



“50 YEARS OF PRESERVING LOCAL HISTORY”

The Courier

SEPTEMBER 2020

VOL. 55, No. 4

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

President's Message

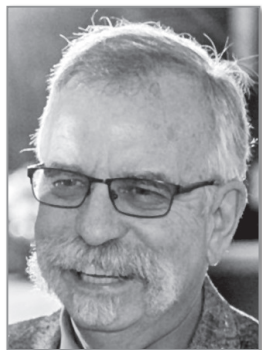
By Jack Prior

Greetings one and all.

This spring and summer many of us may have been hunkered down as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones well. Spring arrived early and summer has had many days over 90 degrees. However, neither COVID-19 nor the heat of the summer have kept the Historical Society quiet. Many projects have either been completed or are in the process of being completed.

Projects completed or in the works include multiple modifications being made to the ground floor space of the History Center building. Rooms are being refreshed and rearranged to expand the usability of the spaces. Some restoration work has been done to the infrastructure. A space has been created for our new Mill Studio, which conducts classes in the fine arts. For class information please visit our website. Upon entering the Mill Studio area, one is greeted by an inviting lobby. Rental space has been expanded and refreshed. We hope to have an open house in this area when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

We have been busy with securing the required documentation and approval to update our HVAC systems. The design was approved by the Cheney Historic District Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office after documentation required by the town, including the Structural Engineer's report of the roof support and an Electrical Engineer's assessment of our current and future electrical needs was provided. By the time you read this, the new HVAC system should be fully functioning on the top



floor and part of the first floor space. It has been a long road but thanks to Gerry Gallo and many others for their hard work and dedication on this project.

Additionally, we are in the process of revamping Room 2 on the upper floor. It currently contains the research library and some exhibits. We are adding offices to the room and have acquired furniture from Travelers. As part of restructuring the room, the research library will be expanded and a restricted area for valuable library materials created. A new archive area will be constructed as well and all research materials will be housed in the History Center. There will be no need to travel between our different facilities in order to do research. The center area of Room 2 will bring back memories of Manchester's Main Street of the past.

This winter, safety improvements were completed at the Cheney Silk Store House/Vault building. Upgrades to the electrical system were installed. In addition, safety wire was added to the second and third floor railings to prevent someone falling between the rails. If you look at the building, the wire is almost invisible, thereby maintaining the original look of the building. A safety railing was added to the stairs leading to the railroad platform. The perimeter of the building is being enhanced by the removal of brush and trees. Come by and check it out. Future improvements will include painting, brick pointing, roofing, and concrete deck work. We are working on adding an interpretive sign which will describe the history of the building. This unique building will be an added point of interest on the newly expanded Cheney Rail trail.

At this time, we hope all members have had a chance to review our new revamped Bylaws and have had your questions answered. Thank you again

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Drop Us A Line...

You can contact us at
info@manchesterhistory.org
or President Jack Prior at
president@manchesterhistory.org

The Courier

*A newsletter of the
Manchester Historical Society*

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100 Years Ago...

Women Vote for First Time in Presidential Election

By Dave Smith

The election of 1920 was the first time women were allowed to vote after the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified August 18, 1920, guaranteeing all American women the right to vote. In Manchester an active campaign to register women was carried out leading up to the election on November 2. As a result some 1,600 Manchester women were now allowed to vote for the first time.

It was soon realized that since women had not voted before, lessons were needed to show them how to use the voting machines, which were first used in Manchester about 8 years prior to this election. It was decided to set up demonstrations in four locations in town: Washington School, East Side Recreation Center, Town Hall and Union School in the north end.

As a result of the election, Warren G. Harding became president and Manchester continued as a strong Republican town. As reported, "the usual plurality in Manchester at national elections is about 500, but today the number was increased to 1,700. It may be a coincidence, but there were just about that many women made voters in Manchester this year."

Genealogy Group News

The Genealogy Group meetings are on hold through the rest of this year. In December there will be an announcement about meetings in 2021. Look for that announcement on Facebook or via the eBlast messages which come out on Fridays to those who have signed up for them.

Museums Reopen

Our museums have reopened on their normal schedules, but with limited attendance and use of face masks and social distancing required.

Old Manchester Museum open the first Saturday each month from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. May through December.

Cheney Homestead open the second Sunday each month from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. year round

Woodbridge Farmstead open the second and fourth Sunday each month from 12 noon until 2 p.m. May through October

History Center open Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. At the present there is remodeling underway on the top floor so access to some areas will be restricted.

Your ad could be here!

Contact us for details

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.

