

The Courier

FEBRUARY 2014

VOL. 49, NO. 2

A quarterly publication of the Manchester Historical Society, Inc. / 175 Pine Street / Manchester, Connecticut 06040 / (860) 647-9985

With the Passing of John Dormer, Society Must Move On

by Robert Dunne

At a particularly testy moment in a Board of Directors meeting about five years ago, then-President John Dormer declared that “No one is indispensable” to the Society, himself included. He meant that the organization functions as a collective entity, mostly of volunteers, and that it cannot endure if its members believe that only one person or a handful are its catalyst.

Since the passing of John Dormer last month, the Society regretfully is now in the position of having to prove him right.

A member of the organization for less than a dozen years, John had an indelible impact on the Society, especially during its challenging period of rehabilitating the History Center. John became a member in 2002, upon receiving a gift membership. Within a few months, then-President Dave Smith nominated John to become a member of the Board of Directors. In October of 2005 the membership elected John to the position of President, in which role he served until 2012, when he then was elected as Treasurer, serving in that capacity until his death.

A retired engineer from United Technologies, John applied his engineering background and quickly acquired many other skills in leading the myriad clean-up, repair, and renovation demands of the History Center. He immersed himself in budgeting and finances, applying for grants, programming, and supervising paid staff and volunteers—but his legacy to the organization will probably rest chiefly on the

40,000-square foot former Cheney Bros. machine shop, now the History Center. He was prepared to fulfill the social and titular obligations required of the President, but the machine shop was his baby.



“John was committed to all things pertaining to the History Center. His dedication to that building seems unfathomable...John’s presence will forever be felt in the History Center.”

and gift shop, to stripping and varnishing thousands of square feet of original wooden flooring, to spearheading landscaping around the building—and countless other actions, John’s presence will forever be felt in the History Center.

Perhaps he was right that “no one is indispensable,” but his service to the organization should inspire its individual members to chip in and pick up the slack of the very many areas on which John left his mark. There is more than enough to go around.

Not content with teeing-off on golf courses or whiling away his retirement years in pleasant and unobtrusive hobbies, John was committed to all things pertaining to the History Center. His dedication to that building seems unfathomable, especially in light of his frequent health problems and their often debilitating treatments. His nearly daily regimen was to attend Mass at St. James Church, drive around town making deliveries for Meals on Wheels, and then descend upon the

History Center for the never-ending tasks required there. From overseeing the new roof project, the restoration of over one hundred windows, and prepping the ground floor to accommodate the looms, to constructing what would become the front offices



Drop Us A Line...

You can contact Society President
Dennis Gleeson at
president@manchesterhistory.org;
or our Executive Director
Eileen Sweeney at
executivedirector@manchesterhistory.org.

A Message from the President

by Dennis Gleeson



I want to thank everyone for pulling together in the past months. The illness and passing of John Dormer has left a large void that we are working to fill. The Gala, Mansion Tour and the Annual Appeal Campaign bring in much needed revenue. Grants are another source of funding and various applications are now being processed. Volunteers are an important part of our organization and we welcome your donation of time as much as money. There are many different opportunities around the various properties where we can use your skills and talents. The Society is healthy and is moving forward. I am blessed that previous Society leaders have built such a strong foundation

Annual Appeal Campaign

The Annual Appeal Campaign is well underway for this year and the Society is grateful to those who have already shown their support. The Annual Appeal is the major fund raising effort each year and we depend on it to help us cover the routine costs of running the organization. Just keeping the heat and lights on through the cold winter months is a considerable expense for us. Other major expenses include insurance, communications, and property maintenance and these are not covered by membership dues or grants. Therefore, we must seek additional support in order to keep the organization running. Your contributions make a big difference for us and we appreciate your continued support.

