

The Courier

MAY 2005

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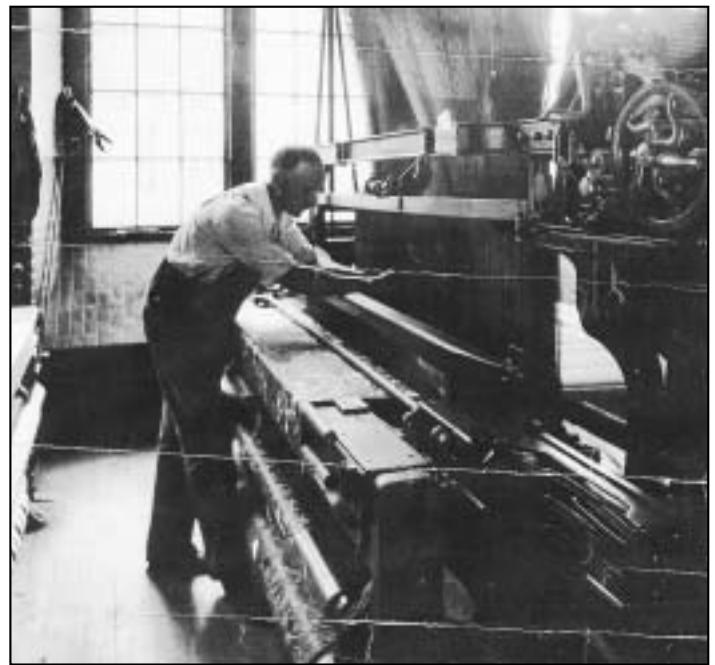
Scalamandr  Looms Find New Home in History Center

by Robert Dunne

On a snowy January day this year, the Historical Society received a belated Christmas present of four looms and a spooler that world-famous textile manufacturer Scalamandr  delivered from its Long Island City mill. Manchester resident Anthony Viscogliosi purchased the looms for the Society and provided for their transportation and installation in the History Center, as well as made arrangements for loom operators to eventually come in and train volunteers how to operate them.

After more than seven decades in New York, Scalamandr  is closing its mill and showrooms and relocating to South Carolina, where the manufacturer will continue producing textiles using new state-of-the-art machinery. Besides the Society, only a handful of other museums, such as the Smithsonian and Lowell's American Museum of Textiles, will possess their historical looms.

"This donation is another step in my goal to preserve the historical authenticity of Manchester," Viscogliosi said. "I want



Vintage Scalamandr  photo of a loom in action at its Long Island City mill.



One of the looms being delivered to the History Center, in January, with only inches to spare in the doorway.

anyone interested in the history of this area to be able to see, appreciate, and enjoy part of the foundation on which our nation was built." Viscogliosi purchased one of the Cheney mansions on Forest Street last year—his second—which many believe saved it from condominium development.

Founded by Franco and Flora Baranzelli Scalamandr  in 1929, Scalamandr  Inc. became one of the country's most respected designers and manufacturers of textiles, earning a reputation for historical reproductions as well as innovative designs. Scalamandr  has provided furnishings in the White House for every president since Hoover, and among its over 600 historical reproductions are an upholstered chair used by George

(see **Looms**, Page 8)

Cheney Homestead News

by Mark Sutcliffe, Chairman

We made it through one of the stormiest winters in recent memory (we had to have the driveway plowed 17 times). But the mud has dried and the gravel is off the lawn and we are preparing to reopen for the summer tour season. We are taking a cautious approach since we don't know how many volunteer docents (tour guides) we can muster, so we plan to open on the second and fourth weekends (Saturday and Sunday) of each month from 1 to 4 p.m. beginning with Heritage Day, June 11. Please help us meet and exceed the challenge by calling me at 647-7541 to help guide visitors at the Homestead. We will have a preprinted tour designed to help you learn, so you can tell visitors about the Cheney's, their Homestead, and the things they left behind.

