



“50 YEARS OF PRESERVING LOCAL HISTORY”

# The Courier

FEBRUARY 2017

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## President's Corner

by Jack Prior

I want to extend my thanks to all the volunteers who made our Gala in December a great success. Shout-outs go to the Manchester and Bolton high school students who volunteered their time helping out –

from providing parking support, food service, and store support, to auction runners and the clean-up. Without you, the volunteers and members of the Manchester Historical Society, such a smoothly run event would not have been possible. We are reviewing feedback from members and attendees to take into consideration for our next winter event, which we will begin to plan in the coming months.

The New Year brings exciting new progress to the History Center. Lots of things are beginning to fall into place. With the successful Gala behind us, we are working on sprucing up some of the spaces within the History Center. Our storage vault has been cleaned and painted. This is the place where we will consolidate our precious archives and records. We are also preparing Room Four to house evening weaving classes this spring in partnership with The Hartford Artisan Weaving Center. We are also in the process of building out the reference and genealogy library, which will consolidate all research materials to one location and will include seating and tables for your comfort.

Good things are happening at our other properties too! Every third Sunday of the month, the Cheney Homestead will be open from noon to 4 p.m. Events at the Homestead will be posted on our Facebook page and on our website, [www.manchesterhistory.org](http://www.manchesterhistory.org). At the Woodbridge Farmstead we are in the process of seeking a zoning variance to allow the barn to be a museum. This spring we are also planning a grand reveal of the renovated barn. We hope to have vendors and groups participate in the event to make it a true farm experience. More details to follow.

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## Weaving Revival at the Cheney Mills

Preparations are underway for the first evening, adult weaving class to be held at the History Center beginning in late March. Our Society is partnering with the Hartford Artisan Weaving Center, under the direction of expert weaver/designer Fran Curran, by providing classroom space for weaving instruction. This will be the first time in many years that a Cheney mill building will have been used for weaving cloth.

Sign-up has begun and the classroom is taking shape with looms and weaving tools. Please stop by to take a look or to inquire about class prices and availability.



## Annual Appeal

We are now more than four months into our current fiscal year. As in years past the Annual Appeal is a very important part of our financial well-being and is the major fund raising effort every year. Like every organization with properties to keep up, we have continuing expenses such as utilities, communications, insurance and property maintenance. We cannot ask for grants for these kinds of expenses so we depend on dues and fundraising. Your contributions really help us in an important way, and we are thankful for your continued support.



## Drop Us A Line...

You can contact Society President  
Jack Prior at  
president@manchesterhistory.org,  
or our Executive Director  
Eileen Sweeney at  
executivedirector@manchesterhistory.org

## The Courier

*A newsletter of the  
Manchester Historical Society*

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## Welcome New Members

We wish to extend a warm welcome to the following new members who joined the Society during the last year. We hope you will take full advantage of your membership and join us for our upcoming events and visits to our properties.

### From Manchester

Debby Bailey	Christine Joyner	Nancy Scott
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### From Elsewhere

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## We Will Miss .....

**Mike Nimirowski** was a long time member of the Society. He was a veteran of World War II having served as a gunner on a B-17 on many missions over Europe. Mike received many medals for his service. He later worked for Cheney Brothers and was a wonderful source of information for us about his time working there.

**Barbara Bawwab** was our tenant at the Woodbridge Farmstead for several years. She enjoyed gardening, especially working with the late Pat Matrick in the flower gardens at the Farmstead, where she also had a vegetable garden with a large variety of plants. Barbara was a caring person having worked at the UCONN Health Center for many years. Her hobbies included cooking, sewing and raising Flemish Giant rabbits.

## Cheney Homestead Begins Monthly Open House Events

Beginning this month, a new series of Open House events will be held at the Homestead on the third Sunday each month. Each event will feature a unique aspect of our town's history, and visitors will be able and encouraged to participate in some of the hands-on activities. In particular, children will be able to sample new experiences and perhaps learn something of our everyday past. See the accompanying Calendar of Events for dates and times of the Open Houses.

