

## New Britain Lodge No. 957

**N**ew Britain Lodge, No. 957, B.P.O.E., was formally instituted in Hanna's Armory, on the evening of March 28, 1905, in the presence of five hundred visiting Elks from various parts of the state, the largest delegation coming from Hartford. The ritualistic work was performed by the officers of the Hartford Lodge and the officers were installed by District Deputy Thomas L. Reilly, of Meriden Lodge. The grand officers, who were banqueted earlier in the evening at the Hotel Beloin, were present at the ceremonies.

A pleasant feature of the evening was the presentation by Hartford Lodge of a silver-mounted block and gavel to New Britain Lodge, the presentation speech being made by ex-Mayor Alexander Harbison of Hartford, who said that his lodge would always look upon the New Britain Lodge as its child. The gift was happily received by exalted Ruler George E. Bunney.

A pretty souvenir, consisting of a gold buckle and ring, the latter encircling an Elk's head, all suspended from a double row of purple ribbon made in the form of a fob, was distributed among the new members and the visitors.

At the business session, which followed the institution and installation, the officers elected at the original meeting were approved, and Exalted Ruler Bunney was elected delegate to the Grand Lodge, and District Deputy Reilly was elected alternate.

At the installation, the chairs were filled by representatives of the Grand Lodge and visiting lodges.

At the social session, over which Exalted Ruler G. E. Bunney gracefully presided, able addresses were made by Messrs. Armstrong of New York Lodge, No. 1; George Alling of Middletown; Senator Patrick McGovern of Hartford; Secretary of State Theodore H. Bodenwein, and Dr. Brothers of New Haven.

Senator McGovern, in his remarks, dwelt upon the cordiality of the relations bound to exist between New Britain and Hartford Lodges.

In an eloquent address on Elkdom, Past Grand Exalted Ruler James J. Armstrong, of New York Lodge, No. 1, made reference to the progress that has been made by the great American Order of the Elks since the institution of New York Lodge. He brought the greetings of the oldest lodge in the country to the youngest, and he agreed that never had a lodge been inaugurated under more auspicious circumstances than was New Britain, No. 957.

New Britain Lodge started with sixty-four charter members. The demit to form the lodge was made out in the names of T. H. Brady, William F. Delancy, W. W. Hanna, and several others. Of the Charter list, twelve were from Hartford Lodge, and two from Meriden



The original officers, as nominated and elected, were as follows:

Exalted Ruler	George E. Bunney	
Esteemed Leading Knight		E. N. Humphrey
Esteemed Loyal Knight.....		H. M. Steele
Esteemed Lecturing Knight.....		W. T. Hartman
Secretary.....		D. T. Holmes
Treasurer.....		James M. Curtin
Tiler.....		Frank M. Zimmerman
Trustee.....		B. F. Gaffney, three years;
Trustee.....		P. McCabe, two years;
Trustee.....		H. W. Eddy, one year.

The first regular lodge meeting of 957 was held at Judd's Hall on April 6, 1905. in its new quarters.

The Exalted Rulers of the Lodge, following Mr. Bunney, who served two terms, have been: Ernest N. Humphrey, William G. Muller, and Harry C. Brown, who at present ably fills the chair. In the nearly five years of its existence, the membership has increased from the original sixty-five, to upwards of four hundred. For the first year of its existence, New Britain Lodge occupied Judd Hall. These quarters were outgrown, and a lease was secured on the top floor in Hanna's marble block, and a splendid lodgeroom and club-rooms fitted up. The lodge has very comfortable quarters but, like very thrifty tenant, fondly looks forward to the time when it will own its own home. The success of its first Fair will go a long ways towards adding impetus to the movement for a new home for the Lodge.



The idea of an Elk's Fair was broached and carried through. It was tremendously successful both financially and socially. The admission charge was 25 cents. The committee took an unheard of gamble that proved to be a bonanza. They engaged the Boston Fadette All Girl Orchestra at a cost of \$1,500.00. The fair hall was packed every night during this week. Besides this, some of the best vaudeville acts obtainable performed each night more than seven tons of candy were raffled off. There was also a drawing for money prizes, the highest being \$500 and the lowest \$25. The tickets sold all over the state. The affairs were held and as the building fund grew, New Britain Elks started to look around for a site for their new home.

A building committee chosen by the Lodge consisted of Ernest Humphrey, Chairman, Joseph M. Halloran, James M. Curtin, John E. Downes, Edward Wiegand, Dudley T. Holmes, Secretary and Trustees Charles Schurr, William H. Corbin and Patrick McCabe.

In choosing a location, the committee planned to have the lodge centrally located near hotels, restaurants, theatres, shopping center and most of all, convenient to the trolley lines.



The site of 30 Washington Street where our home is now located, answered all the requirements and was subsequently purchased by our Lodge at a cost of \$12,000. The old house on the site was sold for \$150.

Old Timers relate how Ernest Humphrey took the architect on a lengthy journey to many different lodges in Connecticut and out of state, inspecting lodge homes to get ideas for our new home. Mr. Humphrey had such great interest in this project that he did this at no expense to the New Britain Lodge. It resulted, however, in compiling the best set of plans for an Elk's Home that we have yet to see.

