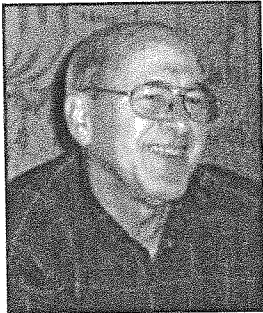


# The Courier

NOVEMBER 2005

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## Meet Your New President, John Dormer

by Robert Dunne

*(At the annual meeting of the Historical Society last month, the membership elected John Dormer to be the Society's new president. A native of Manchester and a resident for all but eight of his 66 years, John is a retired engineer from United Technologies. He has one son now living in Texas, and a step-son living in Germany. Relatively new to the organization, John became a member in 2002, the recipient of a gift membership. Within a few months, then-*

*President David Smith nominated John to become a member of the Board of Directors. As a way of introducing himself to members, John sat down recently for an interview.)*

**Q:** What are your immediate goals for the Society?

**A:** There are probably two goals that I would like to work very hard on in the coming year. One is to raise sufficient funds so we can have our roofing project on the History Center completed by spring of 2006, which means providing the matching money for our \$200,000 [Save America's Future] grant. Secondly, I would like to bring in more of our membership into volunteer service with the Society. We have a very active core group of volunteers, but with a membership of over 650, it would be nice if a lot more of those people could experience doing things with the Society. Most of them would find it gratifying and interesting. And I'm sure there's a space for everybody...I just think we need to make this the Year of the Volunteer, and try to supplement our very active volunteer group with some additional help.

**Q:** In spite of all the events that the Society does, it's surprising how the Society still doesn't register with a lot of people.

**A:** I think it's really a case of contacting people both for memberships and for volunteer work. A lot of us think that with museum work you can either file this old stuff or clean this old stuff or maybe catalogue it or show up at the times the museum is open . . . Obviously, there's a lot more to the Historical Society than just a museum. In the last couple of years we have grown tremendously in our presence in the community, in terms of what we provide the community with tours and with information. We're just coming of age. We have a tremendous background with 40 years of history work, but most of it has been kept to ourselves, so to speak; it hasn't really been promoted—but in the past two years

*(see Dormer, Page 2)*



## Deck the Halls with the Society!



Join us for our annual Holiday Open House Sunday, December 11, from 1-4 p.m. All of the Society's properties will be open to the public with free admission. The Old Manchester Museum at 126 Cedar Street will be decorated with a Santa theme and will feature an annual bake sale and retro-holiday tunes played on a jukebox donated by Shady Glen Dairy Store. The Cheney Homestead will again be splendidly decorated by the Manchester Garden Club. Our second annual silent auction of decorated wreaths will take place at our History Center at 175 Pine Street. In

addition to the auction, which will close at 3:30, there will be entertainment by the Connecticut Concert Ballet and singing groups from local schools. Refreshments will be served, and there will also be cookie decorating for kids of all ages.

**SECOND ANNUAL DECORATED WREATH AUCTION**  
Wreaths decorated and donated by area schools, individuals, and organizations will be on display at the History Center

*(see Deck the Halls, Page 3)*

*Dormer, from Page 1*

there's been a lot of that, and that's good. If we can retain our membership as well as bring in a number of new people, we'd have a much bigger base to get our volunteers from.

**Q:** I know that right now you've committed to being president for one year, but regardless whether you stay on as president after one year, what do see as the big picture, the long-range vision for the Society in, say, five years down the road?

**A:** I haven't thought a great deal about the *real* long range, but after the roof is on our History Center building, I'll feel much more comfortable about doing work inside, and probably the biggest exhibit that I would like to work on immediately would be the loom exhibit—to get that properly positioned, to get the room ready. Of course when we acquired those looms

we had all planned that it would be a working exhibit, where the looms would actually function. That in itself is a tremendous undertaking—the preparation of the looms . . . . Probably as to museum activity, the next goal will be to relocate the existing Old Manchester Museum to the History Center and, although I would like to see that happen within three years, I don't know if a four to four-and-a-half year time frame is more realistic. But before that we have a lot of other physical work to do at the History Center—window repairs, sash replacements. We've had a specialist look at the windows; that person believes that a lot of those windows could be restored, that we really don't need replacements. Replacing them with anything but wood windows would destroy the building, and why replace them with a window that probably won't last 15 to 20 years, when we have these 100-year-old windows, and even with 30 years of neglect they are still structurally—over 80% of them—usable.

