

COLOR YOUR TOWN



HELLO YOUNG STUDENTS

We hope this book will bring you enjoyment. It is meant to introduce you to some of the history of our town, Manchester, Connecticut.

As you read this book and do the coloring, think of the people who lived and worked here many years ago. Pretend you are one of them and think how you would have lived and played here in the past.

Manchester was an important part of a growing nation. Be as proud of our town as were the people who helped to build it.

Come to our Museum, the Cheney Homestead, and the Keeney Schoolhouse and discover more of the past, which helped create our town of today.

Be proud of our “City of Village Charm.”

Artwork by Doti Dienst

DINOSAURS IN MANCHESTER

Did you know that dinosaurs once lived where you go to school and play each day? Of course that was millions of years ago, long before there were people on our planet Earth.

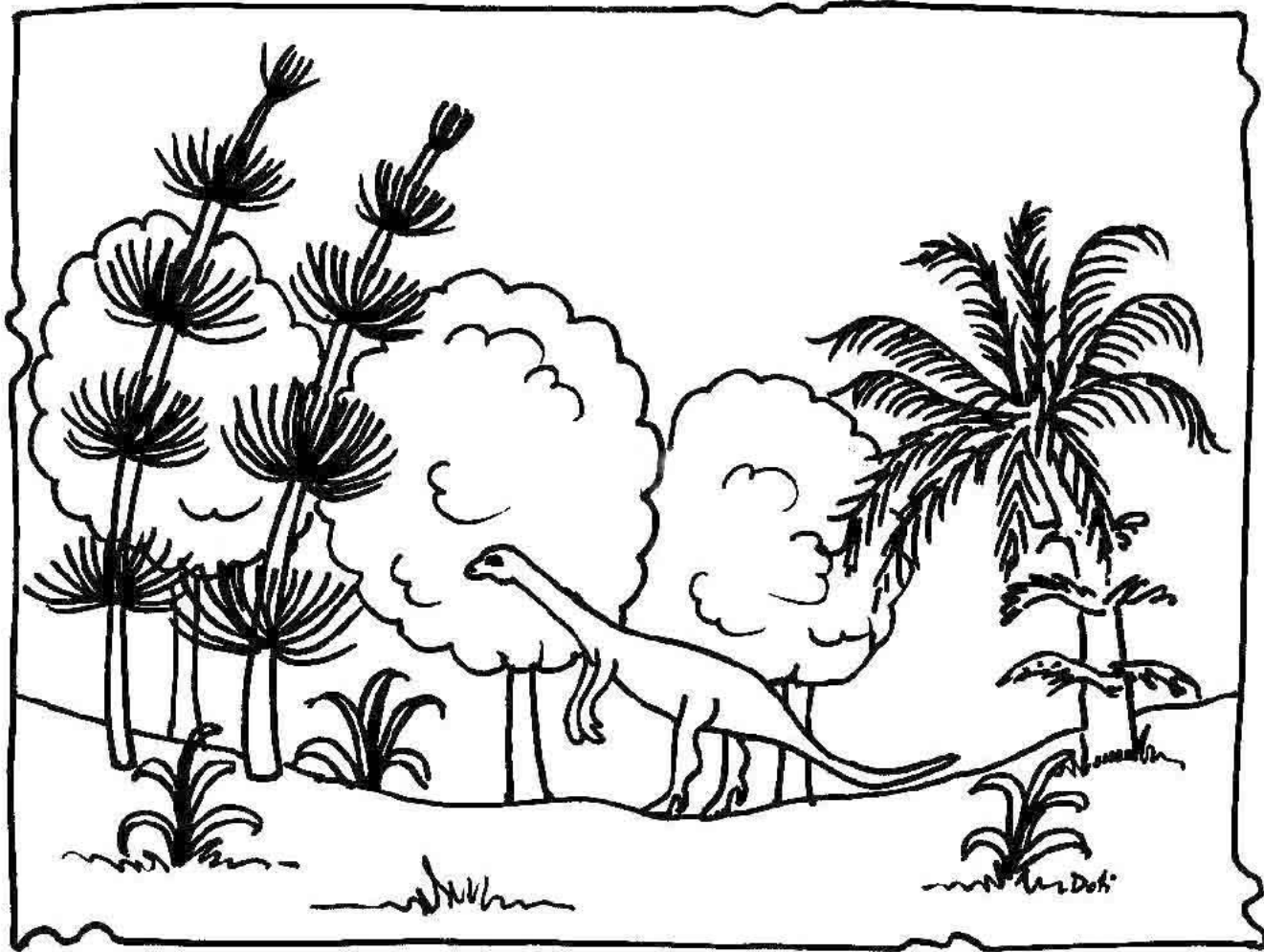
The area that is now our city of Manchester was once a huge swamp where small dinosaurs paddled about. When they died, their bodies sank into the mud and after many, many years under great pressure the mud turned into sandstone and the bones of some of the dinosaurs became fossils embedded in the stone.

Near where Buckland Mall is today there was a sandstone quarry. A quarry is a large pit where stone is cut out or blasted out in large blocks to use in building walls or bridges and many other structures.

Over one hundred years ago in this quarry strange markings were found on some of the stones. Experts were able to put the cut stones together in such a way that the back half of a small dinosaur was clearly visible. Later two more skeletons were found, one of which was almost complete.

These bones were taken to New Haven and assembled into the complete skeleton of a dinosaur. You can see these bones at the Peabody Museum in New Haven whenever you go there.

Wouldn't it be fun to go see them? Maybe your parents or grandparents will take you some day.



WIGWAM STORY

Before the Norsemen landed on the shores of Newfoundland a thousand years ago, they were here. Before Christopher Columbus discovered the New World in 1492, they were here. Before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, they were here.

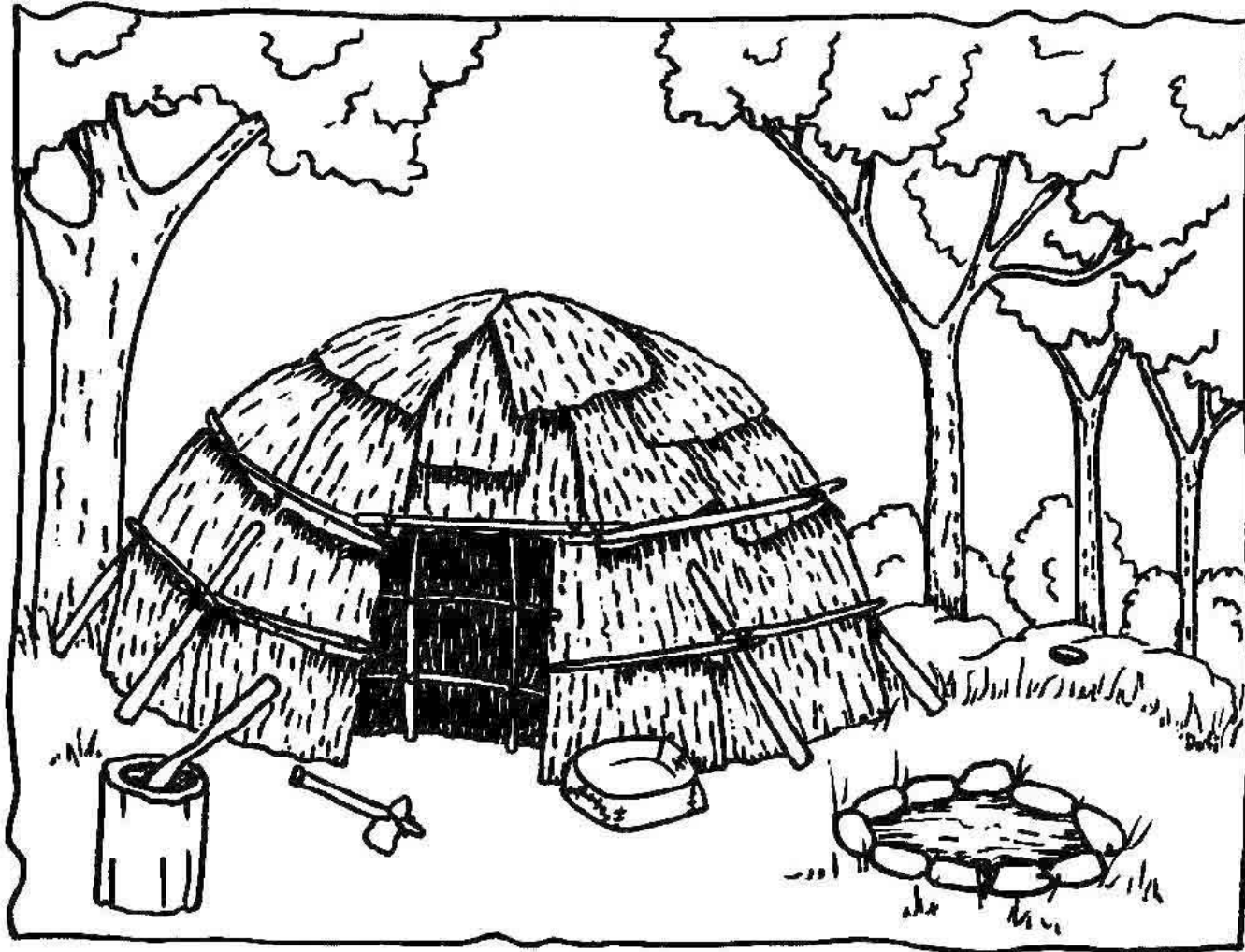
They were our Native Americans, the Indians, who lived in our land thousands of years before the white man came to our shores.

The Indians hunted in the forests, fished in the lakes and rivers, and gathered grains, berries and nuts in the meadows of our great land. The animals that they trapped or shot with their bows and arrows not only provided food but their skins were used for shelter and for clothing.

The Indians had no electric saws or many of the tools that we use today. They built their homes, known as wigwams, from the forests and woods. The framework was fashioned from the limbs of trees, branches of bushes and vines, which were interwoven to make a distinctive form. In the summer, these frames were covered with bark and reed mats and in the winter hides of deer and beaver were used as a covering.

The skins of bears and other fur bearing animals were scraped with sharp stones, known as flints, pounded with larger rocks and then stretched on the ground. When they had dried and were able to be shaped, they were laid on the framework to form the outer walls. The fur or hair of the animals was left on the outside so that the rain or snow would slide off easily.

Sometimes the floors of the wigwams were raised off the ground, covered with fir branches or straw and then with furry skins to make the floor comfortable to sit or sleep on.



THE LEGEND OF WUNNEETUNAH

Many years ago, a Dutch trading ship, "The Fortune" docked on the Connecticut River to trade with the Podunk Indians. One of the crew members, Peter Hager, happened to be taken by the beauty of the Indian Princess, Wunneetunah. Peter decided to stay with the Podunk tribe when the ship sailed for home. The captain of the ship promised to return the next spring to bring Peter home again.

In the meantime, however, Peter and "Wunnee" decided to be married. In order to make it legal, they had to walk to Boston to be married by a minister there. On the way to Boston, Peter was arrested because he was picking up firewood on a Sunday. He was sentenced to one month in prison, a whipping, and one day in the pillory. While in the pillory, however, Wunneetunah and her mother (a chaperone), freed Peter and the threesome escaped. Peter told Wunnee and her mother to meet him by the "big black rock" near the Connecticut River shore.

Peter was waiting by that rock when he saw Wunnee and her mother coming. There were two white men following and bothering the women. Peter went to their aid, a fight occurred, and Peter accidentally knocked one of the men to the ground. The man hit his head on a rock, and he died. Peter and Wunnee had to flee.

They first hid by the Hockanum River near a steep cliff where Wickham Park now is. After a few months, they got word from Indian scouts that the bailiffs were coming closer. With that news, Peter and Wunnee fled to an area where eels and fish were plentiful. This area was in a deep ravine and is now Center Springs Park.

The couple was not safe at this area either. They found out from Indian friends that they must flee again, and made their way to a cave. This cave is now "Bride's Cave" at Bolton Notch. There, Wunnee and Peter lived peacefully for a while.

They would get their food from the nearby lake, wild animals and by gathering nuts and berries. One day, Wunnee was gathering berries alone. She heard a musket shot! She ran to the cave and found Peter dying. Wunnee tried to pull Peter to safety, but he died.

Wunneetunah returned to her family by the Podunk River. She eventually became a maid to a white family in Windsor. She died doing this job and is buried in an old Windsor cemetery. Her tombstone reads "Here lies One Hage, Indian Princess."



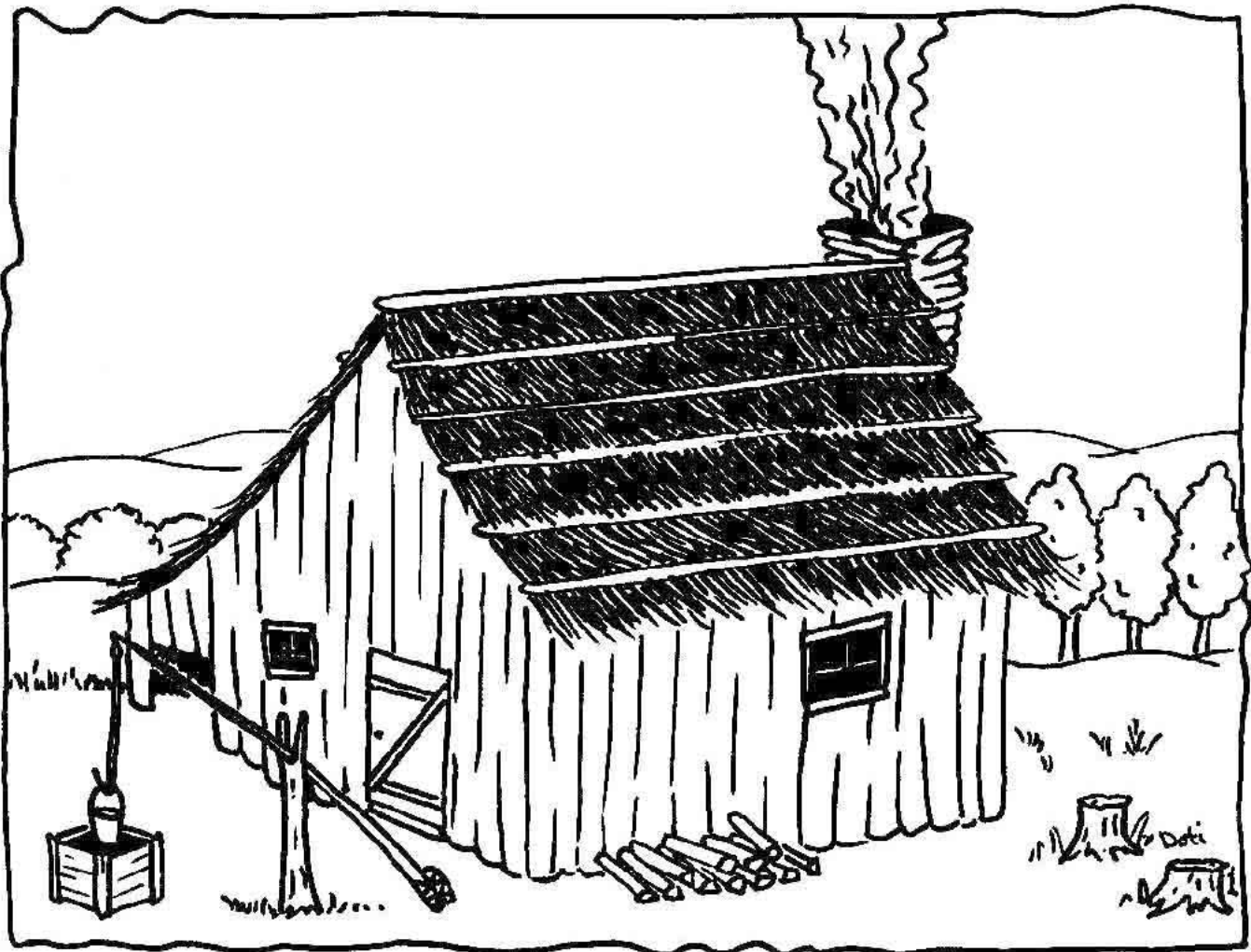
BENJAMIN LYMAN'S BLACKSMITH SHOP

Benjamin Lyman ran a blacksmith shop at Manchester Green on the northeast corner of Vernon St. and East Middle Turnpike from the mid 1700's to the early 1800's.

