such docility. Napoleon once fired his finance minister because that official could think only in terms of the infinitely little. Jones did not think little. At the outset he felt that to accomplish much good there would have to be many clubs working in a common cause. He began corresponding with several business clubs in different states expressing his views, finally inviting them to send representatives to a meeting to discuss and act on a proposal to join together in an effort to help others. This meeting was held at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago on June 7, 1917, with twenty delegates from some twenty-seven clubs attending. There were the Optimists from



Chicago and other cities, the Reciprocity clubs, the Wheels, the Concord Club of Omaha, the Business and Professional Men's Association of St. Paul, the Argonians of Los Angeles, the Vortex of St. Louis and Detroit, and the Lions Club, an Indiana Corporation.

The Indiana club had been incorporated in that state in 1911 by a surgeon, W.P. Woods, under the name "The Royal Order of Lions." In 1915 he sent Elbert A. Hicks, a Texan, to Texas to organize dens.

One was chartered in El Paso in June, 1915, one in San Antonio in October, 1915, and one in Galveston in November, 1915. In 1916, Woods changed the name of the club to "The International Association of Lions Clubs." Under the new name, eleven clubs were set up in 1916 and nine more by June, 1917, in several states. Melvin Jones had been corresponding with Woods prior to the Chicago assembly.

The purpose of the meeting in Chicago was to form an international association of clubs not already in an international organization. That was agreed upon, and though there was disagreement about the name of this new group, the name of Wood's organization was adopted. A general meeting was called within 90 days to establish the new organization, elect officers and directors, and draft a charter, a constitution, and a code of ethics.

The First International Convention was held in the Hotel Adolphus in Dallas, Texas, October 8-10, 1917, though there were no clubs from other countries, for none had been established. So far that was hope, but it would soon be reality. Represented at Dallas were eleven clubs from Texas, five from Oklahoma, two from Colorado and one each from Illinois, Arkansas, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Missouri, and these became charter clubs.

The Dallas convention adopted a constitution and by-laws. The constitution was rewritten in 1918 and has been revised several times since then. Officers were elected, with Dr. Woods as President; L.H. Lewis of the Dallas club, First Vice President; E.N. Kaercher of St. Louis, Second Vice President; M. Harry Mayers of Denver, Third Vice President; and Melvin Jones, Secretary-Treasurer. The home office of the club was to be the home of the President.

The first year this was the office of Dr. Woods in Evansville, Indiana, with much of the work being done in Jones' office in Chicago. From 1921-1925 most of the work was done from Jones' office. The association was incorporated in Illinois in 1919 after the Third Annual Convention in Chicago. The Lions purchased their own building in Chicago in 1925 to serve as the International Headquarters, and all operations were transferred there. The headquarters moved to 300 22nd Street, Oak Brook, Illinois in 1971 where Lions also own the building and where, as of 1984, they are still located. Melvin Jones continued as Chief Administrative Officer until July, 1950, when the title of Secretary General was bestowed on him. This title was permanently retired on his death in 1961. R. Roy Keaton was Chief Administrative Officer from 1950 to 1961 with the title of Director General. This title was also retired on Keaton's retirement.

The Dallas Morning News of October, 1917, reported that the first Convention "voted to open the club's rosters to business women as well as business men and limited its membership to white persons." Limiting membership to white persons had been proposed at the session on October 9, 1917, by T.H. Lewis, President of the Dallas club. Mr. Roy Schaetzel, Executive Administrator of Lions International, reported in 1983 that the Dallas newspaper articles were the only records International has about business women. He said, "Our records of the beginning of Lionism are meager indeed. Since the constitution and by-laws which we have on

record for the year 1918 do not refer at all to women. . . the admission of women went by the boards very quickly. . . the white male limitation was deleted by amendment to the constitution at the convention in San Francisco in July, 1926.”

It is a reasonable inference that the first convention did vote admission of women considering what had been happening in the country. For decades women’s suffrage had been a national and controversial issue. The federal government had consistently refused to pass a constitutional amendment granting women the vote. Finally, in 1914, a militant faction of the National American Women’s Suffrage Association split off to found the Congressional Union to work against Democrats who were seen as the main obstacles. This group founded the National Women’s Party and when campaigning did not produce results they picketed the White House and refused to support the United States in World War I. They were arrested and jailed and some were force-fed when they went on a hunger strike. However, the main body of suffragettes did support the war effort and continued to work “within the system.” The result was that by the time of the first convention, sixteen states and Alaska had already given the vote to women. Two states which had granted the vote, Arkansas and Indiana, were represented at the first Lions convention. It is quite logical that these delegates would have proposed a favorable resolution on women as members.

Opposition to WWI was not limited to the National Women’s Party. An anticonscription rally of some 2,000 in New York City on June 15, 1917, almost led to a riot. There was the “Green Corn Rebellion” in Oklahoma. A working class union made up of poor farmers and tenants tried to enlist large numbers of protestors for a march on Washington to take over the government and stop the war. They cut telegraph wires and attempted unsuccessfully to blow up railroad bridges but were dispersed by patriotic posses. In other cases violence was instigated by patriots. In July, 1917, 8,000 Socialists and radicals staged an antiwar parade in Boston. Soldiers and sailors, commanded by an officer, attacked and beat the demonstrators. None of the some 10,000 attackers were arrested, but some of the demonstrators were. Several other acts of violence occurred, one of which led to a bizarre judgement in an Illinois court. In Collinsville, Illinois, a young German-American with no record of opposition to the war was lynched by a drunken mob. Their attorneys called it “patriotic murder” and the defendants were acquitted.

There can be no doubt that this kind of social unrest, coming just before and at the time of the convention and at a time when American soldiers were just entering combat in WWI, influenced the delegates to take formal notice of it. A committee was established to draft resolutions endorsing the Liberty Loan and President Wilson. Moreover, the convention supported America’s proclaimed mission to make the world safe for democracy.

Lions have always supported their country in national emergencies. Paragraph six of the Lions Code of Ethics is specifically nationalistic and patriotic. More to the point, a Citizenship and Patriotism Code, the work of Mr. Jones and the Reverend W. Murray Allan, was copyrighted in 1939. It was not submitted to a convention for approval, but the essence of it became the Lions slogan: “Liberty, Intelligence, Our Nation’s Safety—L I O N S.” This action also had its ground in international events. The Japanese had bombed the American gunboat *Panay* in Shanghai in 1937 and virtually forced the withdrawal of the American garrison in Tientsin in 1938. Hitler and Mussolini were already involved in aggression in Europe and World War II started in the year the slogan was given its final form. As originally drafted, the Citizenship and Patriotism Code contained a provision “to uphold the principles of democratic government by supporting such movements as

seek to save a country from its own apathy.” It was not spelled out how this support was to be accomplished, nor was the definition of “apathy.” In view of this, it is with understandable pride that Lions remember John H. Bradley of the Neenah, Wisconsin Lions Club. He was one of the six marines immortalized in the photo, and later the statue, of the flag raising on Iwo Jima.

World War I was a traumatic experience for the western world and Lions International reacted in 1919 with the adoption of the following “Objects,” which aim for a better understanding among nations:

To create and foster a spirit of understanding among peoples of the world.

To promote the principles of good government and good citizenship.

To take an active interest in the civic, cultural, social, and moral welfare of the community.

To unite the clubs in the bonds of friendship, good fellowship and mutual understanding.

To provide a forum for the open discussion of all matters of public interest; provided, however, that partisan politics and sectarian religion shall not be debated by club members.

To encourage service-minded men to serve their community without personal financial reward, and to encourage efficiency and promote high ethical standards in commerce, industry, professions, public works and private endeavors.