**February** will highlight Black History Month and the underground railroad. Food, stories and games of the period will be presented.

**March** will cover weaving with demonstrations and opportunities to try your hand at it.

**April** will feature tools and toys. Games and period toys and gadgets will be shown.

**May** will be about American Indians and early American gardening.

## To Our Readers

If there is something you would like us to write about, please contact Dave at 860-647-9742 or at [info@manchesterhistory.org](mailto:info@manchesterhistory.org).



## Meet New Director Richard Borden

Dick Borden has been involved in a number of civic and charitable activities for many years. He has served as Town Manager in several Connecticut towns for 28 years and has been involved with the Manchester, Glastonbury and

Rockville Historical Societies. Dick is a Life Member of the Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce and has been a member of Rotary International for over 30 years, including president of the Manchester Rotary Club and, also served as Rotary District Governor for District 7890 covering 62 clubs in Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut comprised of 2700 members.

Dick has been serving as the Chairman of St. Bartholomew Church's Parish Finance Council for 17 years. Borden Realty was founded over 20 years ago and is now Borden-Lombardi Realty, LLC serving Residential and Commercial clients for sales, leasing and Facilities Engineering services in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

His wife Rita is an Interior Designer who has also been involved in Historical Societies after first becoming involved some 50 years ago with Hazel Lutz in the Vernon Historical Society. Rita and Dick live in an 1884 Victorian home in Manchester which they have faithfully renovated in a historically correct fashion in order to preserve its historic features.

## President's Corner

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The Events Committee is hard at work planning a great line up of programs. They are creating a speaker series and other exciting events. Once we have firmed things up, members of the committees will chair an event and get the word out. Keep an eye out as we will need volunteers! Finally, one other major initiative is the upcoming installation of a new HVAC system at the History Center. It will be installed in phases as our grant allows. If all goes well, we will request contractors' designs and bids at the end of February.

History doesn't stand still, and neither do we! We want to grow the list of events and activities offered at the History Center this year. If you or someone you know would be interested in giving a Manchester-centric presentation (e.g.: genealogy, demographic, medicine throughout time, hygiene, demotic practices, etc.), drop us a line. If you are an educator and want to have a cosponsored event during weekend or school vacations in the areas of Native Peoples, the textile industry, early children's toys, waterpower, immigration, child labor, inventors and inventions, etc. we would like to discuss your ideas. Or do you paint? Why not lead a paint and sip of a notable town scene or landmark.

The ideas and possibilities are endless! With our collective brain power and of course your personal and financial support, we will continue to honor our past and build our future.

### Where did That Street Name Come From?

There are several streets in the northeast part of town that bear the names of some of America's earliest astronauts. The streets were developed by Green Manor Estates in the mid-1970s and are north of Kennedy Rd.

**Shepard Dr.** was named after Alan Shepard, America's first man in space. He was one of the first seven astronauts and part of the Mercury Seven program. Alan first flew into space on a sub-orbital flight on May 5, 1961 aboard "Freedom 7." Shepard also flew again on "Apollo 14" in 1971 taking part in the third moon landing. He was the fifth man to walk on the moon, where he is remembered for hitting the first golf ball on the moon.

**Grissom Rd.** was named after astronaut Virgil "Gus" Grissom, our second man in space. Grissom flew on a sub-orbital flight on the Mercury capsule "Liberty Bell 7" on July 21, 1961. He flew again on "Gemini 3" in 1965. He was killed in 1967 during a test run of the "Apollo 1" during a fire on the launch pad.

**Carpenter Rd.** was named after Scott Carpenter, another of the original Mercury astronauts. He made his first trip on board the "Aurora 7" in May 1962, the second American (after John Glenn) to orbit the earth. Scott did not fly again into space.

**McDivitt Dr.** was named after James McDivitt. James flew into space twice, first as commander of "Gemini 4" in 1965 and again as commander on "Apollo 9" in 1969.