**Q:** Confronted with tsunamis, hurricanes, and earthquakes, a lot of people are suffering from what some have called "compassion fatigue"—feeling both overwhelmed by disasters and being financially pinched from so much charitable giving. How can the Society convince people to keep donating and volunteering?

**A:** Well, that's actually two issues. One, a lot of us have time. The money we may or may not have control of. On the other hand, with volunteer time, there are people who have time even though they may not have the cash to donate a hundred dollars; they may have an hour a week that they can contribute. Very honestly, an hour a week for 40 weeks in a year is actually worth more to the Society than a hundred dollars. We do have a lot of work that can be volunteered for without affecting their cash flow. It is a problem, and a lot of charities are worried about this. People are exhausted from the money aspect, or if they're not sure they're out of money then they're pretty sure, and they just want to take a six-month breather to see how it goes. So many of these recent causes are definitely worthy, and some people don't have the capacity to give more. That is

definitely going to be a problem for maybe the first-time giver, that they won't give. People who have given in the past may have kept their donation for the Historical Society aside and will give it because they have always done it. But I hope that by showing people what we do and what the organization means to the town, people will say, yeah, we really need to support that.

**Q:** With the Society having a solid collection of materials related to the 19th and early 20th centuries, and with the History Center being housed in a former Cheney mill building, it has been a challenge for the Society to make the public aware that it does more than showcase the early history of just South Manchester. The recent attention to the 1960s, for example, plus the variety of walking tours around town, must be helping.

**A:** I certainly think those things not only get the name of the Historical Society out to the public but they show that the Historical Society is interested in things that are five years old as well as 50 or 150 years old. What we look at today as current events is history in the making, and if we can record it today we will have a much better record of it 50 years from now when it is history.

**Q:** The Board of Directors is in a position of filling up to seven vacancies. What kind of people would you like to see on the Board?

**A:** I would certainly want people who have the interest of the Society foremost in their mind. I would like to have people who are in a position to help the Society through this phase of its operation and growth. Board-member requirements might change over the years. Right now since we are interested in a fundraising program to get ourselves started, we will be interested in people in the community who have contacts, who know people, business people, but not just people for the sake of what we can use them for, but people who have an interest in what they can do for the Society. We need people who are business-oriented, not necessarily in the way of running a business, but who know how to run organizations,

(see *Dormer, Page 7*)

### *The Courier*

*A newsletter of the  
Manchester Historical Society*

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#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# Cheney Homestead News

by Mark Sutcliffe, Chairman

The Homestead is now closed for the season. Since the indoor temperature of the museum regularly dips into the low 40s during the winter, it would be rather uncomfortable for docents and visitors alike. We will turn up the heat and employ portable heaters if necessary, however, to make you warm and comfortable when you visit us for the Holiday Open House on Sunday, December 11, from 1-4 p.m. Come enjoy the decorations made by the Manchester Garden Club.

A special thank-you for donations recorded in the past fiscal year from: Jim Reuter and E. Buckley, Hollis Cassano, the Cheney Cemetery Association, Evelyn Clarke, John Fiske, April Hill, Mary Alice Blackburn Hill, Florence Johnson, Kimon Karath, Barbara King, Carol Lenihan, Tim and Faith McCann, the Meisner-McKnett family, Dorothy Olcott, John and Alexandra Preston, Gregg Schuyler, and Carol Sutcliffe. Your benevolence helps us maintain our building and collections.

## SPOTLIGHT ON COLLECTIONS

One of the interesting artifacts on display at the Homestead was known for many years as "Timothy Cheney's Revolutionary War Gun." That seemed logical since the patch box on the stock is engraved "Timothy Cheney Hartford 1775." Research conducted during its recent restoration, however, revealed that it would have been impossible for Timothy to have ever even *seen* the gun, much less carried it in the Revolution.