Here were made all kinds of things not readily available elsewhere. Farmers brought in their horses and oxen to be shod and carts and wagons to be repaired. The blacksmith also made nails, latches, tools and implements, candleholders, pots and pans and other utensils. If not too busy, the blacksmith might even make a ring for a little girl from a nail or a hoop for a boy to roll.

Mr. Lyman was a "jack-of-all-trades" and had several firsts to his credit. He was the first in Connecticut to make iron moldboards for plows, a big improvement over the wooden ones used before. He was also the first to make iron hubs for wagon wheels. These replaced wooden ones previously used that were always wearing out. Mr. Lyman was also the first in Manchester to make light pleasure carriages. These he built in his carriage shop across the street.

When first built, the shop was a primitive wooden building. Later it was rebuilt using bricks from the school at Manchester Green, which was being torn down to make room for a larger one. The site where the shop stood is now an empty lot.



THE PITKIN GLASS WORKS

Did you know people have been making glass for thousands of years? Even before the Greeks and Romans.

Glass is made of sand, wood, ash, or limestone, salt and coloring. There are different mixtures for each kind of glass. A mixture is heated until it is a liquid, then blown and shaped.

Wood was plentiful in our area. Sand was purchased in New Jersey and shipped up the Connecticut River by barge to Hartford. There it was put in ox carts and brought to Manchester. Imagine how long that trip was! Today, by car we can go from Hartford to Manchester in fifteen or twenty minutes.

The first Pitkin came to Hartford from England in 1659. Years later, Richard Pitkin moved to Manchester (then called Five Miles). At the corner of Porter and Pitkin Streets he built a house, tavern, general store and a blacksmith shop. Later the Pitkins built a factory. The remains can be seen today. It was made of stone. The first floor was quite high. There may have been a second story made of wood.

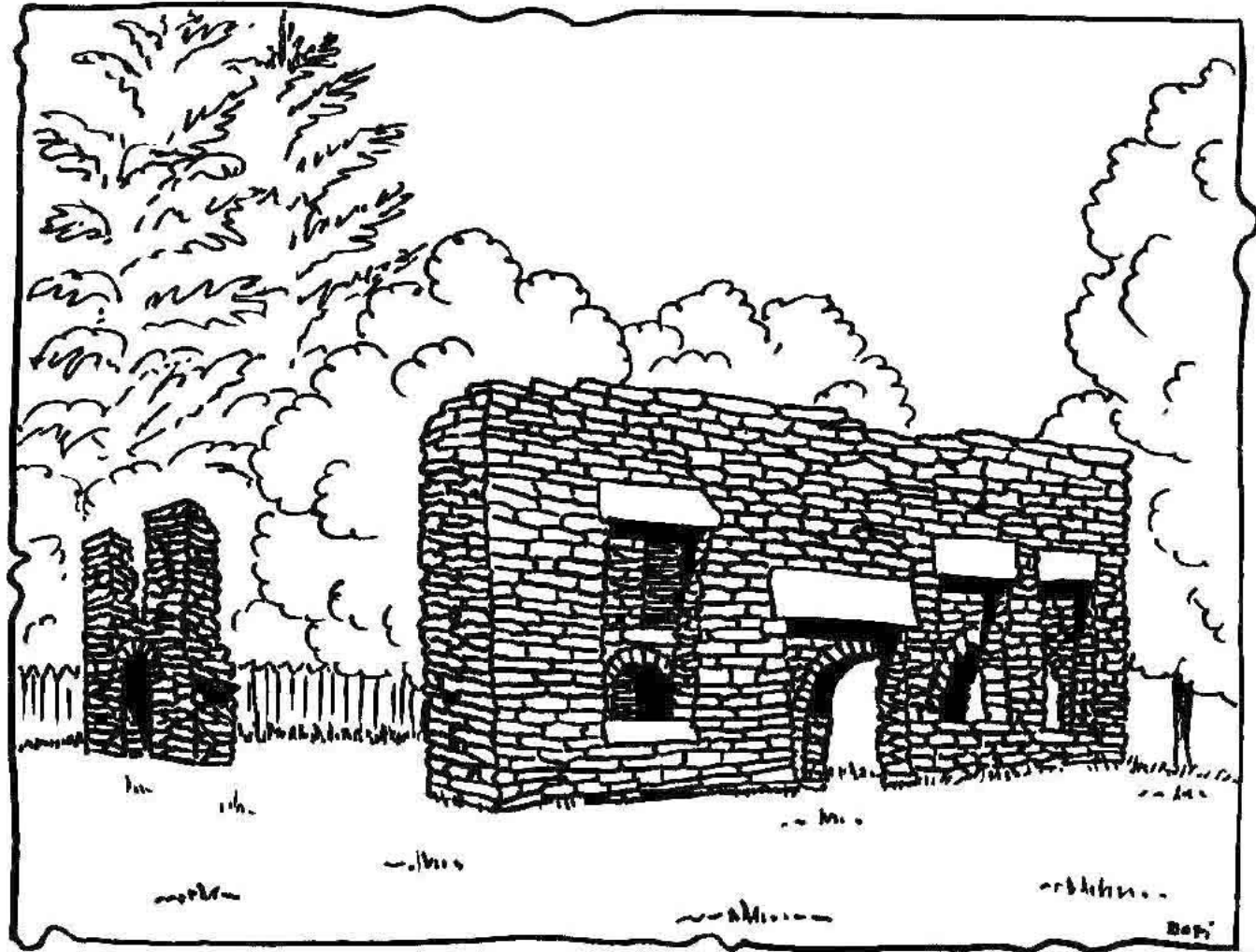
During the American Revolution the Pitkins made gunpowder for the Continental Army.

In 1781, William and Elisha Pitkin, together with Samuel Bishop, applied to the Connecticut General Assembly for the exclusive right to produce glass. This was approved January 1783.

Bottles of many shapes and sizes were made. They held vinegar, liquor, cider, snuff, ink and medicine. Also made were jars, bowls, vases and panes of glass. The bottles were made in various shades of amber and green. Most were made in light green. Brown and black were also used, black being used for inkwells.

From pieces found at this site, it is believed pottery was also made here.

Examples of Pitkin glass can be seen at the Manchester Historical Society's museum.



KEENEY SCHOOLHOUSE

This building is the old Keeney Schoolhouse. It is red. You will find it near the Cheney Homestead on Hartford Road.

There is only one room in the schoolhouse and all grades studied in the one room. In front of the teacher's desk there are three rows of benches for the younger children. The older children sat around the edge of the room.

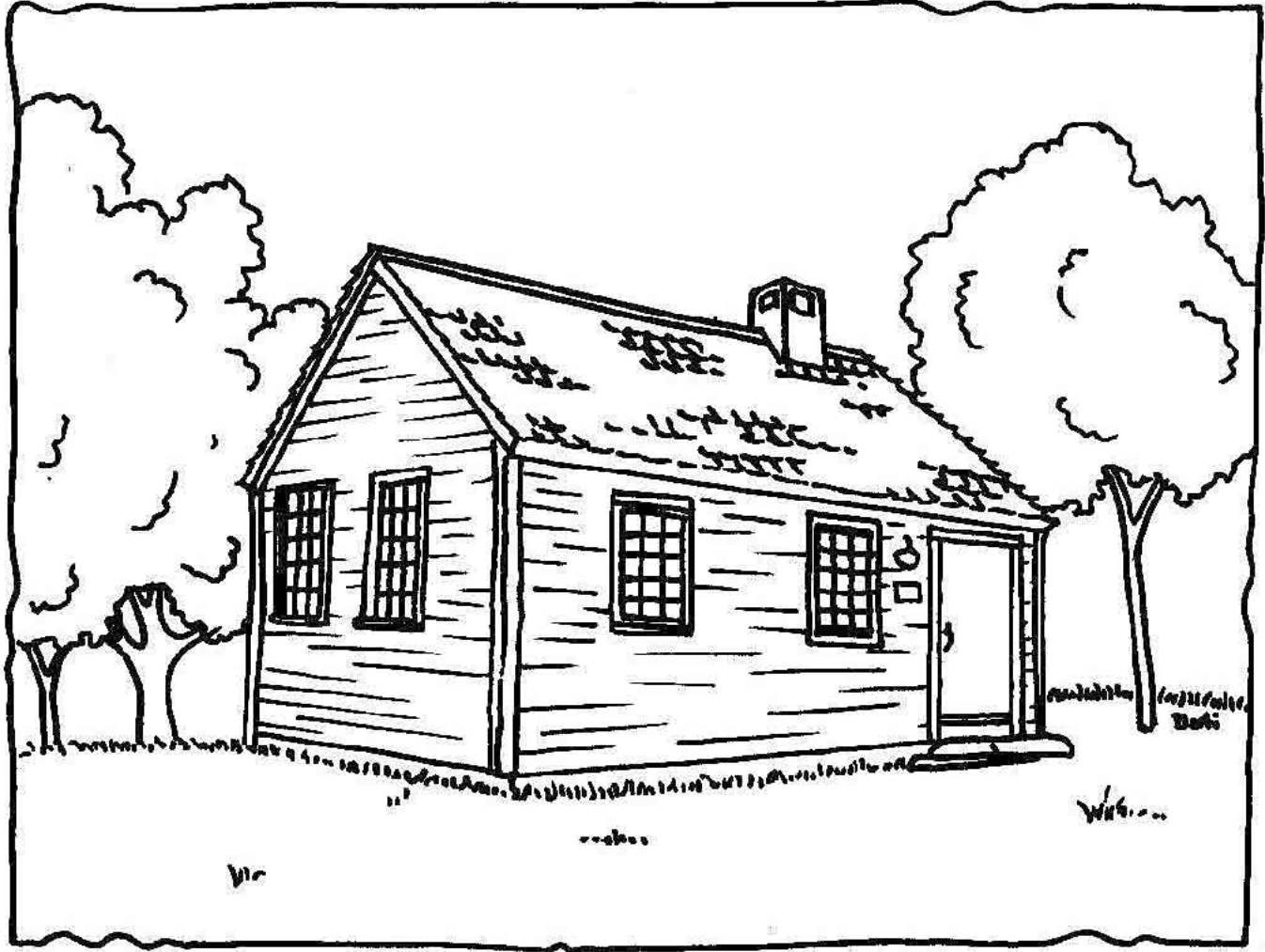
The schoolhouse was built in 1751 and that was a very long time ago. When you come to visit the schoolhouse you will see the kind of books and slates the children used then.

The following poem is part of a longer poem called "SCHOOLHOUSE" which was written by John Greenleaf Whittier and describes this type of schoolhouse:

“Still sits the schoolhouse by the road,
A ragged beggar sunning;
Around it still the sumachs grow,
And blackberry vines are running.

Within the master's desk is seen,
Deep scarred by raps official;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
The jack-knifed carved initial.

The charcoal frescoes on its wall,
Its door's worn sill betraying;
The feet that creeping slow to school,
Went storming out to playing!”



CHENEY HOMESTEAD

This picture is a drawing of the Cheney Homestead on Hartford Road. It is a farmhouse more than two hundred years old. Wide beautiful lawns surround the Homestead.

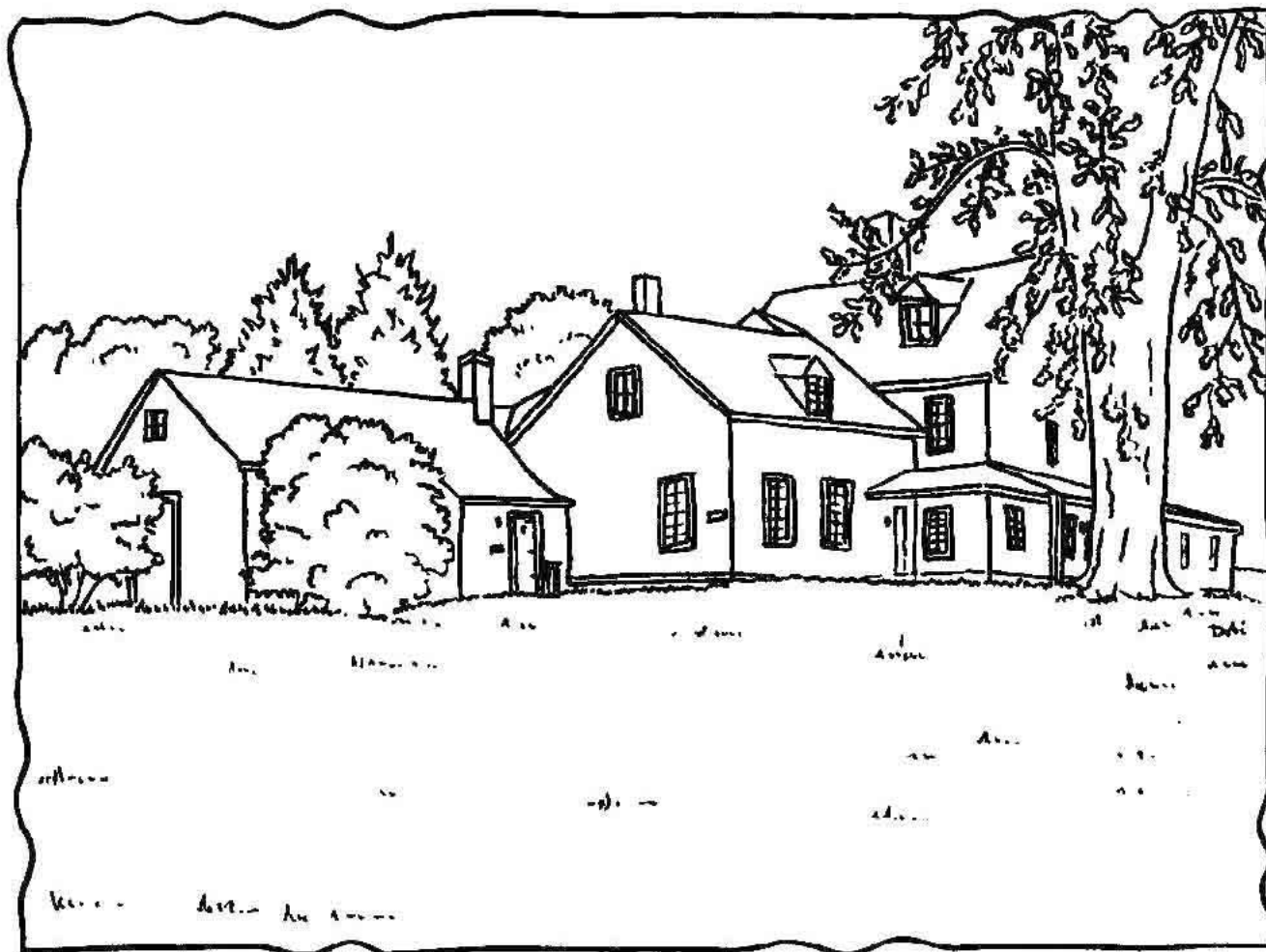
The house was built by Timothy Cheney in 1785. There was also a gristmill on the property alongside the brook. George Cheney, Timothy's son, lived there later with his bride Electa Woodbridge Cheney. You will read in this book about how she met president George Washington. Eight boys and one girl were born in this house to George and Electa.

