



The Courier

MAY 2007

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So Much to Do...

Celebrate Pride in Manchester with the Society

Pride in Manchester week kicks off on June 2 and culminates with Heritage Day, on June 9. The Society is hosting or co-hosting a number of events throughout the week that will take participants all over town in recognizing Manchester's rich history. Some of the many events include:

- Saturday, June 2, 9 a.m.–12 p.m., **Family History Day**, at Town Hall (41 Center St.), where genealogists will be available to discuss researching family histories.
- Saturday, June 2, 1 p.m., **Connecticut Trails Day Family Walk** on a railtrail in the center of Manchester, an easy walk along part of the former Cheney railroad, built in 1869, which connected the Cheney silk mills to the main rail line in the North End. At 2.5 miles, it was the longest private railroad in the United States. Meet behind 2 Main Street, Farr's store.
- Sunday, June 3, 5 p.m., **Wickham Park Family Hike** at Wickham Park's Bird Sanctuary (rain or shine). Children and their parents are invited on a walk at this 250-acre historic park. Susan Barlow will lead this vigorous 1-1/4 hour walk. Meet at Wickham Park's Beech Grove parking lot (ask park guard for directions). The \$4 park-entry fee will be waived for those who bring a copy of this announcement. Wickham Park is located at 1329 West Middle Tpke.
- Monday, June 4, at 5:30 p.m., a family walk at **Center Springs Park**. Hike leaders will comment on history of 55-acre urban park during this approximately one-mile hike.

Prêt-à-Porter in the Silk City



Earlier this month nearly 200 people endured hot spotlights on a steamy evening to enjoy the Silk City Runway Project, a colorful and fun event showcasing the designs of Jennifer Stern and featuring WFSB morning news anchorperson Irene O'Connor (at podium) as emcee. A new exhibit was debuted that displayed some of the many fashions created by the Cheney Brothers silk mills, and there was also a silent auction. With wine, hors d'oeuvres by Café Lafayette, and numerous home-made gourmet desserts available, the event was a feast for the eyes as well as the taste buds. More importantly, it raised several thousand dollars for the Society.

- Wednesday, June 6, at 5:30 p.m., **East Cemetery Walk**. Guest speaker will be Ruth Shapleigh-Brown, Executive Director of the Connecticut Gravestone Network.
- Thursday, June 7, **Evening Stroll On Main Street**. Enjoy a horse-drawn carriage ride accompanied by local historian who will comment on our vintage Downtown.

(See **CELEBRATE**, page 7)

≡ Loom Project Update ≡

Members of the Loom Interpretation Project met in April to report on progress and to establish new goals for a permanent exhibit of the Scalamandr  looms located in the History Center.

Several subcommittees reported their findings:

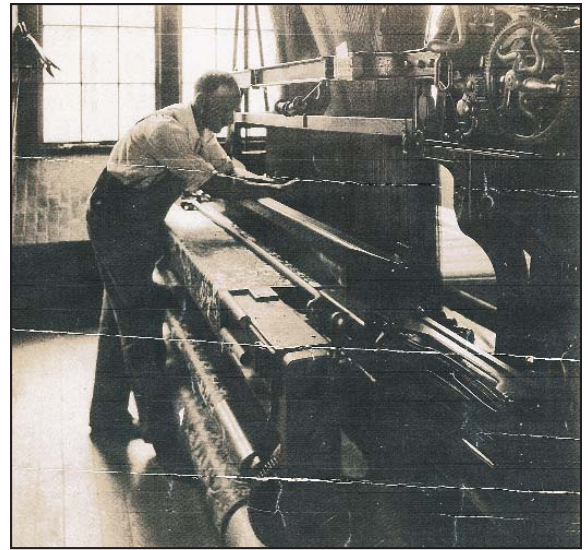
John Lawler updated the group on Building and Grounds, and invites ALL to participate in the Thursday night group (6 p.m.) or in day-time work during the summer on Tuesday mornings. Volunteers are needed even if they're not mechanically inclined. There are jobs for all—even work that can be done sitting down. Much progress has been made in the loom room.

John Carter informed the group about the Exhibit Committee's meeting. He emphasized that although the loom exhibit will be a permanent exhibit, the Society should set up revolving, related exhibits in the loom room and elsewhere in the building, which will encourage visitors to return. The committee agreed that the looms should not be moved into the loom room until that room has been fully prepared. In the meantime, the committee will study the floor plan of the loom room and take precise measurements of all the machinery and other items slated to be moved there.