Timothy Cheney (1731-1795) was one of America's earliest clock-makers. He was also a farmer, grist mill operator, and soldier in the local militia. In 1768 he was appointed a lieutenant of the 6th Train-Band of Hartford in the Army of King George III. He was promoted to Captain of the Five Miles Train-Band in 1769 (the Five Miles area of East Hartford became Manchester in 1823). In 1774 he was a member of

the Colonial War Committee and in 1775 led one of the first Hartford companies of Patriot troops. He was elected a Captain of the militia but served only a short time for he was directed (according to tradition at the request of General Washington) to make granulating powder sieves used in the manufacture of gunpowder for the Continental Army. He built the Cheney Homestead about 1785 and died in 1795.

The gun is a Volunteer Model Baker Rifle designed by Ezekiel Baker and made by gunsmith Stephen Wallis for a British militia company called the Great Packington Volunteers. Its rifled barrel bears private proof marks from the Tower of London. Wallis worked in Birmingham, England, from 1807 to 1833. Clearly, it is a British gun that was made at least twelve years after Timothy's death. So how did it come to be engraved with his name?

Baker rifles were first produced in 1803 and were being phased out of regular service by about 1838. The Centennial of 1876 fueled a wave of patriotism and interest in Revolutionary War artifacts. I suspect that some enterprising soul decided to make instant family heirlooms at the exposition in Philadelphia. He imported a few crates of obsolete British flintlock rifles and set up shop. It didn't matter that the guns were not all from the eighteenth century, or even American, so long as they looked convincing. The Cheneys, like most American families of the day, wanted to have tangible proof of their ancestors' patriotism. What better way than to have their forefather's Revolutionary War musket hanging over the fireplace? A little engraving and *voilà*, grandfather Timothy's musket!

You can admire the fully restored gun in its custom-made display case at the open house. A grant from the Mr. and Mrs. William Foulds Family Foundation funded its conservation. The Beauregard Corporation donated the case.

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## Deck the Halls from page 1

from November 28 to December 9. Members of the public will be able to see the creative handiwork of various groups from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Mondays through Fridays. Because the viewing is free, this is also a great opportunity for non-members to see exhibits on display. The wreaths will be sold by silent auction. Bids will be accepted during the viewing period and again during the Holiday Open House on Sunday December 11. The bidding will close at 3:30 that day. Proceeds from the auction will benefit the programs of the Historical Society.

## SHOP TILL YOU DROP!

Don't forget to do your holiday shopping at the Museum Store. Books, mugs, t-shirts, cookbooks, and many other items will be on sale at the museum at 126 Cedar St. during museum hours and the History Center at 175 Pine Street Monday through Fridays from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.

## Welcome Our New Board Member

The Society welcomes its newest Board Director, Gerry Lupacchino. A life member of the Society, Gerry is Vice President of Client Services at J. Howard & Associates, a diversity consulting firm in Boston. Gerry's interests and experience will be of invaluable help to the Society, particularly in fundraising, preservation, and programming.

"Without question, Gerry will be a valuable member of our Board and community," fellow Board Director Gary Benson says.

Also a member of the Manchester Garden Club, Gerry lives on the south side of town, where he enjoys restoring his historic house.

*Welcome aboard!*

# An Unlikely Hero: John Lord Otis at War

by Rick Dyer

*(This is the second of a two-part essay chronicling the life of Civil War general John Lord Otis. The first part detailed Otis's rise in Manchester's mill industry until he enlisted in the Union army and trained with the Tenth Connecticut Volunteers, in Annapolis, MD. The second installment discusses his many battle experiences during the Civil War and his life after the war.)*

Otis, the self-taught mechanical engineer turned military officer, adapted easily to life in the Army, and was quickly recognized for his leadership. He was promoted to first lieutenant of Company B on November 4, 1861, and was made captain of that unit just eight days later. (As the war progressed, his advance in rank would be equally meteoric. Otis was selected for the rank of major on November 14, 1862, and sewed on the eagle insignia of a full Army colonel on February 13, 1863. In all, it took him less than 18 months to advance in rank from buck private to bird colonel).<sup>10</sup>

