



“50 YEARS OF PRESERVING LOCAL HISTORY”

The Courier

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A Message From the President

by Dennis Gleeson

During the past three months the Society has been active in spite of the long hot spell. When you are the steward of old buildings necessary repairs never let up. The restoration of the Woodbridge barn was completed and it will soon be available for visitors, even though the displays are not yet in place. The restoration work was carried out by J. A. Rosa Construction, and they have been very cooperative and easy to work with. Their attention to detail and innovative ways to solve some of the problems with the barn made the project go smoothly.

Also at the Woodbridge house, repairs were made to some of the ceilings and we recorded the collection of textile books amassed by Thelma Woodbridge. There are well over 100 titles in the collection.

In June the Cheney family held a large reunion with over 75 family members attending from around the country. The History Center and the Cheney Homestead were the center of activities for the reunion and our volunteers did an excellent job during the three day event. At the Homestead we had to remove three dead or dying trees along Hartford Road that were deemed unsafe.

The big news for us at the reunion was the announcement of a major gift of \$500,000 from the Learned Preston Family Trust. \$25,000 will be received each year over the next 20 years. Please see the accompanying article about this wonderful donation to the Society.

In October we will be changing the officers of the Society. I want to thank all the volunteers who have been so helpful during the past several years, especially those who have served at our events and those on the several committees. The organization cannot do what it does without you. Being at the History Center I have met so many interesting people and found so much about the history of Manchester. Thank you for your support during my Presidency.

In seven years we will be observing the 200th anniversary of the establishing of Manchester. That birthday will be here soon.

Major Gift for Society Announced

The Manchester Historical Society has received news that it will be the recipient of a major and transformative gift from a devoted member of the Cheney family. This was announced at the recent 100th anniversary of the Cheney Cemetery Association.

The benefactor follows in the footsteps of her Cheney forefathers who set about building a thriving manufacturing business based on hard work, an entrepreneurial spirit and a good will partnership among all the stakeholders in the larger enterprise of the town. The Cheney family were philanthropists, establishing a legacy of giving that has lasted for almost two centuries.

The donor, Alexandra Learned Preston, is descended from Charles Cheney, one of the founding brothers of Cheney Brothers Silk Manufacturing Company. Her grandmother Emily Cheney married Henry Barrett Learned in 1899. She grew up in Manchester at 30 Forest St., the home of her parents Horace and Eileen Learned.

Mrs. Preston and her late husband, John Elwood Preston, established a Family Trust for purposes of supporting causes and charities that were important to them. Mrs. Preston said that taking care of tangible elements of the Cheney legacy, including the Cheney Homestead at 106 Hartford Road, is her way of preserving the Cheney's spirit of generosity, entrepreneurship, and good will. Her gift will keep a proud history alive for generations of Connecticut residents and visitors to come.

Mrs. Preston has informed us that starting this year, 2016, the Learned Preston Trust will gift to the Manchester Historical Society \$25,000 annually for the next 20 years to benefit the Homestead and Cheney-related programs. This yearly infusion of income will enable the Manchester Historical Society to assure the upkeep of the house museum on Hartford Road and will also enable the Society to stretch its wings in educational and preservation programming related to Cheney Brothers silk and the Cheney family.



Drop Us A Line...

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

The Courier

*A newsletter of the
Manchester Historical Society*

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We encourage our members to support the
Corporate Members of the Society.

Fuss & O'Neill, Inc.
Highland Park Market
Manchester Road Race Committee
Royal Ice Cream Company
Lofts at the Mills

13th Annual Holiday Gala & Auction

We are busy preparing for our Annual Holiday Gala which will be held on Friday, December 2 from 6:00 til 9:00 p.m. at the History Center. This event is one of the major fundraisers for the Society and we look forward to an evening of socializing, fun and excitement. Once again there will be both a live auction as well as a silent auction.

Volunteers

In the February Courier we listed the many volunteers who have helped the society during the previous year. We inadvertently failed to include Diane Bordeaux Lenti who has served as program coordinator for our Genealogy Group. Thank you Diane for your many years of serving the Society.

We Will Miss

Frances Smith was a long time Life Member of the Society. Fran was active at the Senior Center and volunteered at many of our events well into her 100th year. She was a major financial supporter of the Society and enjoyed her many contacts and friends here.

The Mystique of Silk New Exhibit at History Center

There is now a new exhibit at the History Center thanks to a generous donation of vintage Cheney Brothers magazine advertising by Carol Cheney. These ads were collected over a period of years and have been assembled into a fascinating display of women's and men's fashions during the first third of the last century.

Cheney Brothers mastered the art of marketing and presented their products in a stylish and innovative way. They recognized that usually the women were the deciders when it came to purchasing silk goods, either for themselves and their men, their homes and even their cars. The company appealed to the upper class especially and utilized artists for magazine and display advertising.

This exhibit commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Cheney Cemetery Association and the enduring Cheney Family legacy of innovation and good will. The dedicated service of thousands of Cheney Brothers employees helped build the Town of Manchester.

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.