Regarding research, Brenda Paullo reported on the finding of 1838, a Cheney Brothers newsletter published in the 1920s and 1930s. (The year 1838 is the date of the Cheney Brothers' first mill, which was built on Hop Brook.) Several volunteers will help inventory numerous items that can be used in the loom exhibit. The Society also was awarded a grant for cataloging and accession work.

Carole Walden reported the completion of a project to scan, organize, and annotate a collection of Cheney Brothers fashion images and stereoscopic photos of mill operations. John Spaulding was instrumental in this task, and Carole, Mary Dunne, and Dave Smith also worked on this project. The images can be used for other educational and artistic purposes besides the loom exhibit.

Susan Barlow reported on a meeting she had had with Paula Viscogliosi, Chair of Friends of the Looms, about fundraising opportunities. They discussed designing a brochure, creating incentives for donors



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

(such as permanent plaques with donors' names), and "anchoring" a grand opening/fundraising event in May each year, beginning in May 2008. Paula Viscogliosi also offered help with the web site, through her design business in New York.

On other matters, Tanyss Ludescher led a discussion about arranging for a carpooling trip to the Millyard Museum in Manchester, NH, on June 16. Those interested should contact Tanyss as soon as possible.

To coincide with the Town's Heritage Day, June 9, the Society will invite the public to view the looms; this treat will be in addition to the Cheney Hall exhibit, and the openings at the Homestead, Keeney Schoolhouse, History Center, and Old Manchester Museum. Marshall Lamenzo, Michael Nimirowski, John Carter, and Joe Lawler will stand by at the Forest Street entrance.

As you can see, this is a Herculean undertaking that requires the services of many volunteers. To lend your time, talents, and support, contact the Society at 860-647-9983.

The Courier

*A newsletter of the
Manchester Historical Society*

Web page: manchesterhistory.org

E-mail: manchesterhistory@juno.com

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NewsNotes

Knitters, Start Your Needles!

The Society is looking for knitters to enjoy a day of camaraderie and to help raise money to support Manchester heritage education. The Knit-a-Thon will take place Saturday, September 15. We need 100+ knitters to come and knit for any period of time between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. and to bring in pledges for the length of time spent knitting. Entertainment and refreshments will be provided. Participation requires a minimum of pledges or a flat participation fee equaling \$100. Please call 860-647-9983 for more information.

John Sutherland's 30th—and final!— Walking Tour of Cheney District

Manchester Community College Professor Emeritus John Sutherland will lead his 30th and final walking tour of the Cheney Brothers National Historic District, on June 9, 2:30 p.m., starting at Cheney Hall. Dr. Sutherland has enthralled two generations of participants with entertaining and educational commentary. He has conducted many interviews with people who lived here and worked for the Cheney silk mills, and he has published several articles on immigration to Manchester and life and labor in the mills. Refreshments will be served at the Old Manchester Museum at 126 Cedar Street after the tour. Rain date (only if heavy rain on June 9) is Saturday, June 16 at 1 p.m.

Remembering the Hartford Circus Fire

For its “one book” reading project this year, Manchester’s libraries have chosen *The Circus Fire* (2000), a non-fiction book published by local author Stewart O’Nan.

In conjunction with the reading program, the project wants to record memories of the circus fire. Are you interested in talking about your experiences related to the fire? If so, please call Susan Barlow at 860-643-9776.



LEAVE A LEGACY™

June is Leave A Legacy month. Leave A Legacy Connecticut assists organizations such as the Manchester Historical Society by encouraging individuals to include in their wills contributions to their favorite charities. Recent issues of the *Courier* have highlighted individuals such as Mary and Albert Tuttle, Margaret Olmsted, 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 the Society at 860-647-9983, or the Leave A Legacy Foundation at 860-525-6052.

We Will Miss...

The Society regrets the recent passing of several of its valued members.

Last October, **Alice Farley Williams**, 96, passed away in Washington, D.C. Great-granddaughter of Frank Cheney, Alice published *Silk & Guns: Life of a Connecticut Yankee, Frank Cheney, 1817-1904*, in 1996. A native of New York City and a graduate from Vassar and Columbia, Alice spent a great deal of time researching the book in Manchester; in fact, she donated her research materials to the Society after she published the book.