At Annapolis, the 10<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers were assigned to the First Brigade of General Ambrose E. Burnside's Division. The brigade was commanded by Brig. General John G. Foster. On January 2, 1862, Burnside's Division was sent aboard a flotilla of ships to interdict Southern privateers and fight rebel forces along the North Carolina seacoast. Two companies of the 10th Connecticut Volunteers—including Company B commanded by Captain Otis—made the passage in the sooty hold of a schooner that had previously been used to haul coal. Cramped accommodations, poor rations, and winter storms combined to make it a very unpleasant voyage for the Connecticut soldiers.

Otis later wrote in the unit's history that his regiment "...remained on shipboard, miserably provided for, over five weeks, then landed on February 7<sup>th</sup>, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> fought like a regiment of veterans in the battle of Roanoke Island, losing 56 killed and wounded—the heaviest loss sustained by any regiment engaged."<sup>11</sup> Among those killed in action was the commander of the 10<sup>th</sup> Volunteers, Colonel Charles L. Russell of Derby. He was succeeded by Colonel Albert W. Drake of Windsor.

On February 11, 1862, the 10<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers went back to sea for another month as the Burnside Expedition patrolled along the North Carolina coast. The unit was part of an amphibious Union force that sailed up the Neuse River and landed at Slocum's

Creek on March 13, 1862. On the following day, Otis and his company took part in a successful attack on Confederate forces at New Berne, North Carolina.

According to the unit history, 27 members of the 10th Connecticut Volunteers were killed or wounded during the fighting at New Berne on March 14<sup>th</sup>.<sup>12</sup> Army casualty records indicate that Otis suffered a "slight" leg wound during the battle.<sup>13</sup>

Members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Volunteers saw extensive combat in North Carolina throughout the summer and fall of 1862. On December 14, 1862, their regiment engaged in fierce fighting with Confederate forces at Kinston, NC. The Connecticut infantrymen were part of an expeditionary force commanded by General Foster. The Union troops, on a mission to destroy the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad, encountered stiff enemy resistance at a bridge near Kinston.

Otis described the Kinston battle in the regimental history: "General French, of the rebel army, occupied the town with about 7,000 men; one of his brigades under Colonel Mallett occupied a strong position on the opposite side of the Neuse River, to defend the approach to the bridge. Several Union regiments had attempted to carry the enemy's position, but were all repulsed; the Tenth was then sent for from the rear, passing on its way to the front, one entire brigade and three regiments of another. Arriving in position, it charged the enemy over three regiments lying down in line of battle, drove the enemy from their position, pursued them to the Neuse River, charged and carried the bridge, which was on fire, and, swept by four guns in a tete-du-pont, captured 500 prisoners, a like number of small arms, and eleven pieces of artillery."<sup>14</sup>

Although Otis modestly omitted any reference to his individual exploits in the unit history, he was in the thick of the fighting throughout the expedition in North Carolina. Now a major, he was wounded three times within four days: on December 14 at Kinston; on

December 16 during combat at Whitehall, NC; and on December 17 during a battle near Everettsville, NC, when Foster's troops captured and destroyed the Goldsborough Bridge.<sup>15</sup>

On December 24, 1862, President Lincoln directed that the Union troops then in North Carolina would comprise the Eighteenth Corps, under the command of Foster, who had been promoted to the rank of major general. Otis and the other members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers were part of a division that Foster led into South Carolina. On January 29, 1863, Foster's soldiers landed on St. Helena's Island in South Carolina.

On February 13, 1863, while still on St. Helena's Island, Otis was promoted to the rank of colonel and placed in command of the 10<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers. He subsequently fought in a number of battles and skirmishes in South Carolina, including attacks on the James and Morris Islands.<sup>16</sup>

While in South Carolina, Otis became ill with fever, which was probably attributable to malaria. He was sent back to Connecticut in July of 1863, and was subsequently placed in charge of a conscript camp in New Haven.<sup>17</sup> Although the assignment as commandant of the "Draft Rendezvous" afforded Otis the opportunity to convalesce and reunite with his family, the detail proved to be the most onerous one of his military career.

