



“OVER 55 YEARS OF PRESERVING LOCAL HISTORY”

# The Courier

MARCH 2023

VOL. 58, No. 2

A quarterly publication of the Manchester Historical Society, Inc. • 175 Pine Street • Manchester, Connecticut 06040 • 860-647-9983



## President's Message A Big Year Ahead!

*By Dennis Gleason*

I want to thank our volunteers, employees and our board of directors for all the work that has been done in the last quarter of 2022. The beginning of 2023 is sending the Society into the town's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday year with more work than normal. A number of events will be taking place throughout the year. We are the ones that need to make our town history interesting and a resource for the study of our collective past.

Our past has been recorded in books, photos and stories as written and told by many people over the years. We will be sharing much of that this year. We will be presenting talks during the year so the community can understand why the town developed as it has to become the Manchester we know today. The large mix of nations and people were welcomed here who worked in the many mills, attended schools and churches, shopped in nearby stores, and lived in neighborhoods that were pleasant. Their homes and factories were supplied with water, gas and electricity.

As the town grew rapidly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, transportation improved greatly. Banks and lending agencies allowed many people to own their own homes. Schools and libraries improved education, and police and fire departments provided safety and protection.

Our historical society can answer many of the questions through research, informing us how this all came about and who were the people who made it all possible. Society members allow us to maintain the knowledge and stories of the past and to preserve the artifacts of the past.

The Society is now in its 58<sup>th</sup> year and thanks to all of our members over the years we have been able to preserve and maintain so much. Manchester is a great example of a town that has successfully transitioned from agriculture to industry to residential over the past 200 years. We must educate our children about our past and present. Bring your children to our History Center, Cheney Homestead, and Woodbridge Farmstead and attend our history walks so that they can better understand how we became Manchester. Your support is greatly appreciated.

## Genealogy Group

Now that things are returning to normal we would like to resurrect the Genealogy Group to provide a forum for those interested in pursuing their own family histories. We plan to meet the second Wednesday of each month at the History Center. Meeting time will be from 10:00 to noon. The first meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 8.

The group meetings will give folks a chance to exchange ideas about researching family history, how to overcome road blocks, and where to find information. Bring your questions and also be prepared to answer questions by others who have run into trouble finding information.



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# The Courier

A newsletter of the  
Manchester Historical Society

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ManchesterHistoricalSociety

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## Weekly News

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## Newsletter Editors

Dave Smith  
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# Cheney Homestead Arts

## Winter and Spring Classes and Workshops

Schedule for February 15 - June 23, 2023

[www.cheneyhomesteadarts.org](http://www.cheneyhomesteadarts.org)

All classes and workshops are offered at the Cheney Homestead Arts Studio located at 199 Forest St.

- ♦ **Classical Drawing** is ongoing and is scheduled each Saturday from 9:30 - 12:30.
- ♦ February/March: **“Artistic Anatomy”** Instructor: Eliza Moser (Wednesday evenings on Zoom)
- ♦ March 10, 11, & 12: **“Drawing the Portrait from a Photograph”** Instructor: Christina Mastrangelo
- ♦ March 17, 18, & 19: **“Painting the Portrait Master Copy”** Instructor: Christina Mastrangelo
- ♦ March 25: Winter Webinar Series: **“Painting Fruit in Still Life”** Instructor: Carlo Russo
- ♦ March/April: **“Aspects of the Figure”** Instructor: Eliza Moser
- ♦ May 19, 20, 21: **17th Century Dutch Floral Painting** Instructor: Carlo Russo
- ♦ June 12 - 23: **“Painting the Academic Still Life (10 Days)”** Instructor: Christina Mastrangelo

## Amazon Smile

You can make a difference when you shop on Amazon.com. Manchester Historical Society is a registered charity with Amazon’s foundation, Amazon Smile.

For qualified purchases, a portion of your purchase (0.5%) will be donated to the Manchester Historical Society.

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## An exciting new program schedule for 2023

As part of Manchester’s 200th Anniversary the Manchester Historical Society will present a year-long schedule of events based on the theme “There’s No Place Like Home”.

Running from January through December the events will include movies, lectures, cultural events and more. Most will be scheduled on the second Sunday of the month. Please watch for additional information.

# Seasons at the Woodbridge Farmstead

## Mild Winter Brings Thoughts of Spring

By Peggy Newton, Woodbridge Farmstead Chair

Our recent mild weather has us Woodbridge “farmers” thinking about Spring and our first Open Farm Day. We will open on Sunday, May 7 instead of the second Sunday of the month, which will be Mother’s Day. Normally our season runs from May through October on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month. But this year the Special Bicentennial Celebrations (1823-2023) require us to change a few dates so that everyone can attend or join the Town’s festivities.