Anne L. Beechler's Legacy

by Marsha Gunther

Anne L. Beechler—who knew that behind the ever-quiet exterior beat the soul of a dedicated volunteer and benefactor of the Manchester Historical Society? This perhaps is a fitting description of Anne, retired teacher, and longtime Society member who served as Treasurer and Director. So it was again, in this same unassuming manner that Anne remembered the Society in her will with a significant bequest of \$250,000. Anne's gifts of service, commitment, and financial contributions to our Society will sustain her legacy by supporting the education of future generations of Manchester school children about their town and heritage. Recognizing the need to move our organization forward, Anne's foresight and exceptional generosity will ensure her legacy remains a force of change.



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Online at: www.manchesterhistory.org

E-mail: info@manchesterhistory.org

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Genealogy Group News

The genealogical group consists of members of the Manchester Historical Society with an interest in researching their family history. Those looking for other research projects may speak with Historical Society President Dennis Gleeson, who has a list of Manchester families and properties that the Society would like to have researched. Society members can attend the meetings for free.; non-members are welcome to attend for a charge of \$3.00. All meetings will be held at 10 a.m., on the second Tuesday of each month, at the History Center, 175 Pine St, Manchester CT, unless notified otherwise. Check out our upcoming meetings on the events page at www.ManchesterHistory.org.

March 11, 2014, 10:00 a.m. A lively “Member Round Table” discussion is planned for our March meeting. Those attending are encouraged to contribute their thoughts, ideas and suggestions along with their genealogy pursuit. The objective is to maintain a viable, interesting group throughout 2014 and beyond. Thanks to Dennis Gleeson and Kris Miller, there have been motivating, educational topics since the group’s beginning in early 2012. We need member ideas. Please attend. Currently the Genealogy Group has speakers scheduled for our April 8, and May 13 meetings. Details of a possible field trip will be announced in future news.

April 8, 2014, 10:00 a.m. “Genograms for Genealogists” will be presented by Ed Strickland, revealing how to make a genogram that will reveal family dynamics and patterns. A genogram is created with simple symbols, creating a pictorial display of a person’s family relationships. Ed Strickland is past president of the CT Society of Genealogists, Genealogist for DFAW (Descendants of Founders of Ancient Windsor) and a member of the CT Professional Genealogists Council.

May 13, 2014, 10:00 a.m. “Genealogy Resources at CT State Library” will be presented by Dick Roberts, retired Unit Head of the History and Genealogy Unit of the CT State Library. This will be an insider’s glimpse of the large amount of resources available to all of us. Dick is currently President of DFAW (Descendants of Founders of Ancient Windsor), Board Member of CT Society of Genealogists and Tri-Chair of 2015 NERGC (New England Regional Genealogical Conference.)

Welcome, New Members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined the Society during the past year.

FROM MANCHESTER

Gail and Ed Adams
Marilyn and Douglas Atwell
Rod Auclair and family
Sandra Baiardi
Mitsey Baker
Nola and Fred Barrett
Donna and Thomas Bartek
Christine Bedrossian
Lois and Jerome Begley
Ruth Bell
Elizabeth and
Robert Bernobich
Ulrich Birkmaier
Eric Bosworth
Andrew Bushnell
Ingrid Carangelo and family
Janet Drusilla Carter
Cheri and Scott Clendaniel
Nelson DeBarros
Kevin Dougan
George Duhart and family
Lindsay Errico
Linda Gardiner
Dee and Eric Hansen
Mark Hewitt
Roberta and Wally Irish
Robert Kiefer
Doreen LaPlante
Laurel LaPorte-Grimes
and family
Peter Leber and family
Brenda Lowther and family
Sandra Manzo
James McGann
Dylan Mello
Dolores Michna
Susanne Milhomens
MaryAnn Napoletano
Nancy Parciak
Karen Schauster
Patricia Stepanski
Molly Stevens
Judith and Richard Tatem
Dorothy Tomlinson
Laurinda Tuthill
James Valvo
Patti Velona
Wilda Wyse
Nancy Yost