Many of the conscripts were men who wanted no part of military life, but lacked the financial resources necessary to avoid the draft. For the most part, they were unmotivated and undisciplined. Otis's obituary in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* later noted: "This camp had a garrison of 500 men and 80 officers. The position was an arduous and disagreeable one, entailing constant care and watchfulness day and night and about as dangerous as service on the field."<sup>18</sup>

After several months of detached service in New Haven, Colonel Otis

(see *Otis*, Page 5)

*Otis, from Page 4*

requested reassignment back to his old unit. He rejoined the 10<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers and resumed his command of the unit during November 1863 at St. Augustine, Florida.<sup>19</sup>

Otis and his men remained in Florida until April 1864. During that month, the 10<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers were sent to Virginia, where they joined the "Army of the James" and participated in the Union Army's assault upon the Confederate capital at Richmond, Virginia.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers saw heavy combat throughout the Richmond Campaign, and Otis once again proved that he was no rear echelon commander. He was cited for his courage under fire during the crossing of the James River on June 20, 1864 and at the battle of Fussell's Mill and Deep Bottom on August 28, 1864.

On October 13, 1864, Colonel Otis led his regiment into a fierce fight with well-fortified Confederate forces outside of Richmond, near Darbytown Road. Otis wrote that his unit "was ordered to join Pond's Brigade in charging a heavy and well-manned line of entrenchments on the Darby Road, five miles from Richmond. The force sent in was entirely inadequate and met with a bloody repulse, the Tenth losing forty-six killed and wounded—just one more than half the number taken into the fight. The enemy was not only thoroughly entrenched, but outnumbered the assaulting column five to one. During a service of more than three years, this was the first time the regiment had fallen back under fire."<sup>20</sup>

Although defeated, Otis and his men fought courageously at Darbytown. The Brigade Commander, Brig. Gen. Harris M. Plaisted, who later served as Governor of Maine, called Otis's efforts at Darbytown Road "the crowning act of his three years' service."<sup>21</sup> It was the Manchester colonel's last battle, and he led the charge into danger that he would have been justified to avoid.

Colonel Otis's term of service had actually expired several weeks prior to the battle at Darbytown Road. In a handwritten letter to the Army that he penned from the frontlines "near Richmond" on October 12, 1864, Otis wrote: "The three years for which I was originally mustered into the U.S. service having expired on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September last, I must respectfully request to be mustered out ..." <sup>22</sup>



He also added in the letter: "By reason of the expiration of their original term of enlistment, 207 men of the regiment are just discharged, reducing the total of the command to 413 men, with about 200 muskets in the field. There are now present for duty with the regiment three Field Officers and my services can probably be dispensed with without detriment to the service."<sup>23</sup> Colonel E.S. Greeley of New Haven replaced Otis as the commander of the 10<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers.<sup>24</sup>

Otis, now 37, mustered off active duty on October 18, 1864.<sup>25</sup> He was honorably discharged from the Army in January, 1865, after having been involved "in more than 50 battles and skirmishes" during the three years he was at war.<sup>26</sup>

On June 22, 1867, Colonel Otis received a "brevet" promotion to the rank of brigadier general in the "Volunteer Force, Army of the United States."<sup>27</sup> (Brevet is a military term that indicates the award of higher rank without higher pay, and sometimes without a higher command). It was customary then for the Army to bestow a brevet promotion, instead of medals, in recognition of an officer's exceptional war-time service.

The War Department order that appointed Otis a brigadier general noted that the honor was awarded for his "gallantry" at the crossing of James River, and at the battle of Fussell's Mill and Deep Bottom.<sup>28</sup> The promotion, which was

## *Reeling in the Years*

Revelers in period attire get ready for the fashion show at the Society's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary party, The Manchester Experience: The 1960s last month. The event, which included several exhibits, was attended by over 150 guests, many of whom donned fashions from the '60s.

retroactive to March 13, 1865, made General Otis the only Manchester citizen who achieved flag rank during the Civil War.