Landfear Organ Returns Home

By Dave Smith

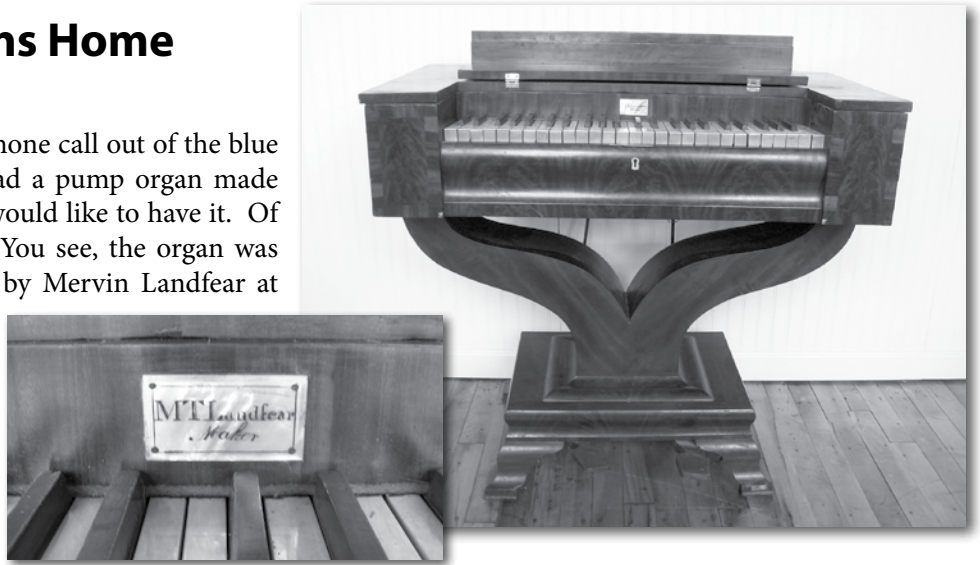
Several months ago we received a phone call out of the blue from Tennessee. The caller said she had a pump organ made by M. T. Landfear and wondered if we would like to have it. Of course we immediately answered Yes! You see, the organ was made in Manchester during the 1850s by Mervin Landfear at his shop on Vernon Street. We know of only two others, so we knew right away that it would be an important addition to our collection.

We understood it would not be an outright donation but the price seemed reasonable so we agreed to go ahead and acquire it. We do not know how it

made its way to Knoxville, but we were told it had been in eastern Tennessee for many years and at one point was on the verge of being discarded. Fortunately the current owner recognized its value as an historical piece and her interest in old pianos resulted in her acquiring the organ at no cost to her. She had some repairs done and made it playable.

Mervin Talcott Landfear was born in what is now Manchester in 1820, the son of Harry L. Landfear. For several years he ran a music shop at the corner of Vernon and Lydall Streets where he made Piano Fortes and Euphonicos. In 1860 he moved to Middletown and later moved to New Haven where he was an agent for pianos and organs and advertised as a piano tuner and repairer. Mervin died in New Haven in 1909 and is buried in Manchester's East Cemetery.

In late August Dennis and Dave drove to Knoxville to pick up the organ and return it to its birthplace. The organ is now on display at the History Center until a more permanent exhibit is created. We are looking for an appropriate period stool to complete the exhibit.



Genealogy Group Meetings

On the second Tuesday of the months of September, October and November, the Genealogy Group of the Manchester Historical Society will meet at 10:00 am at the Manchester History Center, 175 Pine Street. (Note there will not be a meeting in December) The format will be a round table discussion. This is an opportunity to learn from fellow group members doing family research. Come with your questions and stumbling blocks. We also want to hear of your successes. Do you have any helpful advice, promising web sites or helpful books and magazines? Beginners or experts are welcome. The Genealogy Group consists of Historical Society members with an interest in researching their own family history. The general public is always welcome to attend the genealogy meetings with a suggested donation of \$3.00. Future meetings are listed on the events page at www.manchesterhistory.org.

Annual Dinner Friday, October 14th

Don't forget to mail your Entree Choice
(if you have not done so already)

See next page!



The Manchester Historical Society Invites You to the

Annual Dinner

On Friday, October 14, 2016

Manchester Country Club, 305 South Main Street, Manchester

5:30 p.m. – Dinner, \$35.00 per person; celebrating the 50th anniversary of our founding on September 30, 1965 with social time at 5:30; then dinner at 6:00 and an after-dinner talk by Bob Gorman. Complete the form below and send check as described below.

Menu:

Fresh fruit cup ♦ Tossed garden salad

Choice of entrée:

♦ Prime Rib ♦ Chicken Cordon Bleu ♦ Filet of Sole ♦ Vegetarian Tortellini

Served with:

Vegetables ♦ Potatoes ♦ Rolls and butter ♦ Coffee and tea

Dessert:

Ice Cream with Chocolate Sauce

Following dinner:

“94 Years of Manchester Memories” by Bob Gorman, who was born in Manchester in 1922. His family owned the State Service garage on Main Street, Downtown, and Bob will share stories about Gorman construction and quarrying – businesses that continue their historic and architectural influences to this day.