FROM ELSEWHERE

Claire and Bruce Barbieri
(Glastonbury)
Charles Beebe (Mystic)
Connie Bourns (Ellington)
Megan Campion (Ashford)
Dr. Bruce Clouette (Storrs)
Noreen Palladino Cullen
and David Gunci
(Glastonbury)
Alisha Desilva (Ansonia)
Alyce Englund (Hartford)
Mike Forino (Middlebury)
Cathy Donahue and Joe Fox
(Vernon)
Sheila Green (Windsor)
Jennifer Healy (Avon)
Beverly Hayes Hilliker
(Waterford)
Sandra Hood (Hartford)
Janet Jensen (Ellington)
Donna Johnson (Windsor)
Deborah Malinowski
(East Hartford)
Barbara McGhie
(New Haven)
Myron Lynn Pitkin Morgan
(East Berlin)
Nancy Palumbo (Andover)
Herbert Sweet
(East Hartford)
Elizabeth and Robert
Warren (South Windsor)
John Bainbridge (Maryland)
Lynn McPartland Davis
(North Carolina)
Jill Diskan
(Washington, D.C.)
Ann Marie Gleeson
(Massachusetts)
Wendelin Smith
(Massachusetts)
Richard Sobielo (New York)
Jean Taylor
(North Carolina)

★ ★ ★ ★ *The* ★ ★ ★ ★

CIVIL WAR

150th ANNIVERSARY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Civil War Notes

by Ron Schack

MANCHESTER'S BATTLES AND CASUALTIES

February 1864 through April 1864

FEBRUARY 17, 1864

On February 17, 1864 the Confederate semi-submersible ship **H.L. Hunley**, armed with a barbed spar torpedo, attacked the **USS Housatonic** in **Charleston Harbor, South Carolina**. The explosion sent the Housatonic and five of its men to the bottom of the sea. After the attack, the Hunley failed to return to her base. It was found in 1995 not too far from where it attacked the Housatonic and it was salvaged in 2000. The remains of eight men were still aboard. (Note: A spar torpedo is a bomb attached to the end of a long pole, and the pole is also attached to the ship. The spar often had a barbed spear at the end so it would stick to wooden hulls.)

FEBRUARY 20, 1864

The **Battle of Olustee, Florida** was fought on February 20, 1864. Union forces launched an expedition into Florida to fortify their positions, sever Confederate supply routes, and recruit black soldiers. Entrenched Confederate forces near Olustee repulsed attacking Union forces. **The 7th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry Regiment** was involved in the battle. Manchester soldiers in the 7th at that time were: **Thomas Bagain, John H. Couch, William S. Marble, David P. Porter, David P. Thompson, and John W. Wilson.**

FEBRUARY 27, 1864

On February 27, 1864 the infamous **Andersonville Confederate Prison** opened. It was located in the village of Andersonville, Sumter County, Georgia. It became notorious for overcrowding, starvation, disease, and cruelty. More than one in four prisoners (27.7%), died while at Andersonville, the highest death rate of all Civil War prisons.

MARCH–MAY, 1864

The **Red River Campaign**, from March to May, 1864, was a series of battles fought along the Red River in Louisiana. Union commander **Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Bank's** objectives were to defeat **Lt. Gen. Richard Taylor's** Confederate troops, capture **Shreveport**, confiscate cotton from the plantations, and organize pro-Union governments in the region. The Union army was defeated and the campaign failed.

In other March 1864 news, **Lucius Talcott**, a Manchester resident serving with **Company D, 14th Connecticut Infantry Regiment**, died from lung disease in a hospital near **Brandy Station, Virginia** on **March 10, 1864**. Lucius was married to Esther Grant when he was drafted as a private on September 13, 1863. Besides his wife, he was survived by two children, Luella and Arthur.

APRIL 17–20, 1864

The **Battle of Plymouth, North Carolina** occurred from April 17–20, 1864. Confederate forces attacked the Union garrison at Plymouth on April 17. On April 19, the Confederate ram **CSS Albemarle** sank the **USS Smithfield**, damaged the **USS Miami**, and drove off other Union ships on the **Roanoke River** that were supporting the Plymouth garrison. **Fort Comfort** was captured, and Union defenders were driven back to **Fort Williams**. Plymouth garrison surrendered on April 20, 1864.