The Homestead has three floors. Downstairs you will see a large living room or keeping room with a big fireplace. There is a clock built into the wall, but it was necessary to remove the clockworks to make a door in the wall behind the clock to the stairway leading to the second floor. Next to the keeping room is a small room that had been a bedroom many years ago. There is a large dining room on the other side of the keeping room. This used to be a dormitory for the eight Cheney boys who were born in the Homestead.

On the second floor there is a small nursery with a crib, dollhouse and toys used by the Cheney children. You will also see a parlor with a fireplace, and three bedrooms.

The third floor has another bedroom and studio.

Come and visit the Cheney Homestead soon.



THE WOODBRIDGE TAVERN

The Woodbridge Tavern was located at the southwest corner of East Middle Turnpike and Woodbridge Street at Manchester Green. It was run by Deodatus Woodbridge from 1787 until his death in 1836. His son, Dudley, then ran it until 1847.

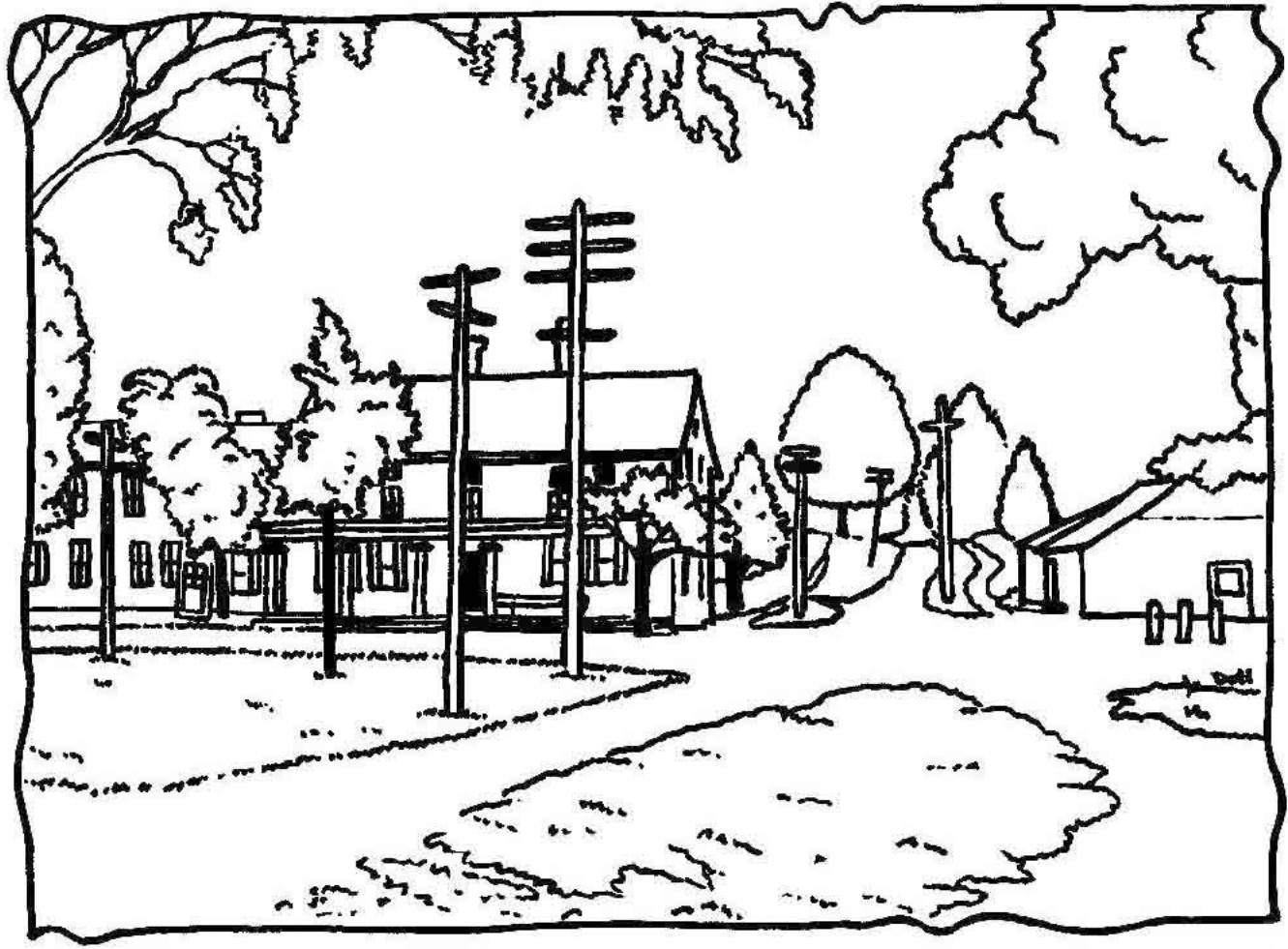
Early taverns provided food and lodging for travelers. The Woodbridge Tavern was on the main road from Hartford to Providence and Boston, and the stagecoach from Hartford always made its first stop here to change horses.

When the stage was due, everyone in the tavern was busy preparing for the travelers. Across the road in the stable where twenty-four horses were kept, a fresh team was harnessed and made ready to replace those pulling the stage.

When the stage approached the Green, the driver gave a blast on his horn. This was the signal for the people to gather to welcome the travelers and hear the latest news. The passengers would climb down for a brief rest and refreshment, and the driver would deliver any messages and the latest gossip. In a few minutes the horses would be replaced, the passengers again in their seats and the stage would be on its way to Coventry, its next stop.

Among the distinguished people who stopped at the tavern were presidents George Washington and James Monroe. Washington made a brief stop on November 9, 1789 on his way to Hartford. According to Deodatus Woodbridge's diary, his daughter Electa gave the president a glass of water and received "sixpence for her pains."

The tavern was torn down in 1938 and now a gas station and convenience store is on the site.



OLD TOWN HALL

In the mid 1800's the people in Manchester needed somewhere to meet to decide on important things that concerned the town. So they held town meetings at the home of George Rich.

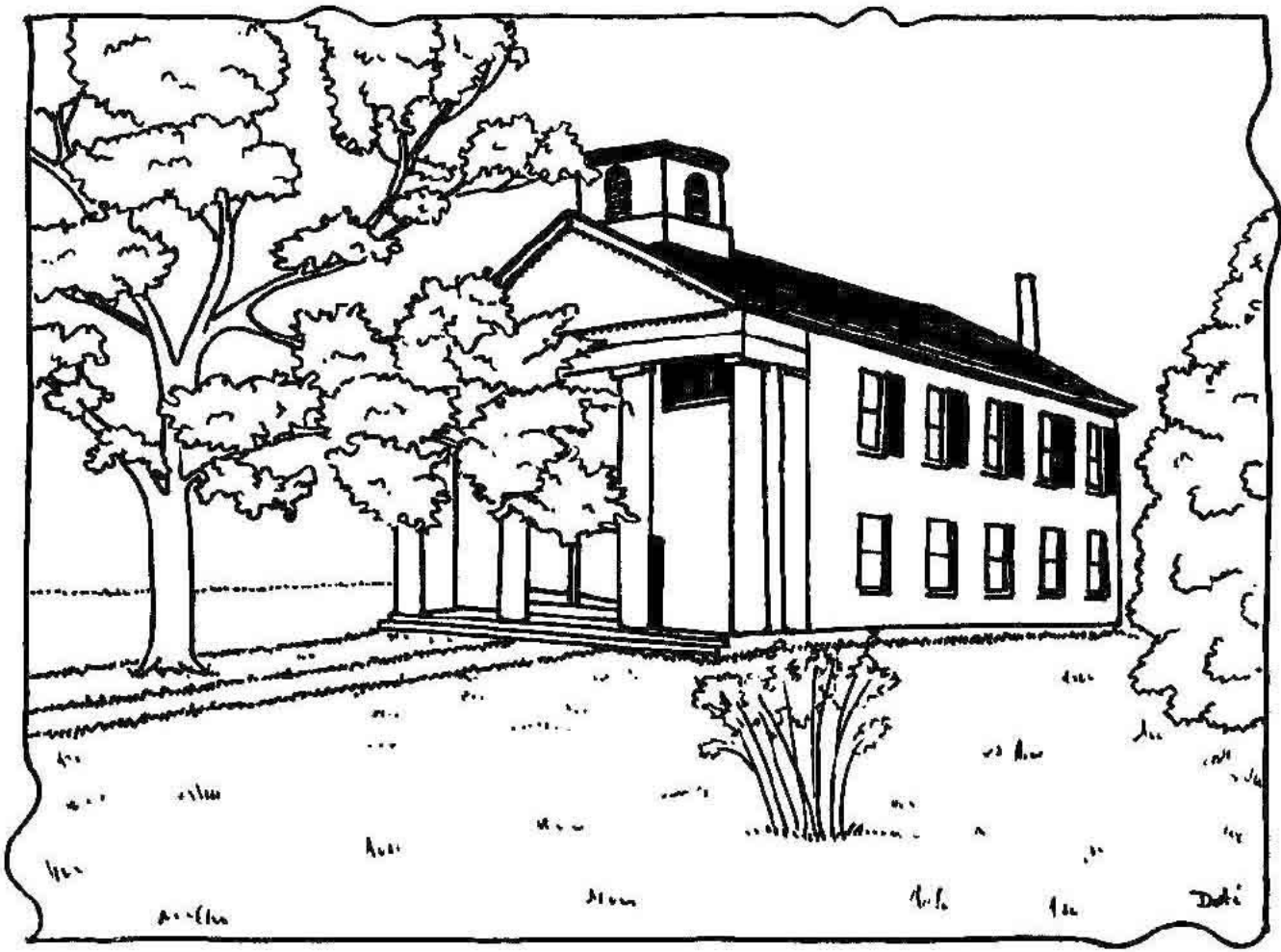
Soon more and more people came to live in Manchester. As the town was growing, people needed to have a larger place to discuss topics. There were just too many people to fit into a house to have meetings. The men in charge of town meetings decided; "It's time to move to a bigger place."

So they asked the Congregational Church if they would sell their building to the town. The church society agreed and moved somewhere else.

Now the townspeople were delighted. They finally could meet and talk about important things in a Town Hall. But there was only one problem, all the important papers and the town's records needed to be stored in a safe place.

So a committee was formed to consider the making of a suitable building with a fireproof vault to store town records. They decided to build it across from the old Town Hall. The Hall of Records was finished in 1895. It is an attractive brick and marble building designed by Frank Farley. Today it is used by the Probate Court and remains as a reminder of Manchester's historical past. It continues to store important records.

Several years later the old Town Hall was torn down. There was no need for town meetings anymore. It was replaced with the present Town Hall, which is now offices for town employees.



IREANUS BROWN HOUSE

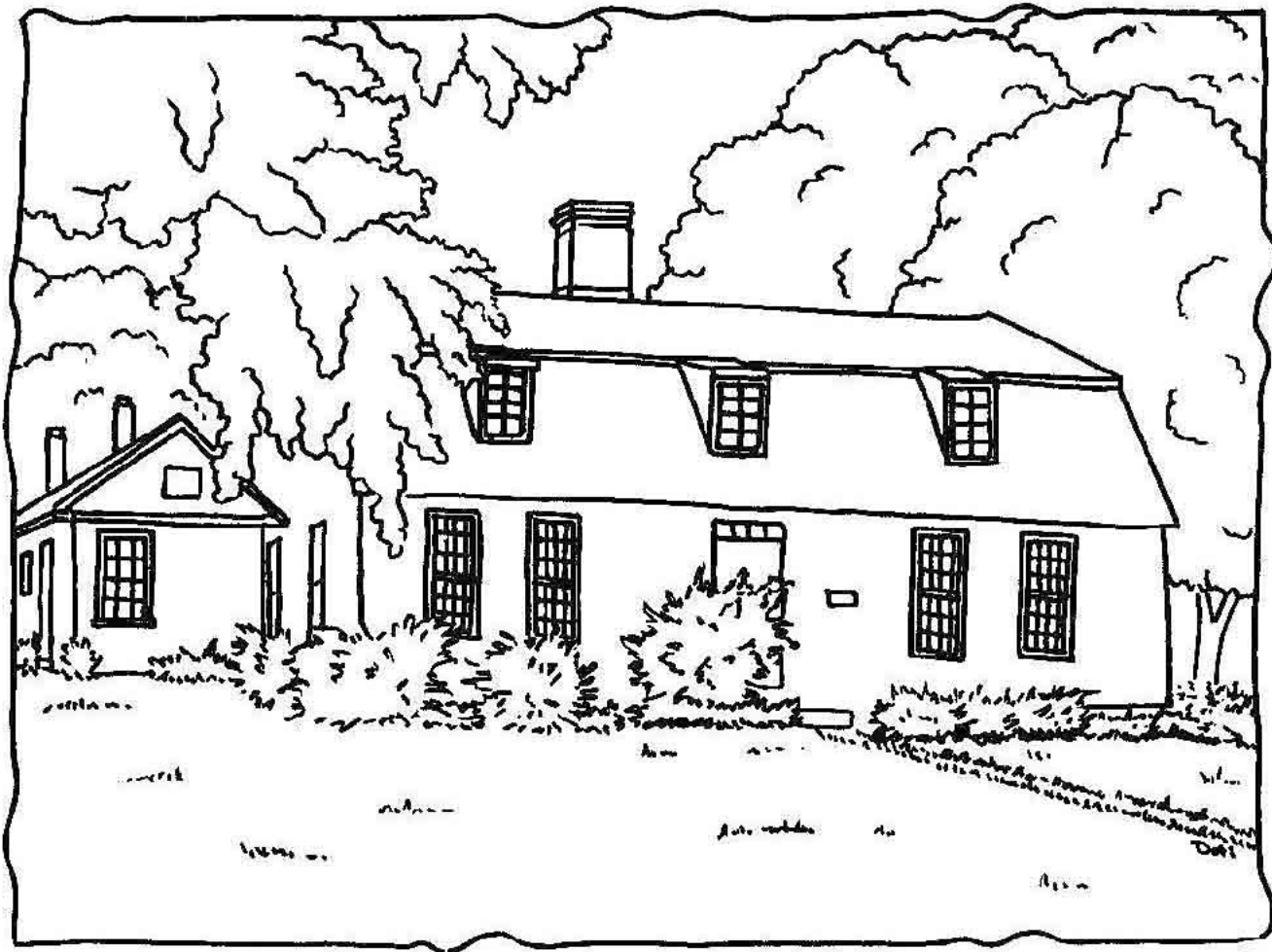
This house is on South Main Street, near the Lutz Museum. The earliest date indicated in any records is the year 1751. This makes it probably the oldest house in Manchester. It is one of the finest examples of a Queen Anne style house.

