

The Cheney Historic District Tour is sponsored by:
Cheney Brothers National Historic District Commission
Manchester Historical Society

with grateful acknowledgment to:

Herbert Bengtson	David Smith
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Cheney Homestead

Books and tour information about Cheney Brothers
from the Manchester Historical Society
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Old Manchester—A Picture Book second edition, reprinted in 1999
by M.K. Adams & A.J. Thibeau, 1994

Old Manchester II—The Storytellers
by M.K. Adams & A.J. Thibeau, 1997

Old Manchester III—Manchester Green
by M.K. Adams & A.J. Thibeau, 1997

History of Manchester, Conn. (facsimile reprint)
by Mathias Spiess & Percy Bidwell, 1924

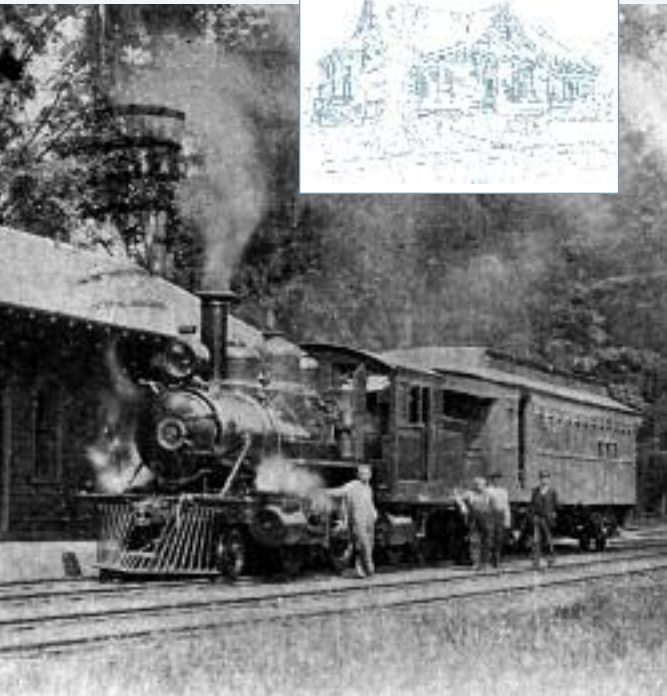
If All the Great Men—The Cheneys of Manchester
by Margreta K. Cheney

On the cover:
Cheney Brothers silk from the collection of the Manchester Historical Society

This pamphlet was designed and produced courtesy of
Carol L. Cheney, Cheney & Company, New Haven, CT.

The Cheneys built decent houses for their workers to rent and later to buy. Their factories were modernized, reservoirs were constructed, and schools were built and supported by the Cheneys. Indeed, “Manchester’s schools were in first place in Connecticut” according to a *Hartford Courant* article. They also built Cheney Hall for meetings, entertainment and social events. The Cheneys were philanthropists and helped build the city of Manchester. All in all, *Cheney Brothers Was the World* for both Manchester’s workers and residents.

Manchester Museum



Cheney Brothers Was the World

George Cheney married Electa Woodbridge. They had nine children—eight boys and one girl. Four of the brothers founded the Mt. Nebo Silk Company in 1838. This Manchester business was later incorporated as Cheney Brothers. During the early 1920s, it was the largest silk company in the world taking thread from cocoons to finished material. Members of the family held all the important positions in the company until the 1920s. Non-family members were then hired as superintendents of the departments.

