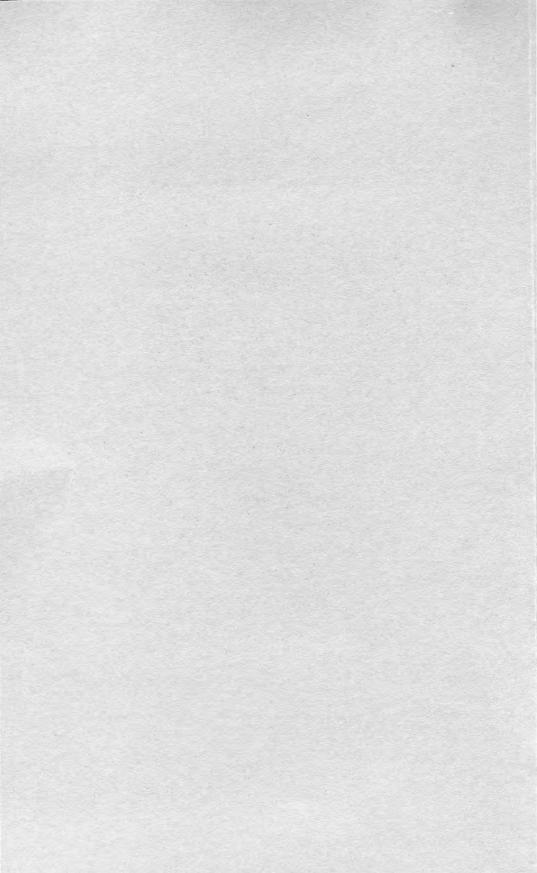
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OLD MANCHESTER LIVES ON . . .



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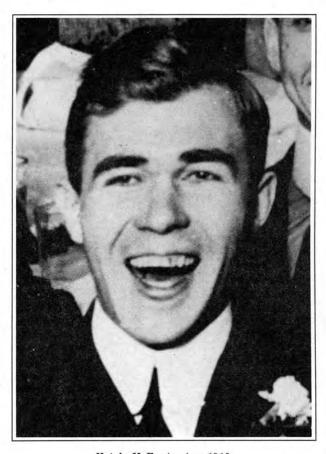
the Manchester Historical Society presents

OLD MANCHESTER II ...The Storytellers

Compiled, written and edited by Milton K. Adams

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Knight H. Ferris, circa 1910.

It is with much love and respect that we dedicate this Storytellers book to Knight H. Ferris. Known only as "The Old Codger," his "Codgitations" column—written anonymously, in the Manchester Herald from 1970–1976—endeared him to the citizens of Manchester. Although he was a "knight," he proved to all of us that this knight's pen was indeed mightier than the sword. He made history come to life.

And so, Old Codger, speaking for the citizens of Old Manchester, we dub thee Sir Knight of the round word, the well-turned phrase, the gleeful prank and Master of Memories. We do hereby, for all time, elect you to the perpetual office of:

Old Manchester's Greatest Storyteller

The words live on.

Acknowledgements

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Publishing

Once again, Cathy Grames, in this most demanding book, has demonstrated her intellectual commitment to excellence.

Her layout and design work have captured the essence of historic times while portraying aesthetic values far beyond the commonplace.

Thank you, Cathy.

MR Introduction MR

If I had my way, this book might have been titled "OLD MANCHESTER...Where the Water Was." That title is just weird enough to catch your interest...right? It's also factual, historically accurate and most stimulating because you see, although Manchester's boundaries start many miles east of "the Grate River" (the Connecticut), its first settlers came to the area because they knew the value of water power. Mill

owners, whether they had asaw mill, grist mill or fabric mill, looked for steady flow, a "drop" deep enough to provide power, and narrow enough stream to allow a proper dam with some broader and shallow area behind the dam to allow impoundment of water for future "insurance" of supply. Manchester, in its early identities, had all of that.

Maps of early

Manchester don't highlight this. A brook, a stream, or a pond are defined in fine black lines that fail to highlight the importance of the early source of power in town—its running water. A bird's eye view of Manchester's history improves the learning process. You can see it here in Hazel Lutz's "Water Map of Manchester-1973". The brooks and streams are historic facts, while the reservoirs shown reflect the long-range planning of Manchester's leadership.

GROWING A TOWN

How do you grow a town, particularly Manchester, Connecticut? You start with water, for water power. You plant saw mills or grist mills on the water. Along comes a "paper man" or a "cotton man" or a "woolen man" who buys the water rights then grows a paper mill or a cotton mill or a woolen mill right there on the water. To make the product, you add people who may work twelve hours a day, six days a week. They settle near the mills and soon become a "ville."

Manchester had its "villes" all around

the edges of town like a misshapen doughnut with the hole in the center later to become Manchester North and Manchester South. There was Hop Brook, Hilliardville, Adamsville, Buckland, Union Village, Oakland, Parker Village, Lydallville, Manchester Green, Frog Hollow, Talcottville, Highland Park, Globe Hollow, Taylortown, Cheneyville and Hillstown. Even "the Green" had a mill and

Hazel Lutz's 1973 "Water Map"

water power from a brook that ran under Middle Turnpike to supply the mill.

To feed the villes and make them live and grow, you built whatever the times decreed. You built tavern stops and livery stables for stage coaches, a post office to assuage people's loneliness and link them to the world, blacksmith shops, general stores, grain and feed stores, tin shops and hardware stores, tailor and clothing shops.

As time passed, fires were common and ever-present in an age of wood. Leather buckets and bucket brigades never really stopped a fire. Your water was there to drink—from a well or stream—but there was no water piped into your house, and your bathroom was outside. Somewhere in time you agreed that your ville was big

enough for a water system. What then? Why water was then piped inside, with indoor plumbing, hydrants outside and a volunteer fire department taking the place of the bucket brigade.