Manchester native and life-long resident **Helen S. (Adamson) McHugh**, 86, passed away in February. Wife of John H. McHugh, Sr., Helen was a Society member for many years, and worked at Pioneer Parachute in town, and other places in Hartford.

A long-time champion of Manchester organizations and an active member of the town’s government and community, **Eleanor (Dwyer) Coltman**, 91, passed away in May. A World War II veteran and Manchester resident for over 50 years, Eleanor was instrumental in the creation of Manchester Community College, and a dedicated volunteer and guest lecturer for the Society.

The Historical Society will miss these special individuals.

Lending (Many) A Helping Hand



(Photo by Ezequiel "Memo" Alejandro)

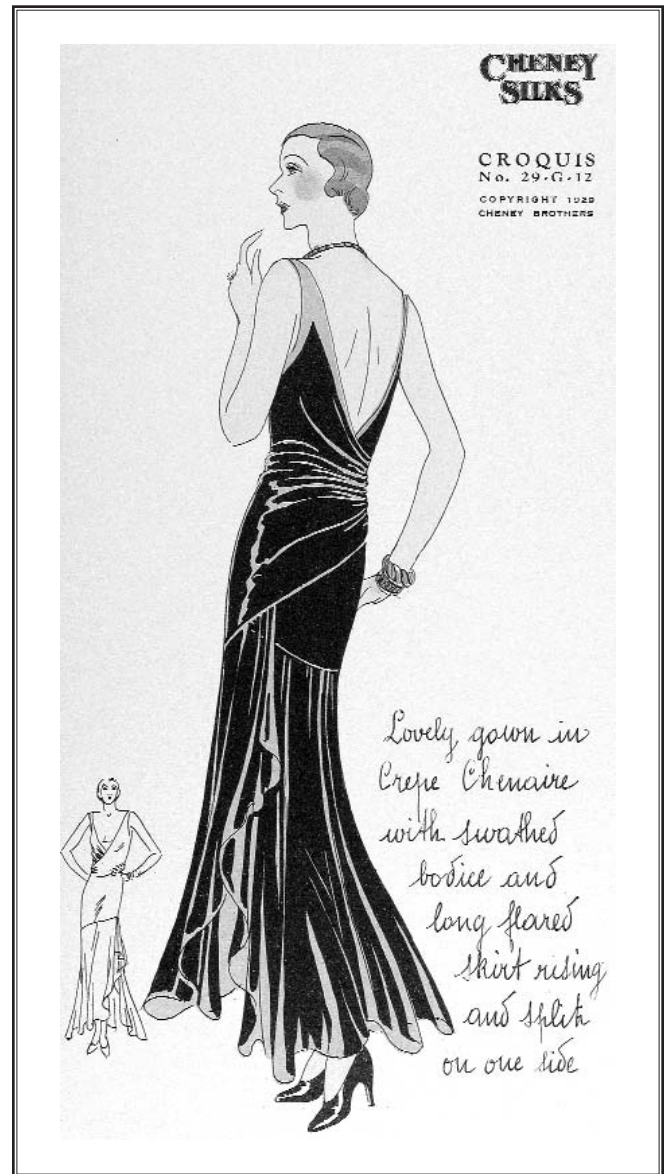
Volunteers from the New Hope Manor helped out at the Cheney Homestead and the Woodbridge Farmstead during the town's Rebuilding Together (formerly Christmas in April) program. Pictured are Dave Smith and the volunteers outside the Farmstead. Thanks so much for so many helping hands!

Learn How To Collect Oral Histories

Board Director Susan Barlow will lead a workshop on collecting oral histories Sunday, May 27, 1-3 p.m., at the History Center.

Susan, who heads the Society's oral history project, will teach participants about historic "storytelling" and the basics of interviewing techniques and the logistics of transcribing interviews. Many of the techniques covered can be used by participants in creating their own historical memoirs. The \$5 fee for Society members and \$8 for non-members includes a variety of printed materials pertaining to collecting oral histories. Space is limited! To register, call 860-647-9983.

Bring Home Some Cheney Silks



Well, not the actual silks but beautiful full-color poster reproductions (12"x24") taken from the pages of Cheney Brothers fashion catalogues (circa 1929). Carole Walden discovered some of the catalogue images; Society curator Dave Smith tracked down several more lavish images from the Cheney catalogues (about 40 altogether); John Spaulding photographed them; and Mary Dunne chose over a dozen to be printed, mounted, and laminated for the Cheney Silks exhibit during the recent fashion show. The posters are on sale for \$35 each. Many of these gorgeous designs will be featured on full-color note cards, at \$15 per package, available after June 1. Stop by the History Center, or call 860-647-9983 for more information.