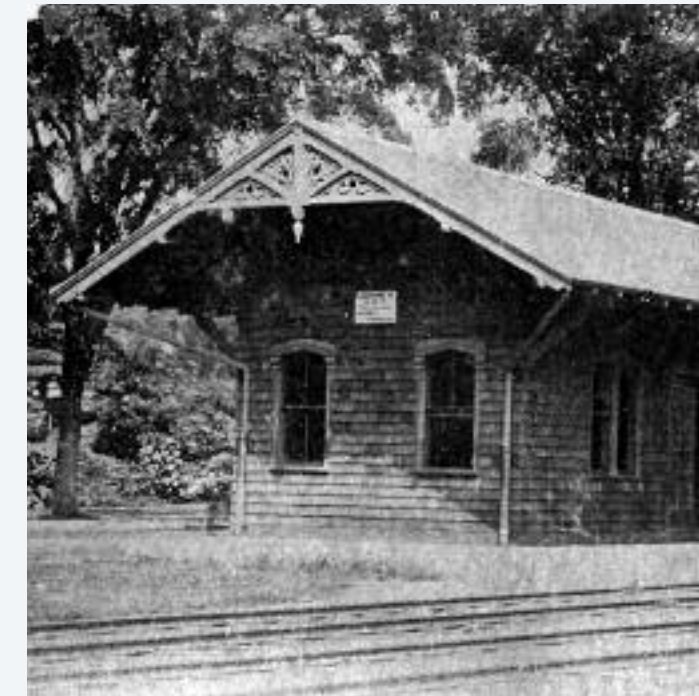


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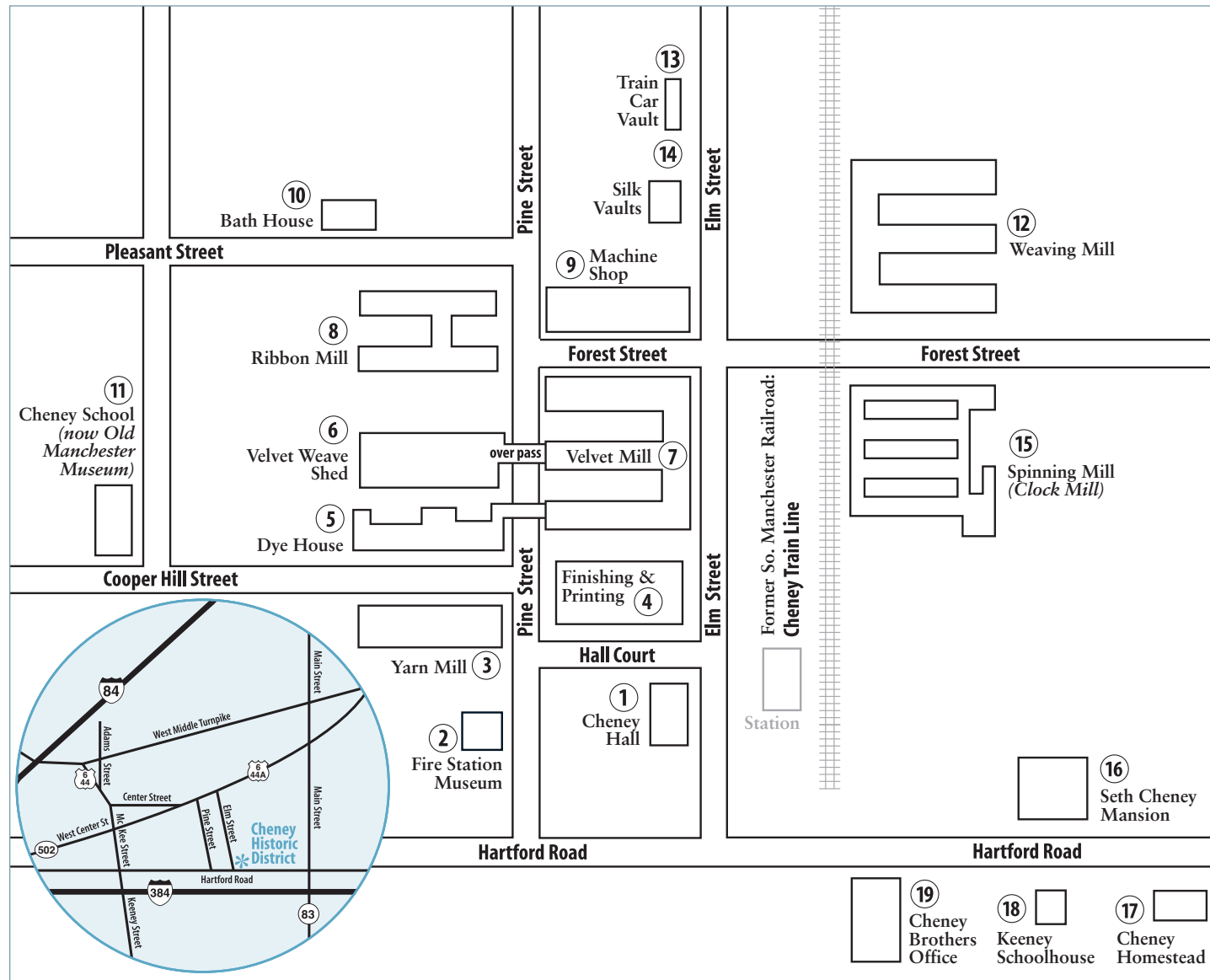


Cheney Train Station

Cheney Historic District



Cheney Fire Station



- ① **Cheney Hall—1867**
Newly renovated, Cheney Hall has served Manchester for five generations as a community hall, church, theater and meeting place.
- ② **Fire Station Museum—1901**
The fire house was built by the Cheney family to protect the mills and homes.
- ③ **Yarn Mill—1911**
Here workers twisted strands of silk into thread and carded silk.
- ④ **Finishing & Printing—1946**
Silk fabrics were printed with designs according to the fashion of the day.
- ⑤ **Dye House—1914**
Yarn and cloth were dyed in this building.
- ⑥ **Velvet Weave Shed—1914**
Cheney Brothers silk velvet was among the company's most famous products.
- ⑦ **Velvet Mill—1901**
- ⑧ **Ribbon Mill—1907**
In this facility workers made ribbons and cravats.
- ⑨ **Machine Shop—1895**
This building is the future home of the Manchester Historical Society. In its day, machinists, plumbers and other tradesmen performed maintenance and repairs essential to running the large textile complex.
- ⑩ **Bath House—1913**
The Bath House provided a place to bathe for Cheney workers who did not have bathrooms at home. Men bathed on one side and women on the other. Towels cost 5 cents.

- ⑪ **Cheney School (now Old Manchester Museum)—1859**
The school was attended by the children of the Cheney family and their employees.
- ⑫ **Weaving Mill—1886**
Yarn was put onto beams for the looms, and weaving was done here.
- ⑬ **Train Car Vault—1919**
After a foiled robbery, Cheney Bros. erected this vault large enough for a freight car loaded with silk to be kept safely until it was ready to be unloaded.
- ⑭ **Silk Vaults—1919**
Silk was kept in these vaults for safekeeping after removal from train cars.
- ⑮ **Spinning Mill (Clock Mill)—1872**
- ⑯ **Seth Cheney Mansion—ca. 1845**
One of the Cheney family mansions is now a beautifully restored Bed & Breakfast.
- ⑰ **Cheney Homestead—ca. 1785**
This farm house, the original building, housed three Cheney generations. Additions were built as the family grew.
- ⑱ **Keeney Schoolhouse—1751**
Restored in 1973, this one-room schoolhouse contains a "horn book"—see how it was used.
- ⑲ **Cheney Brothers Office—1910**



Cheney Library



Silk Works



School House



Old Homestead