It is called the Ireanus Brown house, named after one of its earliest owners. Mr. Brown was one of the first founders of the Baptist Church in Manchester. Meetings of the Baptist Society were held in this house from 1802 through 1835.

It is claimed by some that the house was moved from a site near Gardner Street and Charter Oak Street. This would have had to be done over dirt roads and possibly through some woods. I doubt that this would be done today, even with all the good roads and heavy equipment available.

The house has many interesting rooms, some with large fireplaces. One room has a clothes closet and in the back of the closet there is a hidden door that leads to another closet under the stairs. This second closet was probably used for hiding slaves escaping from the south along what was called the "underground railway." This was a route that slaves had to travel in order to evade the searching parties that were hunting for them.

There is a lot of history and old stories attached to this and other old homes in Manchester.



THE OLD CHENEY SCHOOL

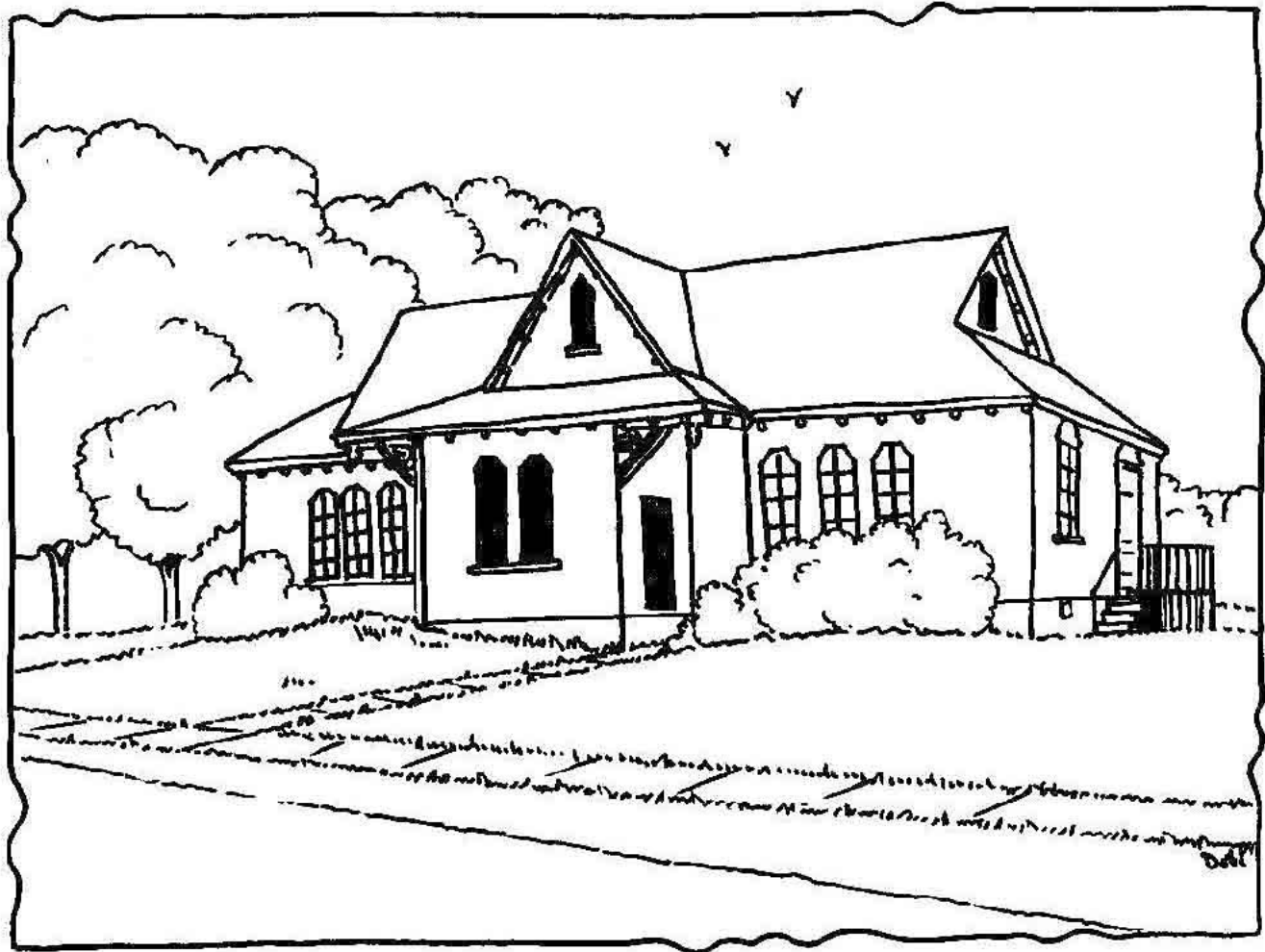
This was the first school in the Cheneyville section of Manchester. Built in 1859, it was located on Cooper Hill St. until 1914 when it was moved to Cedar St.

There were only two classrooms. One was probably for children in first, second and third grades and the other classroom for fourth, fifth and sixth grade students. They had to be very quiet, well-behaved children in such a crowded classroom.

They had two separate doors. One was for the boys and one for the girls. The boys were required to bring in wood for the stoves in winter. Girls' duties probably were to tidy up the rooms. The land around it was called "Four Acres" so they had plenty of playground room.

Some years later a larger school was built on Main St. which was called the Ninth District School. The original Cheney School was then used as a learning center for very young children of kindergarten age. Later it was used as a paint store and then the Lutz Museum.

Now it is occupied by the Manchester Historical Society and the Old Manchester Museum. Come and see us and we'll show you some pictures of school children of one hundred years ago.



THE ORIGINAL CHENEY SILK MILL

Have you ever seen a waterwheel before? The one in the picture is next to a building. Was the one you saw like that? This waterwheel was driven by a brook running next to this building and gave power to the machinery. Those were the days before electricity was used by everyone.

Silk thread was made in this building. Silk is a kind of cloth from which clothing is made.

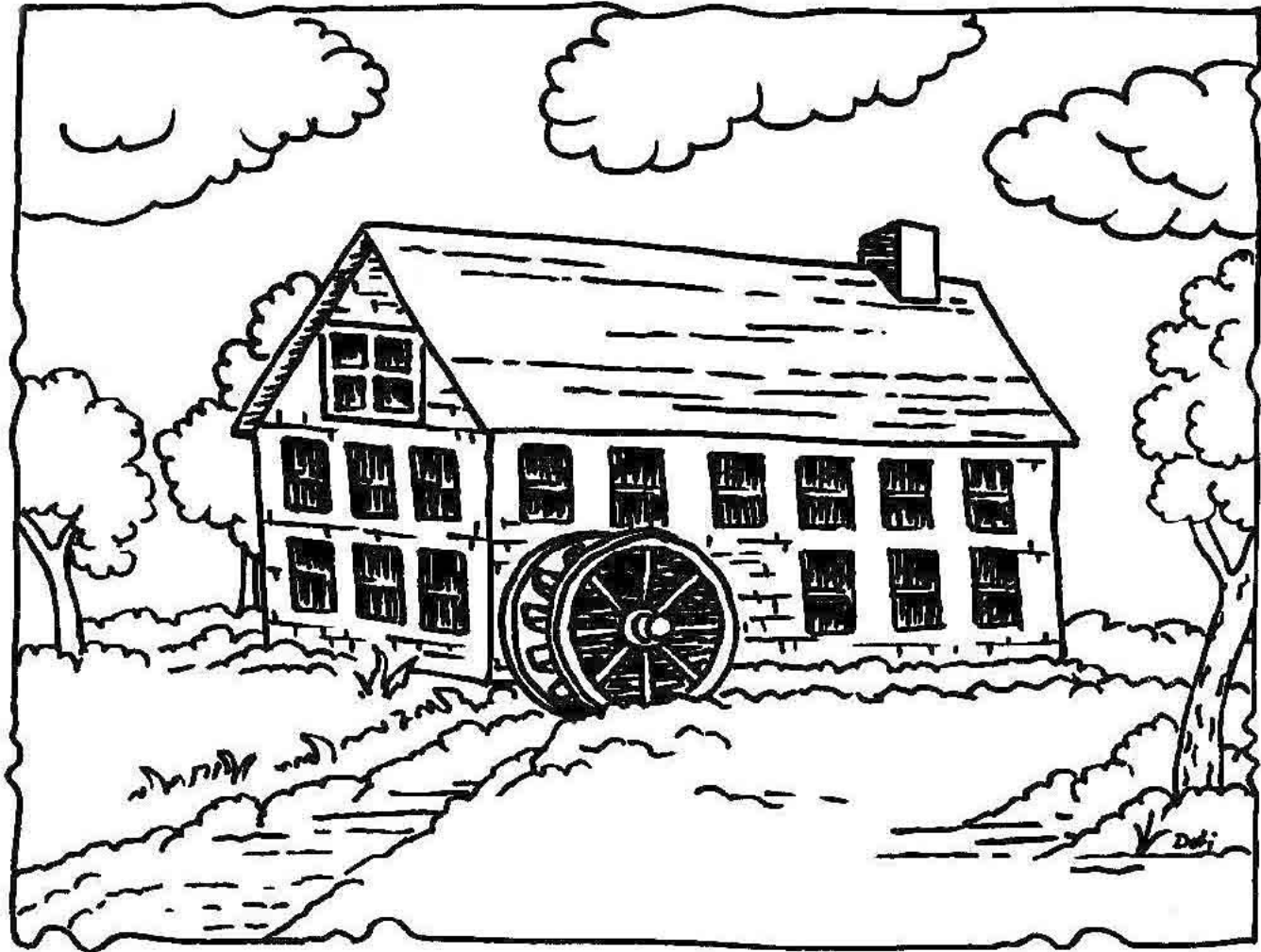
Can you guess what this building was? Yes, it was the first silk mill started by the Cheney brothers. Making silk thread was the most important industry in Manchester for about one hundred years.

Have you ever heard Manchester called the “Silk City”? Now you know why.

This building was a small one, only two stories high. It was situated on Hop Brook at the edge of a pasture quite close to the Cheney Homestead.

At times one of the rooms was used for dances. It was here that the Manchester library got started.

In order to make the time spent working in the mill more interesting, the girls would bring in books to read aloud. One girl read while the others worked. The Cheney brothers found that the girls worked better and faster under these conditions. They bought a number of books for this purpose and this was the beginning of the library which is now called the Mary Cheney Library.

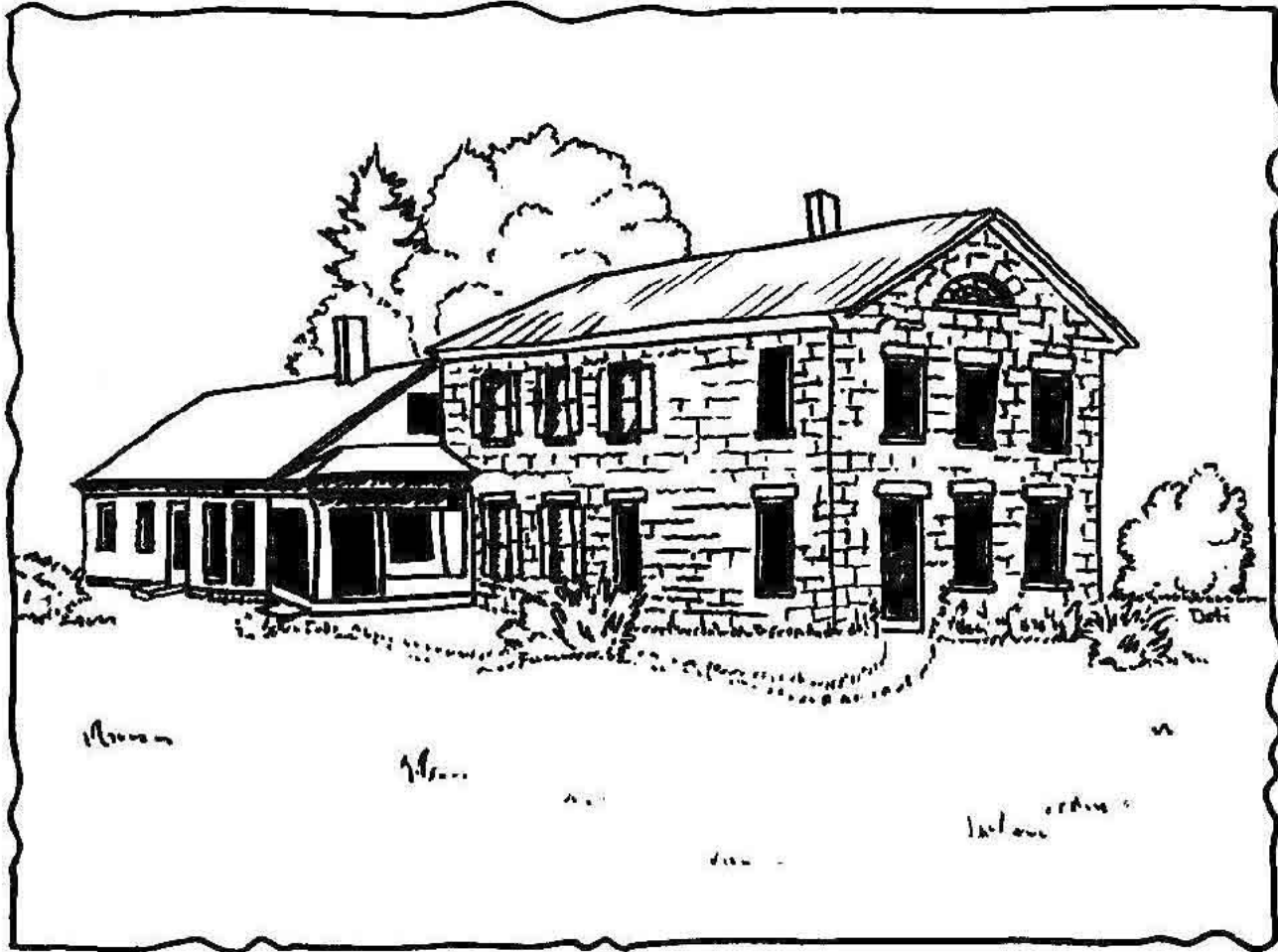


OLD STONE HOUSE

There were only a few stone houses built in Manchester. Most of them were built on the west side of town. One was located near where the Assumption Church now stands. This house was owned by Mr. Trebbe and was known as the Quicy house. It was given this name because it was erected by a builder named Alpheus Quicy.

