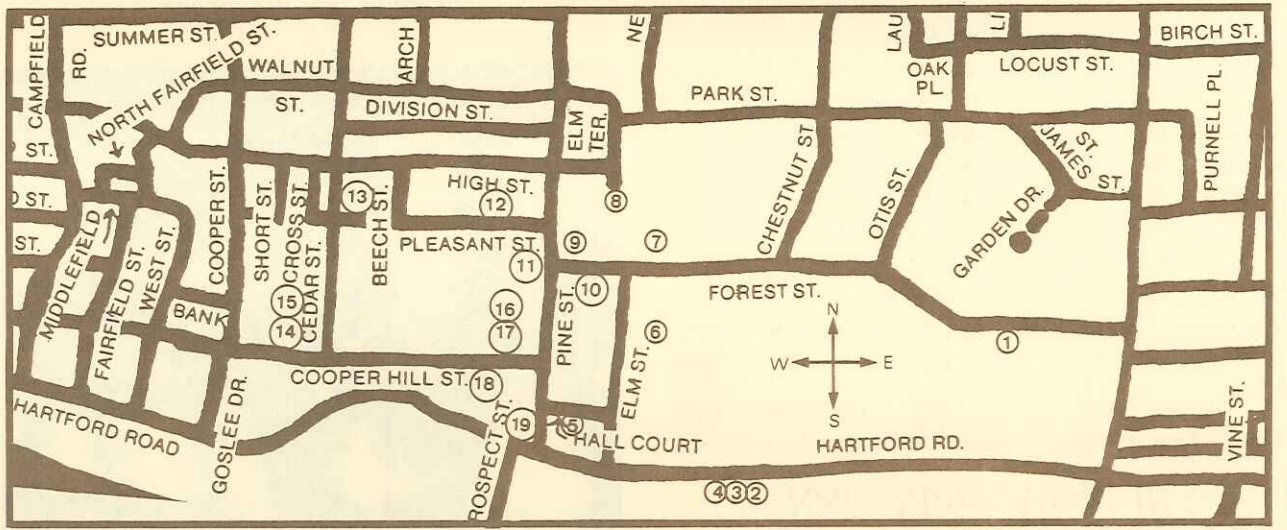


Spinning, c. 1925



Walking Tour Map

The numbered locations on the Walking Tour Map (above) correspond to the buildings described in the text below. The Cheney Brothers Historic District was designated a National Historic Landmark by the United States Department of the Interior in 1978.

Cheney Mills Self-Guided Walking Tour

It is not feasible for us to walk the entire historic district; consequently we have centered on portions of the mill area and the west side. The tour begins while you are driving west on Hartford Road. To your right and left you will see:

1. CHENEY FAMILY HOMES, c. late 19th-early 20th centuries. Thirteen family homes stand facing the GREAT LAWN on both FOREST STREET and HARTFORD ROAD. At least three (#20 Hartford Road and #s 40 and 50 Forest Street) were designed by the noted American architect Charles Adam Platt, a Cheney family member. Just beyond the GREAT LAWN on your left you will see the:

2. CHENEY HOMESTEAD, 106 HARTFORD ROAD, c. 1785. This family homestead was built by Timothy Cheney, a well-known 18th century clockmaker and grandfather of the founders of the mills. It is open to the public on Thursdays and Sundays from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Next to it stands:

3. 130 HARTFORD ROAD, c. 1890. Among other uses, this building served as the first Cheney vocational school, where young people could study textiles in preparation for jobs in the mills. Next to it is:

4. CHENEY OFFICE BUILDING, 146 HARTFORD ROAD, c. 1910. This building replaced one built in 1857, and served as the main office building throughout the firm's existence. New workers received their first exposure to the mills in the employment office maintained in this building. Now turn right on PINE STREET and park beside:

5. CHENEY HALL, 177 HARTFORD ROAD, c. 1867. Designed by Boston architect Hammat Billings, this building served as the area's community center for more than five decades. Now walk north on ELM STREET to the:

6. CLOCKTOWER SPINNING MILL, 63 ELM STREET, c. 1870-1900. This was the first mill building erected north of HARTFORD ROAD. Farther north are the:

7. WEAVING MILLS, 91 ELM STREET, c. 1896, 97, 98. This three story, 215,000 square foot structure is the largest mill building in the district. North, on the west side of ELM STREET, are the:

8. SILK VAULT AND FREIGHT CAR STOREHOUSE, 110 ELM STREET, c. 1919, built following an attempted robbery of raw silk. The SOUTH MANCHESTER RAILROAD, c. 1869, was built by the firm to connect Cheney Brothers with the New York, New Haven, and Hartford railroad less than two miles to the north. Now turn around, walk back down ELM STREET and turn right on FOREST STREET. On your right you will see the:

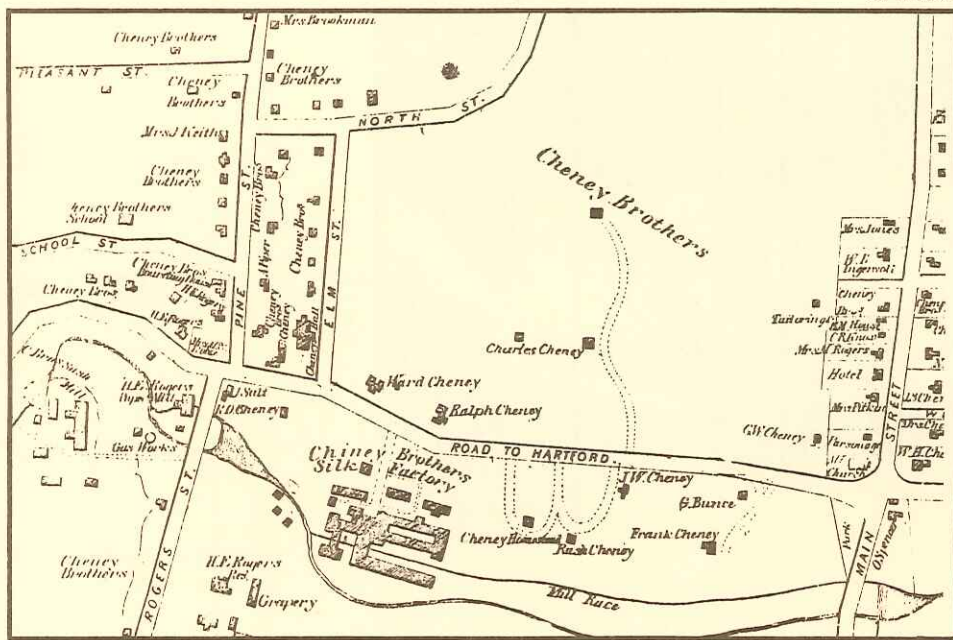
9. MACHINE SHOP, 199 FOREST STREET, c. 1903, 09. Machinists, plumbers, painters, carpenters, and countless other workers performed the essential auxiliary services required by a large textile mill. Across the street is the:

10. VELVET MILL, 60 ELM STREET, c. 1901-02. Cheney velvets were among the company's most famous products. Continue walking west on FOREST STREET and turn right on PINE STREET. Across the street you will see:



A Cheney Worker's Family, c. 1925

Map of South Manchester — 1869



11. RIBBON MILL, 162 PINE STREET, c. 1907, 09. In addition to ribbon, workers made the famous "Cheney Cravats" (neckties) in this building. Cross the street, proceed north on PINE to PLEASANT STREET. Turn west and walk down about 25 yards. On the north side of the street stands the:

12. PUBLIC BATH HOUSE, 27-29 PLEASANT STREET, c. 1913. Though the building has been modified, the separate entrances for men and women are apparent. Now walk down PLEASANT and turn north on BEECH STREET. You are now beginning to explore a portion of the:

13. WEST SIDE WORKER'S NEIGHBORHOOD, c. 1880-1920. This area is composed of over 100 single, two, and three-family houses. Note the variety of housing styles, several of which conform to the Arts and Crafts and Craftsmen styles popular at the time. These were immigrant neighborhoods as you can see from the chart in the brief history. Proceed north on BEECH, turn west on HIGH, walk to CEDAR where you will turn south until you get to PLEASANT. Walk west and turn south on COOPER. The homes on these streets will give you the flavor of a turn-of-the-century working class neighborhood. At the end of COOPER STREET turn east on COOPER HILL and to your left stand the Cheney's first and last ventures into education.

14. CHENEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 126 CEDAR STREET, c. 1859. This building served as a school for Cheney children and children of some of their workers in the late 19th - early 20th century. The building currently serves as the Manchester Historical Society's Museum.