In time, kerosene lamps became gas lights and later, wonder of wonders, electric lights. Somewhere along the line, the town's gravel paths became wider and were paved, the main street was lighted, the fire department was formed, the constable became the police force, the railroad arrived, the trolley line came into being and people began to talk about horseless carriages.

Did you notice? The villes are now combining their efforts and the town is here. The "City of Village Charm" is here. This book will attempt to expand your vistas, help you understand this unique place where we live, and let you explore the mystery of our town's history. You will find hundreds of heroes to admire, some wonderful clowns to enjoy and most important of all, you will see your grandparents (great or later) in the world they lived in. You'll notice key themes in all the storytellers' stories such as work, children, family and friends: everyone worked, yes they did. Widows worked, of course, the men workedsix or seven days a week, twelve hours a day for 50¢ a day and a tab at the company store. Oh, they relied on family and friends to get them through life-this is not a mystery. It's your story. Read on and let the storytellers tell you about the past . . . in Manchester, Connecticut.

Editors Note: Manchester in its early days was indeed a good place to be. The earliest settler, in 1673, is believed to be Corporal John Gilbert, who located a saw mill where Hop Brook now crosses under West Center Street. His land was a grant from the General Court in Hartford of two hundred acres for his service to the Crown in the French and Indian War. His neighbor John Olcutt (also Olcott or Allcott) owned "a home lot" north of Gilbert and in 1708 bought 100 acres from Gilbert's sons Joseph and Thomas, administrators of John Gilbert's estate. Olcott's land, at one time, covered the area at the Bunce School and that land on which is now Verplank School. You'll read more about Olcott Street and the

Olcott known nationally as "the Grass Man" later in this book.

John Allen also received a Court grant of 100 acres for his sawmill now known as (west) Hilliard and (north) Adams Street. The rights were given for that location on the "Sawmill River" (later known as the Crooked River or the Hockanum River) and later known as Hilliardville, occupied by the Hilliard Mills and their environs. Time has flown by. The water is still there—flowing to the "Grate River" and then to the sea.

However, all the villes did not grow from water rights. Other villes grew from location, like Manchester Green, on a stage coach road or Union Village that became North Manchester because in 1850 the railroad depot was located there.

The Early Days

Ed. Note: Isn't it fitting to start our stories with one about our first President?

Storyteller: Deodatus Woodbridge from his diary

THE EARLY DAYS-THE 1700s

Monday, November 9, 1789

Dry and warm. I took my spotted cow out of Richard Pitkin's pasture. Began a new barrell of rum. At two o'clock a coach and four stopped at my house. His excellency, the President of the United States and three gentlemen of distinction were within. President Washington praised the quality of my rum. It was from the barrell and before resuming his journey to Hartford he asked my little Electa for a glass of water from our well and gave her a sixpence for her pains.

Ed. Note: You'll hear more about Electa later since that little girl used her brief encounter with a President, a sixpence, her integrity, her feminine charms and, her foresight to marry George Cheney, grandson of Timothy Cheney ... and thus begat the Cheney silk dynasty.



Ed. Note: Some storytellers' stories arrive from distant places. This article came to us from Sue Way who received it from Herb Seymour, a storyteller himself, whose mother saved it in 1912.

JAMBSTONE PLAIN/BUCKLAND

The 1700s

"That part of Manchester now known as Buckland was originally called Jambstone Plain, the name being derived from the use to which the stone quarried here was once applied. Later, the name was changed to Buckland's Corners, and finally to Buckland. These details which I relate were told by Aaron Buckland Esq. to his son-in-law William Jones, who told them to Daniel Callahan, a trusted employee of the Jones family for many years. I have them from Mr. Callahan himself.

When the news of the battle of Bunker Hill reached Buckland, seven men, cousins, all by the name of Buckland, started at once on horseback for Boston. They were too late to engage in this battle, but enlisted and were in other battles of the Revolution. There must have been other men from who went from here for I found the names of Nehemiah Risley and Moses Evans. The names of the seven Bucklands were Aaron, Jonathan, David, Elisha, George, Joshua and Stephen.

Across from where Norman Buckland lived, on the west side of the road, was the home of another Buckland but I am not sure what his name was. In later years, this was the home of Merritt Buckland. Elisha Buckland lived on the site of the present Connecticut Sumatra Tobacco Company's farm house. Opposite this house is the quarry from which the stone above referred to came. After Elisha came back from the war, he took up farming and quarrying. This quarry was Royal property at one time and all the boundaries for the various grants of land were taken from this quarry as a starting point. Many of the gravestones in the Gold Street cemetery in Hartford came from here, as did also those in the cemeteries in Manchester and surrounding =

towns. The foundation stones of the city hall in Hartford were from this quarry.

Aaron Buckland, at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, lived in a log cabin on the site of the house, until recently the home of Mrs. Barron. After the war, he built a better house, and later he built the large brick house known as Buckland's Inn. Mrs. Barron has the sign that hung in front of the tavern, "Buckland's Inn 1788." This tavern was, for many years, the place where the "gentry" held their parties and many of the older gentlemen today tell of the good times they have participated in at the Inn. This was a posthorse tavern, where the horses were changed in such quick fashion, "for the mail could not be long delayed."

Aaron Buckland built for his daughter, Mrs. William Jones, the gambrel roof house on Buckland Street owned by C. O. Wolcott. This farm has always been known as the Jones farm and the old house stood about where Mr. Wolcott's now does, at right angles to its present position. Aaron Buckland was evidently a public-spirited citizen, as he planted all the maple trees on the Jones farm and those on either side of the road from the corner to the cemetery. Some of these beautiful trees are being cut down and it seems a pity to destroy such old landmarks. He kept the road in repair from the corner to the cemetery, laying large foundation stones topped with smaller ones in much the same manner as roads are built today.