Seasons at the Woodbridge Farmstead

A Sizzling Summer

By Peggy Newton

The Woodbridge barn and house had a fun-filled summer season despite our late opening due to COVID-19. To celebrate finally being together we held our 2nd Annual Duck Race and egg hunt. That was followed by a visit from Bruce Perry, our antique tool expert, who stumped us with some of his old tools. His knowledge of the equipment and their use was extraordinary. An old fashioned game day followed with badminton and croquet competitions.

A highlight of the summer season was the celebration of the 100th anniversary of women getting the vote. Town historian Susan Barlow gave an informative talk on the Suffrage Movement. Town Troubadour Bill Ludwig sang Suffrage era songs and Avery Devine was guest fiddler. On a lighter note, there was a Suffrage Hat Contest, which was won by Elaine Mistretta and her plant based chapeau.

Heat and humidity were present at all our open days and now we are looking forward to a cooler fall. September programs will include a visit of farm animals from Aussakita Farm and an herbal lecture by Kathy Gallo.

We want to thank all our visitors and volunteers who followed the COVID-19 rules, and especially our “Farm Family of Five” who have attended every open day! We wish them and all school children and staff a safe school year.



Bruce Perry describing use of a peat digger.

President's Message

continued from front page

for the fantastic teamwork of Attorney Geoff Nabb, Dianne Lenti, Attorney Malcolm Barlow, and Carol Cafazzo, who undertook this monumental task. It was a pleasure working with you. Before final approval and implementation of the Bylaws, the new board had the opportunity to provide input to the document. Due to their suggestions, the clarification of the society's different committees was made. All committees have been opened to non-board members, as well as non-society members. That being said, we encourage all who participate on a committee to become a member of the Society. Our new Bylaws are accessible on our website to everyone for viewing. If you are interested in joining one of our committees, of which you will find a listing on our website, you are encouraged to call the History Center or email me directly at president@manchesterhistory.org

Through a generous donation of time and funds from Carol Cheney, we will soon see a new look and feel to our website. In collaboration with a group of society members, Carol and her team of professional designers will begin to create our redesigned website. The Historical Society looks forward to this exciting endeavor.

We have had to make adjustments to the way we provide events. Over the spring and summer we have had several virtual events via Zoom and Facebook. The Cheney Homestead and the Woodbridge Farmstead have now opened again with outdoor events and limited tours of the interior of each house. Thanks to Susan Barlow for keeping everyone up to date through our Facebook page and our weekly eBlast. Please follow or subscribe to them because they will have the latest events happening at the Society.

Finally, please remember to support our Annual Fund Campaign. It is an important source of funds for our daily operations.

Motoring Adventure

In the last issue of The Courier we reported that 100 years ago the Maggs family drove from Manchester to Oregon. The fact that it took an arduous 3 weeks to make the journey was omitted from the story. We could not find a report of their return journey.

Annual Campaign Underway

The Annual Fundraising Campaign is now in full swing. This is one of our most important fund raising efforts each year. It provides support for the many expenses that cannot be supported by grants or designated donations. Expenses such as utility costs, insurance premiums, office supplies, and staff salaries are paid with unrestricted donations. Even

purchases of artifacts to add to our collections usually are covered by unrestricted donations. Membership dues cover some of these expenses, but not nearly all of them.

Please make a donation to the Annual Fund Campaign this month. Your support is greatly appreciated.

World War II Exhibit at Old Manchester Museum

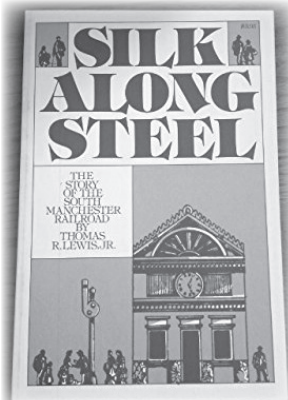
A new exhibit commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II is now open to the public at the Old Manchester Museum. The display includes activities on the Homefront and the many ways that Manchester contributed to the war effort. There are stories of local men who served, including those who paid the supreme sacrifice. Items on display include a Pioneer Parachute Co. parachute in its pack, a model and battle flag of the

USS Barb submarine which had a distinguished career during the war, original posters used during the war, uniforms from the various branches of the service worn by Manchester men, and V-Mail correspondence from men serving overseas.

We would like to acquire copies of correspondence from servicemen written during the war. There are still many stories that have not been preserved and that is part of our mission.