The objects of creating and fostering a spirit of understanding among peoples of the world, uniting clubs in the bonds of friendship, and aiding the needy presuppose ways and means. They require members, organization and money.

From a beginning of 25 clubs with 800 members, 23 clubs were represented at the Dallas convention in 1917. Thereafter Lionism expanded rapidly. In February, 1973, Barney Gill was inducted into the Virginia Beach (Oceana) Club as the millionth member of Lions International. By 1982, there were 1,345,809 members in 35,760 clubs, 643 districts and 7,355 zones, 2,868 being in the United States. The number of zones can vary because of the discretion permitted governors in creating zones. There are 78 international extension representatives, 26 of these being in the United States. Extension representatives are salaried employees of Lions International. They are assigned to areas of the country involving several districts. They are trouble shooters on problems of membership, procedures, and organization.

The Lions are by far the largest service organization in the world. The dedication of individual Lions and especially of club and district officers are the sources of expansion energy. But all that drive might well have been dissipated without effective leadership and organization from the top down.

The first major asset was Melvin Jones whose sense of direction and mastery of detail provided a stable course while the system developed. The second was flexibility in the constitution and by-laws which permitted revisions at early conventions to adjust to growing pains.

Wilbur J. Dixon's history in the next chapter discusses district organization to 1953. Districts conform to state boundaries with a few exceptions. Several United States-Canada districts cross the international boundary, Michigan has two multiple districts, and California and Nevada make up Multiple District 4. Illinois, the mother state of Lionism, is District 1, with Texas as District 2. The ratio of one governor for every 50 clubs was fixed in 1930. It is a standard, but it can vary with local conditions. In 1936 the Board of Directors approved the Standard District



Organization Plan authorizing District Governors to appoint Deputy District Governors and Zone Chairmen to help with their heavy responsibilities.

The minimum number of members for a club to organize or receive its charter is 20. There is no official maximum. In 1983, the club with the largest membership was Monterey, Mexico, with 1671 members. Second was Quezon City, Sinag Tala, Philippines, with 910. Of the seven largest clubs in the United States, five are in Texas, the largest being in Lubbock with 433 members. The optimum number depends upon a variety of factors such as goals the club sets for itself, strength of the leadership, accommodations for meetings, and above all the ability of the community to sustain the club where there is competition from other organizations not only for members, but also for charity dollars.

The expansion of Lionism has been a major social phenomenon of the free world in the 20th century. The first club outside the United States was founded in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, March 12, 1920. The second was in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico on March 15, 1925, and the third was in Tientsin, China, October 1, 1926. Club foundings followed rapidly in the Caribbean, and Central and South America. The first club in Europe was in Sweden in 1948, followed in the same year by those in Switzerland, France and Norway.

The changing international character of Lionism is indicated by the fact that while only ten of its 66 International Presidents have come from outside the United States, five of the last eleven were from other countries. It was not until 1930 that the first voting member of the Board of Directors was elected from outside the United States. However, in 1982-1983, 14 of the 28 members of the board were from other countries.

With the vast expansion of Lions Clubs, with the efficiency of their organization, and with the frequency of communications among clubs and with their International Headquarters, it is not surprising that there would be a role for them to play in international relations.

In 1944, Lions were accorded the privilege of participating in the Dumbarton Oakes proposals on the founding of the United Nations. Shortly thereafter the Lions were invited to have a consultant and two associate consultants at the United Nations Conference in San Francisco. The Lions had unofficial representation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946, their representatives being D.A. Skeen and Clifford D. Pierce. In 1947, they were recognized by the United Nations as an organization with special ability to represent peoples in many nations and were granted consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Lions International is careful to point out that such participation is not appropriate for matters within the jurisdiction of the UN Security Council, which is peace and security. Lions participation is appropriate for the second and third stated purposes of the United Nations: To develop friendly relations among nations... and to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character. This is the sense of the first "Object" of Lions International, and the "Objects" predate the UN declaration by a quarter century. In 1983 the Lions had an official liaison to the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) sector of the UN in New York and Geneva, to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and to the regional branches of the World Health Organization (WHO).

One of the best examples of the international good will of Lionism comes from an address given at the Connecticut State Convention in 1969 by then International Third Vice President, and later International President, Robert Uplinger of



Syracuse, New York. A part of that address follows:

*I'd like to talk to you about this association of ours. I'd like to talk about Lions International. I think one of the greatest thrills that I've had this year serving as Third Vice President was when we went to the Honolulu Board Meeting in late November. When the Executive Committee was meeting up in Dave Evans' room and a telephone call came through to Dave Evans from the State Department, and do you know what they were asking? They were asking this great organization of ours that is approaching a million members now and in all these 145 countries, to cross the borders of the world in a humanitarian effort to gain the release of the Pueblo crew.*

*Immediately Dave said we would see what we could do strictly on a humanitarian basis not as Americans but as Lions and we were able to cross those borders you read a little bit about in the magazines. You probably heard a little bit about it, but I'd like to just add a little more to the story. Yes, immediately we contacted our French Lions, and those French Lions through their District Governors got a message through directly to North Korea. They crossed the borders. Our government in Washington and the government of France were not too friendly at the time, but our Lions were friendly and we were able to cross those borders. We were also able to contact the Swedish Lions and get messages through them, however, they were not as effective as those of the French Lions. Also, we were able to contact the West German Lions and then again the contacts were not as good but they tried and then again they were crossing those borders in friendship, peace, understanding and humanitarianism.*

*Then about the first of December many of you saw films on our local television stations on all of the networks, of four men who were making the journey from the United States to Moscow to visit with the Russians and hopefully to visit with the North Koreans. Two of those men were Lions. One of those men, for any of you who have attended International Conventions, would know him as Clem Daniels, but you wouldn't identify him that way at an International Convention because he's the fellow with the old dirty clothes, with the hillbilly decorations from Virginia and with the crow on his hat. But let me tell you the day after that convention, that beard comes off and he is one of the sharpest individuals you'll ever know, Past District Governor Clem Daniels of Virginia. The other man was a Lion from Stockton, Virginia, and his son was a member of the Pueblo crew. Along with those two attorneys from Virginia they went on to Moscow.*

*It's a long story. They got to Moscow. They contacted the North Koreans and the Russians. They were able to tell pretty well their story to the Russians to gain the release of this crew, but they weren't able to do very much with the North Koreans. They had the gate to the Embassy slammed in their faces and then as these men returned to their hotel, Clem Daniels called our International President down in Texas City, Texas to tell him the things by long distance, that they had planned to tell the North Koreans that day, knowing full well that the conversation would be monitored and that the word would get back to the North Koreans. Then after a few days there were very discouraging days for this party in Moscow, suggestions were made that they go farther east where they might make better contacts with the North Koreans. Finally a suggestion came to them from a little girl in the Inn-Tourist Department of the Russian government that perhaps if they went back to West Berlin they could make the contact. So the four of them went back to West Berlin but when they got to the airport they were divided into two groups—the two Lions travelling by way of Poland, the other two going by way of Sweden and on down to West Germany.*

*On the flight of the Lions, they met a former newspaperman from North Korea, gained his acquaintance and went on to West Berlin. It was only a day or two later that they were contacted and invited to come to the Embassy in East Berlin and here they met this man who had posed as a newspaperman, he being an official of the North Korean government. Here in the next few days, the next few hours, the document that was finally signed in North Korea, that released that crew, was written by these two Lions and the two attorneys. No, I'm not saying to you that Lions International was solely responsible for the release of the Pueblo crew, but I am saying that as an International Organization, we were able to cross these boundaries and these borders as they never have been able to be crossed before by a service club organization, and we certainly had a major share in the release of this crew.*

At one time a special function existed in the Lions International Organization. The term "International Council" first appeared in the association constitution and by-laws in July of 1936. It was to be an "Advisory Board on which there shall be one representative from each country represented or affiliated with" the association. The purpose was closer international cooperation. The name was changed to "Board of International Relations" in the August, 1943, printing of the International Constitution and By-Laws. The idea, and the group itself, was deleted from the International Constitution and By-Laws at the 1961 International Convention. Amendments were added to the constitution and by-laws which completely revamped the number and areas from which International Directors were to be elected. The constitution and by-laws Committee explained simply that the language concerning the Board of International Relations was "no longer needed because of the amendments."