Mr. Quicy was an African-American and had once been a slave. He escaped and came north and was hired by Mr. Olcott to build a stone house for him. The house was built on Olcott Street near the entrance to the town landfill. It was later damaged by fire and was torn down.

At present there are two stone houses in Manchester. One is on Tolland Turnpike, and the one pictured here is on Bidwell Street, just off Hartford Road. Both of these houses may have been built by Mr. Quicy. Perhaps someday on your way to Manchester Community College you could look for the stone house on Bidwell Street.



THE CHENEY CLOCKTOWER

Hickory Dickory Dock – imagine a mouse trying to climb its way up this clock. This is the Cheney Mills Clocktower. It was one of the most important buildings in the mill.

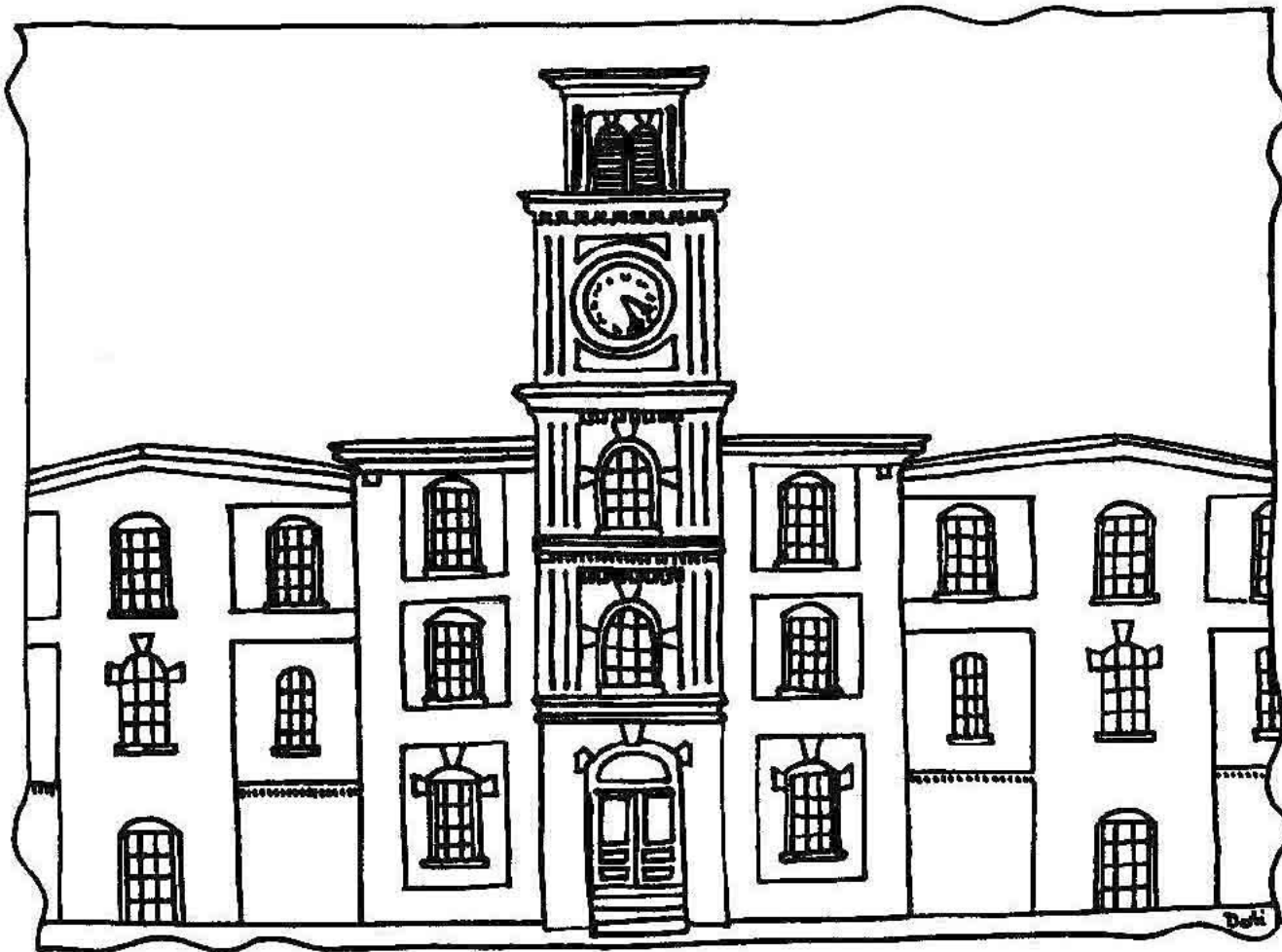
Do you have any brothers or sisters? Do you get along well? The Cheney brothers, all eight of them got along famously. They had to in order to have the best silk factory in the United States. At first they made little things like ribbons and silk ties called cravats. Later on, during World War II, they made most of the parachutes for the war.

Do you know how silk is made? Have you ever seen a spider web? Did you see how soft and shiny the thread looked? Well, there are caterpillars that make a thread a lot like it when they make cocoons. People take these threads and spin sewing thread from it. This thread can make all sorts of clothing.

The Clocktower had a “worm room” in it, as well as many spinning machines to make the thread. Actually one brother, Frank, invented a brand new machine which made the thread heavier and easier to use.

The Cheney brothers made many jobs for people who did not have any. They gave jobs to people who came from other countries and also the people here. They paid their workers a nice amount of money, provided them with homes and schools for their children.

If you could fly over the Clocktower mill you would see that it is shaped like the letter “E.”



CHENEY HALL

A long time ago, Cheney Hall was the center for many activities and entertainment.

Imagine walking to that big castle-like building on a summer's eve, to watch your sister in a recital or your uncle get an award. Probably grown-ups used the intermission time for visiting. The younger set would play tag or hide 'n' seek or even chase fireflies. Many a romance was started inside or outside the building.

Then when influenza broke out in town in 1918, it became a hospital for hundreds of "flu" sufferers.

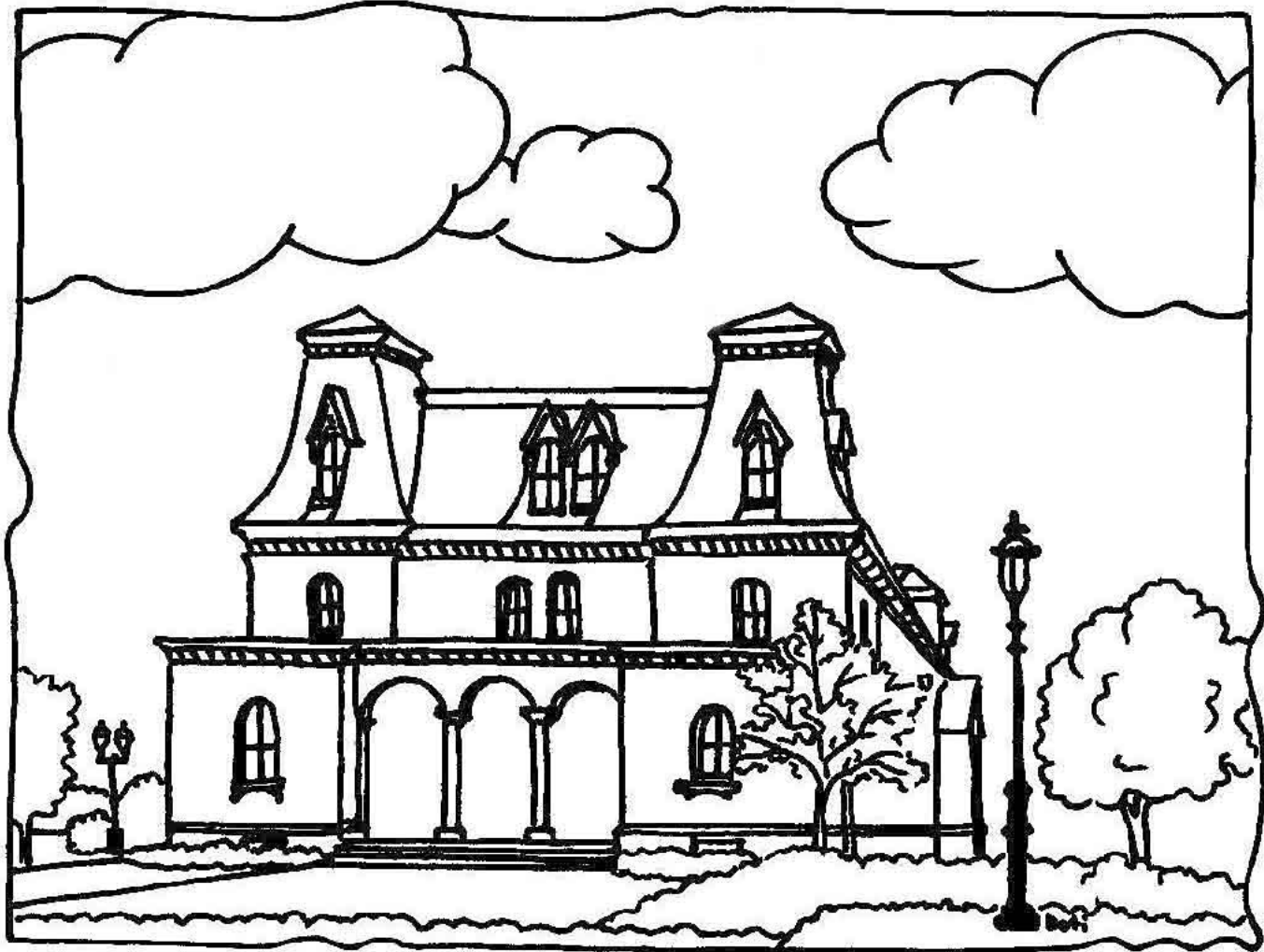
The style of this building is Victorian, which means it was built and decorated during the reign of Queen Victoria in England (1837-1901). It was impressive then and remains beautiful today, thanks to a large committee which has overseen its restoration to its previous grandeur.

The Cheney Brothers Silk Mills surrounding the Hall were world famous. The Cheneys were a very civic-minded family who gave land for many of our local churches, libraries and schools. They built the Hall for the families of the workers in their mills, bringing club meetings, musicals, graduations, dances, lectures, weddings, church services, dramas, boxing matches, exhibitions and fairs to town for all. Most local people were very familiar with it.

This was a slower paced time in history, so families enjoyed live entertainment or town meetings or social events of the day, including many performances of national fame. It was the center of activities, which were frequent and popular with everyone.

At first, the front of the building was different from what it is now. There were two sets of steps opposite each other, at right angles to the front doors. The steps were a fun place for meeting friends and also for running up and down.

Cheney Hall was built right after the Civil War and was dedicated in 1867. Horace Greely (editor of the New York Tribune newspaper and world famous political activist) was the main speaker. Some presidents have been here too.



APEL'S OPERA HOUSE

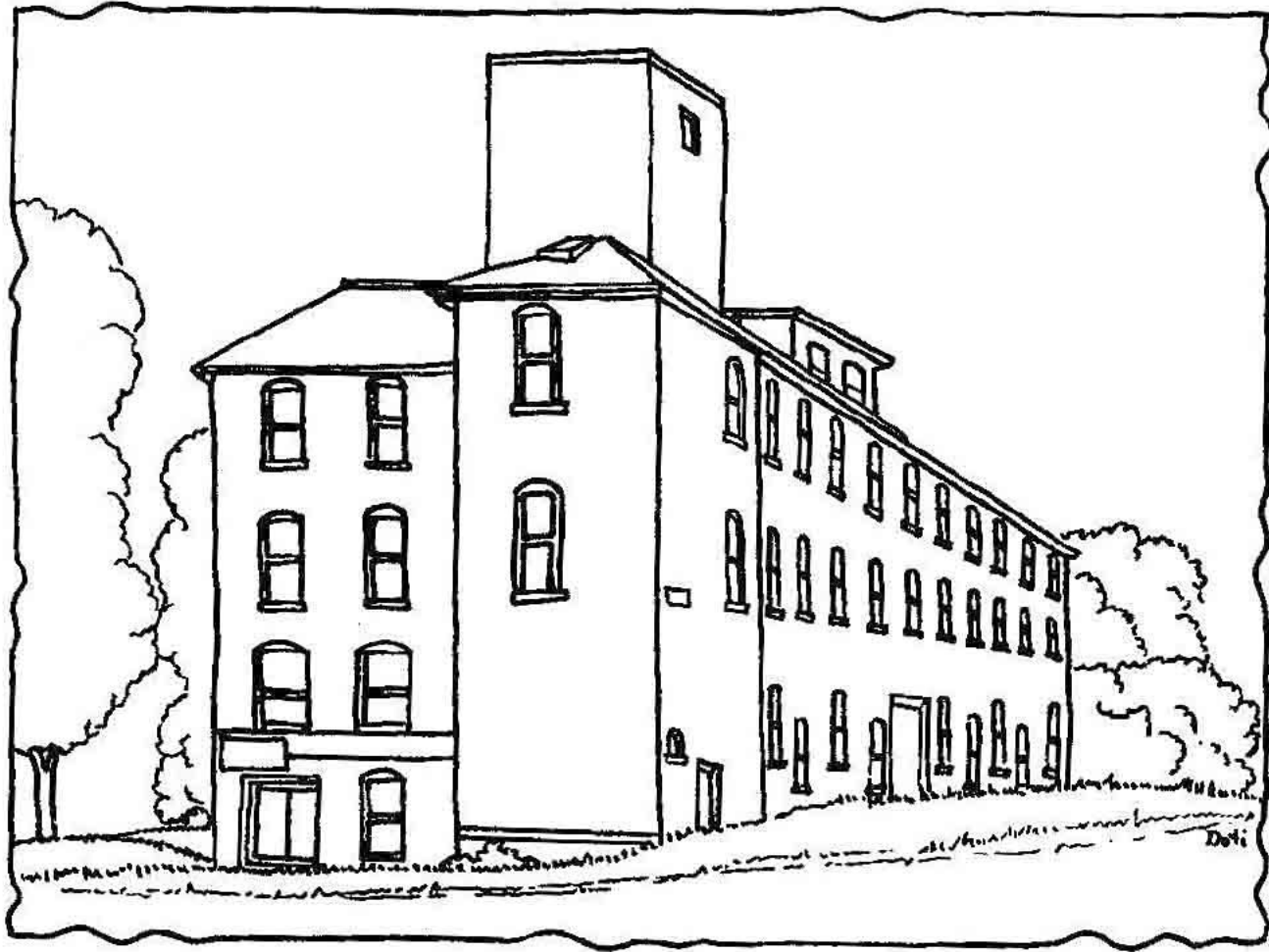
In the early days in Manchester there were no movie theaters. However, people in North Manchester could attend social and cultural activities by going to "Apel's Opera House" built in the 1880's beside the railroad tracks.