Battle Flag of USS Barb Submarine



"Silk Along Steel" Reprinted

This book, written by Thomas R. Lewis, Jr. has been reprinted and is once again available for purchase. The author gives a complete history of the South Manchester Railroad including pictures and maps. We have copies available in our museum stores. The 64 page book price is \$15.

Calendar of Events

Please Note: visiting all of our properties requires the use of face masks, and social distancing.

Old Manchester Museum at 126 Cedar St. is open the first Saturday of the month, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. May through December, depending on the weather and also by appointment. The research facility is available year round by appointment only. To make an appointment for a museum tour or to use the research facility please phone 860-647-9983. In addition to a wide variety of exhibits covering Manchester's history including Cheney Brothers, Bon Ami Soap, Spencer rifles, Pitkin Glass, Manchester's elementary schools, and the Manchester Sports Hall of Fame, there is also a museum store. The building was the former two-room Cheney School, built in 1859.

The History Center and museum store are located in the former Cheney Brothers Machine Shop, 175 Pine St. at the corner of Forest St. Open Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. You can purchase local history items such as books, copies of vintage maps, t-shirts, mugs, note cards and limited edition ceramic tree ornaments with images of our historic buildings. Parking is available along Pleasant St. and in the lot along the Forest St. side of the building.

Genealogy Group meetings will tentatively return in January 2021 -- these are meetings for both amateur and more experienced genealogists, exploring topics in genealogy, helping each other with research and in overcoming roadblocks. Some meetings have guest speakers, and some have round-table discussions, sharing ideas, techniques, successes, and problems. We meet at the History Center. The Genealogy Group consists of Historical Society members, but nonmembers are also welcome (\$3.00 fee for nonmembers). The group usually meets on the second Tuesday of the month, except December, July, and August.

Saturday, September 5 Old Manchester Museum open. Hosts Bob Kanehl and Art Pongratz can help answer local history questions, and there's a museum shop to browse.

Sunday, September 13 Woodbridge Farmstead open. This Sunday we will feature piglets from Aussakita Acres Farm. Kids (both young and old) will be able to pet the animals.

Sunday, September 13 Cheney Homestead open. Tour this historic property, including grounds and gardens, and the Homestead Art Gallery where you will be inspired by Manchester's rich history in art.

Cheney Homestead Museum at 106 Hartford Rd. is open the second Sunday of the month year round from 1 until 4 p.m. Also by appointment - please call 860-647-9983. The Homestead, built in 1785, is where the Cheney brothers grew up and it remained in the Cheney family until it was donated to the Manchester Historical Society in 1969. Exhibits include Cheney family furnishings and an art gallery featuring artwork by John and Seth Cheney and other family members. The house is built into a hillside with doors opening out at the upper and lower levels.

Woodbridge Farmstead Museum at 495 Middle Turnpike East is open May through October on the second and fourth Sundays of the month from 12 noon until 2:00 p.m. It is closed during the winter. The 200 year old barn and several rooms in the house are also open. The farm remained in the Woodbridge family for over 200 years until it was donated to us in 1998. Parking is available at the Senior Center and in the lot behind the barns.

Board meetings of the Historical Society are held at 6:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month at the History Center (except the July and August meetings, which are usually held at the Old Manchester Museum). Members are welcome to attend and may speak or ask questions at the beginning of the meeting. Questions may be directed to 860-647-9983.

Sunday, September 27 Annual Meeting of the Historical Society at 1:00 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting available to members via WebEx. Directions on how to attend the meeting are included with the proxy forms sent to all members.

Sunday, September 27 Woodbridge Farmstead open. This Sunday will feature a talk and demonstration about herbs and herbal recipes by Kathy Gallo. Kathy's passion has been organic gardening and medicinal herbs. She will share her favorite herbs, foods and guidelines to better health. Samples of her homemade elderberry elixir will be offered along with recipes.

Seating is limited and reservations required. Please call 860-647-9983 to secure a reservation.

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Calendar of Events *continued from page 5*

Saturday, October 3 Old Manchester Museum open. Visit with hosts Bob Kanehl and Art Pongratz and reminisce about the old days.

Saturday, October 10, at 1:00 p.m., 45th annual walking tour of the Cheney Historic District with commentary by Dr. Christopher Paulin of Manchester Community College. Popular history walk starting at Fuss & O'Neill, 146 Hartford Road (plenty of parking in the lots west and south of the building). Find out about those huge brick buildings that remain from the days of the world-famous silk mills. Who worked there? Who owned the mills? Where did workers and owners live? This event is co-sponsored by Manchester Community College and the Cheney District commission. We'll see Cheney Hall, the former silk mills, the location of the former South Manchester Railroad, the former Cheney machine shop, neighborhoods of worker housing, and Washington School. The walk takes about two hours with a distance of a mile or so. No rain date, so bring umbrellas if weather is iffy. Extreme weather cancels.