General Otis left Manchester after his military service ended and relocated with his family to Florence, Massachusetts. Florence is a village of Northampton, where Catherine Otis had lived prior to her marriage.

Otis quickly resumed his career as a manufacturer and businessman there. He worked for approximately three years as the superintendent of a sewing machine works in Florence.<sup>29</sup> He subsequently founded the Northampton Emery Wheel Company in Leeds, MA, a business with which he was involved until his death. An advertisement in the 1886 Northampton City Directory announced that the company produced "premium solid emery wheels," "oil stones," and "emery wheel machinery of all kinds."<sup>30</sup>

The war hero's leadership qualities were soon recognized by the citizens of his adopted town. Otis was elected a local selectman in 1875 and 1876. In 1878, he won election to the State House of Representatives. After spending one year in that chamber, he served two terms as a state senator. While in the state senate, Otis was a member of the military affairs committee and chairman of the committee on manufacturing.<sup>31</sup>

Otis later lost by several votes in a bid to become the first elected mayor of

(see *Otis*, Page 7)

# NewsNotes

## Reopening of Museum

After closing in early fall for a much-needed roof replacement, the Old Manchester Museum of Local History will reopen on November 27. Come on down!

## Road Race Exhibit

An exhibit devoted to the history of the Manchester Road Race opened November 14 at the History Center and will run through the end of December. The exhibit will also examine the role of women athletes and the Road Race, a theme established for this year's race.

## Dear Old House Owners...

Are you planning a restoration project for the exterior of your old or historic home? This is a reminder that each spring, the Cheney Brothers Historic District Advisory Commission recognizes property owners who have completed a restoration project during the previous year. If you are undertaking a project, be sure to document your progress with detailed "before and after" pictures and submit an application for the annual preservation award.

## An Exhibit for Green Thumbs

A collection of photos, original hand-made tools, and personal notes of Luther James Bradford Olcott, Manchester native and nationally famous grass gardener, will be on display at the Old Manchester Museum beginning Nov. 27.

## WANTED: Your E-mail Address

Please email us your email address! If you would like to receive reminders and notices of upcoming events and programs, please send your email address to us at [mdunne@mhs.necoxmail.com](mailto:mdunne@mhs.necoxmail.com). While this will be a convenient and inexpensive way to get the word out quickly, we promise not to clog your mailbox. You can expect to receive, on average, about one message each month.

## New Multicultural Exhibit

The Hispanic Experience in Manchester, an exhibit of photographs, clothing and objects, will open at the Manchester History Center in early January. This exhibit is a collaboration between the Historical Society and the Association of Puerto Ricans and Latinos United of Manchester (APLUM) and will include taped interviews with members of the Hispanic community conducted during an event held last summer. The exhibit will help tell the continuing story of Manchester as a town which has historically welcomed communities from all over the world who made a new home in this town.

## We Will Miss...

The Society regrets the recent passing of Joseph L. Sullivan. A dedicated member of the Society, Joseph was a life-long resident of Manchester who worked for over thirty years at the *Manchester Herald*.

## Welcome Aboard, New Members!

We welcome the following new individual or family members of the Society who joined between August 18 and November 5, 2005:

### From Manchester:

Sandra Bursey  
Rena Eagan  
Kevin and Lynne Ferrigno  
Ann Kibbie  
Judith and William Libby  
Marge Mlodzinski  
Robert C. Varvelli

### From other towns:

Norma Burchette (Gainesville, FL)  
Michael Griggs family (Dallas, TX)  
Al and Susan Vaughn Harris  
(Glendale, NY)  
Carolyn Krouse (Mahwah, NJ)  
William and Constance Kuhne  
(Van Nuys, CA)  
Patricia Morrison (New Haven)  
Nancy Pasloski (Needham, MA)  
Richard Walden (Fairfield)

## History on Your Television

by Susan Barlow

**H**istoric Hilliardville will air on Saturdays in December, on Public Access television in the Manchester area, channel 15, at 8 p.m. Octogenarian and property-owner Richard Bezzini tours the factory building where Old Colony furniture was once manufactured. Before the furniture business, E.E. Hilliard manufactured woolen goods in this section of town, using waterpower from dammed ponds, some of which survived into the twentieth century. "Hilliardville" has undergone many changes and will probably continue to change as one of the large factory buildings is for sale. In this one-hour television program, guest Bill Paquette uses maps and stories in describing the factory complex and the turbines that ran the machinery.