Professional road companies that traveled from town to town put on shows there. These companies often came by train and could unload their stage scenery and costumes at the Opera House. Sometimes the companies spent a week in Manchester doing their shows. Other companies put on boxing exhibitions, which only men attended.

There were also some local dramatic clubs that produced plays, and for several years the North End School held its graduation exercises in the Opera House. Since there were no fire laws in the 1800's, the shows took place on the top floor. The building also served as a furniture store with a funeral business on the ground floor.

In later years, after movies began, the road companies stopped coming to the Opera House. The first recorded showing of movies in Manchester at "Apel's Opera House" was in 1899. This was held for a church benefit. One famous play that was performed here in the 1900's was "Uncle Tom's Cabin" by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

You can still see the Opera House today, but it is now used by a commercial business.



THE CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL

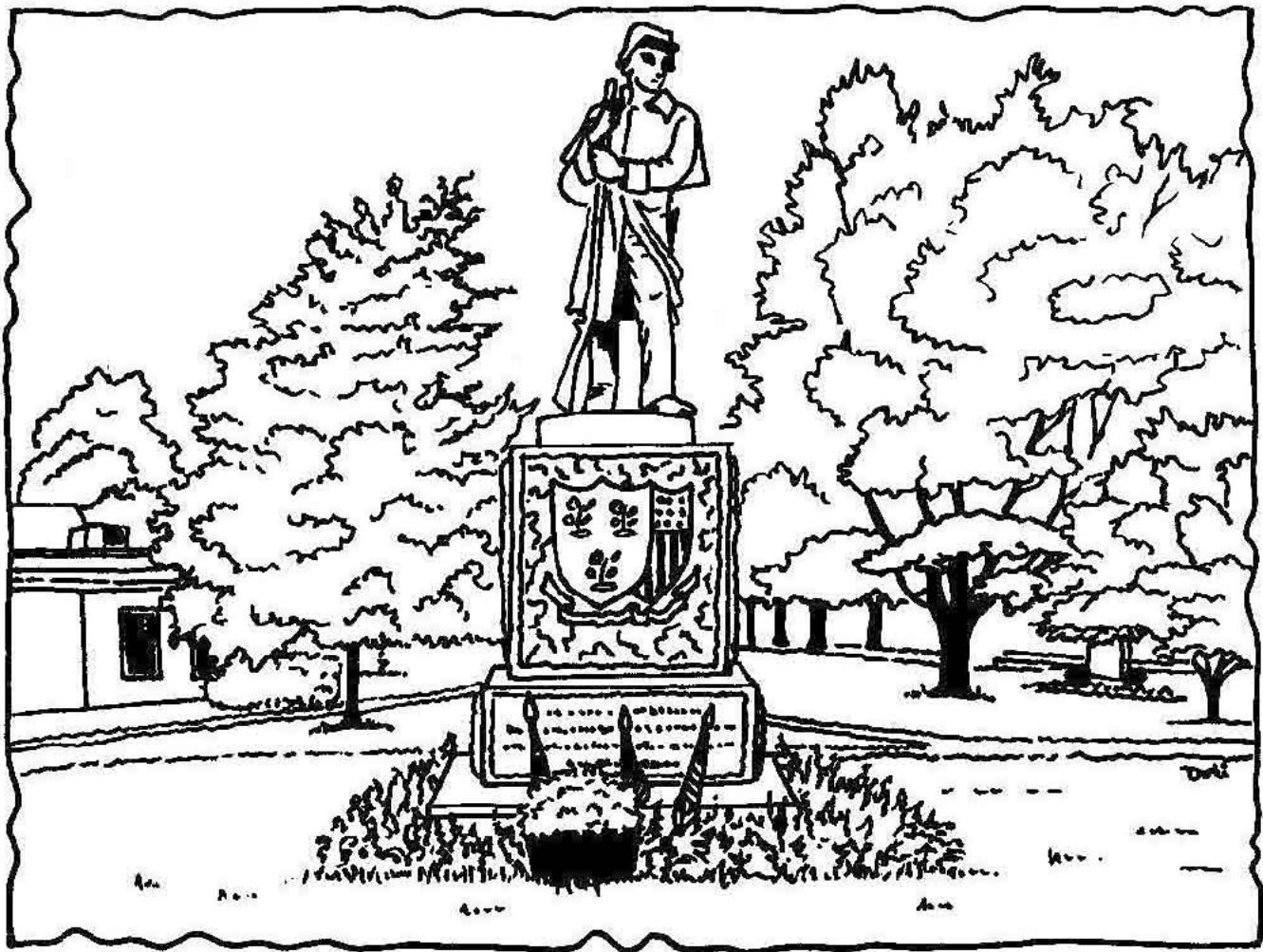
At the center of Manchester is a statue of a soldier holding a long rifle. This statue was placed there in 1879 to remember the men from Manchester who fought during the Civil War. It is called the Civil War Memorial.

The Civil War was fought in this country over 100 years ago. That was a very long time ago.

The monument, in days gone by, was the main feature of the Memorial Day parade. The parade would start at Cheney Hall and go up Main Street to the Center. There the bands would play and speeches would be given. Up until a few years ago the soldier faced south, toward the Mary Cheney Library. It was decided that it should be turned around so as to face the Center of town. This was quite an undertaking and the man in charge was somewhat secretive as to how he would do it, for fear others might underbid him.

When you stand next to the monument, you can turn all the way around and see many other interesting things. See if you can find the following sights when you visit the Civil War Memorial: the Mary Cheney Library, the Center Fire Station, the old Post Office and the Spanish-American War Memorial.

There are many fun and interesting things to see in Manchester. Maybe this summer you will get to visit some of them.



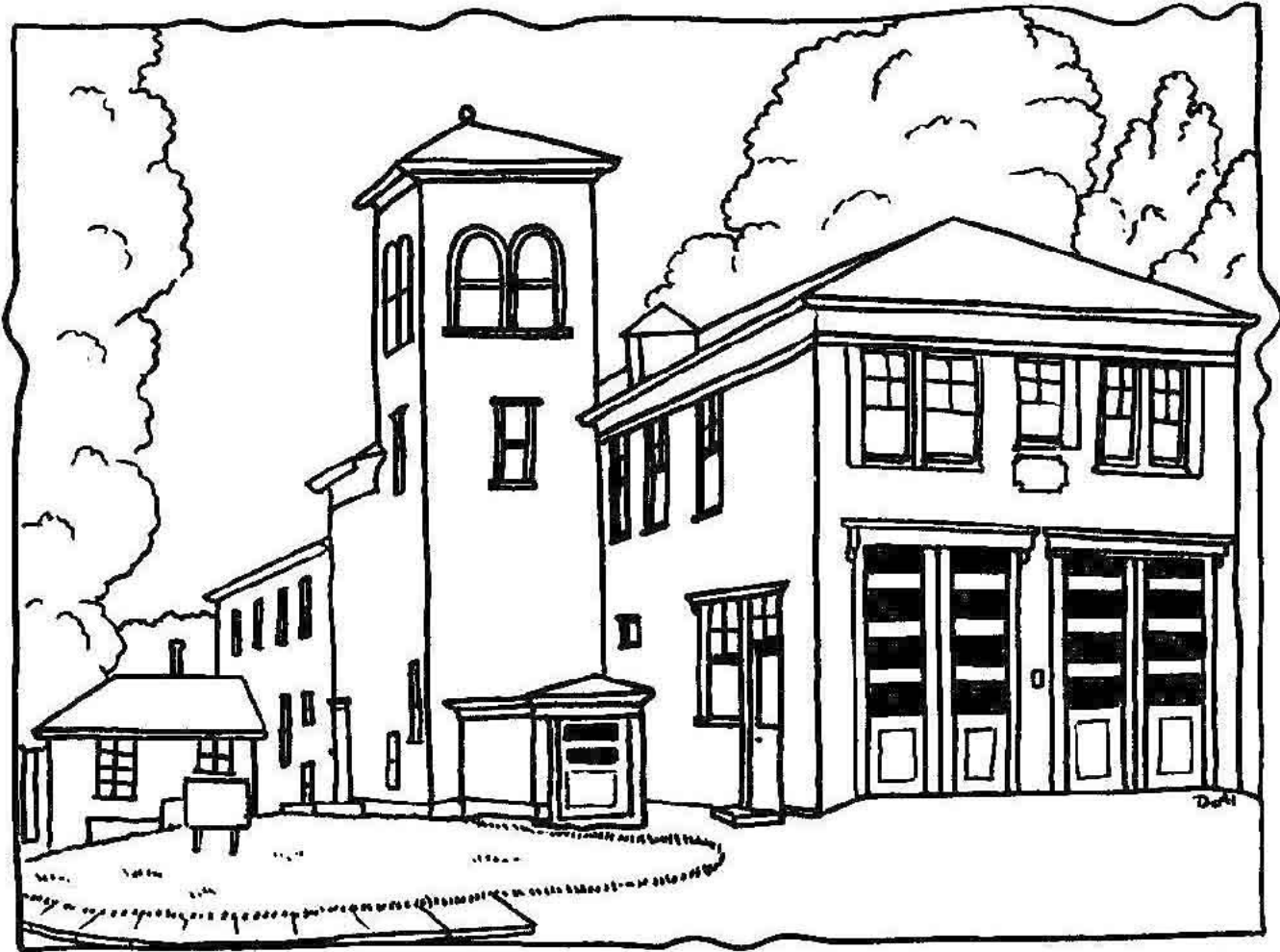
HOSE AND LADDER NO. 1

Have you visited one of the new fire stations in Manchester? They are made of brick and inside there are two or more bright, shiny red fire engines. These fire stations have been built in all different parts of town so if there is a fire anywhere in Manchester it won't take long for the fire engine to get to it. The fire engines carry hoses that the firemen use for spraying water to put out the fire. They also carry ladders so the firemen can reach places that are too high to reach from the ground. There are large axes on the trucks that can be used for breaking down walls and doors in case there is a fire behind them.

Today, if you discover a fire, you can call 911 on the telephone and tell where the fire is and the firemen who are nearest will speed to it. One hundred years ago, when the firehouse in this picture was built, you couldn't call 911 to report a fire. You would have to call the telephone operator who would then call the firehouse, and whoever lived there would sound the alarm. The alarm in those days was a very loud steam whistle, which could be heard all over town. This would let any men who could hear it know that they were needed to help put out the fire.

This firehouse was called Hose and Ladder Company No. 1. It was built near the Cheney mills, so that if the mills caught fire the firemen would not have far to go. It was built of wood and has been painted many times and many colors. It is now painted two shades of gray, but you can color it any color you like.

The types of fire engines we use now are not kept there any more. Instead, it is a fire museum that you can visit. You can see many kinds of old-fashioned fire trucks and hand-drawn fire pumpers that were used long, long ago.

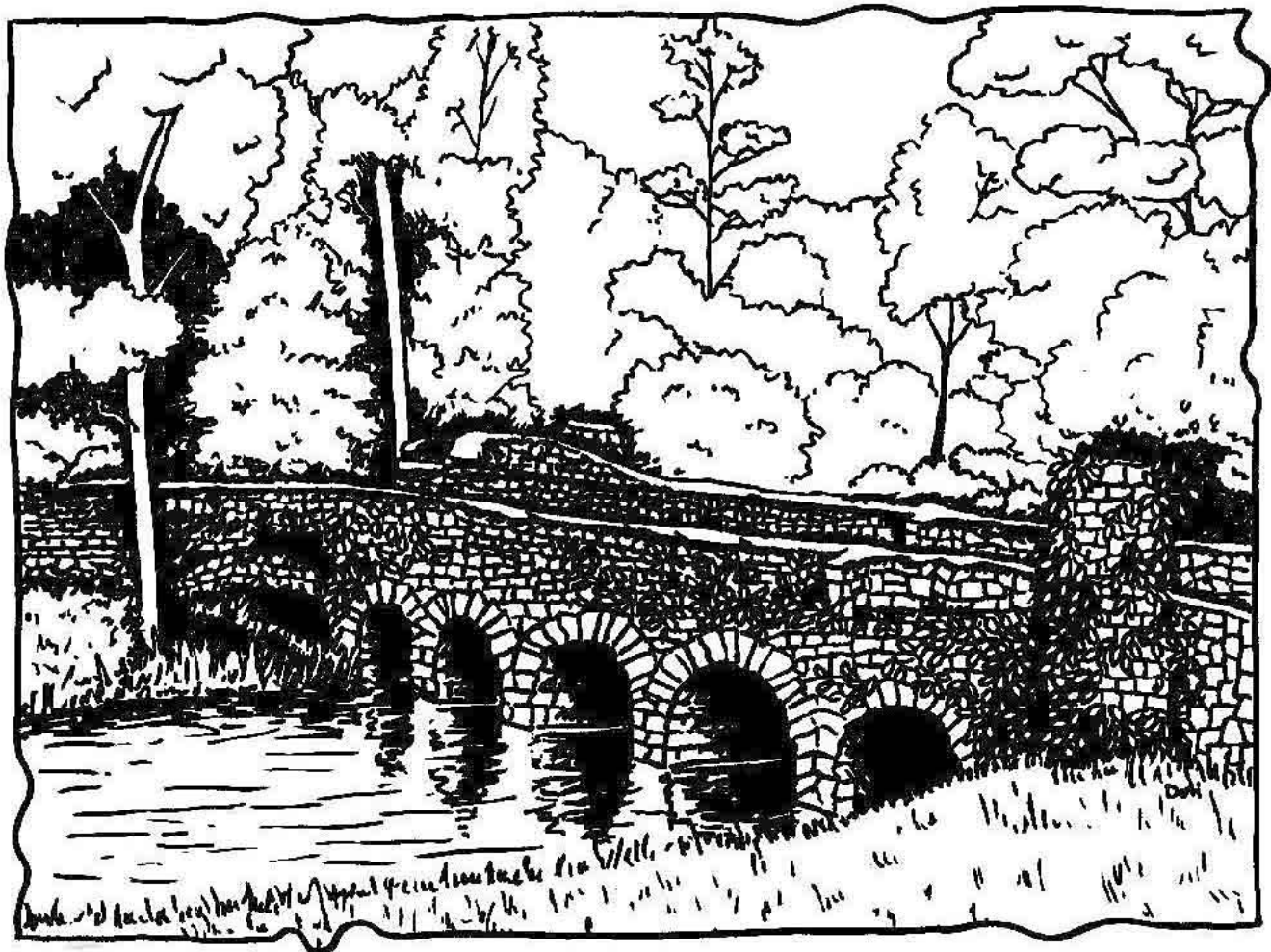


HIGHLAND PARK

One day my friend Tommy and I were looking for something to do. So we decided to go up to the falls near Highland Park. It was a warm summer day and we were hot. Tommy, who does everything his mother tells him, had to stay home and eat lunch before he could go out. I decided I would go up to Lookout Mountain and wait for him. As I sat on the mountain and looked out, I could see all the tobacco nets covering the ground below. What a sight! I could see the paper mill. I love it up here. Wow! I can even see the reservoir built by the people of the town to run the paper mill.

