



The Courier

FEBRUARY 2011

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A quarterly publication of the Manchester Historical Society, Inc. / 175 Pine Street / Manchester, Connecticut 06040 / (860) 647-9985

Society Sponsors New Year's Day Walk

WEATHER COOPERATES—GOOD ATTENDANCE

The Society sponsored a Great Lawn walk on New Year's Day 2011. About 80 people participated, visiting first the Cheney Homestead at 106 Hartford Road, and then touring the town-owned portion of the Great Lawn. Led by **Susan Barlow**, the walk included special guests **Bruce Hamstra**, owner of the former Seth Leslie Cheney mansion (now an Inn), **Susan Shanbaum**, owner of the former Austin Cheney house, and **Tom Ferguson** (pictured here at left looking toward Hartford Road at the bottom of the hill), former resident of the Horace Bushnell Cheney house. The Society has led New Year's Day history walks for the past six years, with good attendance when the weather cooperates.



Homestead News

Many hands made light work at the Cheney Homestead on November 6 and 7, as crews of leaf-rakers, branch-chippers, and house cleaners made the grounds and buildings ready for winter and our Annual Open House. The Homestead is open to the public on the second Sunday of the month from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., and admission is by donation. The Society's open house was held on Saturday, December 4, when many visitors came to hear a harp concert at the History Center, enjoyed the Garden Club's spectacular décor at the Homestead, and visited the Old Manchester Museum with its holiday decorations and traditional bake sale. Thank you to all the volunteers and organizers who worked on these programs.

[Photos by Susan Barlow]



Pictured, with the Homestead in the background, are volunteers T. J. Barber and Kevin Bartlett from Manchester Community College, and board member Jason Scappaticci raking leaves to be brought to the Hartford Road side of the property for the Town vacuum to pick up.

150 Years Ago...

CIVIL WAR EVENTS

- **Feb. 1861** Confederate States of America formed with Jefferson Davis as president.
- **Mar. 1861** Abraham Lincoln sworn in as president.
- **Apr. 1861** Fort Sumter (South Carolina) attacked, beginning the Civil War. Lincoln calls for 75,000 militiamen. Within 6 weeks, 25 men from Manchester had enlisted.
- **Apr. 1861** Robert E. Lee resigns from U.S. Army and accepts command of military and naval forces of Virginia.
- The Confederacy has 11 states with 9 million people (including 4 million slaves) and the Union will soon have 21 states with 20 million people

100 Years Ago...

OPEN AIR SCHOOL ON MAIN STREET

A school that provided fresh air (even in the winter!), to physically deficient children, was opened on Main St. next to South Methodist Church.

[MANCHESTER EVENING HERALD, 1911]

The Courier

A newsletter of the
Manchester Historical Society

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E-mail: manchesterhistory@juno.com

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AN UNPLEASANT CHASE

Edward McCarty, official referee for the basketball games played in the armory, chartered a livery rig, intending to take a friend out for a sleigh ride. He stopped in front of the house on West Center Street and while he was inside, the horse started to walk away. McCarty started after it and the horse stopped, waited until he got within a few yards of it and then started away again. This was repeated time after time and the last seen of "Mull" he was chasing the rig towards Manchester Green. [HARTFORD COURANT, 1911]

FIREMAN INJURED

A peculiar accident occurred at the North End Saturday afternoon when a fireman by the name of Winston was knocked from the cap of the locomotive on which he was working and was not missed by the engineer. He was found lying on the track by a man by the name of Wilson, who was walking down the track below the Manchester freight depot. The inter-urban car [trolley] was stopped and the injured man taken to the Manchester railroad station where Dr. Sharpe was called and took four stitches in the gash which had been inflicted in his head. He says that some projection hit him and knocked him from the cap. [HARTFORD COURANT, 1911]

MANCHESTER BSA TROOP FORMS

The Manchester Troop of Boy Scouts of America formed under the leadership of Fred Verplanck. [MEH, 1911]

Welcome, New Members!

by Florence Johnson

The Society welcomes the following new members who joined between November 1, 2010 and January 31, 2011:

FROM MANCHESTER

Leslie M. Alan
Elsie S. Bagley
Emilie B. DellaRocco
David Lacoss
Alfred Logan, Jr.
Kelley G. Peck
James P. Veseskis

FROM ELSEWHERE

Cathy and Neal Narkon Enfield, CT
William Piotrowski East Hartford, CT
Nancy Steffens & Bob Felber Vernon, CT

The following member has upgraded his membership to Life Member:
Dennis Gleeson

CORRECTION:

In our last issue, the name of new member Ronald B. Case of Wisconsin was spelled incorrectly. We apologize for the error.

Civil War Items Sought For Anniversary Display

In preparation for a new display at the museum commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War and Manchester's participation, we are seeking items related to the Civil War, and in particular with a connection to Manchester. Especially sought are photos of Manchester men who served in the Army or Navy, items they used during the war, and correspondence. If you have something you would consider loaning to us (or letting us photocopy) for the exhibit, please call Dave Smith, Curator, at 860-647-9742.



Highlights from the Museum Store

THE SOCIETY MUSEUM STORE located at the History Center (175 Pine Street) sells merchandise with a Manchester connection, suitable for birthday gifts or “good reads” for local history buffs. Some of the many available items include Manchester History books and jewelry made from Pitkin Glass works artifacts. The Museum store is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We hope that you will stop in soon!

History Books Still Available

A reminder to long-time members and maybe news to our newer members: we have a limited number of copies available of the three books on Manchester history that we have published over the years.

Old Manchester a Picture Book

A 168-page soft cover book containing many photos of Manchester people and places between the 1860's and World War II. Price \$25

Old Manchester II The Storytellers

A 272-page soft cover book with stories and reminiscences by Manchester residents. It is dedicated to Knight Ferris, Manchester's greatest storyteller, known for years only as “The Old Codger” who anonymously wrote a column in the Manchester Herald called “Codgitations.” Price \$15 (Free with new membership.)

Old Manchester III Manchester Green

A 155-page soft cover book of photos and historical information about the eastern side of Manchester, from East Center Street to the Bolton line. Among the families covered are the Cones, Cooks, Pitkins, and Woodbridges. Price \$28

Pitkin Glass Necklaces

The Pitkin Glass Works and the Manchester Historical Society are pleased to offer two necklaces for sale in the museum store at the History Center, crafted from vintage Pitkin glass. The necklaces were made by Manchester artist Doti Dienst, who donated her creative talent, time, and materials to design and produce jewelry made from Pitkin Glass artifacts. The one-of-a-kind creations feature actual Pitkin glass shards shaped and polished by hand and encased in glass beads and sterling silver wire wraps with 18 and 22 inch chains. One of these unique necklaces can be yours for a \$100 donation.



We Will Miss...

ERNEST “JOHN” KJELLSON John was a Manchester native and long-time member of the Society. He was a Korean War veteran and member of the Beethoven Men's Chorus.

MARY ANN LEONE Mary Ann was a lifelong resident of Manchester and a Life Member of the Society who volunteered at the Historical Society as well as at the Lutz Children's Museum. She was also involved with the Little Theater of Manchester.

ALMA NIESE Alma was a long-time member of the Society. In addition, she was a member of the Orford Parish Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

BRENDA PAULLO Brenda was a Life member of the Society and an active volunteer, working on many events and assisting other volunteers. She was an avid researcher and had a distinct knack for finding information about long-ago events and people.

Wish List

• Hospitality and Event Items

We need card tables, wine glasses, white tablecloths and carpets (particularly hall-runner sizes) for events. If you would like to donate any of these items, please call Terry Parla at 860-643-1823.