Our November show was dedicated to the late Earl Yost (1921-2005), a gentleman with legendary skill in sports-writing and editing. In this repeated program, we enjoy Earl's 2002 lecture on local sports and the *Manchester Herald*.

Other recent shows were *Historic Hockanum River with Doug Smith, 100th Anniversary of Center Park*, and interviews with Thelma Woodbridge and town historian Vivian Ferguson.

Some of our previous shows are available for holiday gifts at the Historical Society gift shop. Many can also be borrowed at Mary Cheney Library, or purchased. 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 647-9983, or visit the web site [www.ManchesterHistory.org](http://www.ManchesterHistory.org) and click the "contact us" button.

*Dormer, from Page 2*

how to set goals, how to create a program to reach the goal, and then how to document the goal when it's been reached. It takes constant review. Because sometimes you may set a goal with the knowledge you have now, but in a year you realize that that's not where you want to be going and you have to revise it. When we talk to people about being on the Board, we should bring out these areas and be very honest and frank with them and say, we thought you'd be a good Board member because this is one of our goals, this is what we are trying to reach, and we felt that you have that kind of ability to help us in that area. We don't need all financial wizards on the Board, we don't need people with social contacts only, but I think that we should try to select people—we really need a niche person for this particular kind of thing. That's one of the things we have to really get into as a Board of Directors: not just the historical-collection end of this Historical Society, but the nuts and bolts of how the Society works and how we go about making it function—because it has gotten large compared to 20 people who were interested in preserving the history of Manchester. And the needs are different than they were 40 years ago. We have to develop this appreciation for that niche and realize that these people may not be interested in being on a committee or do physical work for an exhibit set up. But that's okay. Because they can come through in a certain area, an area of their expertise. They can't be everything that the Society wants all wrapped up in every single Board member. I have to make sure, as President, that we achieve that level of balance and understanding. You can almost look at it as a corporation with different divisions. That sounds awfully cold and business like, but it's all these divisions that make the corporation.

**Q:** Any final thoughts?

**A:** I'm looking forward to a very productive year with the Society.



## Early Winter Calendar of Events

*Unless otherwise noted, admission to lectures and walking tours is free to Manchester Historical Society members and \$5 for non-members*

Dec. 11 Sunday 1-4 p.m.	<i>Holiday Open House</i> History Center, Old Manchester Museum, Cheney Homestead FREE to the Public	<i>(See related story)</i>
Dec. 18 Sunday 2 p.m.	<i>Manchester 1965</i> Lecture by Susan Barlow History Center	
Jan. 1 Sunday 1 p.m.	<i>Hudson Street Neighborhood Walking Tour</i> Led by Tanyss Ludescher	

*Coming this Spring: Old House Fair 2006, lectures and walking tours focusing on the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary War route.*

*Otis, from Page 5*

Northampton. He also served for many years as a member of the Massachusetts Republican State Central Committee.

Otis was active in many other civic and fraternal affairs in the Northampton area. The general was a leading figure in the Massachusetts Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union Civil War veterans. He was also a leader in his church, a director of the Northampton National Bank, and a trustee of the local mental hospital.<sup>32</sup>

On March 14, 1894, General Otis died of heart failure at his winter residence in Tarpon Springs, Florida. He was 67 years old. Ironically, his death occurred on the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the battle at New Berne, North Carolina, where he was wounded for the first time.<sup>33</sup> Among the eight bearers at his funeral several days later in Florence were four of Otis's comrades from the 10<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers: General E.S. Greeley (who succeeded Otis as the unit commander); Captain John A. Way, Captain Benjamin Wright, and Captain H.L. Durand.<sup>34</sup>

Today, a photograph of General Otis is displayed in the Manchester Historical Society Museum. Otis Street, located near the Cheney Mills complex, is believed to have been named in his honor.