Join us for the kickoff on Heritage Day from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and bring the

children and grandchildren. We will have a historical scavenger hunt and a new display of John Cheney's engravings. The Homestead Committee has done a special spring cleaning just for you!

You can also admire the 1852 cradle quilt in its new frame. Formerly attached to acidic cardboard with masking tape and rusty nails, it is now properly mounted on acid-free fabric. The frame was custom-made to fit the quilt, and equipped with special UV-inhibiting glass. The colonial blue color picks up the blues in the fabric. The edges of the quilt are now visible so you can read the fine ink inscriptions on the border. Thank you to the Mr. and Mrs. William Foulds Family Foundation for funding the conservation work by Thistle Needleworks of Glastonbury.

Welcome to new committee members Jane and Rudy Zadnik. Thanks also to the

Learned-Preston Foundation for a generous donation towards our ever-increasing operating expenses.

Last but certainly not least, we are pleased to announce the acquisition of a brand new state-of-the-art Toro "zero-turn" commercial lawn mower. This will allow us to keep the lawn mowed quickly and efficiently. We plan to schedule volunteers on a rotating basis, so no one has to feel overburdened. Please call me to place your name on the list to drive this amazing machine. It has a 60-inch cut, turns on a dime, goes up to ten miles per hour, has a cushioned seat with armrests and, yes, *it has a cup holder!*

Capitol Equipment graciously donated a new string trimmer to accompany the mower, but we are looking for someone to donate an air compressor to help keep the mowers clean and their tires inflated.

The Courier

**A newsletter of the
Manchester Historical Society**

Web page: manchesterhistory.org

E-mail: manchesterhistory@juno.com

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Welcome to our Newest Board Member, Thomas H. Ferguson

Thomas H. Ferguson, a lifelong resident of Manchester, recently joined the Society's Board of Directors. Son of Manchester Town Historian Vivian F. Ferguson and the late Thomas F. Ferguson, Tom has been involved in community service to the Town of Manchester for most of his adult life, serving as an elected member of the Town Board of Directors, Registrar of Voters, and President of the Eighth Utilities District. In addition, he is a member of the Town Independence Day Celebration Committee and has been a member of the Republican Town Committee for over twenty years. He was previously the Director of Elections for the State of Connecticut.

Tom was raised in the Horace Bushnell Cheney house on Forest Street, a home that his parents purchased in 1958. The experience of growing up in that neighborhood and getting to know Mrs. Austin Cheney, Mrs. Philip Cheney, and Mrs. Clifford Cheney, as well as the Cheney twins made him acutely aware of the history of Manchester. His interest in promoting and preserving Manchester's history has been strengthened by recent development and changes within town.

Welcome aboard!



Gertrude Sweeney

Remembering Gertrude Sweeney

Gert Sweeney, who passed away earlier this month, was the Society's long-time treasurer. She diligently kept track of our funds and the various bank accounts which we maintain. With her extensive background in insurance she advised us in the important matters of insurance and liability.

Gert was an ardent supporter of the Society and was a major proponent of moving the organization forward. Before we purchased the Machine Shop building she had an opportunity to walk through it. She recognized its potential as our new home and spoke strongly in favor of acquiring the building. She also recognized the need for and advocated the hiring of a full-time, paid executive director, a major commitment on our part.

Gert was an active member of the Woodbridge Farmstead Committee and the Pitkin Glassworks Council. She enjoyed being involved in the activities of the Society and felt that staying busy kept her young. She may have retired from her insurance career, but she never retired from leading an active life.

Thanks, Gert, for all you have done for us. We will truly miss your counsel and friendly personality. ~

Welcome Aboard, New Members!