In spite of the fact that Lions support their country in times of national emergencies, their real goal is international peace, understanding and cooperation. Following both WWI and WWII, Lions dedicated themselves to rebuilding. In 1957 Lions engaged in international "search for peace" projects which included a world publicity campaign to disseminate the real meaning of peace. They sponsored a children's essay contest through 20,000 clubs on the subject, "Peace is Attainable." The Lions work is a healing mission which encompasses the widest range of service: sight conservation and work with the blind; services in citizenship, hearing and speech work with the deaf; education, environment, international aid, recreation, health, and public and social services. The Lions Clubs' International Foundation was established in 1968 with the purpose of promoting human welfare through careful application of contributed funds, and it brings relief to those in need throughout the free world to the limit of its resources.

Other International activities of Lions Clubs are discussed later, such as youth exchanges, club twinning, and details of The International Foundation (LCIF).

# Chapter 2

## WILBUR DIXON'S HISTORY AND STATE CONVENTIONS

Wilbur J. Dixon was one of the venerable patriarchs of Connecticut Lionism. He was the first President of the New Canaan Lions Club, 1929-1930, and Chairman of the International Board of Governors in 1934. His History of Lionism in the Twenty-Third District covers 32 years, 1921-1953. Unfortunately, it is limited to mainly organizational matters and contains nothing about what Lions were doing in charitable activities or community and world service. Because of this, and because many of the early records have been lost, it is impossible to reconstruct a complete history of Lionism in the state. However, much has been recovered from individual club histories and recollections, and this material is the substance of Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

The following table was not a part of Dixon's History. It is an aid to understanding the somewhat complex developments related in his text, see map page 22. Clubs in Rhode Island were originally in District 23, but were separated from Connecticut in 1938. The history of the Rhode Island clubs, even when they were united with Connecticut, is properly a history of District 42, and they are not discussed. As indicated in the table, and is discussed later in the text, the clubs in Connecticut were divided into three districts in 1950, creating Multiple District 23.

EARLY LIONS CLUBS IN CONNECTICUT AND RHODE ISLAND			
(Prepared by Lion Francis Segesman)			
District 23A, 1932-1938 West of Connecticut River		District 23B, 1932-1938 East of Connecticut River      Rhode Island	
Fairfield and Litchfield Counties District 23A, 1950	Hartford and New Haven Counties District 23B, 1950	Tolland, Windham, Middlesex and New London Counties District 23C, 1950	
Bridgeport, December, 1921	New Haven, February, 1922 Hartford, May, 1922 New Britain, July, 1922 Meriden, 1923	New London, August, 1922 Norwich, 1923-32	Providence, November, 1922 Newport, March, 1923
Greenwich, 1923 Waterbury, 1923 Stamford, 1925-26 Torrington, 1925-27 Norwalk, 1925-27 Danbury, 1927 Bethel, 1928	Ansonia 1925-36 Bristol, 1926		



Wilbur J. Dixon's History of Lionism in the Twenty-Third District was distributed with the following cover letter.

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

This history of Lionism as it came into New England and to District Twenty-Three may not be perfect in every respect, and you may wish to correct or add to it with reference to your individual club, but it is the best that could be done with the material at hand.

It was compiled with two purposes in view, first: That one may acquaint themselves and others with the founding of Lionism in New England, and second: That it may encourage each club to write its own history and place same in this folder for future reference.

Wilbur J. Dixon  
District Secretary-Treasurer

**HISTORY OF DISTRICT TWENTY-THREE LIONS INTERNATIONAL**  
(Wilbur Dixon)

At the start of this history it would be only right that I should mention a brief history of the beginning of Lionism.

The International Association of Lions Clubs was organized in Chicago, Illinois, June 7, 1917, at a meeting of representatives of some fifty unaffiliated clubs of various names. Melvin Jones, then secretary of the Business Circle of Chicago, had been corresponding with these scattered clubs since 1917 with the view of organizing them into a strong association. The Chicago meeting called a convention to be held at Dallas, Texas, October 8-10, 1917. At that meeting the name "Lions" was formally adopted and officers of the association were elected.

One of the first things the Directors of Lions International did was to parcel out the country into nine districts for the organization and administration of Lions Clubs, and appoint a district governor over each. At that time, districts were numbered from the Pacific Coast eastward, with California as District One.

Lionism spread with amazing rapidity, and Lions Clubs were soon organized in states not attached to any district. Also, the Lions Clubs in certain districts were soon too numerous for the district governor to supervise them. Therefore, it became necessary to re-district the entire country. This was done soon after the International Convention at Oakland, California in 1921. The country was laid out into 17 districts, with Illinois, where the association was organized, as District One. As other districts were formed, they were given the lowest number then remaining open. The Bridgeport Lions Club was organized on December 28, 1921, even though New England had not yet been placed in any district. In January, 1922, Lions International appointed Major George T. Hewlett, of New Haven, to be District Governor of Connecticut. Soon other Lions Clubs were organized: New Haven, February 9, 1922; Hartford, May 11, 1922; New Britain, July 7, 1922; New London, August 15, 1922; Providence, Rhode Island, November 14, 1922; and Newport, Rhode Island, March 15, 1923.

The first district convention to be held in New England was in New Haven on July 7, 1922, with only three clubs participating, Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford. District Governor Hewlett presided. A committee was appointed to report back on a constitution for adoption at the next convention. District Governor Hewlett was then re-elected for the year 1922-23, and Ernest M. Butler of Bridgeport was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

District Governor Hewlett called for a meeting of Presidents and Secretaries,



and other interested Lions, to meet in Hartford on March 5, 1923, to crystallize the sentiment of Lionism among the clubs, and to work out plans for further development. Representatives from the following clubs were present: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Holyoke, Boston, Worcester, Providence, and Springfield. So many Lions Clubs were now organized, and being organized, it was felt necessary to divide New England into districts. After some investigation, it was found that Rhode Island was willing to join with Connecticut and that Massachusetts would affiliate with states to the north. This was to be decided at the next convention.

The second district convention was held in Springfield, Massachusetts, on May 2, 1923, with District Governor Hewlett presiding. Requests had been sent to all of the clubs in New England to send delegates and all responded with the exception of one, whose delegate was detained on account of transportation. It was a rousing convention; it was decided to make Connecticut and Rhode Island one district, and Massachusetts and the states to the north another district. The two groups then separated, one district in one room and the other district in another room. District Governor Hewlett then announced that Connecticut and Rhode Island were officially united as the Twenty-third District. It was decided to hold the next convention for District 23, in Providence, Rhode Island. James H. Readio, Jr. of Providence was elected District Governor for the year 1923-24, and Ernest M. Butler Secretary-Treasurer. The number of clubs in the district now stood at seven, with a membership of 550. A constitution was adopted with an assessment of twenty-five cents per capita.

The third district convention was held in Providence, Rhode Island, on May 7, 1924, with District Governor Readio presiding. The number of clubs had increased to eleven. New clubs were Norwich, September 2, 1923; Greenwich, August 28, 1923; Waterbury, October 18, 1923; and Meriden, November 5, 1923. Membership was now 732. Rev. John L. Davis of New Britain was elected District Governor, with Ernest M. Butler Secretary-Treasurer, and the 1925 District Convention was voted to be held in Bridgeport, Connecticut. District Governor Davis resigned on December 16, 1924, and the District Board of Governors elected William W. Bent of Bridgeport to succeed him.