The second open farm day will be Sunday, May 21 because the fourth Sunday in May coincides with Memorial Day weekend. In June the first open farm day will be Saturday, June 10 which is also the state-wide Open House Day for all historic sites. Hours that day will be noon to 4 p.m.

Many of our popular events from the past will return this year, including the farm animals from

Aussakita Farms, the Duck Race on Bigelow Brook, an Egg Hunt and the ever popular hay rides in our pony wagon. Some new events being planned include an apiarist (bee-keeper), chicken farmer, firemen’s visit, a food truck and musical presentations.

Of course all of our events would not be possible without the help of our volunteers. If you enjoy meeting new people and having fun while trying new activities, please consider joining us for a few hours and becoming a Farm Friend. To find out more about volunteering call our History Center (860-647-9983) or Peggy Newton (860-305-7310). You can also email Peggy at [peggynewton47@att.net](mailto:peggynewton47@att.net).



## Welcome New Members

We wish to extend a warm welcome to the following new members who joined the Society during 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

Elaine and Philip Axler  
Yusuf Bawwab  
Nancy Begg  
Mark Connors  
Barry D’Andrea  
Neil Ellis  
Nicholas Francioine

Sue Gaffney  
Ryan Hinton  
Sarah Kania  
Christine Larson  
Nathan Loeffler  
Leah Lourie  
Andrew Main

Michael Merritt  
Lucille Mulligan and Steve Cram  
Amy Muro  
Mikel Ann O’Brien  
Toby and Manuel Reis  
Debra Shaffer  
Marilyn and Jonathan Sheffield

### From Elsewhere

Aaron Bayer – Glastonbury  
Elaine Dumas – Storrs  
Michael Foley – Tolland  
Susan and Tom Grant – Burlington  
Janet Shlafstein – Somers  
Mark Todd – West Hartford  
Carolyn Venne – South Windsor  
Keith Zambori – Glastonbury

Brian Commerton – Mississippi  
Ernie Dills – Kentucky  
Robert Johnson - Pennsylvania  
Barbara Silverstein – New York  
Brad Smith – Maryland  
Donna Tedford – Vermont  
Robert Trotter – North Carolina  
Scott Tyson - Florida

## Calendar of Events

**History Center Office, Museum Store and exhibits** at 175 Pine St., open Wednesday to Friday from 10:00 to 2:00 and Saturday noon to 4:00 p.m. located in the former Cheney Machine Shop building. Our phone is 860-647-9983 and our email is info@manchesterhistory.org.

**Old Manchester Museum** at 126 Cedar Street, will reopen Saturday, May 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and will be open the first Saturday of the month, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. through December. It is also open by appointment. Please call our office at 860-647-9983 for further information. Exhibits include some early Manchester manufactures, our elementary schools, both past and present, Pitkin Glass Works bottles, and the story of the Spencer Rifle and its inventor Christopher Spencer. There is also a museum store in the lobby.

**Cheney Homestead and Keeney Schoolhouse** at 106 Hartford Rd. are open the second Sunday of the month from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. An early American home with period art and furniture.

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**History Walks** A series of free walks continues through November 25, with a December 2 rain date. The walks will be held rain or shine. Guests who participate in at least 10 walks will be eligible for a free commemorative coin (first 200 winners) and a reception at the History Center on Sunday, December 31, 2023 at 1:00 p.m., celebrating Manchester and its 200th birthday. Printed copies of the free booklet are available at Town Hall customer service, Town libraries, and at the Manchester History Center during regular hours.

**Sunday, March 5, from 1:00 to 4:00, at the History Center, a special lecture and exhibit-dedication.** As we celebrate the “Women of the Cheney Homestead” exhibit, we welcome the public for MIT Professor Margery Resnick’s talk about MIT’s first female graduate, Professor Ellen Swallow Richards (1873), and her student, Margaret Swan Cheney, who was born at the Cheney Homestead in 1855. Following the presentation, guests may visit the Cheney Homestead to view the exhibit room dedicated to the women of the Cheney family who lived at the Homestead during its 238-year history. Refreshments will be served.

The Homestead was donated to the Manchester Historical Society by the Cheney family in 1968 for the purpose of a museum to exhibit and explain the impact of the Cheney family on Manchester. Guided tours include the 1751 Keeney one-room schoolhouse, a partial restoration of one of Manchester’s earliest one-room schools. A \$5 donation is suggested to help with the upkeep of the Homestead.