Finally, Tommy came up. He frightened me, and I almost fell. "You almost made me fall!" I said. "Sorry," Tommy said. "Let's go," I said. "I have something to show you." We walked down the mountain towards the falls. As we walked, I explained what we were going to do. "Tommy, there's a bridge that we can jump off." "OK, let's go," said Tommy. At first we took it easy, just jumping and turning. Then I dared Tommy to do a backflip. He tried it. "Ahhh!" Tommy screamed. I jumped in after him and pulled him out. He had a nasty cut on his leg. I told him we should get him home. I helped Tommy get home. He said he would probably get in trouble from his mother. That was the last day I ever saw Tommy. It's 40 years later now and so much has changed. No more tobacco nets, there are houses built there now. The old paper mill is closed and the town has tripled in size.

As I sit here on Lookout Mountain, I notice all of the changes and it's hard to believe it has been 40 years. At least I can still get peace of mind on Lookout Mountain.



Handwritten text at the bottom of the drawing, possibly a signature or a note, which is difficult to decipher due to the cursive style and some fading.

THE FOUNTAIN IN THE PARK

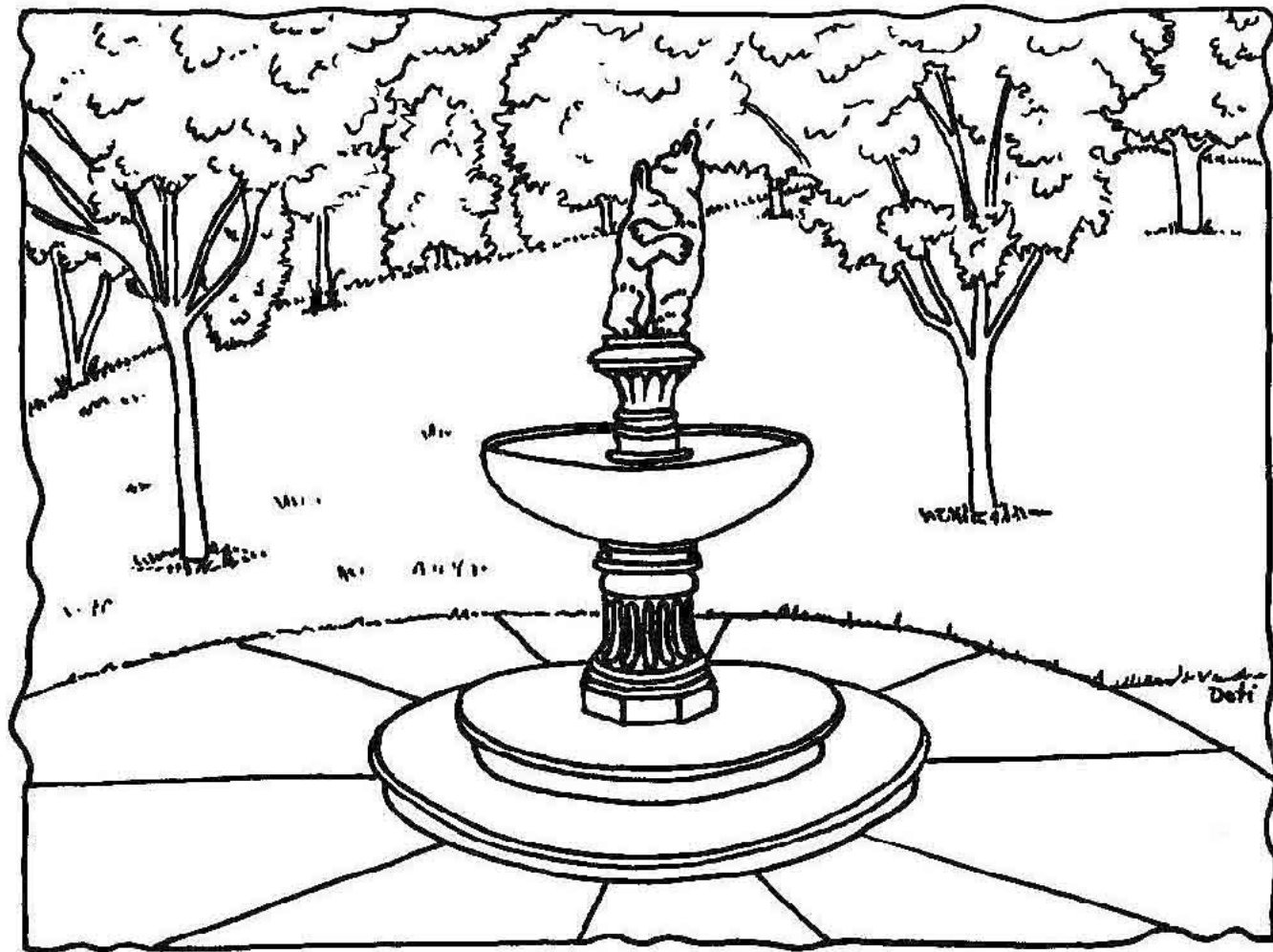
In October 1912, Manchester voted to accept as a gift the public park at the center, which had been offered by Mrs. Susan Cheney. Mrs. Cheney was the mother of Miss Mary Cheney, after whom our library was named. In that park was erected a fountain, with bronze dancing bear cubs, which is still there.

Did you know that those bears once disappeared? They tell us that they were taken off the fountain to be cleaned and repaired and were lost. Do you really believe that is what happened? I think that this is the correct tale:

The little bears had grown tired of dancing in just one place. One night in November, when the moon was full and very bright, the bears climbed down from the fountain. They danced around the fountain and then skipped up the steps to the flagpole. Tumbling down the grassy bank, they were stopped by the wall at the bottom of the hill. Over the wall scampered the little bears and down Main Street they ran. The trees had shed their bright red and yellow leaves, which rustled as the cubs ran through them.

On and on they ran until suddenly they found a hole in a high hill. That hole led into a tunnel. Now the bears knew why they had run so far. They had found the perfect place to hibernate for the winter months. The bears crawled into the tunnel and curled up together. Side by side they slept the winter away.

When spring came and the days grew warmer and longer, the little bears woke up from their long sleep. They came out of their den. They found that the grass and the flowers were growing and that the moon was again shining brightly. After eating some of the grass and drinking cool water from the nearby stream, they retraced their steps up Main Street until they came to the fountain in the park. They climbed up the pedestal and that is where you will find those little bear cubs, still dancing the days and nights away.



LUTZ MUSEUM

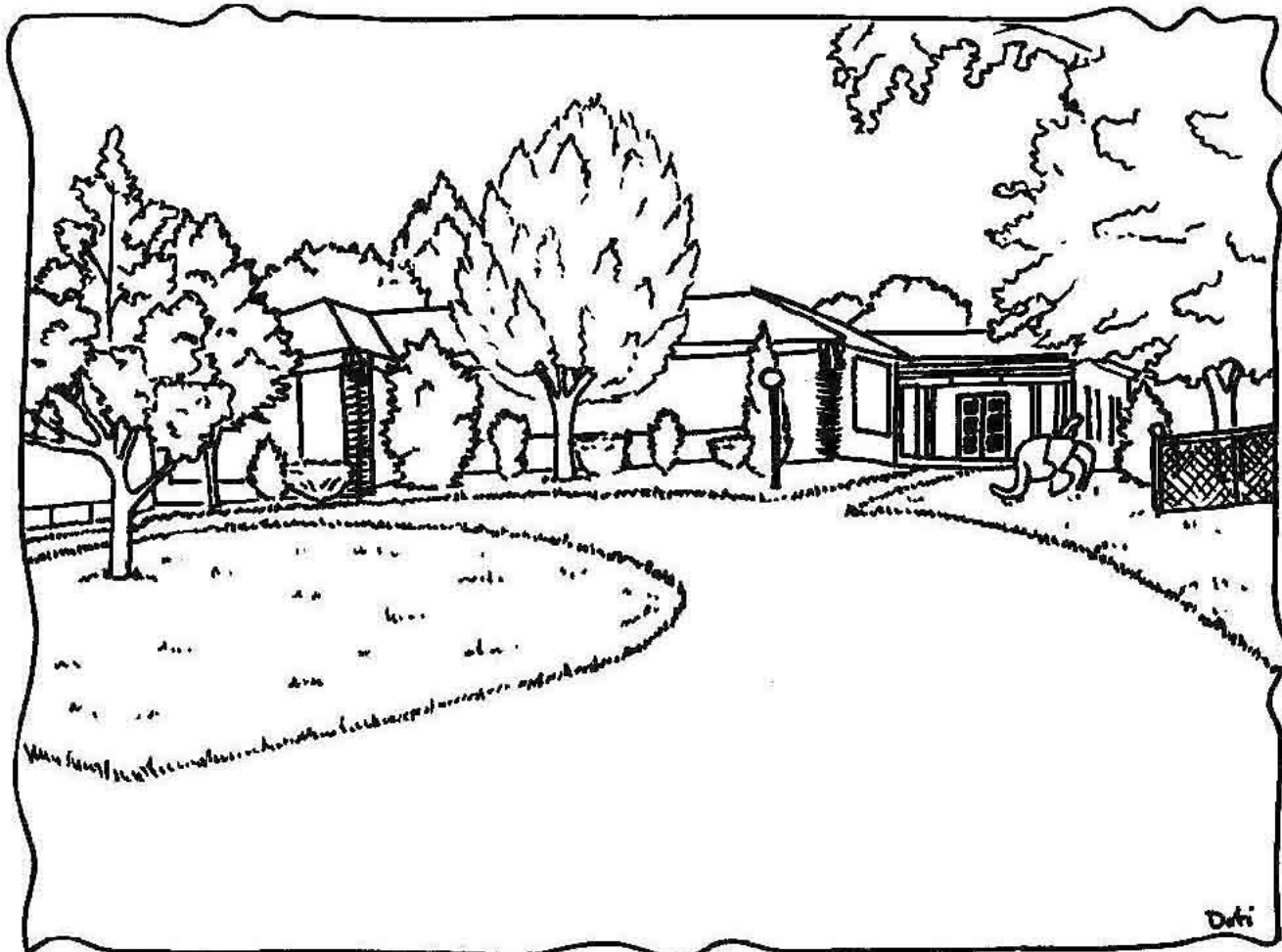
In 1953, the PTA Council for the Manchester Public Schools voted to start a children's museum and name it for Hazel Lutz, a popular art teacher. For many years she had been loaning items from her personal collection to fellow teachers because she felt that children could learn better if they saw real objects, not just pictures.

With the start of the museum, more loan materials were developed and a room in Waddell School was set up to house and display the growing collection. Later the museum moved to the old Cheney School on Cedar Street and in 1982 it moved to its present location on South Main Street.

Visitors to the museum are greeted at the front door by a giant Kodiak bear. They can walk into a room where live animals such as rabbits, turtles, owls, snakes and a variety of other animals are housed and can be observed.

The other rooms are filled with different hands-on exhibits that change regularly. There might be a puppet theater where one can put on a play, a make-believe boat ready for a fantasy trip, or a science experiment to help learn about the world.

The museum also offers classes, special programs, and loans out educational materials and objects to teachers throughout central Connecticut. We think that Miss Lutz would be pleased with the way her little museum has thrived.



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OAK GROVE NATURE CENTER

There is a forest green building in the woods off Oak Grove Street which serves a very special purpose. This building was erected in 1968 for the Lutz Children's Museum. It is used in the summer and on weekends at other times of the year to teach the natural sciences to children and others.

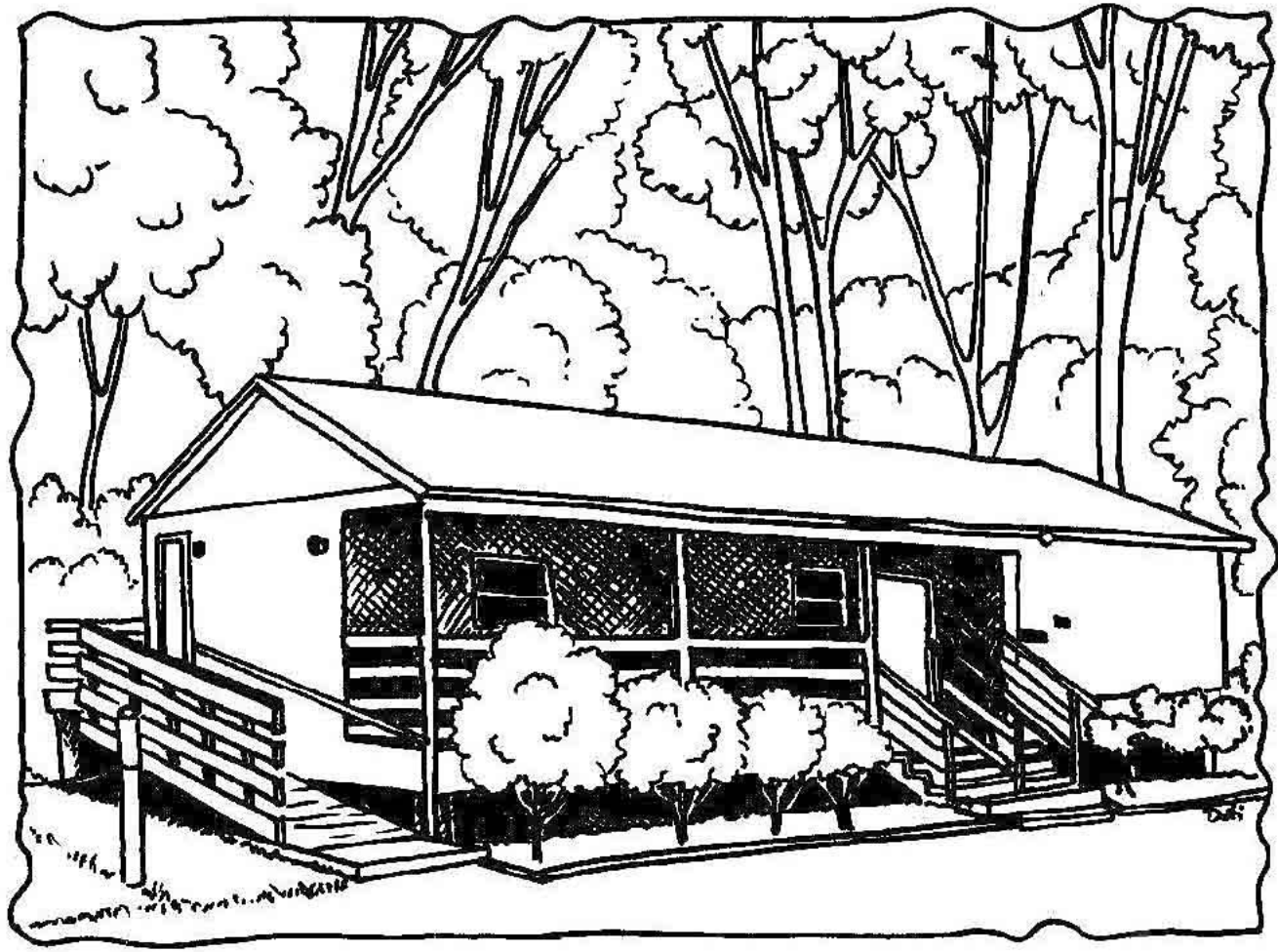
During the school year, the staff of the Manchester School System uses the building to instruct students in Grades 4 through 12 in the Environmental Education Center Program. One of their studies is done on Native Americans. The Podunk tribe, who at one time lived in the area now known as Manchester, is one of the tribes that has been studied.