The fourth district convention was held in Bridgeport on May 6, 1925, with District Governor Bent presiding. Lions International was represented by Third Vice President Irving L. Camp, who gave the principal address. There were 57 registered delegates in attendance, representing every one of the 12 clubs. William W. Bent was unanimously re-elected District Governor for the year 1925-26, and Ernest M. Butler was elected Secretary-Treasurer. Membership was 767.

The fifth district convention was held in New London on May 5, 1926, with District Governor Bent presiding. Thirteen clubs were represented by 67 registered delegates. Connecticut clubs receiving charters were: Norwalk, January 13, 1926; Stamford, February 16, 1926; Ansonia, April 19, 1926; Torrington, November 30, 1925; and Bristol, March 23, 1926. The number of clubs was 16, and membership was 965. Lions International was represented at the convention by Director Charles M. Bakewell of New Haven. J. Nelson Alexander of Providence was elected District Governor and Ernest M. Butler as Secretary-Treasurer.

The sixth district convention was held in Newport, Rhode Island on June 7-8, 1927, with District Governor Alexander presiding. This was the first two-day convention the district had held, and the officers recommended that all future conventions be of that length. The district now had 18 clubs and a membership of 1,085. Phillip A. Jakob of Norwalk was elected District Governor and Oscar E. Ericson of

New Haven Secretary-Treasurer.

The seventh annual district convention was held in Hartford, Connecticut, May 24-25, 1928, with District Governor Jakob presiding. Director Charles M. Bakewell was the principal speaker. Danbury received its charter October 27, 1927; and Bethel, June 27, 1928. The number of clubs was 21, and membership was 1,240. William S. Hewlett of Bridgeport was elected District Governor and Andrew B. Comstock Secretary-Treasurer.

The eighth annual district convention was held in New Haven in May (no date), 1929, with District Governor Hewlett presiding and with 349 delegates registered. Earl W. Hodges, Horace S. Kerr, and George B. Anderson were speakers and they also represented Lions International. Clubs receiving charters included: New Canaan, April 4, 1929; Rockville April 24, 1929; Stafford Springs (no date), 1929; Manchester (no date), 1929; New Milford, May 15, 1929; Ridgefield, June 25, 1929; Milford (no date), 1929; and Middletown, June 11, 1929. The number of clubs was 34, and membership was 1,540. G. Irving Burwell of Waterbury was elected District Governor and Andrew B. Comstock Secretary-Treasurer.

The ninth annual district convention was held in Newport, Rhode Island, May (no date), 1930, with Governor Burwell presiding. Director William S. Hewlett and Vice President Earl W. Hodges represented Lions International. Clubs receiving charters were: Willimantic, July 15, 1929; Madison, August 7, 1929; Guilford, August 20, 1929; Old Saybrook, September 12, 1929; Old Lyme, September 3, 1929; Niantic, September 24, 1929; East Lyme, September 19, 1929; Mystic, September 26, 1929; Stonington, October 1, 1929; Groton, October 29, 1929; East Hampton, October 21, 1929; Colchester, October 23, 1929; Moosup, November 7, 1929; Danielson, November 13, 1929; and Stratford, December 12, 1929. The number of clubs was 52, and membership was 2,192. Lucius A. Whipple of Pawtucket, Rhode Island was elected District Governor and Andrew B. Comstock Secretary-Treasurer.

The tenth annual district convention was held in Bridgeport, June 9-10, 1931, with District Governor Whipple presiding. In attendance were 400 registered delegates. Director Edwin R. Kingsley and Rev. Hugh Shields were speakers. Club Presidents' and Secretaries' meetings were profitable. Phillip A. Jakob of Norwalk was elected District Governor and Andrew B. Comstock Secretary-Treasurer.

The eleventh annual district convention was held in Watch Hill, Rhode Island, June 28-29, 1932, with the Providence club acting as host club. District Governor Jakob presided. Earl W. Hodges represented Lions International. Some thought had been given toward dividing District 23 into two parts. It was moved and carried that the Connecticut River be the dividing line, and that the new districts be known as 23A and 23B. Wilbur J. Dixon of New Canaan was elected District Governor of District 23A and Daniel Y. Rose of Providence District Governor of District 23B. Andrew B. Comstock was elected Secretary-Treasurer. The Stafford Springs and Colchester clubs were stricken from the roll. The number of clubs was 30, and the membership totalled 1,966.

The twelfth annual district convention was held in Watch Hill, R.I., June 28-29, 1933 with the Waterbury club acting as host club. District Governor Dixon presided. A motion was made and carried that the incoming District Governor be sent to the International Convention at the expense of the district, provided that only the sum of \$125.00 or so much thereof as may be necessary shall be appropriated for each District Governor-Elect for such expense. The Guilford and Moosup clubs were stricken from the roll. Wilbur J. Dixon was re-elected District Governor of District 23A and Dr. Frank Duffy of West Warwick, R.I., of District 23B. The

New Britain Club's charter was cancelled.

The thirteenth district convention was held in Watch Hill, R.I., June 27-28, 1934, and was sponsored by the Westerly Lions Club. District Governor Frank Duffy presided. Secretary General Melvin Jones and Director Harold Crane attended. During the year three clubs were lost to Lionism: Old Saybrook, Niantic, and East Hartford. Three were gained: New Britain was reorganized, and Old Greenwich and Simsbury received their charters. Joseph C. Bailey of Greenwich was elected District Governor of 23A and Robert Johnson of Pawtucket of 23B. Andrew B. Comstock was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

The fourteenth district convention was held at Watch Hill, R.I., June 26-27, 1935, with the Hartford club acting as host club. District Governor Bailey presided. There were 480 registered delegates. District 23A now consisted of 23 clubs and 981 members, and District 23B of 20 clubs and 769 members. A resolution was passed endorsing Providence as the location for the International Convention in 1936. International representatives were President Edwin R. Kingsley and Chairman of the Board of Governors, Wilbur J. Dixon. During the year three clubs were lost to Lionism: Milford, Old Lyme, and Danielson. William H. Hoyt of Danbury was elected District Governor of 23A and Marcus J. Offers of Woonsocket, R.I., of 23B. Andrew B. Comstock was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

The fifteenth district convention was held in Providence, Rhode Island, June 20, 1936, and was sponsored by the Pawtucket club, with District Governor Marcus Offers presiding. During the depression years the district had been losing clubs and at the end of June, District 23A had 22 clubs and a membership of 1,070, and District 23B had 17 clubs and 738 members. Woodbury received its charter, and charters from Ansonia, Manchester and East Lyme had been cancelled. Kenneth F. Taylor of New Milford was elected District Governor of 23A, and Leo H. Beaulac of Pawtucket, R.I., of 23B. Andrew B. Comstock was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

The sixteenth district convention was held in the Griswold Hotel, Groton, Connecticut, June 23-24, 1937, with the New Haven club acting as host club. Woodbury received its charter and the charter for Mystic was cancelled. District 23A now stood at 24 clubs with a membership of 1,122 and District 23B at 15 clubs and 809 members. Philip C. Rouleau of Bristol was elected District Governor of 23A and Charles D. Carlin of 23B. Andrew B. Comstock was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

The seventeenth district convention was held in the Griswold Hotel, Groton, Connecticut, June 21-22, 1938, with 308 registered delegates. Third Vice President Karl Sorrick was the principal speaker. A resolution calling for the separation of Connecticut and Rhode Island into two separate districts was passed. All clubs in Connecticut now constituted undivided District 23, with 24 clubs and a membership of 1,144. Charles F. Stubbs of Bridgeport was elected as District Governor of District 23 and Wilbur J. Dixon as Secretary-Treasurer. Rhode Island became District 42, and is no longer part of this history.

