

A 15th-anniversary article, from the Manchester Half Weekly Herald, Wednesday, December 16, 1896. This article appeared on page 2, editorial page. *Below:* Masthead from that day's edition. *On the right,* snippet from the article herewith transcribed by volunteer Maureen Hevey. To see the whole edition, go to The Historical Society's website, find the Newspapers icon, and from the "Calendar" page, choose 1896, and then 12/16/1896 edition.

—Webmaster, Susan Barlow, February 2021.

MANCHESTER HALF WEEKLY HERALD.

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TWO CENTS

MANCHESTER HERALD.
HALF-WEEKLY.
Published Wednesday and Saturday
Mornings.

ELWOOD S. SELA - EDITOR

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streets, Manchester. Branch office, vice
of F. W. Mills, Park Building, South Man-
chester.

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advance. Single copies two cents each.
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The Herald is sold on the streets by news
boys. It is also on sale in Manchester at the
Herald office and at the Manchester News
Company's in South Manchester at Maguire's
news stand. At the post office and at Her-
ald branch office, Park Building.

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Byth, J. M. Burke, C. Tiffany, Watkins
Brothers, E. T. Carrier, R. P. Bissell,
Hugh Moriarty, B. G. Apel, L. S. Em-
mons, Fitch & Drake, Charles H. Rose,
Wm. McCormack, Hale, Day & Co.,
Barrows & Skinner, Ferris Bros., E. M.
House, W. H. Childs, J. E. Morton, G.
S. Parkhurst, T. P. Aitkin and H. R.
Hale.

The Herald's Anniversary

Within two weeks anniversary sermons have been preached by two Manchester clergymen, one at the close of ten years' and the other at the close of five years' service. Both discourses contained interesting and valuable historical data, although confined mainly to the progress of their respective churches.

The writer is reminded that The Herald has reached an anniversary. Fifteen years ago tomorrow it made its first appearance and from that day to this its editorial head has been the same. This term of service exceeds that of any pastor now in town. Fifteen years is not a long period; yet, viewing the town from the standpoint of a newspaper writer, whose pen has chronicled all the important local events in that time, many and great changes are noticeable. A glance at the town as it was 15 years ago will be instructive to those who have more recently made this their home and may not be without interest to those who are familiar with the Manchester of 15 years or even longer ago.

The greatest change apparent to the writer is in the social relations of residents. Fifteen years ago, the population of Manchester was a little over 6,000, about two-thirds of its present population. Of course the smaller the population the closer the relations of the inhabitants. Each man then knew a larger proportion of his fellow citizens than now. There were fewer strangers in town. Today the population has grown to such an extent that one has no incentive to cultivate acquaintances beyond his neighbors and associates. The growth in population is, however, no more noticeable than the change in the character of the population. Fifteen years ago a large proportion of the population was made up of old residents - men and women who had grown up together and had social and family ties in common. The additions to our population have been almost exclusively of foreign born persons, many of whom have come here direct

from their native land, ignorant even of our language. Most of them are developing into good citizens; but they and the older residents have not that community of interest which existed so generally in town when The Herald was founded. The natives have passed away by hundreds and their places have been taken by adopted citizens from other lands. Fifteen years ago any entertainment or "sociable" at "the hall" was sure to draw a crowd. Everybody went. Today there is hardly any form of entertainment that can so please all the diversified tastes of our new population as to unite them in its support.

This change in social relations is illustrated by the changed condition of the churches. In 1881 but three denominations had church edifices in town. There were two Congregational churches, two Methodist churches and two Roman Catholic churches, the last named under one pastor. These churches still exist, but in addition to them we have a Swedish Lutheran church, a German Lutheran church, a Swedish Congregational church, a Protestant Episcopal church and the Salvation Army. The growth of the Catholic church has made necessary its division into two parishes.

Another important change The Herald has witnessed is in the manufacturing interests of the town. These, while expanding in volume have shrunk in variety. The silk manufacturing industry has grown rapidly. Fifteen years ago Cheney Brothers had no mill north of Forest street where now stands a magnificent block of buildings within whose walls more than a thousand operatives are employed.