Aaron Buckland was given, as his salvage or pension, a thousand acres of land in Buckland. Land was then worth 17 cents an acre. He built a powder mill where the Adams Mill now stands, which was in operation until after the War of 1812. At one time there was a serious explosion at this mill, one man being blown two or three hundred feet. He was buried where he fell, on the bank of the Hockanum River, and a stone erected over the spot telling of the tragedy. This stone is now at the house of Thomas Hackett. Aaron Buckland also owned a woolen mill, in 1780, located some distance southwest from the powder mill. He sold this in 1824, to Williams & Tracy and later it was bought by Sidney Pitkin, who came from Hartford. This is the present Hilliard Mill. Mr. Callahan has a bayonet

given him by Mr. Jones that was carried through the Revolution. He was not sure whether Aaron Buckland used it or not, but states that it was brought home by him.

After the war, when the French troops were marching from Boston to New York, one detachment of soldiers came by Tolland Turnpike and stopped at Buckland's Inn, where they were reviewed on the green in front of the Inn by General Lafayette and DeRochambeau. They were entertained by Captain Buckland. Later, in 1824, when Lafayette was visiting this country, people for miles around came to Buckland's Inn to pay honor to General Lafayette, who stopped there on his way to Hartford.

The William Jones referred to as son-inlaw of Aaron Buckland, having married his daughter Eunice, was not a native of Buckland. He came originally from Hartford, but when only 13 years old, because of delicate health, he was sent by his parents with an older brother, Richard L. Jones, who was a master of a seagoing vessel, on a voyage in hopes that the sea air would be beneficial. Off the coast of Ireland, they were shipwrecked. William returned to America and later settled in Buckland. He was the first postmaster, the mail being brought by stage coach. This was 1799.

The post office was in the gambrel-roof house at the corner of Tolland Turnpike and Buckland Street. Here also, he kept a store of the usual type of those days. The large cellarway is still to be seen in this house, where farmers backed up their wagons to load or unload as the case might be, meal, grain, molasses, etc. Jones's store, then as later, was the depot for the region around about and later the post office was moved to the house on the next corner west and finally, in 1840, William Jones built the building, now used as a barn, just north of the present post office on Buckland Street, where he and later his son Aaron kept a general store for many years.

There was a paper mill in Buckland before the Revolution, as news of the Battle of Lexington was printed in the Connecticut Courant on paper made at this mill, which was the second paper mill in Connecticut. It was owned by Watson & Ledyard or Goodwin. There was also an oil mill owned by Richard Jones, who gave up the seagoing life and built a house, which has since passed through many hands, the fourth house beyond the railroad bridge on the west side of Adams Street. This oil mill later was used as a grist mill and afterwards as a wire factory. This was about 1780.



Storyteller: Mrs. J. M. Williams from The Manchester Herald, January 1900

THE 1700s AND EARLY 1800s

Manchester is one of the four towns whose territory was officially included in the town of Hartford. The plantations east of the Connecticut River were known as the Three-mile Lots, and extended as far east as the Hillstown Road in Manchester. The land east of the Three-mile Lots, was known as the Commons, and formed the hunting grounds of Joshua, sachem of the Western Niantic Indians, who was the third son of Uncas, sachem of the Mohegans.

About 200 years ago, Chief Joshua sold to Major Talcott of Hartford, a tract of land, east of these Three-mile Lots, extending for five miles, to what is now the Bolton town line. This last named tract was known until 1772 as the "Five Mile Tract," and is now included in Manchester. The area of Manchester is now 28 miles square.

The first settlers of the Five Mile Tract located in the western part of our town near Hop Brook. Here, as early as 1711, Thomas Olcott kept a tavern, and tradition tells of great droves of cattle which passed this point, on their way to market, and of numerous emigrants from Rhode Island making their way with wagons to the Western Reserve, which was the western most point anyone then sought. On the north side of Center Street, east of the church, a century ago, were the homes of the brothers Timothy, Benjamin and Silas

Cheney. Timothy Cheney was notable as one of the first clock makers in New England. Then, the usual timepiece was the noon-mark on the kitchen floor, and clocks were rare and costly. The Cheney clocks were made of carved cherry and in the style of the "Grandfather's Clock" in the song, but unlike this one which "stopped short, never to go again" after it had "stood ninety years on the floor," these have stood for a century and some are still keeping good time.

About a mile east of Manchester Center. lived the elder Richard Pitkin, his home being on the lot east of the old Center church parsonage. His son, Richard, lived in a house which was on the same site as the residence of the late Elisha Williams, This house was built with very high Corinthian columns in front, which rested on large blocks of red sandstone, one of which is preserved as a horse block at the home of his grandson, James R. Pitkin. This Richard Pitkin kept a tavern and frequently pleasure parties who came to visit the glass factory would repair to the nearby Pitkin Tavern for supper and a dance in the upper hall. This village was the business center of the town in the time of the Revolution. In the present highway, north of the tavern was a blacksmith shop, and east of this shop was a store, where a political organization called the "Know Nothings" held their secret meetings. A pottery once stood southwest of the old glass-works.

THE MANUFACTURERS

Throughout the state, a century ago, a variety of manufacturing was carried on by the Pitkin family. They operated powder mills in East Hartford and Manchester during the Revolution and War of 1812, but at a great loss to them pecuniarily, for the young government was too poor to pay for the powder, or even the saltpeter used in its manufacture. To repay such loss, the government granted monopolies. In 1784, William Pitkin was granted the sole privilege of making snuff in the state for 14 years, exempt from taxation. Ten acres of land on the Hockanum was released by the town to William, George and Elisha Pitkin for this

purpose. In 1783, because of their loss on production of gun powder, William and Elisha Pitkin and Samuel Bishop were granted by the General Court the sole privilege of making glass in the state for 25 years. It was manufactured south of the Green until about 1830. The ruins of this factory still remain and are owned by J.R. Pitkin. The vine-clad walls and graceful arches of the stone structure form an attractive ruins which are 117 years old.