The eighteenth district convention was held in Danbury, June 7, 1939, with District Governor Charles F. Stubbs presiding. There were 432 registered delegates in attendance. Past President Roderick Beddow was the principal speaker. During the year three clubs were added to the district, making 27 clubs and a membership of 1,229. Presidents' and Secretaries' meetings were held and much good derived therefrom. Howard F. Saviteer of Meriden was elected District Governor and Wilbur J. Dixon Secretary-Treasurer.

The nineteenth district convention was held in New London, June 10-11, 1940, with District Governor Saviteer presiding. International President Alexander T.



Wells, Secretary-General Melvin Jones and Director Fred H. Gabbi were present and added much to the success of the convention. There was a loss of one club, Norwalk, during the year, leaving 26 clubs and a membership of 1,242. W. Carl French of New Britain was elected District Governor and Wilbur J. Dixon Secretary-Treasurer.

The twentieth district convention was held in Norwich, June 7-8, 1941, with District Governor French presiding. During this term the Willimantic club had been re-organized and Springdale, Sharon, Plainville, and Washington received their charters, making 31 clubs and a membership of 1,416. Charles F. Patterson of Torrington was elected District Governor and Wilbur J. Dixon Secretary-Treasurer.

The twenty-first district convention was held in Hartford, June 6-7, 1942, with District Governor Patterson presiding. During the year charters were given to: Terryville, Deep River, New Hartford, Bantam, South Coventry, Berlin, Unionville, Wallingford, Newington, Southington, Bloomfield, Enfield, and Devon. Thus, there were 38 clubs, with a membership of 1,570. The following resolution was passed at the convention: "The officers of this district shall consist of a District Governor, Immediate Past District Governor, Deputy District Governor, District Secretary-Treasurer, and the District Directors, and these officers shall constitute the Governing Board of the District." Lions International was represented by Melvin Jones and Director Kenneth F. Taylor. Roy M. Van Fleet of Hartford was elected District Governor and Wilbur J. Dixon Secretary-Treasurer.

The twenty-second district convention was held in Bridgeport, June 13, 1943, with District Governor Van Fleet presiding. During the year two clubs were cancelled, Watertown and South Coventry, and the number of clubs stood at 38, with membership at 1,635. A resolution was made and carried that this district recommend W. Carl French as International Director. It was regularly moved and carried that the Secretary-Treasurer be elected at the final governing board meeting which is to precede the International Convention. Col. Lott R. Breen was elected District Governor and Wilbur J. Dixon Secretary-Treasurer.

The twenty-third district convention was held in Hartford, June 10, 1944, with District Governor Breen presiding. During the year two inactive clubs were stricken from the roll, those of Bantam and Wallingford. The number of active clubs was now 39, with a membership of 1,787. William F. Curtin of New Britain was elected District Governor and Wilbur J. Dixon Secretary-Treasurer.

The twenty-fourth district convention was held in Waterbury, June 16, 1945, with District Governor Curtin presiding. During the year one inactive club had been stricken from the roll, that of Madison. All 39 clubs of the district were in good condition with a membership of 1,921. Harold A. Ashley of Waterbury was elected District Governor and Wilbur J. Dixon Secretary-Treasurer.

The twenty-fifth annual district convention, sponsored by the New Canaan Lions Club, was held at the Ocean House, Watch Hill, R.I., June 29-30, 1946, with District Governor Harold A. Ashley presiding. Wilbur J. Dixon was General Convention Chairman. This was the first two-day convention since World War II, and it was largely attended. First Vice President Clifford D. Pierce and Dr. C.H. Rust, honorary member of the Stamford club, were the principal speakers. The West Hartford Lions Club received its charter on May 7, 1946, sponsored by the Newington club, with Paul B. Isham as contact man. There were now 40 active clubs, with a membership of 2,070 members. Merrill G. Scott was elected District Governor and Wilbur J. Dixon Secretary-Treasurer.

The twenty-sixth annual district convention, sponsored by the Meriden Lions Club, was held at the Griswold Hotel, Groton, Connecticut, June 20-21, 1947, with



District Governor Merrill G. Scott presiding. General Convention Chairman James F. Hirst, together with his fine committee, did a splendid job with 198 delegates in attendance, and 470 Lions and ladies attended the banquet. Governor Scott reported that he had made 153 visits and travelled over 15,000 miles. Dr. Charles H. Rust of the Stamford Lions Club gave the eulogy at the necrology service. Assistant Secretary-General R. Roy Keaton represented Lions International and was with us during the entire session. He was a fine speaker and a royal good fellow. Norwalk held its Charter Night on September 10, 1946. The district now has 41 clubs and a membership of 2,192. David F. Armstrong of Groton was elected District Governor and Wilbur J. Dixon Secretary-Treasurer.

The twenty-seventh annual district convention, sponsored by the New Haven Lions Club, was held in the Griswold Hotel in Groton, Connecticut, June 19-20 1948 with District Governor David F. Armstrong presiding. General convention Chairman James Poole welcomed the delegates and turned the meeting over to Governor Armstrong. During the year, 32 of our members passed to the great beyond, among which was International Counsellor William H. Hoyt of Danbury, Connecticut. There were 400 Lions and guests present, and all were pleased with the fine work done by Chairman Poole and his committee. International Director Monroe L. Nute of Kenneth Square, Pennsylvania, and Lion Dr. Charles H. Rust of the Stamford club were the speakers. Dr. Rust also officiated at the necrology service. There were now 41 clubs with a membership of 2,248. Roy L. Heck of Devon was elected District Governor and Wilbur J. Dixon Secretary-Treasurer.

The twenty-eighth annual district convention was held in the Hotel Griswold in Groton, June 25-26, 1949, and as there was no club to volunteer its sponsorship, the cabinet officers were appointed for this purpose by District Governor Roy L. Heck. Deputy District Governor Kenneth F. Pohlman of Danbury was appointed General Convention Chairman and Lieut. William E. Mackenzie of Groton Co-chairman. Governor Heck read his report which contained the following: made 115 visits with a mileage of 10,535 miles. During the year the charter was withdrawn from the New Hartford club, and seven new clubs were formed: Cromwell, Jewett City, Newtown, Southbury, and Darien, all by special representative Dugal B. Dewer; Rocky Hill by Lion Paul Isham of the Newington club, and Manchester by special representative Alfio Urbinati. Thus, the year closed with 46 clubs and 2,724 members. The convention was a grand success with International President Eugene S. Briggs and Director Harold A. Ashley representing Lions International. Lion Leslie Wood of the Danbury Club officiated at the necrology service. Lion Edwin P. Hopfer conducted the Presidents' and Secretaries' meeting. Eighteen of our members passed to the great beyond during the year, including our Third District Governor Rev. John L. Davis, and Ernest M. Butler, who was the first Secretary of the first Lions Club in New England, Bridgeport, and who also was the first Secretary-Treasurer of District 23. Charles W. Naylor was elected District Governor and Wilbur J. Dixon Secretary-Treasurer.