Sunday, October 11 Cheney Homestead open.

Sunday, October 11 Woodbridge Farmstead open. "Decorate a Pumpkin" and guess the weight of our large pumpkin and win a prize

Sunday, October 25 Woodbridge Farmstead open. celebrating the fall harvest season

Saturday, November 7 Old Manchester Museum open.

Sunday, November 8 Cheney Homestead open.

Saturday, December 5 Old Manchester Museum open.

Sunday, December 13 Cheney Homestead open.



Cheney Mill Art Studio



A Woman's Suffrage Connection in the Cheney Homestead Collection

By Peter Millett

Before the success in 1920 that gave women the right to vote, there was the women's rights movement of the early 19th century, starting nearly a hundred years before. Ednah Dow Cheney, from a very early age, was at the center of this burgeoning movement, along with many notable friends such as Julia Ward Howe ("Battle Hymn of the Republic"), Caroline Healey Dall (friend since child and later prominent journalist), and Dr. Harriot Kezia Hunt. Dr. Hunt was one of the earliest professional female physicians, and after twice being publicly rejected from admittance to Harvard Medical School in the 1850's, she joined the women's movement to advance women's opportunities. It was in her home in Boston that Howe as president and Cheney as vice president, Hunt, Dall and others founded and gathered as the New England Women's Club to strongly and publicly advocate for the rights of women.

In the library at the Cheney Homestead is the autobiography by Dr. Hunt, personally inscribed as a gift "To the Cheney Homestead", "Glances and Glimpses" (1856). In this book, Dr. Hunt firmly states, "The prevalent custom of educating young women only for marriage . . . of bringing them up without an occupation, profession or employment, and thus leaving them dependent on anyone but themselves . . . is an enormous evil, and an unpardonable sin".

It is possible that Dr. Hunt, experienced with caring for patients with tuberculosis, visited her close friends Ednah and her husband Seth at the Cheney Homestead. Seth succumbed later that same year of tuberculosis, leaving Ednah as a thirty-two year old widow with a child one year old, encouraged by her brothers-in-law of the Cheney family and with the affection of her many Boston friends.

Ednah was in an independent position and raised their daughter as a single mother by choice. Margaret Swan Cheney later graduated as one of the first female students of the Boston Institute of Technology, which became MIT. With her friend Dr. Hunt and others, Ednah redoubled her commitment to women's rights, abolition and educational opportunities for young women and the freed slaves following the Civil War.

In addition to the women's club, they founded the School of Design for Women in Boston, the New England Hospital for Women and Children, and spoke at meetings across the country advocating for women's rights. Ednah controversially was the first woman to speak at the Harvard Divinity School, again fighting for the rights of women, and published one of the early handbooks for citizens (for the newly freed slaves), "A Handbook for American Citizens" (1864).

Earlier, at the age of thirteen, Ednah in a series of letters, corresponded and debated with her close friend Caroline Healey (later Dall). Influenced by outspoken intellectual women of their time, including



Ednah Dow Cheney

participation in Margaret Fuller's "Conversations" classes and with the expectations of Republican Motherhood of the time (a belief that in the new republic, girls should be better educated than boys since mothers are the primary teachers of the children), Ednah and Caroline engaged in spirited debates with their peers and each other. Their debate and letters are preserved in Margaret

McFadden's article, "Boston Teenagers Debate The Woman Question, 1837-38" (1990, University of Chicago Press. Ednah at this early age challenges her friend to stand firm and, "let them not lead you to the altar of matrimony until you are allowed your full political rights", and to disobey laws "we don't have a hand in making.". And finally, "The heart cannot be satisfied with common everyday life; the mind at times must burst the bonds of its prison house, and be free."

At the Cheney Homestead we value the stories, lives and history we have in early Manchester, and the significant connections to Early American issues and ideas.

Further Reading & Research:

Ednah Dow Cheney – "Reminiscences", and various online books/resources at Manchesterhistory.org

Dr. Harriot K. Hunt – "Glances and Glimpses", 1856

Caroline Healey Dall – "Daughter of Boston"

Margaret Fuller – Leading intellectual of her time, and co-laborer with Ralph Waldo Emerson in the Transcendental Movement.



The Manchester Historical Society
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Address: _____

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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
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Individual	\$500				

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<input type="checkbox"/> Cheney Homestead Endowment	\$ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Appeal	\$ _____		
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