Early Paper Mills

The first paper mill in Connecticut, with one exception, was built near the ruins of the Charles R. Keeney mill. The news of the battle of Lexington was printed in the Connecticut Courant on paper made at this mill. This one was burned, however, in 1778, and funds to rebuild it were raised by lottery, permission being granted by the General Assembly to raise \$7,500 in this way. It has had several owners. Paper shavings, formerly regarded as almost worthless, were here first used in the manufacture of paper.

Pioneer Cotton Mill

In 1794, Connecticut's first successful cotton mill, and the first in the country except one in Rhode Island, was built at what is now Union Village, Samuel Pitkin being the principal owner. The Pitkins operated this mill for 25 years. People came here from far and near to see the wonderful machine, capable of making the fabulous amount of 12 pounds of good yarn in a single day. In 1819 David Watkinson bought this mill, and erected a stone mill in 1821. Owing to the presence of quicksand under the foundations, it had to be taken down and was rebuilt in 1823 a short distance away. It was merged into the Union Manufacturing Co. and a brick mill has since been added.

Powder Mill

Within the present limit of Parker Village, a settlement was started in 1808 by John Mather who built there a small glass factory and powder mill. Two kegs of 25 pounds each were the daily production, and when 50 kegs had accumulated, they were loaded into a wagon and started for Boston on the old turnpike. The powder mill

exploded, like most of its kind, and the water privilege has since been used for the manufacture of cotton warp and paper.

John Mather's family was one of the most aristocratic in town. They were southern people and their piano was one of the first brought here, and was quite a wonder. They occupied a very large house west of William Fould's paper mill. We shall remember John Mather by the Lombardy poplars which he planted near his house.

Needles and Paper

At Lydallville, a prosperous paper mill and a long-established needle business has been carried on for many years by Lydall and Foulds.

More Paper Mills

At Oakland, a flourishing paper business was carried on for many years by N.T. Pulsifer and at present it is owned by the American Writing Paper Co. In Buckland, the first paper mill was built in 1780, by Richard Jones, who had a powder mill near here, an oil mill (which was afterwards a grist mill) and a wire factory. After having several owners, the paper mill and surrounding territory was purchased in 1868 by Peter Adams, who, at a great personal expense, provided his mills with the best manufacturing facilities. He was said to have been one of the largest manufacturers of writing paper in the country. The mill has recently been partially destroyed by fire.

About a year ago, A. Willard Case purchased the H.H. White mill at North Manchester and made extensive alterations, and at Highland Park the Case Brothers have another paper mill. The romantic beauty at Highland Park is surpassed by that of few localities in New England. On the southeast the hills are covered with forests, and from here a full view is afforded of Manchester. Hartford and much of the Connecticut Valley. Here a stream of water falls a distance of 65 feet over the rocks, into the valley below, enclosed by wooded bluffs. At the base of the bluffs are the well-known old Wyllys Copper Mines. The ore was found only in limited quantity. Above the falls are the famous mineral springs of Highland Tonica Water, containing bicarbonate of iron with sodium, calcium, magnesia, etc.

Silk Mills

George Cheney and Electa Woodbridge, married in 1798, were the parents of eight sons and one daughter. Several of the sons engaged under the name Cheney Bros. in the manufacture of silk. In 1836, they built their first mill and after years of experimentation and study, aided by travel and close observation abroad, they have acquired a success of which we all are proud. They employed a half a dozen men in their first mill, but their operatives now number about 2,500. It is by far the largest industry in town.

Wool...Buckland to Pitkin to Hilliard

In 1780, Aaron Buckland, from whom our village of Buckland received its name, owned a woolen mill, in which was made plain cloth on hand looms. He wove blankets by hand for the War of 1812. The next owner was Sidney Pitkin and in 1824 Elisha E. Hilliard entered his employ. From 1832 to 1860 the firm name was Pitkin and Hilliard. On the last named date, Mr. Hilliard became sole proprietor, being succeeded by E.C. Hilliard.

Later Industries

In August 1886, a new industry was added to the many of which this town boasts, this being a bakery built by Frank Goetz. This was recently burned and promptly rebuilt. During the last year his extensive business was increased by the erection of a large factory, where forty employees daily transform fifty barrels of flour into crackers, bread and fancy cakes.

In 1891, the J.T. Robertson Soap Co. located at Childs' Grist Mill and began the manufacture of Bon Ami and a variety of other soaps. A disastrous fire last June crippled their business for a while, but they soon located at the Mather mill, a portion of which they purchased and remodeled and continued business with an increased output and a force of thirty-five hands.

Two years ago (1898) a new firm, the Unitype Co., began the manufacture of typesetting machines at the Mather mill, and furnishes employment to about ninety men.

One of the greatest conveniences to our

town, since the opening of the steam railroad in 1850, came with the introduction of the trolley. The first car was run on the cross-town line in May 1895. The line was extended to Rockville not long after, thus furnishing that city with a much needed means of communication with Manchester and Hartford.

Woodbridge Tavern was opened in 1780 by Deodatus Woodbridge and continued in business for nearly a century under his son Dudley and others. Across the street was the stable and the Woodbridge farm, an extensive acreage which continued to be operated into the present century until it was broken up into home sites and school property. Arthur T. Woodbridge and Raymond B. Woodbridge, respectively the great-great- and the great-great-great-grandsons of Deodatus still live on the family plot today.