The twenty-ninth annual district convention was held in the Griswold Hotel in Groton, May 25-26, 1950, with the Newington Lions Club acting as host club. Lion Howard S. Jackson, General Convention Chairman, gave words of welcome and introduced District Governor Charles W. Naylor who then presided. Governor Naylor read his report. It showed his great activity during the year, and that he had made 122 official visits and travelled 15,732 miles. During the year 19 new clubs had been organized: Colchester, Taftville, Niantic, Mystic, Putnam, Prospect, Ansonia, Cheshire, Watertown, Hamden, Windsor, Wethersfield, Guilford, East Hartford, Litchfield, Kent, Georgetown, Derby, and Danielson. District 23 had

grown so large that Governor Naylor suggested it be subdivided into three districts, to be known as District 23A, 23B, and 23C. Chairman of Constitution and By-laws Committee, Tom Cox, moved that the district be divided as follows: all clubs in New Haven and Fairfield Counties were to be known as District 23A, all clubs in Hartford and Litchfield Counties were to be known as District 23B, and all clubs in Middlesex, Tolland, New London, and Windham Counties were to be known as District 23C (map, p. 46). The motion carried unanimously. Lion Cox then presented a new constitution and by-laws to cover the re-zoning, and it was adopted as read. There were now 66 clubs with a membership of 3,544. Secretary-General Melvin Jones was the guest of honor and he told of the wonderful growth of Lionism. He was presented with a clock in appreciation of his interest in Lionism and for the many friends he had made in New England. The officers elected for the coming year were:

23A-District Governor Joseph Carlin	Sec.-Treas. Wilbur J. Dixon
23B-District Governor Merrill A. Louks	Sec.-Treas. M.V. MacLaughlin
23C-District Gov. Lieut. Wm. E. McKenzie	Sec.-Treas. Alfio C. Urbinati

The thirtieth annual district convention was held in the Griswold Hotel in Groton, June 2-3, 1951, with the New Britain Lions Club acting as host club. General Convention Chairman Thomas J. Leonard welcomed the delegates and guests and presented District Governor Joseph Carlin who presided. Lions International was represented by Directors Curtis Lovill and Roy W. Dickinson. Miss Jean Billupe of West Hartford was chosen Queen. The 100th club of our district was sponsored by the Willimantic Club and was in Storrs, Connecticut. The Mid-Winter Conference was held in New Haven with Joseph Carlin as chairman. It was a grand success. The following officers were elected:

23A-District Governor J. Sidney Wakely	Sec.-Treas. Wilbur J. Dixon
23B-District Governor Merrill A. Louks	Sec.-Treas. M.V. MacLaughlin
23C-District Governor T. Joseph Puza	Sec.-Treas. Alfio C. Urbinati

The thirty-first annual district convention was held at Copake Lake, Craryville, New York, June 6-8, 1952. The council was left with the duty of sponsoring the District Convention this year, under the very able leadership of Paul L. Moran, Joseph Carlin and Chester Larson, who brought the affair through to a grand success. Another Mid-Winter Conference was held, which proved to be very beneficial. Wilbur J. Dixon, having served the District for 14 consecutive years as Secretary-Treasurer, was given a testimonial dinner at the Hotel Taft in New Haven, October 11, with approximately 300 in attendance. He was presented with a Hamilton Gold Watch from the district, a silver service from the International Counsellors of the district, and a lovely silver bowl by the Meriden Lions Club. The following officers were elected for the coming year:

23A-District Governor Jerome C. Keech	Sec.-Treas. Fred G. Gracy
23B-District Governor Earle J. Glidden	Sec.-Treas. Harold A. Ruger
23C-District Governor Richard F. Case	Sec.-Treas. Alfio C. Urbinati

The thirty-second annual district convention was held at Copake Lake, Craryville, New York, June 5-7, 1953.

The thirty-third state convention was held at the Copake Country Club in Craryville, New York, June 3-6, 1954. Convention Chairman was Jerry Keech of Southbury. Guest speaker was Monroe Nute, First Vice President of Lions International.

*Note: The last entry in Wilbur Dixon's History was for 1953. The additional information was researched by the present author.*

The thirty-fourth state convention was held at the Copake Country Club,

Craryville, New York, June 2-5, 1955. Convention Chairman was A. Leroy Anderson of Bristol. Guest speaker was Lion Dr. Dan J.V. Martin, International Director.

The thirty-fifth state convention was held at Banner Lodge, Moodus, Connecticut, June 7-10, 1956. Guest speaker was Lions International Second Vice President, Edward Barry, of Little Rock, Arkansas.

The thirty-sixth state convention was held at the Copake Country Club, Craryville, New York, June 6-9, 1957. Convention Chairman was Dominic J. Minicucci of Naugatuck. Guest speaker was International Treasurer Wilburn T. Wilson.

The thirty-seventh state convention was held at the Copake Country Club in Craryville, New York, June 5-8, 1958. Convention Chairman was Thomas J. Leonard of New Britain. Guest speaker was International First Vice President Dudley Simms.

The thirty-eighth state convention was held at the Copake Country Club in Craryville, New York, June 4-7, 1959. Guest speaker was International Director Paul W. Mahady, from Pennsylvania.

The thirty-ninth state convention records are unavailable.

The fortieth state convention was held at the Griswold Hotel in Groton, June 1-4, 1961. Convention Chairman was Marshall Golden of Newington. Guest speaker was International First Vice President, Per Gustav Stahl of Sweden.

The forty-first state convention was held at the Copake Country Club, Craryville, New York, May 30-June 3, 1962. Convention Chairman was Dave Darling of Middletown. Guest speaker was International Past President Monroe T. Nute, from Pennsylvania.

The forty-second state convention records unavailable.

The forty-third state convention was held at the Copake Country Club, Craryville, New York, June 4-7, 1964. Convention Chairman was Bob Miller of Bloomfield. Guest speaker was International Past President Frank V. Birch from Wisconsin.

The forty-fourth state convention was held at Banner Lodge in Moodus, June 3-7, 1965. Convention Chairman was Bill Shea. The guest speaker was Past International President Clarence T. Sturm of Wisconsin.

The forty-fifth state convention was held at Banner Lodge in Moodus, June 2-5, 1966. Convention Chairman was Leo J. Redgate. Guest speaker was International Second Vice President Jorge Bird.

The forty-sixth state convention was held at Banner Lodge in Moodus, June 1-4, 1967. Convention Chairman was George Seely. The guest speaker was International Second Vice President David Evans of Texas.

The forty-seventh state convention was held at Banner Lodge in Moodus, June 6-9, 1968. Convention Chairman was Stephen Steg. The guest speaker was Past International President Dr. Walter Campbell.

The forty-eighth state convention was held at Banner Lodge in Moodus, June 5-8, 1969. Convention Chairman was William Grosberg. The guest speaker was International Third Vice President Robert Uplinger of Syracuse, New York.

The forty-ninth state convention was held at Banner Lodge in Moodus, June 4-7, 1970. Convention Chairman was Richard O'Leary. The guest speaker was International Director Leonard M. Cella from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The fiftieth state convention was held at Banner Lodge in Moodus, June 3-6, 1971. Guest speaker was International Director Joao Fernando Sobral of Brazil. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor Dr. Louis De Santis.

The fifty-first state convention was held at Grossinger's, Liberty, New York, June 7-10, 1972. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor Russell Weldon. The re-districting committee recommended that there should be four districts in the state. No action was taken on the proposal. Guest speaker was Second Vice President Tris Coffin of Canada.

The fifty-second state convention was held at the Concord Hotel, Kiamesha Lake, New York, May 31-June 3, 1973. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor Ralph Fiore. Guest speaker was International Director Merle W. Hartle of Ohio.

The fifty-third state convention was held at the Concord Hotel, Kiamesha Lake, New York, April 25-28, 1974. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor Joseph Amato. Guest speaker was International Director Everett J. Grindstaff of Texas.

The fifty-fourth state convention was held at the Concord Hotel, Kiamesha Lake, New York, June 26-29, 1975. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor Morton Reisenberg of Cheshire. Guest speaker was President of Lions International Johnny Balbo, Oak Brook, Illinois.