Water from the pond at the Nature Center is analyzed and the creatures that live in the water – fish, polliwogs, frogs, and turtles – or around the pond – dragonflies and birds – are studied.

The Oak Grove Nature Center is used by the museum to instruct children on the variety of flowers, trees, small animals, and birds, which inhabit this wooded area. Raccoons, robins, squirrels, blackbirds, green frogs, and painted turtles can be found in the woods and in the pond. Hemlocks, maples, red cedars, birches, and oaks grow in these woods. Lady slippers, violets, forget-me-nots, and black-eyed susans can be found during the spring and summer.

A few years ago, a family of beavers built a lodge to live in and a dam, which formed a small pond on the brook above the larger pond in the Center.

Children and adults enjoy taking walks through the winding paths at the Nature Center at all times of the year.



OAK GROVE NATURE CENTER BRIDGE

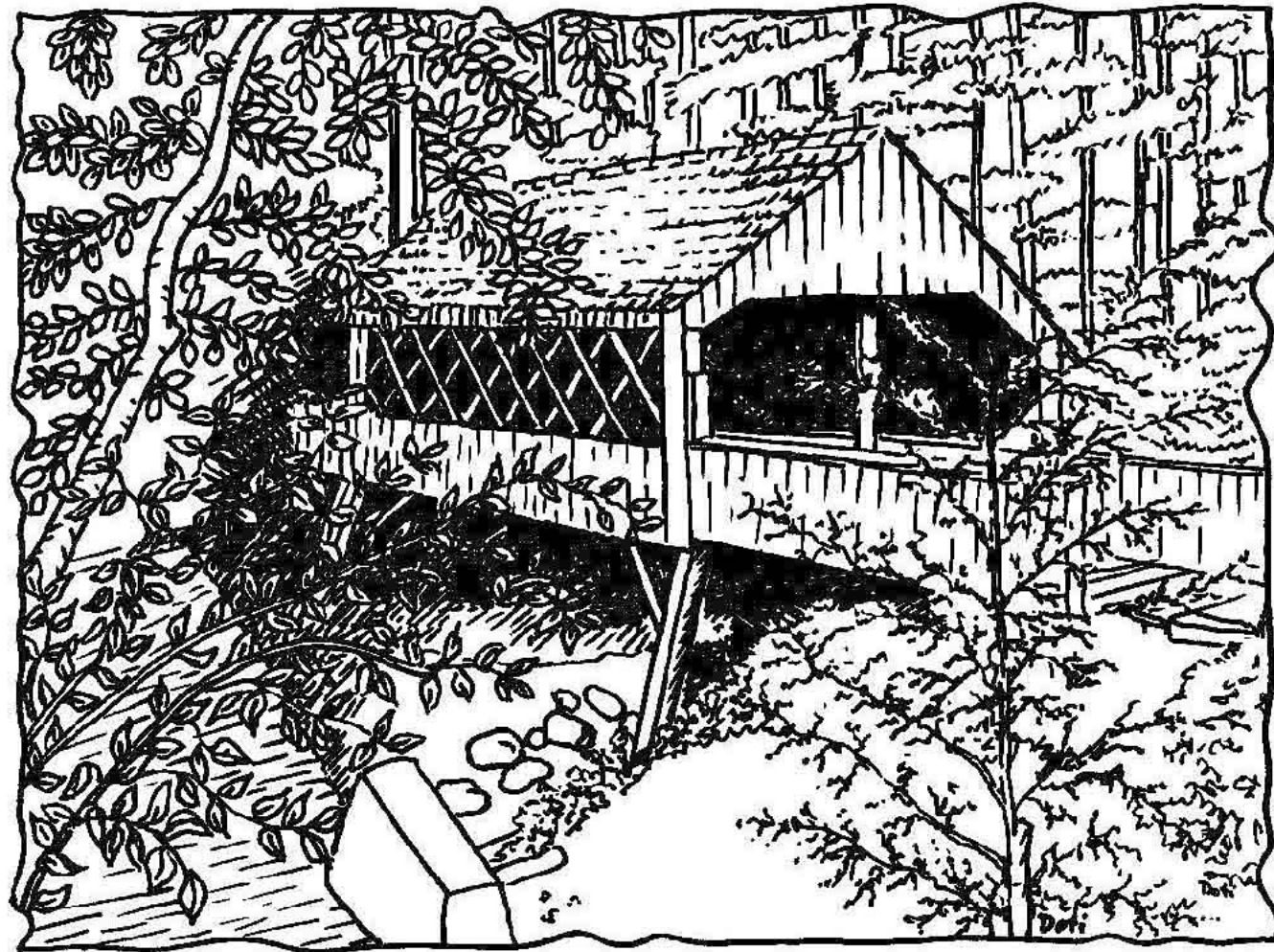
Skunk cabbage pushes its way through the melting snow on the banks of Reservoir Brook. Red-winged blackbirds flutter through the trees. Slowly the buds burst forth on the bushes and trees. Robins are picking and tossing leaves on the ground in search of food. Green frogs are appearing in the pond. Soon painted turtles will be sunning themselves on fallen logs around the pond. Spring has come to the Oak Grove Nature Center.

In November 1971, another step was taken to preserve the 53 acres of land forming the Center when a 48-foot long dam was dedicated. That dam holds the water to form a large pond. Volunteers worked hard to build this dam. A few years before, a bridge had been constructed over the brook flowing out of the pond. This bridge was constructed by the Manchester Junior Chamber of Commerce and is just a few yards below the dam.

This is not just an ordinary bridge. It is a covered bridge. The bridge was built from timbers and siding boards from old tobacco sheds which used to be very common in Connecticut. The bridge is a scaled down replica of an old covered bridge still used by motorists in West Cornwall, Connecticut.

Covered bridges were originally built to protect the deck of the bridge from rain and snow. They also guarded the horses and other livestock that used the bridges. They were even used to shelter travelers overnight in bad weather.

This covered bridge – a bridge with a roof – now allows children and adults to cross the brook when they go exploring at the Oak Grove Nature Center.



POST OFFICE

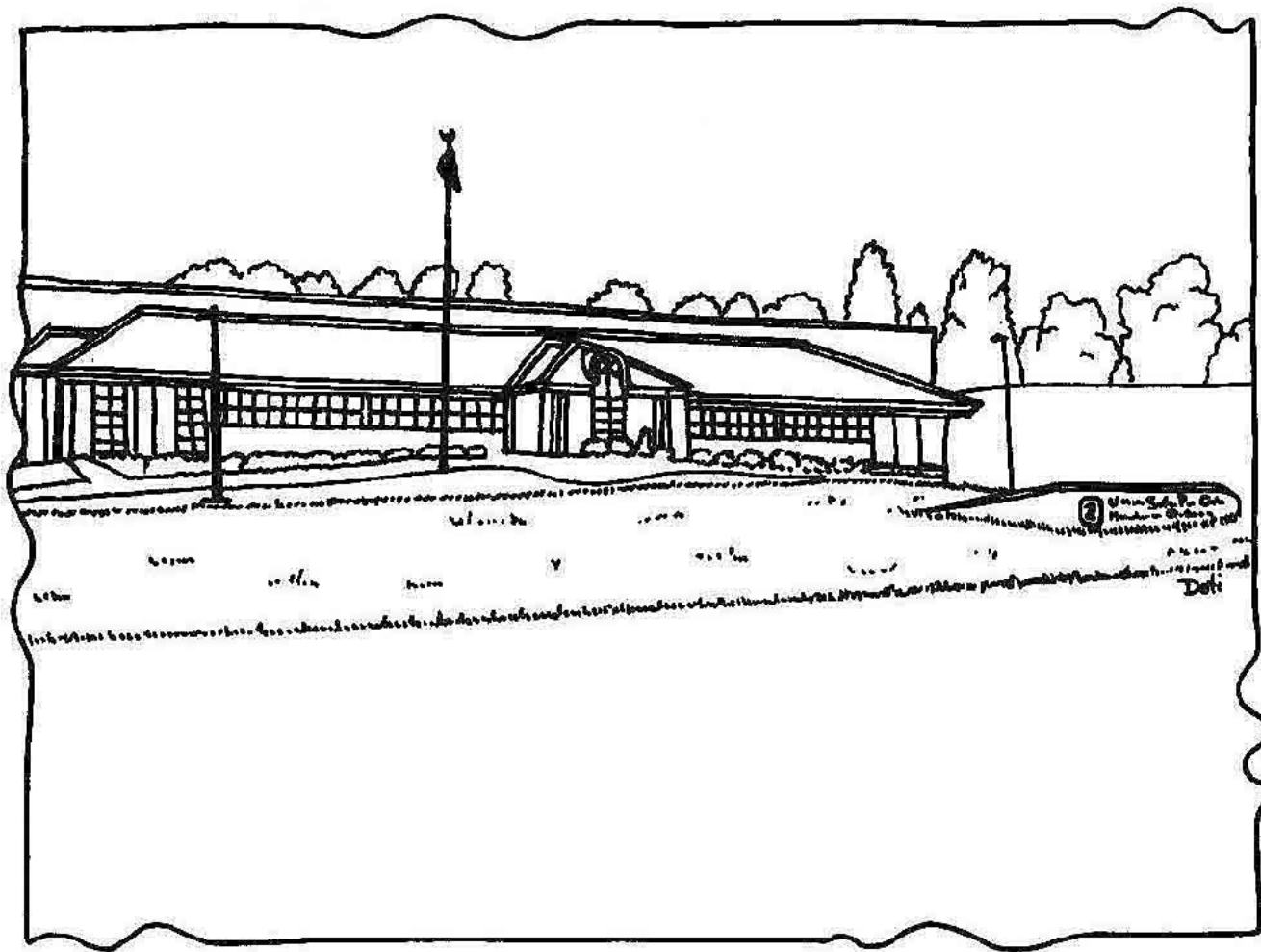
The newest public building in Manchester houses one of the oldest businesses in our country. In 1775 Benjamin Franklin was elected Postmaster by the Continental Congress. Before that he had served the British Government as Postmaster. In those days most of the mail moved on stage coaches going from Maine to the Carolinas. Other ways by which the mail was transported were the railroads, ships, horseback and by individuals.

The first stamps were issued on July 1, 1847. They were a five cent stamp with a picture of Benjamin Franklin and a ten cent stamp with a picture of George Washington.

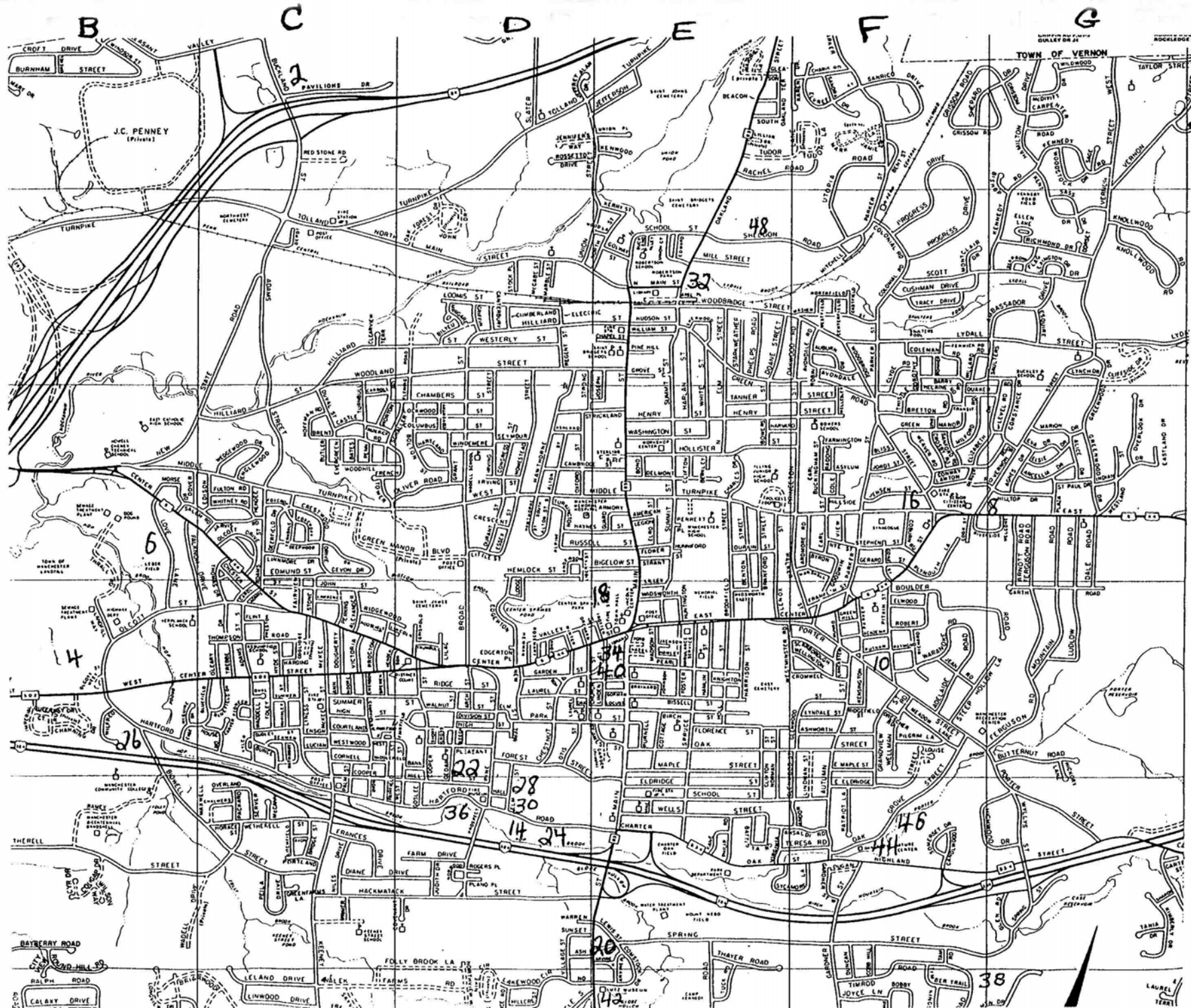
Manchester's first post office was built at Manchester Green in 1808 and named Orford Parish. Wells Woodbridge was the first Postmaster. The post office remained in this area, although not in the same building, until 1945. The last Postmaster here was Harry England. He also ran the store in the building at the Green that now houses a restaurant.

Other post offices in Manchester were set up in Buckland, Oakland, North Manchester, Highland Park and at the Center of the town.

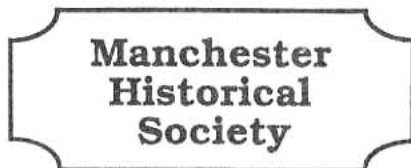
The present post office was built in 1991 on Sheldon Road in the Oakland area. It is a large building and able to handle all the mail that is delivered in the town of Manchester.



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Printed by Manchester High School



Communications Technology II Class

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