



Summary of Town Historian Records

1. Bethlehem or Nicoll-Sill House

Collection, 1735 - 1976, 0.2 cubic feet

Bethlehem House is the oldest family structure in the town, established circa 1735. The Town of Bethlehem acquired the deteriorated house and property. The house was subsequently sold to a private owner and restored. The associated cemetery continues to be the property of the Town. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

This file contains much information on the house including an architectural structure report, an historical analysis of the house, details on its restoration as well as grant information. There is also a narrative of a Sill descendent and a biography of a slave written by Duncan Sill. There are also notes regarding the Margaret M. Sill portrait.

2. Civil Defense Records

Records, 1941 - 1957, 1.0 cubic feet

The Town of Bethlehem was actively engaged in civil defense in both World War II and the Korean Conflict. Former Town Historian Ruth Dickinson was actively involved in the effort. She kept records on potential volunteers as well as surveys of available billets (temporary housing for military personnel) within the town. These files include name, family, employment and residence data. The files also include a file of local servicemen, a warden's manual and report of the War Council.

3. Community Organizations

Collection, 1843 - 1977, 0.3 cubic feet

Filed by organization name

This file contains the records of inactive town organizations. The file has many different types of organizations including economic, religious, political, community and various leisure groups. The groups are the Tri Village Church Women, the Committee That Cares, the Delmar-Elsmere Sewing Circle, Economic Development, Bethlehem Debating Club, Opportunity for Growth, Bethlehem Women's Republican Club, Bethlehem Christmas Community Festival, Delmar Community Field Day, Elks, Selkirk YMCA, Delmar Progress Club, Pure Water Association of Bethlehem, Delmar Taxpayers Improvement Association, Bethlehem Freeze Lockers, and Bethlehem Service Men's Committee. Information varies; files can include minutes of meetings, membership lists, programs and organizational information.

4. Genealogy Reports and Documents

Collection, 1680 - 1980, 0.9 cubic feet

Filed by surname, reference the Town Clerk's index for specific surnames

This file contains miscellaneous family papers, including legal documents, marital information, genealogies, biographies, burial information, account books, school information and records, deeds, other land information and a family Bible and other miscellaneous information.

5. Historical Notes and Reports

Collection, 1899 - 1991, 0.8 cubic feet

The Town Historians have preserved the history of the Town of Bethlehem through their numerous and varied collections. Such collections paint many pictures of the life and history of the Town of Bethlehem. Information includes local history reports, local directories, church information, newspaper clippings, information on roads, name origins, recollections, and historical notes on the post office, library, and other historical buildings in the Town of Bethlehem. Also includes notes on the history of the Hudson River and surrounding natural environments, as well as the histories of various area businesses and industries. There are two issues of the Bethlehem Chronicle and summaries from the Albany County Post. There is some information on Kenaware Park and Kenholm Gardens.

6. Old Historical Documents

Collection, circa 1700 -1800, 0.5 cubic feet

Some documents filed by surname

This file contains a large amount of indenture records from various old families from the Town of Bethlehem. There are also a few other miscellaneous documents contained including family maps, a warrant and a marriage certificate from the early nineteenth century marriage certificates, warrants, deeds, surveys, abstract of titles, some unidentified documents and even food recipes.

7. Photographs

Collection, circa 1870 - present

Index and search engine available through the offices of the Town Clerk and the Town Historian

The town historian accumulated many of the photographs in this collection. The photographs include individual portraits, as well as homes, buildings and other general scenes. All photographs depict images of late nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century life in the Town of Bethlehem.



Mrs. Nelson Pernil
Wolferts Roost, July 1928

8. Records of the Historian's Office

Records, 1946 - 1983, 0.3 cubic feet

Filed by surname

These are the records of the Town Historian. The town created the office of the Historian in 1921, however, documentation began only in 1945. The file includes correspondence, notes and memos, papers regarding the Bethlehem Historical Association, certificates of appointments, an oral history by Ruth Dickinson, and the historians' annual reports from 1946, 1948, 1960, 1966-1973, 1991-2001.

9. Records of Military Service

Records, 1918 - 1953, 0.6 cubic feet

The Town of Bethlehem kept records on all individuals who served in World War II. Albany County received some forwarded copies. There are also other service documents, including records of service during World War I, as well as photographs and militia enrollment list from World War I. There are also records from the Korean War Conflict. The information in these records includes personal family data, addresses, education, military campaign information, etc.

10. Residential-Telephone Directories

Collection, 1908 - 1993, 2.0 cubic feet

Bound volumes in chronological order

The Delmar Progress Club published a 1913 Delmar residential directory to raise funds for a public library. Subsequently, the First United Methodist Church compiled the Tri-Village Directory from 1932 to 1993. Such directories provided names, spouse, children and employment information. There are maps in some editions. There is also a 1926 issue of Tri-City Suburban Directory for Bethlehem as well as copies of excerpts from 1908, 1909 and 1917 telephone directories.

11. Schools in Bethlehem - History

Collection, 1918 - 1984, 0.3 cubic feet

This series includes documents and photographs related to the development of Bethlehem schools. There are school histories, as well as a list of 1918 school officials. There is information on Cedar Hill School and Glenmont/Slingerlands elementary schools. There are excerpts from District 10 school records from 1845 to 1922. There is also a record of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the first High School's graduating class. There is also a 1983 interview with the Superintendent of Schools.

12. Town of Bethlehem Celebrations

Collection, 1932 - 1993, 0.8 cubic feet

This file includes information relating to various celebrations within the Town of Bethlehem. There is a great amount of information pertaining to the 1993 Town Bicentennial celebration as well as the 1976 U.S. Bicentennial. This includes reports and minutes of the various committees and meetings. There is also information on the 1959 Hudson-Champlain celebration and the 1932 George Washington Bicentennial, including news clips of a movie. There is also information included on the 1993 Town of Bethlehem time capsule burial.