**Woodbridge Farmstead** at 495 Middle Turnpike East, will reopen Sunday, May 7 and Sunday, May 21 and then be open the second and fourth Sundays of the month from 12 noon until 2:00 p.m. (except during June when it will be open Saturday June 10 and Sunday June 25). An 1830 house, Visitor Center and late 1700’s barn on the site of the former Meadowbrook Dairy. Early farm equipment is on display along with a one-horse open sleigh and a pony wagon. The Visitor Center has displays of the history of Manchester Green. Visitors can park at the municipal lot behind the Senior Center or along the side street to the east of the Farmstead.

**Wednesday, March 8, Genealogy Group** meeting from 10:00 to 12 noon, at the History Center

**Sunday, March 12, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., open house at the Cheney Homestead,** 106 Hartford Road. The afternoon includes tours of the historic property, including grounds, gardens, and inside at the Homestead and its new Women of the Homestead exhibit, and art gallery where you will be inspired by Manchester’s rich history in art

**Sunday, March 19, from 1:00 to 2:30, at the History Center, Early Cheney family history** presented by Bettylou Sandy, Cheney Homestead Chair. This will be followed by Dennis Gleeson, Society President presenting The Cheney Brothers and the emergence of the Cheney Mill Empire

### SPRING TOURS

#### April

**Wednesday, April 12, Genealogy Group** meeting from 10:00 to 12 noon, at the History Center

*During April no tours will be available at Cheney Homestead, Old Manchester Museum and Woodbridge Farmstead. The History Center will be open on regular schedule.*

## Calendar *continued from page 4*

### May

**Saturday May 6 Old Manchester Museum** open 10:00 to 2:00

**Sunday May 7 Woodbridge Farmstead** Open noon to 2:00

**Wednesday, May 10, Genealogy Group** meeting from 10:00 to 12 noon, at the History Center

**Sunday May 14 Cheney Homestead** Open 1:00 to 4:00

**Sunday May 21 Woodbridge Farmstead** Open noon to 2:00

### June

**Saturday June 3 Old Manchester Museum** Open 10:00 to 2:00

**Saturday June 10 Museum Open House Day** All museums open 11:00 to 3:00

**Saturday June 10 Pitkin Glass Works** Open for archaeological digs by children

**Wednesday, June 14 Genealogy Group** meeting, from 10:00 to 12 noon, at the History Center

**Sunday June 25 Woodbridge Farmstead** Open noon to 2:00

**Art classes at the History Center** Following the artistic traditions of the Cheney family, classes are offered for children and adults.

**Board meetings of the Historical Society** are held at 4:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month at the History Center. Members are welcome to attend and may speak or ask questions at the beginning of the meeting.

## Cheney Homestead News

*By Bettylou Sandy, Homestead Museum Chair*

The Cheney Homestead Museum was closed in January, but the research and planning continued to progress! Donations of artifacts and other objects have been received from 2 donors, a consultant of “Wooden Clocks” came to review our new clock exhibit portion of our “Ingenuity and Industry” exhibit room, and our “story line” of our current household museum.

Some of the *projects we have completed* include the resurfacing of our driveway, including a large, solid parking space, close to the entry of the museum, for those who have difficulty walking.

Two sides of the exterior of the primary museum building have been painted, with the rest of the building expected to be completed next Spring.

Much tree work has been completed, this winter, to remove dead and problem trees in many areas of our five acres of land. This will allow more air and light to help our other trees, shrubs and flowers thrive.

*Travel in time* through the family history to see how this early American family lived in 1818, before we were called “Manchester”. As we go up the stairs, the time changes to 1840 in John Cheney’s sitting room, where he entertained his friends and family, as they visited from around the country and from other countries as well.

The three rooms off John’s room, now are “topical history” of the family, going deeper into the stories of the Cheney’s various interests, of multiple generations, in each room. The Art Gallery shows four generations of Cheney Artists, the “Women of the Cheney Family” exhibit shows four generations of Women and their influence in their times; and the “Ingenuity and Industry” exhibit room shows the progression and variety of their ingenuity from 1770 to 1880 and beyond.

Up one more stairway, we travel further forward in time, to 1920 through 1967, in Dorothy Cheney’s art studio, as she might have used it for her artwork and joy of painting of the beautiful flowers she was known for growing.

In our **Bicentennial celebration year** of the founding of the town of Manchester in 1823, we will carry the theme of “Then and Now” through many of our special programs. The Manchester Historical Society’s theme for the year is “Welcome Home!”. At the Homestead museum we are honored to welcome you to the original home of the Cheney family every time we open our doors!

*continued on next page*

## Cheney Homestead News

*continued from page 5*

**March 5**, Sunday, 1 p.m. at the *History Center*, Speaker, with the dedication of “**The Women of the Cheney Family**” exhibit. **Speakers from MIT and Carol Cheney** followed by refreshments. Tours of the “Women of Cheney Room” at the homestead museum will be available.