Manchester Green was the center of the community in the heyday of the Woodbridge Tavern. Besides the tavern, there was a country store, a cotton mill and the post office, established in 1808 as the first within the present limits of Manchester, and a village of twelve or fifteen houses built rather close together.

Stage Coach Important

The growth of the village depended largely on the stage coach route which was established when the Boston and Hartford Turnpike opened in 1794. Spiess and Bidwell's "History of Manchester, Connecticut" contains a vivid account by Mrs. Mary Cone Jenney Moeser of the arrival of the stage coach in those days:

"My mother was about twelve years old when her father moved from the Rich place, where nearly all of his children were born, to the tavern, which remained her home until her marriage to my father, Mr. Ralph Cone, in 1840. It was always a delight to me to have her tell of the wonderful doings of the tavern. Of the rush and excitement as the time grew for the arrival of the stage. Everything must be in readiness. A fresh log rolled upon the blazing open fire in each room, spotless caps and aprons donned by the serving maids, the last touches given the loaded tables, bits of dust flecked off here and there, glasses set out in the bar

room, a last look at the flip-dog to see if it is hot for the flip, the mixing of wonderful concoctions for the hasty drinker, and a general stir, inside and out, all over the Green.

"At the sound of the bugle, persons might be seen coming from every house, belated ones running up the street, loud voices and directions issuing from the barn, where twenty-four horses were kept, men trooping from the store, while a curious group gathered on the outskirts, ready for their sly jokes and comments on the occupants of the four-in-hand and cumbersome stage, as they swung themselves down from its top or crawled from its depths, to stretch themselves after their cramped position during the ten-mile ride from the last stopping place.

"Soon the tired horses are taken out to be rubbed down and made comfortable. fresh ones take their places for the hard climb over the hills; the call for the start is made, passengers hurry out and store themselves inside and on top of the stage, the good-byes are said, the driver flings his last joke to the one or two characters of the Green standing near and gets a witty response in return, and with a crack of the whip, blowing of horns and shouting of youngsters, away they go, up over the hill, and are out of sight while the men return to the barn, to the tavern, and to the store for their mail and to talk over the news brought them by this, nearly the only medium from the outside world, and to exchange theories of the passengers who have continued their journey."

Storyteller: Unknown from The Manchester Herald, August 1906

PASSING OF THE TOLL HOUSE

Reminiscences of 100 Years Ago When Middle Turnpike Was A Stage Road

The old toll house at the foot of McLean Hill, which has stood guard over the Middle Turnpike from a time beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitants of this town, has been razed to the ground. An ell that was added about 20 years ago was saved and moved to the rear of the next house where it will be used as a barn. Contractors Barber & Blinn had the work in hand.

The old toll house stood in the highway and the highway commissioner required that it should be moved back before the road was macadamized. The house has been in the possession of the Logan family since 1858 and was until April of this year occupied by Andrew Schulty and family. The property was originally in the hands of the McLean family after which the hill is named and a member of this family was, in all probability, the last toll-gate keeper. No toll has been collected there for about 54 years.

The Middle Turnpike was, many years ago, part of the stage road from New York to Providence. The road was owned and built by the company operating the stage and they received revenue from other vehicles that used it by means of toll gates. These gates were placed at distances of about six miles. A fee of six and a quarter cents was exacted from one-horse vehicles and a proportionate sum was added for more pretentious caravans. Pedestrians passed through a turnstile and paid a penny apiece. After midnight, the gatekeepers were not required to be on duty. They might, if they chose to, stay awake and charge half rates for all who passed between that time and sunrise. The keeper's children oftentimes earned pocket money by watching after midnight for belated travelers, or those who waited for economy's sake until an hour when they hoped to pass through unchallenged.

Except for the three stages which passed in either direction through the day, the Middle Turnpike was not a much traveled road. It was laid out in a straight line, or very nearly so, and abounded in steep hills. Many preferred the Tolland turnpike, which was also a toll road, and the farmers in the south part of the town always used the Hartford Rd. which was a free road. It was not until the advent of the trolley line and the construction of Chapman Rd. that traffic to Hartford was diverted to the Middle Turnpike.

Storyteller: Elinore G. Howard as told to Ruth Watkins Treat. 1/2/93 Source: Chauncey Bryant's account book at C.H.S.

SOME ORFORD PARISH DEATHS 1819, 1820, 1824, 1825

1819

January 15...Edward Hail...aged 55 years... fever

March 15...Child of Chester Lyman ... about 5 days

March 22...Child of Ireanus Brown...9 weeks April 16...Child of Dudley Woodbridge ... about 5 weeks

June 15...Child of Salmon Lyman...7 months August 19...Joseph Henry...35 years... burnt in mill

September 20...Daniel Gurley...74 years

January 25...Mrs. Norma Spencer...aged 47...Consumption

February 18...Miss Aurilla Evans...aged 22 years...Dropsy, Consumption

February 20...Decon Hopeful Lyman... aged 75

February 21...Henry Griswold...aged 33...fever

March 6...Mrs. Esther Woodbridge...61 years April 16...Child of Horace Kiley ... 4 years July 12...Mr. Charles Keeney ... 28 ... dropsy

1824

January 16...Died Mrs. L. Wolcott consort of B. Wolcott...39 years January 16...Child of J Griswold...2 weeks

January 24...Catharine Clark...90 years

January 24...Abner Landfear...70 years

April 5...Child of Selah Wilson by her clothes taking fire

May 28...Hiram Hail...26 years

June 23...Child of John Earl...aged about 7 years...drowned

July 15...Child of Selah Wilson

July 30... Child of Norman Buckland ... aged 29 mos.

September 26...Henry Treat...56 years

November 25...Child of Seth Hoskins...9 days December 11...Lydia, wife of Woolcott Dart...38 yrs.