Although he only spent a portion of his life in Manchester, Otis made a large imprint on the town's history. His technological expertise helped the Cheney

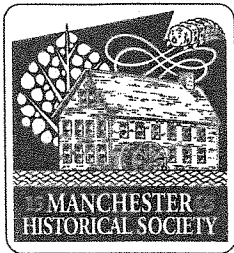
Brothers to significantly expand their textile industry, and his bravery on southern battlefields helped to preserve an endangered Union.

Unlikely or not, John Lord Otis was an authentic Manchester hero.

### Endnotes

10. Muster Roll records of the 10<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteer Infantry Regiment obtained from the National Archives in Washington, DC.
11. "Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the Army and Navy of the United States During The War of the Rebellion," Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company (Hartford, CT), 1889, as set forth in the "History of the Tenth Regiment C.V. Infantry" by Brvt. Brig. Gen. John L. Otis, p. 394.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 394.
13. War Department "Casualty Sheet" record obtained from the National Archives in Washington, DC.
14. "Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the Army and Navy of the United States During the War of the Rebellion," Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company (Hartford, CT), 1889, as set forth in the "History of the Tenth Regiment C.V. Infantry" by Brvt. Brig. Gen. John L. Otis, p.394.
15. War Department "Casualty Sheet" record obtained from the National Archives in Washington, D.C.
16. "Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the Army and Navy of the United States During the War of the Rebellion," Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company (Hartford, CT), 1889, as set forth in the "History of the Tenth Regiment C.V. Infantry" by Brvt. Brig. Gen. John L. Otis, p. 394.
17. Obituary, *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (Northampton, MA) March 15, 1894.
18. *Ibid.*

*(see Otis, Page 8)*



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**Otis, from Page 7**

- 19. Copy of War Department Special Order No. 510, obtained from the National Archives in Washington, DC.
- 20. "Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the Army and Navy of the United States During the War of the Rebellion," Press of the Case, Lockwood and Brainard Company (Hartford, CT), 1889, as set forth in the "History of the Tenth Regiment C.V. Infantry" by Brvt. Brig. Gen. John L. Otis, p.397.
- 21. Charles A. Sheffield, *History of Florence: 1681-1884* (Florence, MA, 1895), pp. 234-35.
- 22. Copy of letter written by Colonel John L. Otis on October 12, 1864, obtained from the National Archives in Washington, DC.
- 23. Ibid.
- 24. "Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the Army and Navy of the United States During the War of the Rebellion," Press of the Case, Lockwood and Brainard Company (Hartford, CT), 1889, as set forth in the "History of the Tenth Regiment C.V. Infantry" by Brvt. Brig. Gen. John L. Otis, p. 397.
- 25. Muster Roll records of the 10th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry obtained from the National Archives in Washington, DC.
- 26. Obituary, *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (Northampton, MA), March 15, 1894.
- 27. Copy of War Department General Order No. 65, dated June 22, 1867, obtained from the National Archives in Washington, DC.
- 28. Ibid.
- 29. Obituary, *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (Northampton, MA), March 15, 1894.
- 30. Northampton, Massachusetts City Directory (1886), p. 258.
- 31. Obituary, *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (Northampton, MA), March 15, 1894.
- 32. Ibid.
- 33. Ibid.
- 34. "Funeral of General Otis," in *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (Northampton, MA) March 21, 1894.

*The author consulted several other historical texts and web sites to gain a greater contextual understanding of the life and times of John Lord Otis, and the battles which he fought. Sincere thanks are extended to the staff members at the National Archives, the Connecticut State Library and Museum, the Manchester Town Clerk's Office, the Mary Cheney Public Library, the Northampton Public Library, the Manchester Historical Society, and the Florence (MA) Historical Museum of the Florence Civic and Business Association for their invaluable assistance.*