• School Tour Volunteers

We need volunteers for our annual school tours in the spring. 700 elementary school students visit the Homestead, schoolhouse, loom room and museum and we need docents, aides and coordinators to make the tours a success. This is a wonderful opportunity to work with the upcoming generation of history enthusiasts! Some docents have a lot of knowledge about the Cheney silk mills but for those who are new at it, we can provide information—or you can start out as a helper and learn “on the job,” so to speak. The hours are generally 9:15 to 12 noon, Tues. through Fri., and you can work as many or as few days as fit your schedule. We also need a small group of volunteers to package up 700 silk cocoons for teachers to distribute to the students. Email Susan Barlow sbarlow627@aol.com or phone the History Center at 860-647-9983.

Artifacts and Photos

Curator Dave Smith is always on the lookout for Manchester items such as Cheney memorabilia, paper items, textiles from the Hilliard Woolen Mills, Union Cotton Mill and Glastonbury Knitting Mill, or interesting old photos that we can borrow to make copies, or receive as donations. Contact Dave at 860-647-9742.

Holiday Gala A Festive Success

Hundreds of revelers attended the 7th Annual Gala at the History Center on Friday, December 3, 2010. Over \$11,000 was raised for the Historical Society and its programs. Thanks to all who attended the event and to those who donated money, auction items, gift certificates, wreaths, artwork, wine, etc. Mark your calendar—the next gala will be held Friday December 2, 2011. Plan to attend a merry evening of fun, music, and shopping, all for a good cause. Meanwhile, please take a look around your house for a potential auction item, such as a rare piece of jewelry, antique furniture or a painting. Keep us in mind if you're “downsizing.”

We Salute Our Volunteers

The success of our Manchester Historical Society is entirely dependent upon the dedicated service of our many volunteers. They act as docents, plan and staff events, conduct school tours, serve on committees, maintain our properties, run the museum stores and help us out in many other ways. Please accept our thanks for all you did for us during the year 2010.

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Elsie Bagley | Pat and Bob Hetzel | Terry and Leonardo Parla |
| Cynthia Barlow | Maureen Hevey | Hunter Passmore |
| Malcolm Barlow | Susan Holmes | Anthony Pedraza |
| Susan Barlow | John Hovey | Ron Perrault |
| Adam Bawwab | Gordon Howard | Jessica Planck |
| Sue Beach | Florence Johnson | David Poland |
| George Beauregard | Monica Katkavich | Winthrop Porter |
| Anne Beechler | Cathy Keane | Jon Reichelt |
| Chris Bergin | Jean Kelsey | Charlotte Rhodes |
| Dawn Black | Ann Kibbie | Ed Richardson |
| Emily Bloom | Peggy Koehler | Genevieve Robb |
| Rita Borden | Mildred Kos | Sarah Robbins |
| Mike Brackin | Jean and Marshall | Maureen Robenhymer |
| Robert Brindamour | Lamenzo | Althea Ruderman |
| Sandra Bursey | Linda and Don LaPlante | Ron Schack |
| Vivian Carlson | Arlene LaPorta | Audrey and Earl Schaefer |
| Mary Jane Carter | Robert Laughlin | Edith Schoell |
| Elaine Charendoff | Mary Ann and Joe Lawler | Tom Schuetz |
| Anthony Chirico | Fred Lea | Carol Shanley |
| Mike Chirico | Lillian Legier | David Shapiro |
| Vincent Chirico | Clair Leighton | David Smith |
| Mary Jane Cooper | Gerri Lemelin | Frances Smith |
| Martha Davidson | Tanyss Ludescher | Grace Smith |
| Peg DeForge | Jill and Kevin Mack | Joe Sobanski |
| Marles Deveau | Colin MacNamara | Betty and John Spaulding |
| Doti Dienst | Anna Maggiore | Robin Starkel |
| Adele Dietz | John Malone | Nick Stevenson |
| Maggi Donovan | Leslie Manna | Ellen Strano |
| John Dormer | Marjorie Martin | Charles Swallow |
| Harriet and Larry Duff | Pat Matrick | Eileen and Wayne Sweeney |
| Mary and Robert Dunne | Faith and Tim McCann | Jacqueline Sweeney |
| Doug Edwards | Jan McCollum | Sean Sweeney |
| Richard Egan | Kris Miller | Judy Taylor |
| Sonoko Fagans | Marie Miller | Dorothy Tomlinson |
| Kay Faulds | Jackie Mirtl | James Veseski |
| Vivian Ferguson | Nancy Mitchell | Paula Viscogliosi |
| John Fletcher | Dick Moriconi | Carole Walden |
| Frances Forde | Joan and Geoffrey Naab | Connie Walker |
| Bernice Frattaroli | Neal Narkon | Christine Wallen |
| Mary Frink | Virginia Narkon | Kathryn Wilson |
| Brian Gammon | Robert Neagle | Mary Wynn |
| Linda Gates | Mike Nimirowski | Jane and Rudy Zadnik |
| Chris Gibbs | James Olcott | |
| Dennis Gleeson | Carol O'Neill | Manchester Garden Club |
| Cathy Grames | Don Paine | Sean Murphy and his |
| Ted Greaney | Cecelia Parla | Troop 25 Boy Scout crew |
| Eileen Griffin | Chris Parla | |
| Liam Griffin | Jamie Parla | |
| Marsha Gunther | John Parla | |
| Joanne and Joe Hachey | Johnnie Parla | |
| Elizabeth Healy | Olivia Parla | |
| Ruth and Ken Herbele | Sarah Parla | |