15. THE WASHINGTON SCHOOL, 94 CEDAR STREET, c. 1914, was built with bonds guaranteed by Cheney Brothers. Continue east on COOPER HILL STREET and an aptly named SAW TOOTHED ROOF will appear on your left, so named for its shape which permitted more natural light to flood the factory floor. This is the:

16. VELVET WEAVE SHED, 182 PINE STREET, c. 1914. At the same time looming up on the north side of COOPER HILL, is the:

17. DYE HOUSE, 31 COOPER HILL STREET, c. 1914. Now turn south on PINE STREET and you will walk past the:

18. YARN MILL, 210 PINE STREET, c. 1911. Farther south the tour will conclude at the:

19. PINE STREET FIRE HOUSE, 230 PINE STREET, c. 1897, which housed the Cheney Volunteer fire department. Currently, the building is home to the museum of the Connecticut Firemen's Historical Society and is open to the public during spring and summer Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

Your car is parked across PINE STREET in the parking lot of CHENEY HALL. We hope your walk has been enjoyable and educational. Perhaps you will wish to explore further. Drive west on HARTFORD ROAD, turn north on WEST STREET, and examine some of the early 20th century neighborhoods on such streets as WEST and FAIRFIELD. Or travel east on HARTFORD ROAD, keep going through MAIN STREET and turn north on SPRUCE STREET. Here is another immigrant neighborhood of the post-Civil War era which can be seen on such streets as SCHOOL, WELLS, ELDRIDGE, OAK, and MAPLE. Read more about your community in the bibliography. We hope your desire to learn about your community never wanes.

Acknowledgements

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This brochure was prepared by the following Manchester Community College staff members:

John F. Sutherland — Historian
Thomas R. Lewis — Geographer
Sylvian Ofiara — Photographer

The assistance of the following institutions is gratefully appreciated:

Lutz Children's Museum
The Manchester Historical Society



Pine Street Fire Station, c. 1905

Thus it can be safely said that Cheney Brothers created a community of newcomers in South Manchester.

Street	Place of Birth of Head of Household in 1900
Pleasant:	U.S. = 2 Ireland = 13 Sweden = 5
High:	U.S. = 5 Ireland = 6 Sweden = 6 Germany = 6 Scotland = 4 England = 3
Cedar:	U.S. = 5 Ireland = 4 England = 2 4 other countries = 1 each
Cooper:	U.S. = 0 Germany = 10 Ireland = 1 Scotland = 1 Sweden = 1
Cooper Hill:	U.S. = 0 Germany = 3 Ireland = 2 Scotland = 1

look at these streets:
going to visit were immigrant neighborhoods in 1900. For example, Italy and southern and eastern Europe. The neighborhoods you are from Ireland, Germany, Scandinavia, and, in the 20th century, Manchester's population. English migrants were followed by those abroad. In 1910 immigrants and their children made up 76% of jobs created by the company's growth stimulated migration from

with other turn-of-the-century industrial communities. standards of the time. Clearly, Manchester compared favorably service departments, and their workplaces were superior by the of the public utilities. The company provided medical and social in their district, the major recreation centers, and they owned most five workers' houses. They built and maintained most of the schools of their company. They maintained more than two hundred attractive had lived in their community for a half century before the founding contrast to many other eastern industrialists, the Cheney family Cheney's reputation as both good employers and good citizens. In three generations of enlightened self-interest earned for the 870 men and women.

next fourteen largest companies in town combined employed only town. Cheney Brothers was not the sole employer. But in 1923 the out of 18,370 citizens worked at the mills. This was not a company silk manufacturers in the United States. By 1920, 4,670 workers Between 1838 and 1900, Cheney Brothers became one of the major manufacturing firm formed at least a large part of their world. Manchester in the late 19th — early 20th centuries, the giant silk century. And for thousands of silk workers who lived in South as he reflected upon his life in Manchester in the early 20th "Cheney Brothers was the world!" So exclaimed a retired employee

A Brief History.

Cheney Brothers Was Their World!