Childhood Memories of E.L. Bidwell (1859-1932)

The Society will present an intriguing booklet of the experiences of Edward Lincoln Bidwell. As a child growing up in the 1860s, E.L. roamed the woods and fields, attended the old South School, met Civil War veterans, and enjoyed many old-fashioned activities with friends and classmates. In his later years, E.L. wrote about his schoolboy days, and these memories were published as columns in the *Manchester Herald* in 1921.

Customs and Incidents of Early Days in Manchester – Reminiscences about a South Manchester Boyhood in the Post-Civil War Era will contain reprints of those columns, with vintage and contemporary photographs. The booklet is being compiled, edited, and designed by Brenda Paullo, Roberta Lusa, and Susan Barlow, with assistance from other volunteers and members of the Society. The booklet will be ready this fall, in a limited printing.

This booklet will join several other small-format local-history publications available for sale at the Society's gift shops, such as: *Self-Guided Historical Walking tour of East Cemetery*, by John Spaulding; *From Warsaw to Manchester, Talking with Helen Kopman*, by Susan Barlow; and *Vet Haven and Related Tales*, by Susan Barlow.

Look to the Skies

A Roof Over Our Heads

Pending the town's Planning and Zoning approval, the Society will soon commence its roof replacement of the History Center on Pine Street. Allied Roofing is scheduled to replace the roof by June 30, which will include uncovering the skylights over the future loom room. The skylights have been covered up for over 30 years, and their restoration will shed fresh light into the History Center.

According to Executive Director Mary Dunne, the roof replacement "is the key to all of our future plans," which include setting up the looms in their permanent location and ultimately relocating the contents of the Old Manchester Museum.

This major project was made possible from a \$200,000 Saving America's Treasures matching grant, an award sponsored by the federal government.

History on Your Television

By Susan Barlow

Check out local history every Saturday on public television in the Manchester area. In our show airing throughout May, we visit the Garden Club 80th anniversary exhibit and listen to stories about the Club and its members. At the end of the show, Mark Sutcliffe, Society director emeritus, presents a slide show about Cheney gardens in Manchester. The program runs about one hour and 45 minutes. The Society collaborated with the Garden Club on the exhibit as well as the opening reception and lectures.



*Manchester Garden Club
Manchester Connecticut
est. 1926*

Life-member Lynn Beaulieu designed this new crest for the Manchester Garden Club, which is featured in the current Society cable TV program.

Upcoming shows will include a WWII veterans panel discussion and geology hikes at Highland Park and Buckland.

Our Society's TV show airs on channel 15 at 8 p.m. Each show runs for a month, so if you miss it on the first Saturday of the month, you can catch it on subsequent Saturdays. Some of our tapes are available at Mary Cheney Library and some are for sale at the museum gift shop.

Cox public access, Channel 15, broadcasts in Manchester, South Windsor, Glastonbury, Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, and Newington. Your comments on the shows are welcome. Call the Society at 860-647-9983, or call me directly at 860-643-9776.

SUMMER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Unless otherwise noted, admission to all lectures and walking tours is \$1 for Society members and \$3 for non-members. All lectures will take place at the Manchester History Center, 175 Pine Street.

- May 26** **Bus Trip to Fruitlands and Longfellow's Wayside Inn**
Saturday
8 a.m.–5 p.m. Meet at Cheney Hall (177 Hartford Road) at 8:00 a.m. and return 5:00 p.m.
\$65 members, \$75 non-members
- May 27** **Oral History Workshop**
Sunday
1 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Led by Susan Barlow. *(See related story, pg. 4)*
\$5 members, \$8 non-members
-

PRIDE IN MANCHESTER WEEK: JUNE 2–JUNE 9 ALL EVENTS ARE FREE *(See related story, pg. 1)*