We apologize if we have omitted anyone's name. Please let us know if we did and we will list your name in the next issue of the Courier

2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All lectures are at the History Center at 175 Pine St. at 1:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Parking is available along the Forest St. side of the building and in the small lot on Pine St. Admission is \$3 for nonmembers, \$1 for Society members and free for children under age 16. For the latest information on events please check online at www.manchesterhistory.org

February 13, Sunday

HARTFORD'S CHANGING EAST SIDE, FROM FRONT STREET TO CONSTITUTION PLAZA

Jason Scappaticci presents an illustrated history of Hartford's East Side Italian district, the riverfront, what it was and what it became. We will also have commentary on how Manchester's growth was thus affected.

February 13, Sunday, 1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

CHENEY HOMESTEAD OPEN TO VISITORS

View this 1785 house at 106 Hartford Road, and hear commentary about this interesting residence. Admission and guided tour by donation, for which we are very grateful, on this Sunday and the second Sunday of every month, year-round.

February 26, March 5, March 12 and March 26

Saturdays, 10:00–11:30 a.m.

CHAIR CANING WORKSHOPS

Have you always wanted to learn how to cane chairs? We are offering hands-on workshops on four Saturdays in February and March. K.C. Parkinson, owner of Connecticut Cane and Reed, will conduct the workshops, using six chairs that belong to the Historical Society that need re-caning. Participants will work on these while learning the skills of weaving with cane. Alternatively, workshop participants can bring their own project (\$10 for the four sessions, plus cost of materials). The workshops will be held on February 26, March 5, March 12, March 26 (skipping March 19). **RSVP to 860-647-9983.**

March 13, Sunday

GRATITUDE ETCHED IN STONE: CONNECTICUT'S CIVIL WAR MONUMENTS

Mary M. Donohue, Architectural Historian, Commission on Culture & Tourism, presents a program of pictures and historical background about the many Civil War monuments in Connecticut's towns, as well as the history of and pictures about Manchester's Civil War statue and its recent restoration.

March 19, Saturday, 9:30 a.m., History Center

VOLUNTEER MEETING

Come find out about volunteer opportunities at the Historical Society. RSVP for the meeting, so we'll have enough coffee and refreshments, 860-647-9983 and leave a message (also, if you can't come to the meeting, but want to volunteer, call that number and leave a message). *(Related story on back pg.)*

April 10, Sunday

WHY THE CIVIL WAR?

Historian and author Richard Meyer will present a program reflecting on the questions What were the early causes of the Civil War? and What led up to the start of the war in 1861? Find out more about the origins of the war as we mark the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the terrible

conflict. Mr. Meyer will discuss what caused the North and the South to diverge in their economics, social norms and politics—a division that eventually ended in war. He will lay the ground work for an understanding of both positions in the debate, beginning in Colonial times.