December 4...Child of Samuel McKee

December 18...Sam'l Benjamin...81 years

December 19...Wife of Dan'l. A. Ball

December 21...Child of George Bidwell

January 14... A son of Mr. Sam'l Chancler ... aged 10 years

January 30...Chester Lucas...aged 36...found dead in the road

February 2...Child of W. Ruby Hail...3 years

February 6...Alvin Keeney...83

March 11...Hart Porter Buckland...12 years March 13...Mrs Kick wife of George Kick...30 years

March 13...Mrs. Anoren...87 years

March 16...Peter Kick...68 years

March 26...Mrs. Cloe Keeney...91 years

April 8...Thadeus Wright...51

April 10...W.H. Alexander...48 years

May 2...Lina Landfear...about 30 years

May 2...Child of Lina Landfear...10 weeks

May 2...W. Hills...81 years

September...Joshua Couch...46 years

...Mrs. Wells, wife of Oliver Wells

October 16...Allen Marsh...21 years

October 15...Dorcas Thomas

October 15...Miss Carrier

12...Julius Hale...20

December 3...Henry Lyman...Killed at Chatham by (illegible)

Storyteller: American Advertising Directory for the year 1831 Published by Jocelyn Darling & Co. New York, NY

For Manufacturers and Dealers in American Goods Manchester, Hartford County, Connecticut

Bunce, George...Manufacturer of paper of every description

Lyman, Benjamin...Manufacturer of pleasure and common wagons and carts of every kind with cast iron hubs, etc.

Mather, John...Manufacturer of flannel, also of gun powder.

Spencer & Seymour...Manufacturers of satinet

Union Mfg. Co.... Manufacturers of cotton goods and yarns for satinet warps and bleachers and finishers of cotton; having 3,500 spindles and 76 looms.

Storyteller: Mrs. Elwood Ela from The Manchester Herald, March 20, 1943

A SERMON AT THE CENTER, A FIRE AT THE GREEN

It is doubtful whether many people living in Manchester at the present time know the mill at Manchester Green is the second mill built practically on the site of a former mill destroyed by fire. This fire occurred one Sunday morning when people attending services at Center Congregational church were quietly listening to their pastor's sermon. Suddenly, the mill bell was rung-a sinister sound, for every man knew something serious was happening. The pastor laid aside his sermon and suggested that a few of the younger men follow him to the mill where they, in all probability, would be needed. When the men reached the mill, one end of it was burning fiercely. Nevertheless, father and two other young men reached the roof by means of a long ladder. In the meantime, other men had been filling pails with water taken from the brook back of the mill. Three pails were handed to the men on the roof who worked valiantly until the fire made such headway that it was unsafe to remain longer. The burning of this mill threw some seventy people out of employment. Incidentally, many of the employees lived in the old houses we see at Manchester Green today.

1860s

In the early 1860s, there were few houses on Woodbridge Street, so few that I was not allowed to walk on the street until I was eight years old, unless some older person was with me. One morning in June, however, when I had passed my eighth birthday, I walked down Woodbridge Street to call on an old friend of our family, a Mr. Abernathy who was a cobbler and who lived in one of the oldest houses on the street. He loved this modest, weather-beaten house of his, and could be seen every pleasant day during the summer seated behind his bench that was placed just back of the open front

door. There he worked patiently, from morning until late afternoon, repairing shoes. His hair was white and he had a long gray beard, so he seemed to me, a child, one of the oldest men I had ever seen. When I arrived at his house, I was carrying a package that I gave to him immediately. It contained one of my shoes and two of Mother's. They were to be resoled. I told him.

"Well, well," said he, "I will see what I can do, but I shall have to keep them at least a week. Would you like to come in and rest before you walk home, or would you rather sit on the step?" "I will sit on the step, thank you, sir," I replied, "for I have to watch for Mr. Graves, I am going to drive his two horses from here to the store, so he will stop for me on his way home with the mail."

A Coach Ride. "Mr. Graves came to Grandfather's house this morning," I continued, "so he knew I was coming to see you." "In that case," replied the kind old man, "I will watch for Mr. Graves with you," and he laid aside his leather apron and sat down on the doorstep with me.

It was not long before the two horses appeared, drawing the heavy old stage coach. Three passengers were inside. They looked much astonished when Mr. Graves stopped the horses, got down from his lofty seat, and lifted a little girl to the seat beside him. "Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye, Mr. Abernathy," said the little girl. "My best regards to all your family," said he, and away we drove in a cloud of dust. True to promise, I was given the extreme end of the reins, while Mr. Graves grasped them with his strong hands just above mine. The horses did not run away with their youthful driver, and all too soon we were at the Post Office where the passengers alighted, including myself. Undoubtedly, my relatives were relieved to have me safe home again and full of information about my walk and visit with Mr. Abernathy.

Many years have passed since the death of Mr. Abernathy, and the little girl who loved to visit him is now an old lady, but the house still stands in its quiet corner. Friends tell me it is no longer weather-stained, but rejoices in several coats of paint. May the family living in it now be very happy in this house of pleasant memories.

Storyteller: Mrs. Harry Maidment from The Manchester Herald, 2/22/67

Ed. Note: Edited for content and brevity.

INVENTIVE YANKEES

Rev. John Pierpont

"The Yankee genius, with his jack-knife driven, can cut canals or build a floating dock and quickly settle any problem given while making locomotives, or a clock."

Cheney Clocks

Timothy Cheney, fourth son of Benjamin Cheney, grew up in his father's house on East Center Street. He was a captain in one of the four Hartford companies being led by Lt. Col. George Pitkin, but was later recalled by Governor Trumbull to manufacture powder or gun powder sieves for the army.