- June 2** **Family History Day at Town Hall**
Saturday
9 a.m.–12 p.m. 41 Center Street
Genealogists will be available to discuss researching family histories
- June 4** **Kids and Parents Walk at Center Springs Park**
Monday
5:30 p.m. One-mile hike, some uneven terrain.
Meet at 39 Lodge Drive
- June 6** **East Cemetery Walk**
Wednesday
5:30 p.m. Led by Ruth Shapleigh-Brown
Meet at corner of Harrison and East Center Streets. *(Rain or shine)*
- June 9** **Heritage Day**
Saturday
11 a.m. and 1 p.m. *Cheney Homestead, Schoolhouse and Society Museums open to the public*
Free bus tours of historic sights, limited to 20 people per bus
Meet at Cheney Hall and register at the information desk in the parking lot
- 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Free horse-drawn carriage rides with commentary by two local historians
Meet at Cheney Hall
- 2:30 p.m. **30th Annual Walking Tour of Cheney Brothers National Landmark District**
Led by Dr. John Sutherland, with refreshments at Old Manchester Museum
Meet at Cheney Hall
-

- July 21** **Hudson Street Walking Tour**
Saturday
1 p.m. Led by Tanyss Ludescher
Meet at the corner of Main and William Street, across from St. Bridget Church
- August 5** **Crusin' on Main**
Sunday
10 a.m.–3 p.m. Visit the Society's booth at this popular car show
Free *(Rain date: August 12)*
- August 11** **West Side Walking Tour**
Saturday
1 p.m. Led by Joe Camposeo and Susan Barlow
Meet at 175 Pine Street for this 1.5 mile urban walk *(Rain date: August 18)*

FALL PREVIEW: COMING EVENTS

September 15

Saturday
8 a.m.–4 p.m.

Knit-A-Thon

Knitting fundraiser. Entertainment and refreshments provided.
(See News Notes, pg. 3)

September 29

Saturday
10 p.m.

Case Mountain Charcoal Walk *Sponsored by CT Forest and Park Assoc. Family Hikes.* Led by Walt Landgraf and Dick Whitehouse
Meet at parking lot near Birch Mountain and Camp Meeting Roads

October 20

Saturday

Great Lawn Mansion Walk

History hike special event. Look for special details in the mail.
\$25 per person for Society members, \$30 for non-members

CELEBRATE, from page 1

- Saturday, June 9, **Heritage Day.** The Cheney Homestead, Keeney Schoolhouse and Museums will be open, free to the public. Our historic looms will also be available for viewing at the History Center.

In addition:

1. Free bus tours of historic sights, at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Limited to 20 people per bus.
2. Free horse-drawn carriage rides with commentary by two local historians (11 to 2).
3. Don't forget to visit the Society's booth in Cheney Hall.
4. 30th Annual Walking Tour of Cheney Brothers National Landmark District, Manchester Community College Professor Emeritus John Sutherland's final walking tour!
(See News Notes, pg. 3)



Welcome, New Members!

The Society welcomes new members who joined between February 1 and May 10.

From Manchester:

Christine Berta
Patricia and John Coatti
Patricia Cottle
John and Nathalie Cunnane
Neil Danahy
Anne Goodin
Walter Gorman
Elaine Heubelt
Paul Hillen
Cary Hull and Al Malpa
Marjorie Kravitz
Richard Moriconi
Donald Paine
Angie Rockett
Carol Rodd
Ellen Strano
Phyllis Wilson

From Elsewhere:

Ralph Arcari (Unionville, CT)
Dana Charlton-Zarro (Bronx, NY)
George Dieter (South Windsor, CT)
Ann Eccles (Eden Prairie, MN)
James Loersch and Dorothy Hall (Bolton, CT)
Jon Roe (Vernon, CT)
Mr. and Mrs. Crawford Westbrook (East Hartford, CT)

Manchester Historical Society Gift Membership

I would like to give a Historical Society membership to:

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This gift is from:

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Category:

Individual (\$15) Contributing Individual (\$45)

Family (\$25) Contributing Family (\$75)

Life (\$250) Life Couple (\$400)

Student (\$5) (age 18 and under)

Make checks payable to: *Manchester Historical Society*

Mail to: *Manchester Historical Society*

106 Hartford Road, Manchester, CT 06040

HELP SUPPORT THE ANNUAL FUND

Yes, I/we want to be part of the Manchester Historical Society's continued growth and transformation!

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$250

\$500 \$1000 Other \$_____

I/we prefer to pledge \$_____ over _____ months.

Please make check payable to Manchester Historical Society and mail to 106 Hartford Road, Manchester, CT 06040

(To be paid in full by September 30th 2007)

Pay with check, or: Visa MasterCard

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Credit Card #: _____

Name on Card: _____

Card Exp. Date: _____

Thank you for your support!