The fifty-fifth state convention was held at the Concord Hotel, Lake Kiamesha, New York, June 3-6, 1976. Convention Chairman was William Jerin, Southington, Connecticut. Guest speaker was International Third Vice President Ralph Lynam, St. John, Michigan.

The fifty-sixth state convention was held at the Concord Hotel, Lake Kiamesha, New York, April 28-May 1, 1977. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor Fred Curtin of Cromwell. Guest speaker was International Director Albert Lavine of Middletown, New York.

The fifty-seventh state convention was held at Grossinger's, Grossinger, New York, May 11-14, 1978. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor William L. Roberts of Meriden. Guest speaker was Past International Director Joseph W. Ganim of Bridgeport.

The fifty-eighth state convention was held at Playboy Resort, Great Gorge, New Jersey, May 31-June 3, 1979. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor Theodore S. Boryczki of Berlin. Guest speaker was Past International Director Judge Howard Patterson from Mississippi.

The fifty-ninth state convention was held at the Concord Hotel, Kiamesha Lake, New York, May 1-4, 1980. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor Wilbur Dennis of Hebron. Guest speaker was First Vice President of Lions International, William Chandler of Alabama.

The sixtieth state convention was held at Grossinger's, Grossinger, New York, May 14-17, 1981. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor William J. Carroll of Bridgeport. Guest speaker was International Director William E. Winland of Wyoming.

The sixty-first state convention was held at Grossinger's Grossinger, New York, May 13-16, 1982. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor Edward S. Smith of Southington.

The sixty-second state convention was held at the Concord Hotel, Kiamesha Lake, New York, April 28-May 1, 1983. Convention Chairman was Past District Governor Frank L. DiStefano. Guest speaker was Second International Vice President Bert Mason from Ireland.

The Connecticut Lions State Constitution provides for creation of sub-districts when justified, provided that each sub-district must have thirty-five or more clubs and no less than 1,000 members in good standing. The state convention in 1950



established Multiple District 23 with the three sub-districts, 23A, 23B, and 23C. Since 1950 no sub-districts have been added.

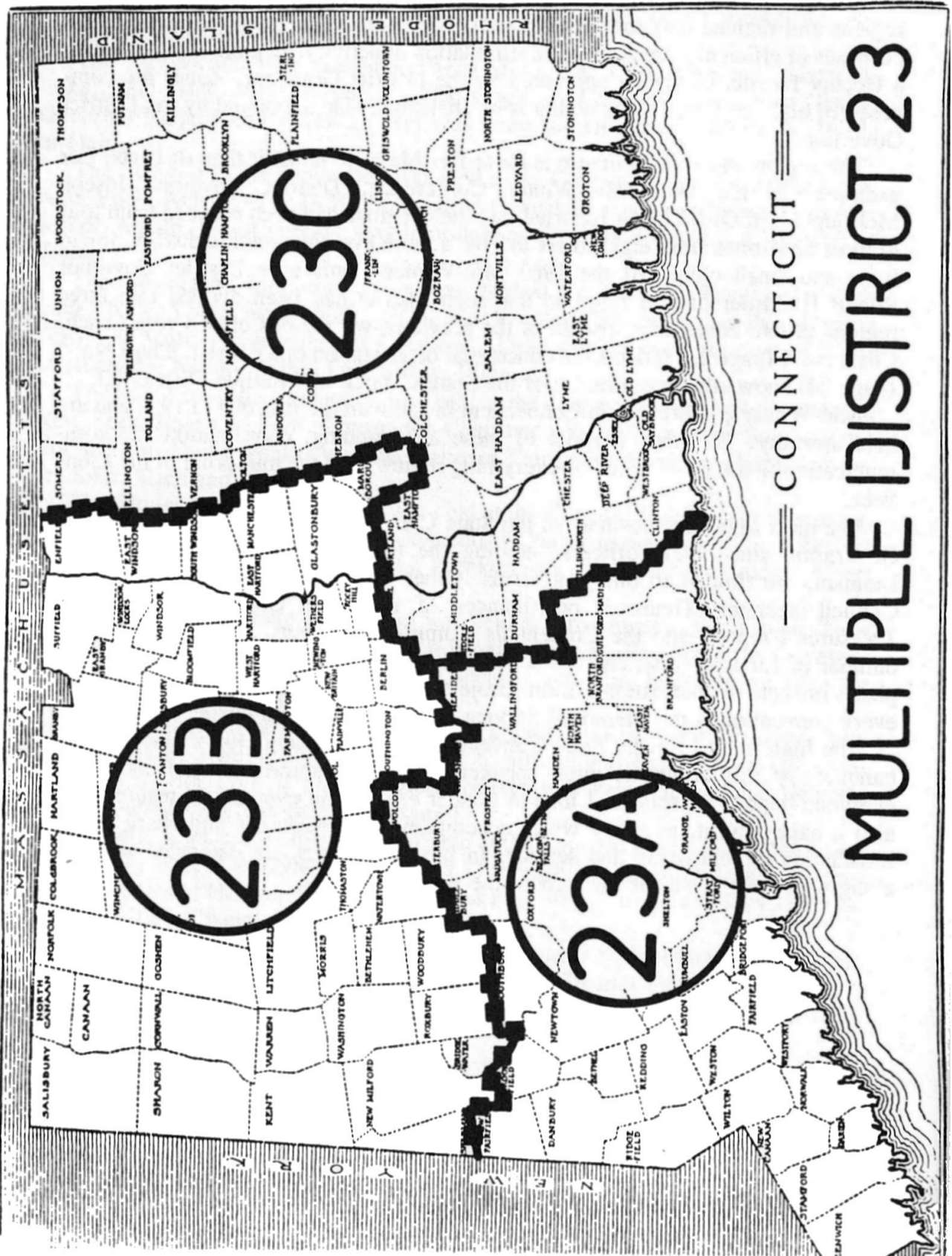
The Lions State Constitution provides that the sub-districts may be divided into regions and regions into zones by District Governors. This further division is for purposes of efficiency, economy and stimulation of activity. Regions are headed by a Deputy District Governor appointed by the District Governor. Zones are composed of eight or fewer clubs with a zone chairman, also appointed by the District Governor.

The region and zone structure is more flexible as to number than districts. For example, at the 1962 Mid-Winter Conference, District Governor Joseph McLoughlin of District 23A reported that their regions had been reduced from four to three and zones from eight to six to give a more even geographic distribution to large and small clubs. At the 1963 Mid-Winter Conference District Governor Robert E. Miller of 23B reported that their district had been divided into three regions of two zones each instead of the previous two regions of two zones each. Chart No. 1 (page 23) reflects the conceptual organization of a district. Chart No. 2 (page 24) shows the organization of the State Council of Multiple District 23.

Mid-Winter conferences in Connecticut began with the first one in 1952 and are held annually. The main purpose of these are planning, coordination and communications—a kind of status-of-everything review near the mid-point of the Lions year.

The most important business of the State Convention is the election of District Governors, since these officers, holding the top leadership positions in state Lionism, are limited to one-year terms. Other business includes reports of the Council Secretary-Treasurer on finances of the State Council, the District Treasurer's report, and the Credentials Committee's report, which includes the number of Lions by districts. Other reports include those determined by the emphasis on state or International Lions projects. An impressive and moving event at every convention is the Memorial Service for Lions deceased during the year.

The high point of every State Convention is the outgoing District Governors' banquet. At this affair the guest speaker gives the inspirational address which everyone hopes will spur all Lions to greater efforts and even better results. It is also a happy event, as many wives accompany their husbands and share in the satisfaction of fellowship and service. In fact most wives are dedicated workers along with their husbands throughout the year.