As a civilian after the war, his clock factory was located in the area where Center Springs Park is now. He married Mary Olcott and built the house known as the Cheney Homestead on what is now Hartford Road. There lived his son, George, and George's seven sons most of whom founded Cheney Brothers.

The Inventive Minister

Enoch Burt, minister of the Congregational Church in 1826, was considered an inventive genius. He opened a machine shop in the woods behind the church. At that location, he invented the first power loom for weaving checks and plaids. His patent was dated August 19, 1829.

Benjamin Lyman, Inventor

Benjamin Lyman, of Manchester Green, was a farmer and an ingenious person. He improved the construction of the iron plough and received a patent in 1828 for cast iron ploughs. Once the farmers used his cast iron ploughs, Lyman was kept busy making them. Later he designed and manufactured cast iron hubs for carts and wagons to replace "wooden hubs used since time immemorial."

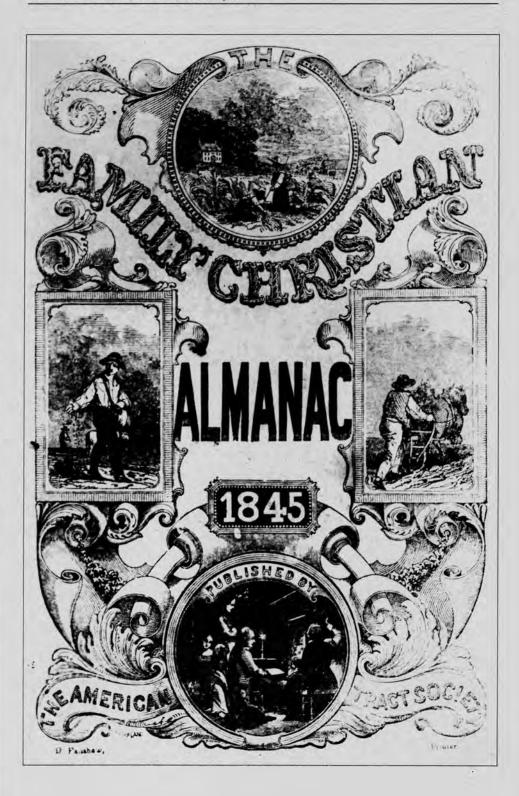
Improved Guns

Major improvements on guns were made by Cyrus Buckland, born in Manchester in 1799. A pattern-maker for the U.S. Arsenal in Springfield, Buckland soon realized that firearms as used in the War of 1812 were antiquated. He designed machinery for making a new type of firearm, built 13 machines to make gun stocks from the rough state to the point where they required only smoothing the outer surface. His "milling of the breech screw, invented in 1857, led to international ability to interchange parts." The cost of making muskets was reduced 50%. The British government copied his machines. Buckland received no personal profit except a \$10,000 congressional grant in 1859.



That Versatile Jones Man

William H. Jones first worked as a carpenter. In 1836, he was commissioned to build a two-story school house. The Building Committee Report: "built better than the contract." In 1840, he invented an automatic silk spooler which did away with one step in the usual process of reeling silk from the cocoon. With water rights on both sides of Oakland Street at North Main Corner, he built a silk mill there and was awarded "6 medals" and "had the reputation of making the best silk in the U.S." He invented a rubber belt waterwheel never used before. After 16 years of manufacturing silk thread, he turned to cotton and wool; invented a yarn winding machine; invented knitting machines "faster than any ever before known"; invented a stocking machine that would knit 25 dozen pair in 10 hours. A unique man.



The Genius of Manchester

Christopher Spencer invented the Spencer repeating rifle, which is reputed to have shortened the Civil War by increasing the fire power of the Union soldiers. Most of the rifles were made in Boston but in order to get out a great many in a brief time, Cheney factories were utilized.

"Spencer's fame as a mechanical genius does not depend alone on the repeating rifle," writes Bidwell in "The History of Manchester." "During the early years of his service with Cheney Bros., he invented a silk spooling machine which later proved of great importance in the manufacture of cotton and linen thread. He was interested in steam engines and, during the War, he built a steam automobile. The automatic screw machine, Spencer's greatest invention, was manufactured in Hartford by Billings and Spencer."

Ed. Note: Manchester's greatest inventor, Christopher Miner Spencer, was son of Ogden Spencer, called a "prominent wool manufacturer." He lived one house south of Charter Oak (then called Eagle Street) on the east side of South Main. In 1869, Charter Oak Street abutted on the north the Hop Brook Mills noted John Cheney's Looking Back (next col.).

Carriage Trade.

The "Cone Cart" was a well-known local vehicle in the nineteenth century but it was only one of several types of carriages made by Ralph and Marvin Cone in their shop at the corner of Pitkin and East Center Streets. Daniel Wadsworth, the town clerk for 43 years, was associated with them. Eight of the firm's wagons and carriages were in the Centennial Parade in 1923, including, according to the program: "Phaetons, buggies, carry-alls and old carriages of all types.

Other Unusual Concerns.

- J.B. Williams Genuine Yankee Soap started at Manchester Green.
- The Holland Fountain Pen was invented by Frank Holland & Aaron Cook at the Green. Later redesigned, it became the Waterman Pen.
- Joslin Sash and Blinds was on South Main opposite Hackmatack Street.

- From 1844–1889, Globe Mill Co. operated a machinery repair shop (which led to Globe Hollow name).
- The Landfear Company made organs and melodeons in turn.
- The Cheney Chemical Co. made Cheney's Listerine Tooth Powder with a Walter B. Cheney formula at his Main & Charter Oak St. location.
- Mather Electric Co. made arc lights near the former railroad station. Thomas Edison sued them and put them out of business.
- A typesetting machine company known as Unitype operated in the Mather-Bon Ami building on Hilliard St. for a short period.
- For a short year or two, fireproof boxes were made by Magneso Calcite Fire Proof Co.; feed was sold by Manchester Elevator Co. in 1892.