The **16th Connecticut Infantry Regiment** was in the thick of the battle, when the garrison fell, and Union soldiers were taken prisoner. Manchester men who were captured included: **Michael Burke, Charles H. Golden, James M. Keith, Edgar E. Strong, and Frederick Waldo.** They were all sent to Andersonville Prison.

In letters sent home during May 1864, **1st Lieutenant Strong**, after being transferred from Andersonville prison, possibly to **Camp Oglethorpe in Macon, Georgia**, said he was in good health. His new address was: Prisoner of War, Macon, Georgia, via Richmond. Letters had to be unsealed, and stamped with a United States three cent stamp, and contain no more than one page. He talked about the camp which consisted of 4 acres, enclosed by a board stockade twenty feet high. The prisoners were occupied by cooking corn meal and bacon, policing the camp, and looking for vermin. Prisoners were furnished barracks inside the stockade. Occasional letters were received from members of the 16th Connecticut Regiment still at Andersonville. They considered themselves well off compared to the **Belle Isle, Richmond, Virginia** prisoners, who were sick when they reached Andersonville.

Sources include: Manchester Historical Society Civil War data; Wikipedia website, Hartford Courant Archives



The Manchester Historical Society Invites You to the

Annual Dinner — Friday, May 2, 2014

Manchester Country Club, 305 South Main Street, Manchester

5:30 p.m.: Social half-hour, cash bar, teacup auction (\$1.00 per ticket) ♦ **6:00 p.m.:** dinner

Menu:

Fresh fruit cup ♦ Tossed garden salad

Choice of entrée:

- ♦ Baked Haddock with Lemon Butter Sauce ♦ Chicken Florentine with Dijon Cream Sauce
- ♦ Petit Prime Rib of Beef ♦ Vegetarian Pasta Primavera

Served with:

Vegetable medley ♦ Parslied potatoes ♦ rolls and butter ♦ coffee and tea

Dessert:

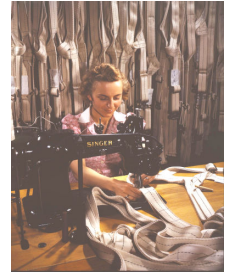
Pecan Nut Roll with Chocolate Sauce

Following dinner:

Jim Reuter of Manchester will present a talk about Pioneer Parachute, the home-town industry that just celebrated its 75th anniversary. Pioneer's beginnings reach back to a time when people hardly believed parachutes would do any good – airplane passengers would die if they had to bail out. Find out how the Cheneys were involved in parachutes and how parachutes got involved with aerospace projects!

1942 photo:

Sewing harnesses at Pioneer Parachute, located at Forest St., Manchester



❖ **IMPORTANT! PRINT EACH GUEST'S NAME NEXT TO ENTRÉE CHOICE** ❖

❖ **Please put a big "X" in the entrée choice next to each guest's name** ❖

Print name of guest and select entrée ➡	Baked Haddock	Chicken	Petit Prime Rib	Vegetarian

Please include your e-mail address _____ & phone number _____

Total Number of People _____ @ \$28.00/**member** = \$ _____ enclosed

Total Number of People _____ @ \$30.00/**non-member** = \$ _____ enclosed

Check # _____ Total enclosed _____

Return this portion with check payable to **Manchester Historical Society** by April 29th to:
Manchester History Center, 175 Pine Street, Manchester, CT 06040 (or bring in person)

Please write **DINNER** on the outside of the envelope! Thank you.

For information, phone 860-647-9983 – *Sorry, we cannot accept phone reservations*
ADDITIONAL INVITATIONS AND INFO on our web site www.manchesterhistory.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Lectures usually take place at the Manchester History Center at 175 Pine Street. Parking is available along Pleasant Street and along the Forest Street side of the building; parking for people with disabilities is available in the small lot next to the History Center. The building is accessible. The costs for most lectures and walking tours are \$2 for members and \$4 for non-members; free for children under 16.

OLD MANCHESTER MUSEUM

Closed until early May. The research facility is available year round by appointment. Phone 860-647-9742.