CONNECTICUT

# MULTIPLE DISTRICT 23

# CONCEPTUAL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

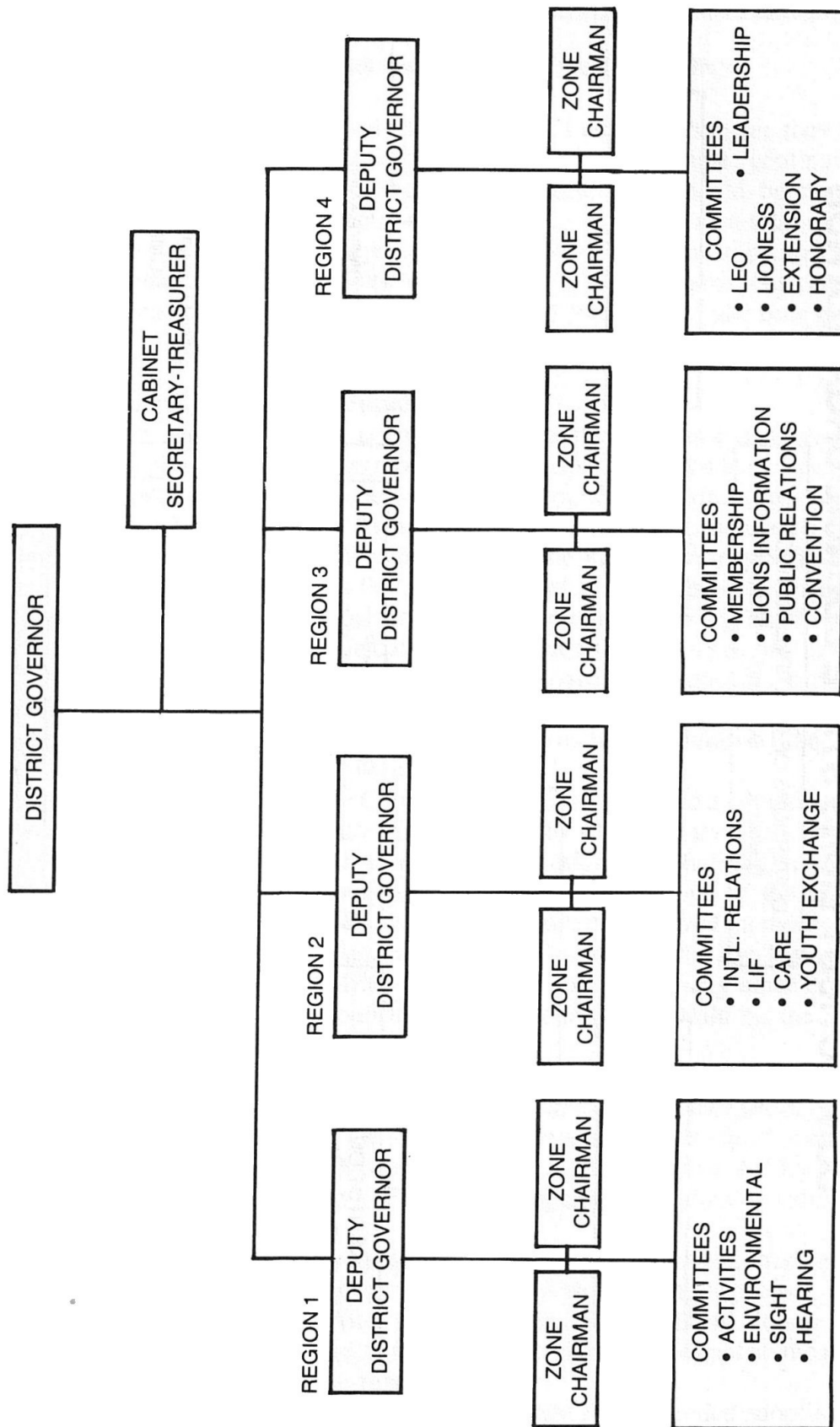


CHART 1

# CONNECTICUT LIONS STATE COUNCIL ORGANIZATION

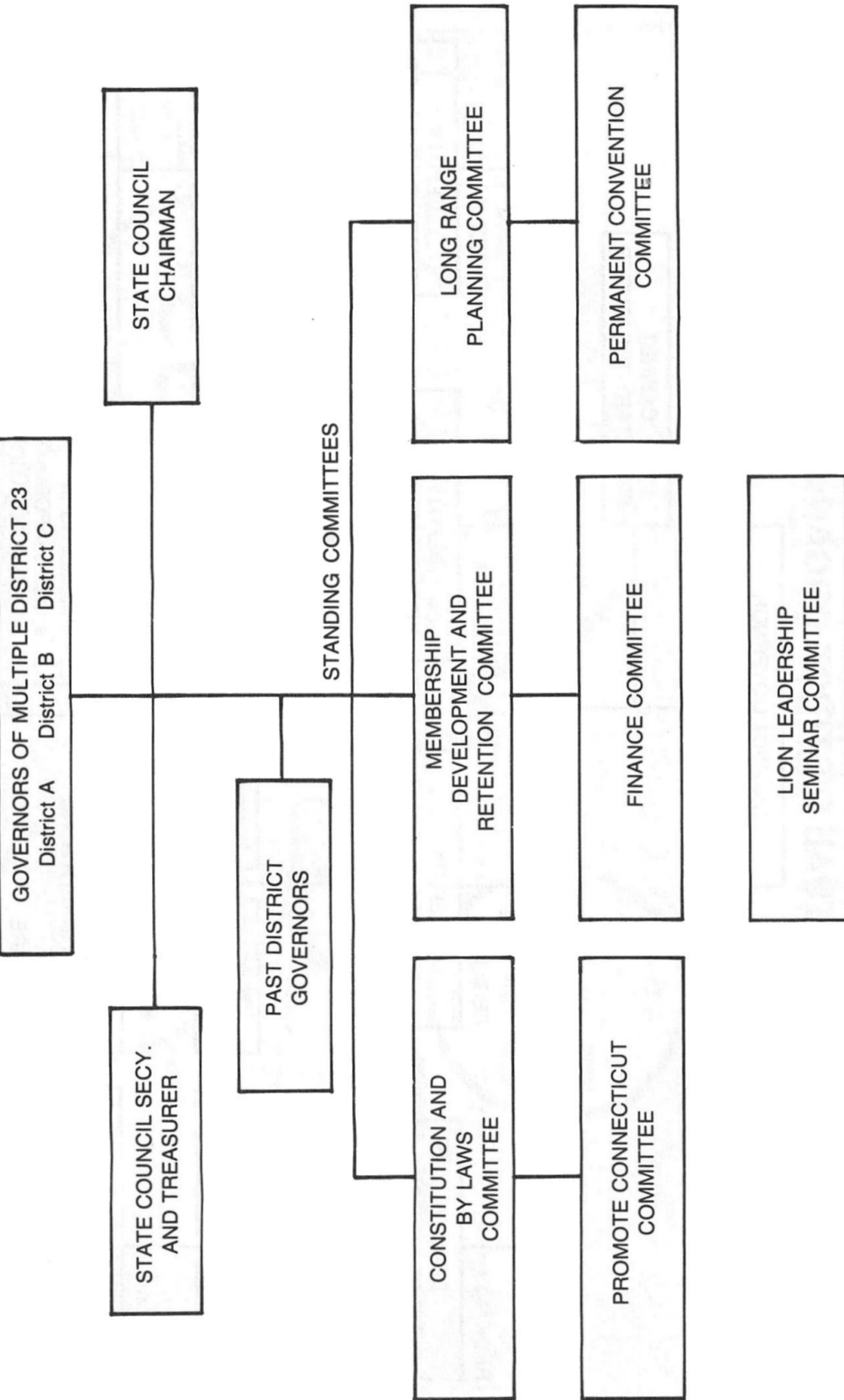


CHART 2