**March 12**, Sunday, 1-4 Homestead Museum Open House

**International Woman’s Day** – Focus upon the “**Women of the Cheney Family**” exhibit; “a day in the life of Electa Cheney”, lifestyle, work and children; Electas’ impact on the Cheney men, woman’s issues and marginalized people, like the emancipation of slaves.

**March 19**, Sunday, 1 p.m. at the *History Center*, Speakers, “The Transition from Agriculture to Industry in Manchester”. Speakers Bettylou Sandy and Dennis Gleeson will cover the period 1770 through 1970 and beyond.

**May 14**, Sunday, 1-4 Homestead Museum Open House, focus on history of gardens, shrubs, flowers



and meadow; Spring at the Homestead with the first harvest of our herbs; regular house tours will be available.

**June 10**, Saturday, 1-4, Connecticut Open House Day. **Bicentennial interest.** George Cheney’s “**Common Place Book**”, “His thoughts and Readings” *from 1807 through 1824*; Tours, focusing on George and his activities and relationships at the Homestead, with Electa, with the children and in the community.

**June 11**, Sunday, 1-4 Homestead Museum Open House with Electa Cheney and Boy Scouts in our newly constructed outdoor baking oven. Also

available, children’s games of 1818 AND modern-day Lawn games with “Rec on the Run” from the town of Manchester. Regular house tours are also available.

We look forward to seeing you at one or many of our offerings by the Cheney Homestead Museum, at 106 Hartford Road. Visit us on Facebook, or on the website of the Manchester Historical Society.

*Join us in celebrating the contributions of*

# THE WOMEN OF THE CHENEY FAMILY

*~ from the Colonial Era to the Present Day ~*



MARCH 5: (1:00 - 4:00)

The History Center ~ 175 Pine Street ~ Manchester, CT

Professor Margery Resnick will speak of MIT’s first female graduate, Professor Ellen Swallow Richards (1873) and her student, Margaret Swan Cheney.

Following refreshments, visitors may tour the new exhibit at the Cheney Homestead Museum.

## Volunteers Are the Heart of Our Society

We depend a great deal on our volunteers to make the Society function and for our events and tours to take place, therefore we wish to acknowledge those who are the key to our success. They serve on committees, keep our properties maintained, plan events and programs, catalog artifacts, operate the museum stores and greet visitors. Thank you for all you do. The following persons volunteered during the year 2022. If you volunteered last year and your name does not appear here, we apologize and please let us know. We will acknowledge your participation in the next issue of the Courier.

Gail Adams  
Mike Agostinelli  
Debbie Bailey  
Susan and Malcolm Barlow  
Adam Bawwab  
Yusuf Bawwab  
David Beal  
Steve Blanchard  
Rita Borden  
Ruth Shapleigh Brown  
Jean Burr  
Ed Burzawa  
Carol Cafazzo  
Craig Cowing  
Susan Crombie  
Noreen Cullen  
Jamie Donahue  
Kevin Drake  
Robert Gauthier

Dennis Gleeson  
Anita Hawkins  
James Hall  
Dick Jenkins  
William Johnson  
Bob Kanehl  
Dan Kimball  
Fred Lea  
Beverly Logan  
Andrew Main  
Suzanne Mamet  
Maude McGovern  
Kris Miller  
Peter Millett  
Trudy Mitchell  
Peg Newton  
Catherine Pearson  
Steve Penny  
Bruce Perry

Art Pongratz  
Janet and Jack Prior  
Bettylou Sandy  
Earl Schaefer  
Tom Schuetz  
Deb Shaffer  
Deborah Simmons  
Dave Smith  
Gwyneth Smith  
Lynn Sottile  
Lou Spadaccini  
Rae Strickland  
Lucy Sweeney  
Gerhard Vogel  
Tom Waldo  
Ginny Wickersham  
Kathryn Wilson  
Carol Zapadka





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

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- |                    |  |       |                                      |         |  |       |
|--------------------|--|-------|--------------------------------------|---------|--|-------|
| Type of Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual              | \$25  | <input type="checkbox"/> Family      | \$50    | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Individual | \$60  |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Individual (65+) | \$20  | <input type="checkbox"/> Couple      | \$40    | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Family     | \$100 |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Student (under age 18)  | \$5   | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Couple | \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate               | \$500 |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Individual         | \$500 |                                      |         |  |       |

**I would like to make an additional contribution for**

- |   |          |   |          |
|---|----------|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manchester Historical Society Building Fund  | \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodbridge Farmstead Endowment | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manchester Historical Society Endowment Fund | \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Keeney Schoolhouse Fund        | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheney Homestead Endowment                   | \$ _____ |   |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Appeal                                | \$ _____ |   |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have enclosed a matching gift form         |          |   |          |

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