CHENEY HOMESTEAD

Open year-round, second Sunday of each month from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Admission and tour by donation.

March 11, Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.

GENEALOGY GROUP MEETING (See related article pg. 3)

March 18, Tuesday, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m., FREE

CHAT WITH THE PAST, HIGHLIGHTING DEPOT SQUARE AND THE IRISH COMMUNITY

All are welcome to this informal chat. Bring photos, particularly of Depot Square. We will scan and return them.

March 29, Saturday, 1:00 p.m., FREE

CHENEY RAILROAD HISTORY WALK AND COMMENTARY

(See website for details)

April 8, Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.

GENEALOGY GROUP MEETING (See related article pg. 3)

May 2, Friday, 5:30 p.m.

ANNUAL DINNER AT MANCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB

Featuring a program about home-town business Pioneer Parachute, presented by Jim Reuter, who has worked at Pioneer for nearly 50 years and holds four patents. *Please use the insert form in this newsletter for your reservations.*

May 4, Sunday, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

OLD MANCHESTER MUSEUM REOPENS

May 4, Sunday, 1:00 p.m. (Tentative)

HILLIARD MILLS WALK AND TOUR

Meet at 642 Hilliard Street for a walking tour and commentary about the historic buildings in the Hilliardville section of Manchester, including the country's oldest woolen mill. This section of town is named for the Hilliard family. We will tour building interiors and also walk outside about a half mile, encountering uneven and possibly wet terrain.

May 11, Sunday, 1:00 p.m. (Tentative)

MANCHESTER GREEN WALK; VISITS TO PITKIN GLASS WORKS AND THE WOODBRIDGE FARMSTEAD

Meet at Pitkin Glass Works (corner of Putnam and Parker Sts. Hosted by Tom and Elaine Duff. Then walk to "The Green" and visit the grounds and barns of the Woodbridge Farmstead, with commentary. For those who don't want to walk the mile or so, meet at the Woodbridge house, 495 East Middle Turnpike, east of the intersection of the Turnpike and Woodbridge St., at 2:15 p.m.

May 13, Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.

GENEALOGY GROUP MEETING (See related article pg. 3)



We Will Miss...

TERRY WERKHOVEN was a long time member of the Society. Former Mayor of Manchester, Terry remained very active in the town government and the community for many years. He was familiar with many of the town buildings and even climbed onto the roof of our History Center to advise us on the replacement of that roof several years ago even though he was well into his 80s at the time. Reflecting his interest in the town's heritage, Terry was instrumental in returning the Dancing Bear fountain to Center Park after it was stolen and damaged in 1990. He was active in many organizations besides the Historical Society, including the Army and Navy Club and the American Legion, reflecting his service in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Did You Know?

EVERY ADDRESS LABEL TELLS A STORY. Just a reminder that by checking the address label on the back of the newsletter, you can easily see when your membership expires. The date that appears in the upper right hand corner tells you when it is time for you to renew.

YOU CAN NOW FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK. The Historical Society is on Facebook and we currently have over 500 friends. You can follow us at: www.facebook.com/ManchesterHistoricalSociety.



The Manchester Historical Society
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MANCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please print and fill out this form, and mail it with your check to:

The Manchester Historical Society, 175 Pine St., Manchester, CT 06040

Name: (Mr.) (Mrs.) (Miss) _____ Date _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone () _____ Email _____

Type of Membership:	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Individual	\$45
	<input type="checkbox"/> Student (under age 18)	\$5	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate	\$250	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Family	\$75
	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Individual	\$250	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Couple	\$400		

I would like to make an additional contribution for

<input type="checkbox"/> Manchester Historical Society Building Fund	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Woodbridge Farmstead Fund	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Manchester Historical Society Endowment Fund	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Woodbridge Endowment Fund	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheney Homestead Endowment	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Keeney Schoolhouse Endowment Fund	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted	\$ _____		

I have enclosed a matching gift form

Make checks payable to: Manchester Historical Society

Membership Dues and Donations to the Society are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.