April 29, Friday, 5:30 p.m., Manchester Country Club SOCIETY'S ANNUAL DINNER

Join us for a convivial evening as you socialize with friends. Our after-dinner speaker will be Kent Schwendy, Senior Vice President of Fuss & O'Neill, who will present "Investing in the Past," the story of the conservation of formerly decrepit buildings on the south side of Hartford Road, which have now become a handsome part of the Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark District. Kent says that Fuss and O'Neill's corporate culture is "to build upon the investments made by prior generations rather than tearing things down and starting over." Social half-hour with cash bar at 5:30, and guests can participate in a teacup auction (\$1.00 per ticket). Members and non-members are welcome to attend. Cost for dinner is \$28 for members and \$30 for nonmembers. Invitation forms will be mailed out in March.

May 1, Sunday (NOTE DATE)

MANCHESTER'S JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Historical Society is pleased to present Sissy Seader of Manchester, who will give a lecture about our diverse community on Holocaust Remembrance Day.

June 4, Saturday, 1:00 p.m.

WALKING TOUR AT CENTER SPRINGS PARK

Come for a 1.15 hour walk on the loop trail and explore this 55-acre urban park with its hills, brook and gorge right in the center of Manchester. (Starts at the parking lot at 39 Lodge Drive.) Children and their parents are especially welcome on this approximately one-mile hike, with commentary on the history of the park. The terrain is difficult and wet in spots, and participants should wear sturdy shoes. Reservations are not necessary. This history walk is part of the CT Forest and Park Association's Trails Day program. Rain date, same time the following day (June 5) at 1 p.m. **TRAFFIC ALERT:** Please note that as of this writing, Edgerton St. is closed to through-traffic. Use the Main-St.-to-Bigelow-St. approach to the park. After the loop trail, there will be an optional additional walk to the Cheney rail trail, for an added 45 to 60 minutes, for those interested.

June 4–June 12, EVERY DAY, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Manchester History Center

GIGANTIC WEEK-LONG TAG SALE—Free Admission

Exclusive Early Bird Sale Friday, June 3 from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m., \$5 admission. Parking available along Pleasant St. and along the Forest St. side of the building (no on-street parking on Pine and Forest Streets). *(Related story on back pg.)*



The Manchester Historical Society
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Manchester, Connecticut 06040

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MANCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY WANTS YOU!

Volunteers are the backbone of the Manchester Historical Society.

Volunteering is fun and gives you a great sense of accomplishment.

You frequently learn something new, and meet new people. Find out how you can help the Society fulfill its mission at a meeting on Saturday March 19, at 9:30 a.m. We need volunteer workers for tag sales, the spring tours for schoolchildren, the holiday gala in December, museum store workers, work crews indoors and outdoors, and docents for the Old Manchester Museum on Saturdays and Sundays. Come meet fellow volunteers and sign up for great opportunities—there really is something for everyone! We will have light refreshments, descriptions of volunteer opportunities, and conviviality. The meeting will be held at the History Center, 175 Pine Street, with parking along Pleasant Street and in the paved lot along the Forest Street side of the building. RSVP to 860-647-9983, so we'll know how much coffee to make. Oh, and can you bake for this event? Oh, and why not bring along items for the June tag sale and save a separate trip? Oh, and why not bring a friend?

It's Tag Sale Time!

It's a win-win situation. De-clutter your house and help the Historical Society raise funds for its programs and property maintenance! We are now accepting donations of good saleable items for the week-long June tag sale (no clothing, computers, typewriters, televisions, entertainment centers or textbooks, please). Bring items to the History Center at 175 Pine St., from 10 to 2 M-F, except holidays. We can also arrange to pick up larger items—please phone tag sale manager Terry Parla at 860-643-1823. Terry is also looking for volunteers to help sort and arrange items and to work at the tag sale, which will be held from 9–4 every day June 4 to June 12,



with **Exclusive Early-Bird**

Sale on June 3rd
4:30–8:30 p.m.

(\$5 admission fee, all other days are free.)