We welcome the following new individual or family members of the Society who joined between January and May 1, 2005:

From Manchester:

Claudia Besterfield
Elaine Byrne
Thomas Ferguson
George Flavell
Linda Gates
Karen Golnik
Joanne Haddock
Elizabeth Larson
John and Bonnie Lindland
Gerard Lupacchino and Lynn Beaulieu
Kathleen Kelly
Suzanne Mamet
Leslie Manna
Robin Murdock-Meggers
James Olcott
Howard and Carol Rovegno
Jane Sherman
Kathleen Sylvester
Carolyn Wagner
Katherine Wittke

From other towns:

Jim and Mary Bellow (Falls Church, VA)
Jane Cunningham (Glastonbury)
Hector Guillen (Southport)
Fred McCurry (Chestnut Ridge, NY)
Steven and Joanne Snyder (Glastonbury)



Leave A Legacy

June is Leave a Legacy Month. Leave a Legacy Connecticut assists organizations like the Historical Society by encouraging individuals to include in their wills contributions to their favorite charities. Recent issues of *The Courier* have highlighted several individuals, such as Mary and Albert Tuttle, Margaret Olmsted, Ruth Campagna, and Ruth Cheney Shepherd, who left legacies to the Society with generous bequests.

You, too, can make an impact on future generations in Manchester and ensure that our important work will continue by leaving a legacy to the Manchester Historical Society. For more information, please contact Mary Dunne or Dave Smith, at 860-647-9983, or the Leave a Legacy Foundation, at 860-525-6052.

Historic East Side on Television

by Susan Barlow

A one-hour program entitled "East Side Treasures" will air on Cox Cable channel 15, Saturdays, May 21 and 28 at 8 p.m. It documents a Historical Society walking tour on January 1st that strolled through the neighborhood east of Main Street. Viewers will see houses, stores, and a church included in the "Manchester Historic District Boundary Increase," which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. This district is roughly bounded by East Center, Harrison, Norman, Charter Oak, Main, and Cottage Streets. Channel 15 broadcasts in Manchester, Glastonbury, South Windsor, Wethersfield, Rocky Hill and Newington.

Some previous shows can be borrowed at Mary Cheney Library, including the recent programs "Visiting Manchester's Hollywood," "Conversations with Vivian Ferguson," and "History of the Manchester Land Conservation Trust." Tapes can be purchased at the Old Manchester Museum on Cedar Street.

Comments from the public are welcome. Call 647-9983, or contact us through the web site, www.manchesterhistory.org.

We Give Thanks To Our Donors

The Historical Society has literally hundreds of reasons to be thankful: during our last fiscal year, October 2003 to September 2004, over 250 donations were made to the Society's various causes. Without this help, we would not be in existence to preserve and showcase Manchester's rich history. As but one of the many ways in which we can show our gratitude to our donors, we are delighted to honor them all by listing their names below. These donations were made through our annual appeal, membership applications or renewals, and individually throughout the year. Please continue—or consider increasing—your generosity!

INDIVIDUALS

Nathan Agostinelli	Martha Davidson	Florence Johnson
Leonard and Barbara Anderson	Raymond and Susan Davis	Pauline Johnson
Anonymous (5)	Robert and Ann DeMarchi	Frank Johnson
Fred and Kathryn Baker	Lois-Jean Dion	Joan Johnson
Susan and Malcolm Barlow	John Dormer	Gayle Juliani
David Barry	Betty Dorr	Kimon Karath
Robert E. Beach	Mary and Robert Dunne	Martin and Martha Keiderling
Susan Beach	Elizabeth Dziadus	Donald Kelsey
Henry Becker	Douglas and Hemmerda Edwards	James Kennedy
Anne Beechler	Dorothy Ewing	Mr. and Mrs. E. John Kjellson
Mary Bellor	Mr. and Mrs. John Farley	Richard Klein
Herbert and Louise Bengtson	John and Kay Faulds	Jean and Louis Kocsis
David Bengtson	John Fiske	Vilma and Frank Kopcha
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Elizabeth Buckley	Richard Hagenow	Carol Lenihan
Shirley Bunce	Harold and Lois Harmon	Diane Lenti
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R. Lamotte Russell)
Estate of Ruth Shepherd
Estate of Mary Reardon Tuttle

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Manchester Arts Council
Andrew Purdy Corp.