The committee members had certain definite ideas about the building. They wanted the club room on the first floor so that members could have the benefit of daylight and sunshine. Most all other lodges had their club rooms in the basement where it was dark and gloomy and sometimes damp. Second, they wanted one large club room and lounging room where one could see at a glance who was around. Other lodge homes were broken up into small rooms where small groups could keep to themselves.

The architect chosen to draw up the plans for the new building was Walter P. Crabtree.

Ground was broken for the new building February 6, 1911. The cornerstone was laid on June 6, 1911. Attorney Quinn of Hartford Lodge No. 19 was principal speaker.

The dedication and occupancy took place on February 6, 1912 with Congressman Thomas L. Reilly of Meriden, prominent Elk, as Principal speaker. The installation of Officers was performed by Hartford Lodge No. 19.

The Exalted Ruler on that date was Attorney William F. Delaney. Two months later in April, 1912, August Burckhardt was elected Exalted Ruler for the ensuing year.

On dedication night, February 6, 1912, many gifts were made to our lodge. Mrs. William E. Beers donated \$1,000 towards the purchase of the organ in our Lodge room which adds to the impressiveness of our Ritualistic work. The Baby Grand piano was donated by members of the club through a collection. The Victrola was given to us by Judge Bernard F. Gaffney. Eddy Emmons gave us the Grandfather Clock. Hartford Lodge donated the beautiful vases. A desk lamp was presented to us by Meriden Lodge #35. Waterbury donated a picture. The Eleven O'Clock Toast Clock which hangs over the Exalted Ruler's chair in the Lodge Room was donated by John Shea, PDD., Hartford Lodge #19. One Elk head was donated by E. N. Humphrey and another by Attorney George Klett. The deer Heads were donated by William E. Beers. The large oil painting in the south ante room was painted and donated by Owel E. Wardner.

The New Britain Lodge of Elks #957, has a rich history in founding members, building committees and dedicated officers and members. The detailed planning of our lodge at its conception, gave us a building that today, stands as one of a few original Elk buildings designed to showcase its beauty, withstand the test of time, and continue to be the home where the benevolent works of our Order make a difference in the community we are still located in, and serve.

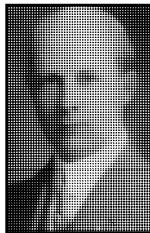


The Trustees of our lodge have historically managed to keep the building in good order, so the members can point with pride to the building that has stood for over 93 years, as the home where New Britain Lodge #957 was originally built and stands today, as a testament to the members who take pride in their membership of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America.

**1905 - 1906 OFFICERS**



**GEORGE E. BUNNY**  
*Exalted Ruler*



**ERNEST N. HUMPHREY**  
*Esteemed Leading Knight*



**HOWARD M. STEELE**  
*Esteemed Loyal Knight*



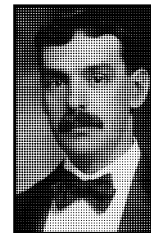
**WILLIAM T. HARTMAN**  
*Esteemed Lecturing Knight*



**DUDLEY T. HOLMES**  
*Secretary*



**JAMES M. CURTIN**  
*Treasurer*



**FRANK M. ZIMMERMAN**  
*Tiler*



**HORACE W. EDDY**  
*Trustee*



**BERNARD T. GAFFNEY**  
*Trustee*



**PATRICK McCABE**  
*Trustee*



**CHARTER MEMBERS**

John W. Allen	William T. Hartman	John O'Neill
Aden L. Andrus	Bennett H. Hibbard	Virgil M. Palmer
Samuel Bassett	Dudley T. Holmes	Fred A. Palmer
Stone J. Bergstrom	Lawrence Horgan	Loren D. Penfield
Dr. Henry T. Bray	George W. Klett	Eugene J. Porter
Harry C. Brown	Edward J. Lynch	William J. Rawlings
Frank J. Cobey	George H. Lynch	Dennis J. Riordan
William H. Corbin	Dr. John E. Martin	James Roche
George W. Cryne	Harry E. McCabe	Howard M. Steele
William J. Dunlay	Francis T. McDonough	Alfred L. Thompson
Horace W. Eddy	Patrick F. McDonough	Evelyn U. Thompson
James M. Finnegan	James T. Meskill	Joseph Towers
Bernard F. Gaffney	Henry J. Monsees	George S. Vivian
John A. Gleason	Thomas Murtha	Edward Wiegand
James M. Hallinan	Frank O'Brien	Frank M. Zimmerman
	Thomas W. O'Conner	

**CHARTER SIGNATORS**

Demit from Hartford Lodge No. 19, March 28, 1905

John M. Brady	William F. Delaney	Patrick McCabe
Thomas H. Brady	William W. Hanna	William G. Muller
George E. Bunny	Ernest N. Humphrey	James W. Ringrose
James M. Curtin	John L. Kelly	John J. Walsh

Demit from Meriden Lodge No. 35, March 28, 1905

John J. White      Michael T. White