State Service station and the Patrick Gorman mansion on the west side of Main Street in Downtown Manchester.



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

❖ **Please put a big “X” in the entrée choice next to each guest’s name** ❖

Print name of guest and select entrée ➡	Chicken	Filet of Sole	Prime Rib	Vegetarian

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

Total Number of People _____ @ \$35.00 per person = \$ _____ enclosed. Check # _____

Return this portion with check payable to **Manchester Historical Society** 175 Pine Street, Manchester, CT 06040 by September 24 (or bring in person). Please write **DINNER** on the outside of the envelope!

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

Calendar of Events

- **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 -- where you can purchase local-history items such as books on local history, copies of vintage maps, Kage company plastic decorations, Manchester Herald cookbooks, t-shirts with historic scenes of Manchester, copies of high school yearbooks, vintage business directories, mugs, notecards, and limited-edition ceramic tree ornaments with images of Cheney Homestead and other landmarks. There's an exhibit of the Russell barber shop, with barber pole, and vintage barbering tools and furniture.
- **The Old Manchester Museum** at 126 Cedar Street, this year features an exhibit commemorating the 100th anniversary of America's and Manchester's participation in World War I. Among the many other exhibits are the Gorman brothers quarries, Pitkin glass, John Knoll photography and variety of items made in town. Museum open by appointment -- phone 860-647-9983.
- **The research facility** is available year round -- for an appointment phone 860-647-9742.
- **The Cheney Homestead** at 106 Hartford Road is open by appointment. Phone 860-647-9983.
- **The Woodbridge Farmstead** at 495 Middle Turnpike East may be visited on special occasions. The barn has just been restored and is available for viewing. Phone 860-647-9983
- **Tuesday, September 13 at 10:00 a.m., the Historical Society's Genealogy Group** -- a meeting for both amateur and more experienced genealogists. We will hold a round table discussion. We usually meet at the History Center at 175 Pine Street. The Genealogy Group consists of Historical Society members, but non-members are also welcome, \$3.00 fee. The group usually meets on the second Tuesday of the month.
- **Saturday, September 17, 40th annual walking tour of the Cheney Historic District** with commentary by Dr. Chris Paulin of Manchester Community College, 1:00 p.m. Popular history walk starting at Fuss & O'Neill, 146 Hartford Road. 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 Manchester Historical Society. We'll see Cheney Hall, the former silk mills, the location of the defunct South Manchester Railroad, the Loom exhibit at the former Cheney machine shop, neighborhoods of worker housing, and the Old Manchester Museum. 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. The walk is free, but donations to the Manchester Historical Society are welcome.
- **Tuesday, October 11 at 10:00 a.m., the Historical Society's Genealogy Group** -- a meeting for both amateur and more experienced genealogists. We will hold a round table discussion about researchers' problems with Roadblocks and How to Get Around Them. We will meet at the History Center, 175 Pine Street.
- **Friday, October 14, Annual Membership Meeting** at 5:00 p.m. and Annual Dinner at 5:30 at the Manchester Country Club, 305 South Main St. The annual membership meeting includes election of officers and annual reports; there is no cost to attend the meeting, and all members are invited. The annual dinner social time starts at 5:30, followed by dinner at 6:00 p.m., and Bob Gorman's talk "94 Years of Manchester Memories." Cost for the sit-down dinner is \$35.00 per person; send check with names of guests and entrée choices to the History Center, 175 Pine Street. Dinner includes fruit cup, salad, dessert and entrée -- choice of prime rib, stuffed filet of sole, chicken cordon bleu, or vegetarian. Deadline for dinner tickets: October 7.
- **Sunday, November 6 at 1:00 p.m. "447 Tango Down"** -- a new play by local author and historian Walter Scadden describing the turmoil in a soldier's mind as he waits for help after his plane is shot down, not knowing whether he will live or die. In addition to the play there will be an opportunity for veterans to share their experiences and reminiscences. Music and refreshments. The event is free to all at the History Center at 175 Pine St.
- **Tuesday, November 8 at 10:00 a.m., the Historical Society's Genealogy Group** -- a meeting for both amateur and more experienced genealogists. We will hold a round table discussion about How to Organize Your Family Research and Photos. We will meet at the History Center, 175 Pine Street. The group does not meet during December.
- **Friday, December 2, the Society's 13th Annual Gala "Home for The Holidays!"** -- a fundraiser for the Society and its programs. 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., with glamour, gifts, good fellowship, entertainment, refreshments, wine, and dessert and coffee. Auctions, music, holiday festivities, and some surprises. The museum store will be open. A very popular event! The building is accessible, with a ramp at the Pine Street door.



The Manchester Historical Society
 175 Pine Street
 Manchester, Connecticut 06040

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Your Membership Expires on:

MANCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

The Manchester Historical Society, 175 Pine Street, Manchester, CT 06040

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

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"/> Woodbridge Barn Restoration	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheney Homestead Endowment	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Keeney Schoolhouse Fund	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted	\$ _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> I have enclosed a matching gift form			

Make checks payable to: Manchester Historical Society