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IN MEMORY OF

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King Industries
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Melinda Hazzard
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Mildred Kos
Harry Maidment
Mark Milewski
Jon Mullen
Scott Tinti
Vernon Center Middle School
George Wales

Ruth Watkins Treat

Gail Adams
Mildred Kos
Robert Smith
Gene Suslam
Ruth Treat

Mrs. John Mosley Williams

Constance Walker

NewsNotes

PRESERVATION AWARDS GIVEN

Cheney Brothers National Historic District Commission Chairperson **Vivian Ferguson** handed out the Fifth Annual Historic Preservation Awards this month. The Commission gives the awards to property owners who restore the original architectural integrity of their buildings. The Commission bestowed **James and Barbara Boutot** with an award for restoring their 1872 colonial home on Spring Street, and also honored **the Pelletier family** for restoring their 1900 colonial Myrtle Street home.

UPCOMING EVENTS

On Sunday, June 19, from 1:30 to 2:30, **John Bishop** will lead an organ recital at Cheney Hall as part of the 2005 Cheney Family Reunion. Bishop is executive director of the Organ Clearing House in Lexington, MA, and has a 30-year career as a church musician, most recently serving for 17 years as director of music at Centre Congregational Church in Lynnfield, MA. The recital is free to the public.

Check out the Calendar of Events for information about upcoming walking tours, including **Dr. John Sutherland's** annual tour of the Cheney Brothers National Landmark District, on June 18, as well as the Society's several events on Manchester Heritage Day, Saturday, June 11, from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bring the kids to the Cheney Homestead's scavenger hunt!

Welcome Back!

The Society welcomes the return of **Leslie Nieves** to both the country and her place on the Board of Directors. Leslie had been in military service in the Middle East for over a year.

Wish List



Local artist Kathleen Kelly's painting of the future exhibit space for the Scalamandré looms was unveiled in May at an event at the History Center, entitled "Silk and Spool."

Is there a bank or insurance company out there that is getting new furniture and needs to remove the old stuff? The Society needs a 20-foot conference table and 20 chairs. A donation of suitable conference-room furniture would help not only our Board but also some of Manchester's other non-profits that use our conference room at our offices at 175 Pine Street. Contact Mary Dunne at 860-647-9983.

MOHOSEO

Mark your calendars for June 21! MOHOSEO has begun to meet and plan the year's activities, but they need more input and participants! Please plan to attend a social/meeting on Tuesday, June 21 from 7-9 p.m. at the History Center. Call or e-mail (mdunne@mhs.necoxmail.com) Mary Dunne to let us know.

We Will Miss...

The Society regrets the passing of **Mary H. Fraher**, a Manchester native and long-time Society member who was active in many town organizations.

Help Us "Deck The Halls"

We are now forming a committee to organize "Deck the Halls," our annual auction of decorated holiday wreaths. Our first effort last year was a tremendous success as well as lots of fun. We hope to expand the event substantially with additional activities, sponsors, and wreath donations. If you are interested in joining the committee, please call the Society at 647-9983. The first meeting will take place some time over the summer.

Take This Down—Please!!

The Board is looking for someone who will attend Board meetings and record the minutes. Meetings are bi-monthly on Monday evenings, with occasional special meetings. If interested, contact Society President Dave Smith.

We Want Your Business, circa 1965

As part of a year-long program celebrating the Society's 40th anniversary, we are planning an exhibit entitled, "Manchester 1965." We are interested in learning more about Manchester businesses that were established in the 1960s and continue today. We would like to borrow photos and other small artifacts for the exhibit. Contact Dave Smith for more information.

Herb Wants To Hear From You...