Why is there no Glenn St. in Manchester, honoring America's first man to orbit the earth? We can only speculate that because there was already Glen Rd. near Highland Park that it may have been thought to be confusing to have two streets with almost the same name.



## Genealogy Group News

*The Genealogy Group consists of Society members interested in researching their own family history. All Historical Society members may attend for free (an individual membership to the Society is \$25.00 per year). The general public is asked for a \$3.00 donation per meeting. Some of us have been doing genealogy for years while others are just beginning. All are welcome. The group meets on the second Tuesday of the month at the History Center at 10:00 a.m. unless otherwise specified. Future programs and meeting places are listed on the upcoming events page at [www.manchesterhistory.org](http://www.manchesterhistory.org). For any questions, contact Kris Miller at 860-432-0307.*

**February 14** The meeting will be at the History Center. The speaker is Nora Galvin who will speak on Irish Genealogy. Many Irish records are now digitalized and available on line. Find your immigrant ancestors!

**March 14** We will take a field trip to Bloomfield Family History Center located at 1000 Mountain Road in Bloomfield. These centers operated by the LDS Church provide a wealth of resources to help the public discover their roots. The tour is limited to 20 persons and sign ups begin at the February meeting. There will be opportunity to carpool.

**April 11** The meeting at the History Center will focus on dating photographs. Members will present information on the clothes worn by men, women, and children as well as hairstyles through the various decades when photography began. Attendees are encouraged to bring their unidentified photographs and group members will play photo detectives.

**May 9** This meeting will be an all day trip to the New England Historic Genealogical Society located at 101 Newbury Street in Boston, MA. The library consists of six floors containing extensive records on New England. It is an excellent resource for British and Irish families. There is one floor devoted to local histories for all states and Canadian provinces. The tour and library visit will be limited to 20 people. The fee for the bus trip and library admission is \$75. Members of NEGHS and persons wishing to travel to Boston for sightseeing or shopping would pay \$60. All payments are non-refundable after May 1, 2017. The Post Road Stage bus will leave from the History Center at 8:30 am and leave Boston at 3:00 pm arriving back in Manchester at 4:30 pm. Make out checks to Manchester Historical Society and send to Genealogy Group, 175 Pine Street, Manchester, CT 06040. NEHGS members please include your membership number.

**June 9** This meeting at the History Center will follow a "Genealogy Road Show" format. Members of the Genealogy Group will be available to meet with any attendee who has questions or needs help regarding their family genealogy.



## Jake Cheney, Local Artist

The late Jake Cheney, a well-known fixture in town who was often seen walking along Main Street with a cigar and newspaper, was a talented artist who drew many off the cuff drawings of Manchester people and scenes. He would often draw a person without that person's knowledge, sometimes in the library, in church or at the park. He then gave the drawing to the subject. He also drew scenes, both current and as he remembered them. We have several of his drawings in our collection. However, there must be many hundreds that we do not know about.

In an attempt to give recognition to his efforts, we would like to acquire as many of his drawings as possible, preferably originals, but also copies. If you have or know of someone who has one (or more) of his drawings, we would like to hear from you. Please include the identity of the subject, and the date and place where he made the drawing. Please call us at 860-647-9983 or email us at [info@manchesterhistory.org](mailto:info@manchesterhistory.org). You can email us a scan of a drawing too.

## Calendar of Events

Lectures take place at the Manchester History Center at 175 Pine Street. Parking is available along Pleasant Street and along Forest Street next to 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 \$5 for members and \$7 for nonmembers; free for children under 16. Some events are free, but donations are always welcome.

- ▶ **The Old Manchester Museum** at 126 Cedar Street, open by appointment -- phone 860-647-9983. The research facility is available all year round. To make an appointment, please phone 860-647-9742.
- ▶ **The History Center and Museum Store** are generally open weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. 175 Pine Street at the corner of Forest Street. Here you can purchase local history items such as books on local history, copies of vintage maps and many other items of local interest. Please call ahead to make sure the building is open before coming!
- ▶ **Cheney Homestead** is open the third Sunday each month from noon to 4:00 p.m. Each month will feature a unique craft or event. You can also tour the 1785 house and hear commentary about the residence, which was donated to the Manchester Historical Society by the Cheney family. Guided tours include history of the building and its contents, and of the family who lived there. The one-room Keeney School-house may be open if the weather is warm enough.