This wonderful gain has necessitated the sacrifice of several smaller manufacturing enterprises. Two small mills owned by the Globe Mills company and manufacturing cotton warps, further up the stream, have been bought by Cheney Brothers because their water supply was needed by the larger plant. They were torn down and now hardly a trace of them

remains. Ingalls & Co.'s paper mill met the same fate. The Charter Oak mill, once a busy place, manufacturing stockinets, [sic] was also absorbed by Cheney Brothers and, moved a few rods from its former site on Charter Oak street, now serves as a storehouse.

But other causes have been more potent in closing the mills that were in operation 15 years ago than absorption by this great industry. The Union Manufacturing company's gingham mill, then second only to the silk mill in magnitude, was wrecked by the mismanagement and dishonesty of its treasurer and manager. The Parkerville cotton warp mill, owned by the Mutual Manufacturing company, was burned, and was never rebuilt. Two paper mills in the west part of the town owned by Case Brothers also went up in flames and were never replaced.

The sash and blind factory of R. Joslyn on South Main street was closed by the death of its proprietor, and after standing idle for several years was torn down.

The effect of closing these scattered manufacturing plants has been to curtail the growth of the outlying manufacturing villages and stimulate, to a remarkable extent, the growth of South Manchester in the vicinity of the Cheney mills. Fifteen years ago the number of school children enumerated in the silk mill district was 689. This year it was over 2,000.

The rapid increase of population in South Manchester has naturally been followed by its development as a business center. When The Herald was first published there was not a store on Main street north of Ferris Brothers, and between that and Cheney's store on the south there were but two places of business. Those were Moriarty's stove store, which was lately moved to give place to the Orford market, and the late E.M. House's tailor shop. Today in that locality are no less than 23 shops and stores, some of them housed in fine business blocks.

It is noteworthy, however, that not one of the merchants doing business in town 15 years ago has failed and that nearly all of them are, with perhaps slight changes in firm, still doing a prosperous business. Among the advertisers in the early issues of The Herald were W.H. Cheney, O. Magnell, R.M. Blyth, J.M. Burke, C. Tiffany, Watkins Brothers, E.T. Carrier, R. P. Bissell, Hugh Moriarty, B.C. Apel, L.S. Emmons, Fitch & Drake, Charles H. Rose, Wm. McCormack, Hale, Day & Co., Barrows & Skinner, Ferris Brothers, E.M. House, W.H. Childs, J.E. Morton, G.S. Parkhurst, T.P. Aitkin and H.R. Hale.

The physical aspect of Manchester has been so greatly changed during the past 15 years that, in several localities an old resident who had not visited the place during that period would not recognize his surroundings if he were placed there today. The Center is one of those localities. The church, the town hall, the Masonic building, the soldier's monument and two or three residences are the only landmarks remaining. The church and the Masonic building have been enlarged and the town hall has been rebuilt inside. But the attention of the visitor would be drawn from these comparatively familiar objects to the new town building, the tramway car house and offices and thrifty-appearing dwellings that now form a populous village in that vicinity. Probably no less than 150 dwellings have been built within a radius of quarter of a mile from the soldier's monument. The highways too have changed.

The broad avenue extending east toward the Green remains the same, but the streets branching in three other directions from the Center have been changed from sandy, hilly roads to graded thoroughfares with hardened surface and paved gutters. North, south and west the highway is bordered by the steel rails of the tramway. Going a little more into details regarding the growth of this section of the town it may be observed that when The Herald started, Church street did not exist. Locust and Laurel streets, now lined with comfortable dwellings, were then tracts of woodland. The east slope of Park street was a sandy hill covered with stunted pines.

The east and west sides of the village show changes almost as important as the Center. On the west Walnut and Cooper Hill streets have been laid out and built up. On the east side what was a huge sand flat has been covered with dwellings and Spruce street has grown from an unfrequented lane to an important thoroughfare.