Long-time Society member and former Town Historian Herb Bengtson, who moved to Rhode Island last year, would like to hear from you! He has invited everyone to write to him and keep him abreast about Manchester. Contact Dave Smith for his address.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Spring and Summer 2005

Unless otherwise noted, admission to lectures and walking tours is free to Manchester Historical Society members and \$2 for non-members

May 22 Sunday 2 p.m.	<i>History of the Hockanum River</i> Slide lecture by Douglas Smith, Chairman, Hockanum River Linear Park Committee
June 4 Saturday 10 a.m.	<i>Historic Downtown Manchester</i> Walking tour, co-sponsored by the Downtown Manchester Special Services District, led by Susan Barlow, free to the public Meet at the corner of Pearl and Main Streets <i>(Rain date: Monday, June 6 at 5:30 p.m.)</i>
June 11 Saturday 10:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.	<i>Manchester Heritage Day</i> Stop by the Society booth at Cheney Hall for information, gift shop items, and the latest Society news. Don't forget the Scavenger Hunt at Cheney Homestead.
June 18 Saturday 2 p.m.	<i>28th Annual Cheney Brothers National Landmark District Walking Tour</i> Led by Dr. John Sutherland; free refreshments at Old Manchester Museum Meet at Cheney Hall, free to the public
June 21 Tuesday 7-9 p.m.	<i>MOHOSEO Social/Meeting</i> At the History Center
June 25 Saturday 11 a.m.	<i>3rd Annual Walking Tour of Union Village</i> Led by Mary and Robert Dunne, with Susan Barlow Meet at the rear of Whiton Library
August 18 Thursday 5:30 p.m.	<i>Forest Street Walking Tour</i> Led by Susan Barlow Meet at 20 Hartford Road <i>(Rain date: Monday, August 22 at 5:30 p.m.)</i>

Early Fall: "Manchester 1965," a multi-media event...Details to come. *(See related story above.)*

Belated Thank You to 2004 Volunteers

While it is great that we have such a large corps of dedicated volunteers to help with every aspect of running the organization, unfortunately sometimes some of our most dedicated are not recognized. In our last issue we failed to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of several of our volunteers:

Cynthia Barlow has dedicated her time to a variety of tasks, from tending bar to developing a scavenger hunt for children at the Cheney Homestead. Her wonderful photographs have also helped to chronicle the walking tours presented almost monthly by the Society;

Emily Barlow has also volunteered for countless events and programs and has lent her talent with graphics to market our videos;

Robert Shanbaum maintains the Society's web site, which he continuously updates for us. His responsive-

ness and expertise helps keep the site informative and current;

Suzanne Shorts is a charter member of the organization and a regular participant with the Monday morning volunteer group;

Kathryn Wilson is the one-person production crew for our Cox Cable TV shows. Along with Board member Susan Barlow, she has devoted hundreds of hours to producing videos and programs that help with our mission of educating the public about Manchester's history.



The Manchester Historical Society
 106 Hartford Road
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106 Hartford Road, Manchester, CT 06040

Looms Find New Home

from Page 1

Washington in his 1789 inauguration and the fringe of an American flag in Abraham Lincoln's balcony box at Ford Theater where he was assassinated.

Aware that textiles were historical artifacts as much as decorative elements in interior decoration, Scalamandré also operated the Museum of Textiles in New York for over thirty years, allowing the public to learn about both the manufacture of textiles and their historical significance.

Now the four looms, which were still in operation until December of last year, will themselves be showcased as important historical artifacts in the the Society's History Center. Similar to looms used by the Cheney Brothers silk industry, their display will allow the public to recapture the silk-making experience during the heyday of the Cheney mills. And, according to Society Executive Director Mary Dunne, once they are up and running, they will be the only working silk looms in the state.

"We plan to set up a working 'tableau' of a typical silk weaving operation," she said. "I think these looms will attract people from all over the northeast who are interested in learning about this era in textile history. Even if you know nothing about weaving and textiles, an operating Jacquard loom is a beautiful sight to see." ~