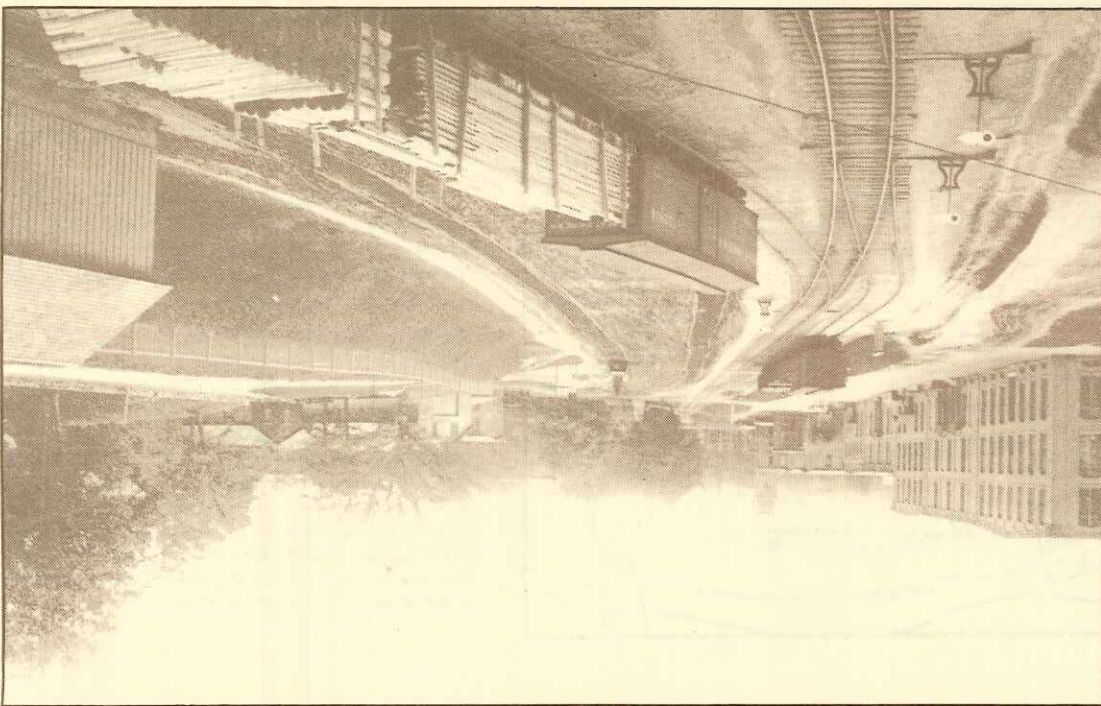
MANCHESTER, CONNECTICUT

Cheney Brothers

THE WORLD OF

A WALK THROUGH

Cheney Silk Mills, c. Early 20th Century

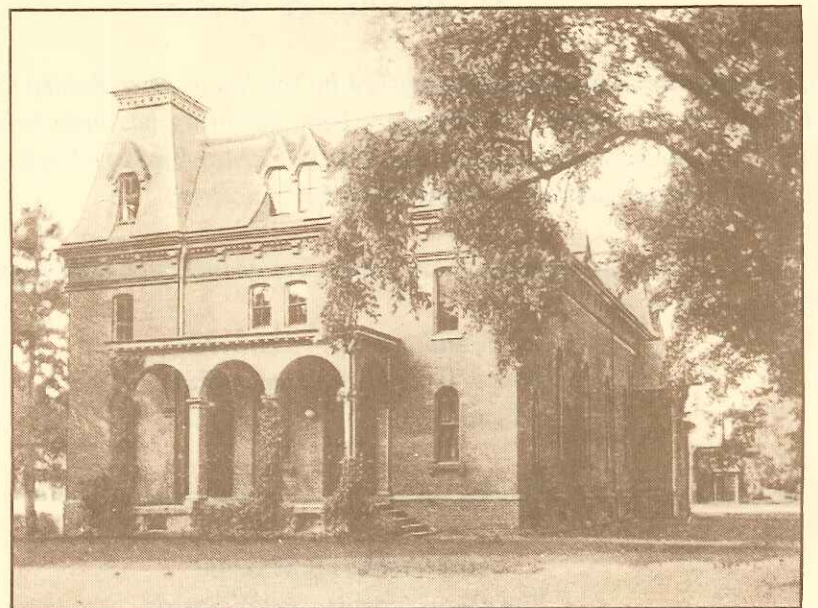


The Cheney Brothers National Historic District

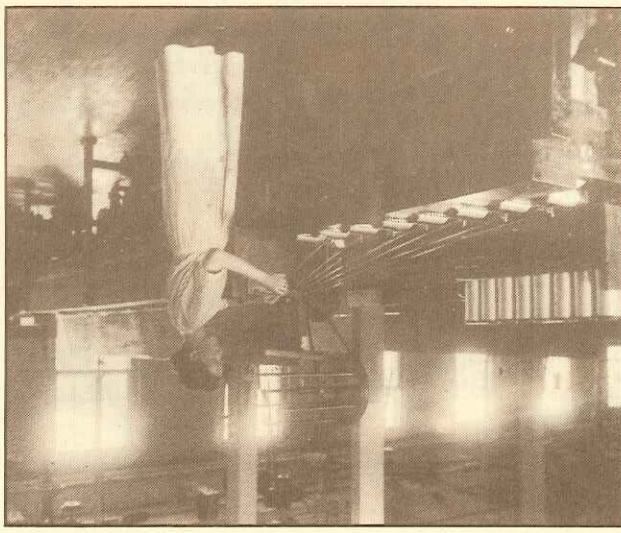
The Cheney Brothers National Historic District (approximately 175 acres) includes all of the former Cheney Mills (some converted to apartments), the 18th century Cheney Family Homestead (a museum), several 19th century mansions, Cheney Hall, schools, churches, etc. The District also includes 275 homes which were built by the Cheney Brothers for employees. An effort is being made to further expand the District to include more of the Cheney properties.