**“The Mystique of Silk”** exhibit at the History Center. This exhibit was created by Carol Cheney, great-granddaughter of Knight Dexter Cheney, who was president of Cheney Brothers from 1894 to 1907. Carol describes the exhibit as commemorating “the 100th anniversary of the Cheney Cemetery Association in 2016, and the enduring Cheney Family legacy of innovation and good will. The family expresses deep gratitude to the generations of Cheney Brothers employees whose dedicated service helped build the Town of Manchester. Design, advertising, and sales of Cheney silks were handled at the company’s New York offices. Much can be learned about the Cheney Brothers brand from their advertisements in high-end magazines of the day. These ads emphasized life style and corporate image over product details.”

- **Sunday, February 12 and Saturday February 18 and 25, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**, History Center will feature a temporary exhibit of photographs from the collection of the late Reginald Pinto, Herald photographer. Many of these photos are not identified and we are hoping that visitors can help us in identifying them
- **Tuesday, February 14 at 10:00 a.m.**, the Historical Society’s Genealogy Group -- a meeting for both amateur and more experienced genealogists. Noted genealogist Nora Galvin will be with us to talk about Irish Genealogy. Meet at the Manchester History Center. See article elsewhere in the Courier
- **Sunday, February 19 from 8:00 a.m. to noon**, History Center will host a morning get together with coffee and refreshments. Music, live and/or from our vintage player piano, will brighten this winter morning social hour.
- **Sunday, February 19 from noon to 4:00 p.m.**, Cheney Homestead Open House. The third Sunday each month. This month we will be highlighting Black History Month. Homestead committee member Lucy Anne Hurston, will share information about Manchester and the Underground Railroad. Children and adults will learn about Manchester’s role, try food from the trail cooked over an outside fire, hear stories and share games of the period
- **Tuesday, March 14 at 10:00 a.m.**, Genealogy Group. We will take a field trip to the Bloomfield Family History Center. Meet at the Manchester History Center.
- **Sunday, March 19 from noon to 4:00 p.m.**, Cheney Homestead Open House. This month will feature “Weaving Revival in Manchester.” Instructors from the Hartford Artisan Weaving Center will provide a weaving demonstration as well as instruction for adults and children.
- **Sunday, April 2 at 1:00 p.m.** at the History Center, the Society will present “Perspectives on World War I, United States enters the War,” a lecture by former State Senator Mary Ann Handley. The lecture will establish a foundation for understanding the conflicts and issues of this period in American history. A question and answer period will follow the talk. In addition, the new “100th Anniversary of World War I” exhibit at the Old Manchester Museum will be open following the talk.
- **Tuesday, April 11 at 10:00 a.m.**, Genealogy Group. This meeting will focus on dating your old family photos using clues in the pictures. Bring your unidentified photos.
- **Saturday, April 15 from noon to 4:00 p.m.**, Cheney Homestead Open House. “Tools and Toys,” Children and adults can learn about Easter in early America, play games and try period toys and gadgets. Also, you can help to make and prepare our American Indian and colonial garden tools for Spring planting.
- **Sunday, May 7 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**, Old Manchester Museum will reopen for the season. Revised exhibits will highlight the Pitkin Glass Works and some of Manchester’s prolific inventors.
- **Tuesday, May 9 at 10:00 a.m.**, Genealogy Group will take an all day trip to the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston. See details in related article.
- **Sunday, May 21 from noon to 4:00 p.m.**, Cheney Homestead Open House. “American Indian & Early American Garden Planting” Children and adults can learn about gardening in early America while getting dirty with us in our new garden. Try American Indian and colonial garden tools. In the Fall we will share our harvest together in period recipes.



The Manchester Historical Society  
175 Pine Street  
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