While South Manchester can justly claim credit for most of the town's progress in 15 years, nevertheless other parts of town show a healthy growth. At Highland Park, which, by the way, was unknown by that name 15 years ago, Case Brothers have replaced their old wooden buildings by substantial brick buildings and have materially enlarged their plant. They have beautified the village, established a store and post-office and developed the mineral springs at considerable expense. Highland Park is now a pretty manufacturing village, comparing favorably with any part of the town. The Hilliard woolen mills at Buckland have more than doubled in size and give employment to a correspondingly increased number of hands. The Oakland Paper company have also enlarged their mills, replacing wood with brick and

increasing the number of employees. The Keeney & Wood paper mill was then idle. Since its purchase by Keeney Brothers it has been enlarged and is now giving steady employment to 40 or 50 hands. The Lydall & Foulds Paper company have enlarged their plant by a new mill built on the site of the burned cotton mill at Parkerville. The Manchester Green knitting mill has been burned and replaced by a much larger mill. The Robertson soap factory is a creation of the past few years and promises to become a substantial addition to our industries. The Mather factory did not exist 15 years ago and its lack of activity today takes it out of our list of progressive enterprises. Yet this factory left its mark on the growth of the town for it drew to Manchester a large number of skilled mechanics, some of whom still make their homes here though employed elsewhere.

During the last 15 years transportation facilities have greatly improved. The New England road has been double tracked. A new freight depot has been built and a commodious yard has been established west of the station. Formerly the side tracks were east of the station, necessitating continuous switching across Main street. This has now stopped and the safety of the crossing has been further increased by the employment of a flagman. The South Manchester railroad has established a model freight yard north of the Park street bridge and built a brick roundhouse adjoining it. The introduction of the tramway, giving employment to 50 to 75 men, is too recent to require more than passing notice. It will be generally conceded that no improvement in the past 15 years has been of more value to the town than this.

Other conveniences have come as the result of modern scientific discovery. The town had just been connected with the outside world by telephone 15 years ago. Within a few months the nucleus of the present telephone exchange was formed at Rose's drug store, which was made the central station for three or four mills, then the only local subscribers. The electric light was then in its infancy. Cheney Brothers were experimenting with a few Brush arc lamps in the old mill, but they were expensive and unsatisfactory. When local capitalists became interested in the Mather Electric company, then located in Hartford, interest in the new light began to show itself in Manchester. Mather arc lights were place[d] in the silk mills and the Oakland paper mills. The Perkins incandescent lamp made by the same company, followed and in time was generally introduced in the silk mills to the exclusion of gas. When the Mather factory was established in Manchester a central lighting station was organized at the factory and in that way Manchester obtained the advantage of electric lights

for in-door and street illumination several years ahead of most towns of its size.

The introduction of a water system at the north end and of a sewer system at the south end were important improvements.

During all this time The Herald has had its eyes open and has in every way possible aided in the introduction of every desirable improvement. Many of its words printed in the early years read like prophecy today. Changed conditions have affected the local newspaper as well as other industries. When The Herald started there was no other newspaper between Rockville and Hartford. It was the local newspaper for East Hartford and Glastonbury as well as for Manchester. Now Glastonbury has its own paper and East Hartford has two. Naturally the residents of those towns have gradually shifted from the subscription list of the Manchester paper to those of their own local papers. But in spite of this competition The Herald has held its own in circulation, and has gained largely in advertising patronage. More than three years ago the publisher thought it wise to change the paper from a weekly to a semi-weekly, and has never had occasion to regret the step. We now print weekly four times as much local news as at first, while the price to subscribers remains the same. Still the paper has not improved as much as the publisher had hoped. The expenditures of a paper must be governed by its income. While the local circulation of The Herald has increased, it has not increased in proportion to the growth of the population. The cause for this is stated in the opening paragraphs of this article. The newcomers have been largely foreigners who do not, at first at least, care for a local newspaper. Many of them are unable to read the English language, and others who can read do not for several years become sufficiently interested in local affairs to subscribe for a local newspaper. But the growth of The Herald though slow has been sure. Its success has been won on its merits. Schemes for booming the circulation have never been resorted to and no effort has been made to secure subscribers by undue solicitation.

We believe that Manchester has a bright future and that the next 15 years will show a growth and progress equal to if not greater than the last. The writer is not so old yet but he hopes to be here to write the thirtieth anniversary editorial. But whether he is or not he is confident The Herald will still be here, abreast of the times and edited by someone capable to chronicle the achievements of our beloved town.