The Cheney Brothers National Historic District Commission protects and preserves this important link to Manchester's past — an excellent example of the industrial revolution in the United States. Through preservation, control and education, this remarkable area will be of interest to all future generations.

The Commission was appointed by Manchester's Board of Directors in 1978 — the same year the Landmark District received its designation from the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Commission is advisory to the Board of Directors, the Planning and Zoning Commission and other town agencies on matters concerning appropriate construction and architectural design. An additional goal of the Commission is to provide educational information to the public. The Commission is always open to your suggestions. Call the Town Manager's office for the names of Commission officials.



Cheney Hall, c. Early 20th Century



The Ribbon Mill, c. 1925

In 1990 Manchester's 50,000 citizens live in a diversified economy, and the Cheney mill area has undergone radical change. The mills have been adapted to new purposes, serving the community as apartments and shops. One must stretch the imagination to hear

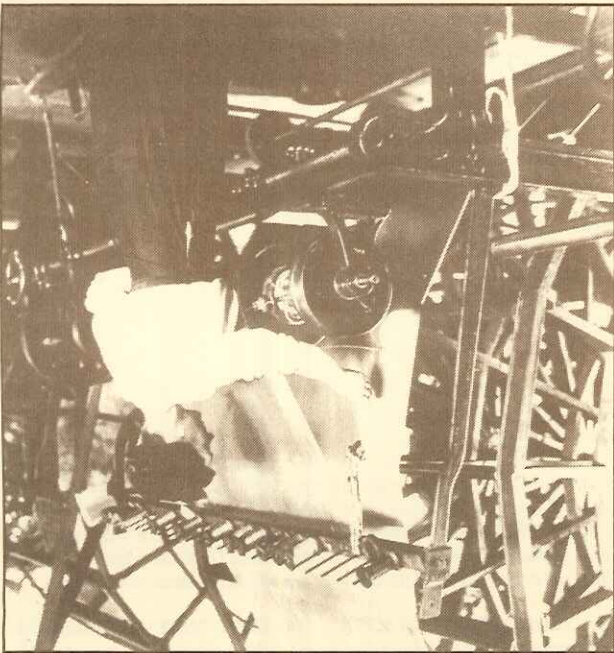
the company. The Cheney era was over. decline continued following the war, and in 1955 the family sold chutes and other war goods increased employment. However, the brought an artificial recovery as government contracts for para-Brothers auctioned off its remaining tenant houses. World War Two enterprises to the town or to private companies. In 1937, Cheney community. The firm sold its utilities, schools, and other auxiliary times forced a change in the company's relationship to the Brothers' fortunes. Then came the Great Depression. The hard thetics, and price fluctuations precipitated a decline in Cheney

In the 1920s overproduction, competition from inexpensive syn-Brothers remained unorganized until the Great Depression. and "one loom or no looms!" In the end they lost, and Cheney unionize and picketed, chanting derisively, "two looms, two looms!" some velvet weavers for seven and twelve weeks, the weavers tried to The 1902 strike was the worst, as the firm successfully required labor had their disputes. Strikes occurred in 1902, 1923, and 1934. Do not fall into the trap of believing that Manchester was some kind

Read More About It!

the clatter of hundreds of looms and to see workers streaming into follow the guide we have prepared for you and take yourself back in time to the era when "Cheney Brothers was the world!"

Making a Warp, c. 1925



The following sources are available at both the Mary Cheney Library and The Manchester Community College Library:
Buckley, William E. *A New England Pattern: The History of Manchester, Connecticut*. Chester, Ct.: Pequot Press, 1973.
Lewis, Thomas R. *Silk Along Steel: The Story of the South Manchester Railroad*. Chester, Ct.: Pequot Press, 1976.
Sutherland, John F. "Cheney Brothers was the World: Migration and Settlement in Manchester, Connecticut at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Proceedings of the New England-St. Lawrence Valley Geographical Society* 10 (1981).
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