Storyteller: John S. Cheney from a speech made at the Businessmen's Banquet, 1901

LOOKING BACK

I have in mind tonight events which took place in 1836. In 1836, the Eagle Hill mill, the Whig mill and the Bunce & Spencer mills were built on Hop Brook, South Manchester. They were all woolen mills & none of them is in existence today. As an investment, they were failures. At the time I speak of, there were a few paper mills on the Hop Brook that got their power from the little stream that runs through South Manchester. There was no store or post office in South Manchester. At Manchester Green, there were three stores and a post office. The Union mill at the north end carried on a store, and Frank Cowles at Buckland and George Rich at the Center, kept stores where groceries and other necessaries were sold. In 1840, the population of Manchester was 1695. In 1900, it was 10,601, an increase of more than six times in sixty years.

The Silk Mill Original

About the silk mills: the original silk mill was built on Hop Brook, South Manchester. The frame for the mill, like all building frames of that day, was made of hewn timber. Capt. Asa Piper hewed the frame. It was raised January 17, 1838. The building was 60 ft. long by 32 ft. wide and two stories high, with a breast waterwheel, six-feet in diameter, which gave six horse power. The water was taken from the trail race of George Bunce's paper mill which stood directly in front of the Cheney homestead. The mill was built by the Cheney Bros. in expectation that raw silk could be produced there.



Storyteller: Unknown from The Manchester Herald, 1907

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO (1882)

years ago on the south side of Charter Oak Street just east of what is now the American Laundry, had just been bought by Cheney Bros. who were starting it up in the experiment of making furniture covering from waste raw silk. The paper mill at Woodland was completed 25 years ago this winter by the Hartford Manila Co. of which M. S. Chapman was president. Mr. Chapman, even then, had the idea of making a picnic ground on the shore of the mill pond, a scheme which he carried out years later when he was president of Tramway.

The Union mill, which has for many years stood dismantled and idle, was running full-time giving employment to 300 hands and turning out 50,000 yards of ging-

ham a week.

- Simeon Francis Wetherell dead at age 83. One of the oldest paper manufacturers in this part of the country. B. in Middletown, 12/19/1820. Ancestors for 3 generations have been in manufacturing in Hartford County. His great-grandfather came to East Hartford from Wareham, Mass., in 1789, and worked as an anchormaker in an anchor factory which was on site of Woodland paper mill. Plant later made into powder mill. One of 10 children. Educated in Manchester. At 19, worked in Peter Rogers' (father of Henry Rogers) paper mill . Married February 4, 1844 at Buckland to Jane A. Borra. Widow survives and 4 daughters-Maria J., Emma, widow of Arthur H. Rogers, Minnie, widow of Alfred Bidwell, Ellen M., wife of Frank W. Carpenter of Poquonock.
- The name of the post office near the Manchester rail road station was North Manchester while the post office at Manchester Green was called Manchester.
- The town was under no license rule and raids and prosecutions were frequent. There was no town court and prisoners were tried before one or another of the justices of the peace. Joseph L. Barbour was usually the defending attorney for the liquor sellers and generally succeeded in getting them off.
- It was decided to establish a telephone circuit in North Manchester with a pay station at the post office and telephones at the Manchester Green mill, the Adams paper mill & Hilliard's mill.
- Company G held its eleventh annual ball. Coates's orchestra provided the music and Charles P. Montgomery prompted.

Storyteller: E. Howland from Harper's Magazine, 1872

Manchester has been spared the evils effected by the great changes in the American way of life.

Workers at Cheney Brothers live in cottages that are company-owned, but, at the same time, are neat and well-furnished and "the grounds about the mill are laid out like a park."

Storyteller: Holyoke Manufacturer reprinted in The Manchester Saturday Herald February 4, 1882

"Manchester is one of the finest specimens of a manufacturing village. It occupies "an undulating site of great natural attractiveness." "Hundreds of working men and their families, intelligent, thrifty and self-respecting, live on the best of terms with their employers." "There is scarcely a hint of factory life about the scene."

Storyteller: Manchester Saturday Herald January 14, 1882, Vol. 1, No. 5

- "Telephone connections from the post office were completed yesterday and the line is in good working order."
- "A free train will run from South Manchester after the Old Folks Concert Monday evening."
- "Three-months trial subscription to The Herald-25¢."
- "R.P. Bissell, groceries and meats, sirloin and short steaks 16¢ a pound"
- "G.S. Parkhurst Store, Union Street, 'Plunket Gingham Remnants'"
- Watkins Brothers; Ferris Brothers; Magnell, the Tailor; E.M. House; Hale Day & Co.; Homer Hale's Drug Store; J.M. Burke, General Store; C.Tiffany, jeweler; W.H. Cheney, dry goods and groceries.
- Local market prices: Butter 35¢/lb.; eggs 32¢/doz.; chickens 15¢/lb.

Storyteller: Helen Estes from The Manchester Herald, 3/22/67

MANCHESTER SATURDAY HERALD, AUGUST 28 1886

- C.N. Griswold, North Manchester's dentist, advertises in a business card: "I have recently purchased a Seabury Vulcanizer whereby rubber plates can be made more durable and with half the ordinary thickness."
- Watkins Brothers advertised: "Furniture, carpets and wallpaper"; "Seven piece parlor set \$45.00"
- In "Affairs About Town": "Mr. Popples near the Green is building a spacious barn." "The excitment over croquet is so great that on some lawns kerosene lamps are used to help out an interesting game."
- "Work in some departments of the Union Mills has been suspended several days during the week because of the scarcity of water."
- "Mrs. Bidwell's private school on Chestnut Street will begin its second term on Monday."

Storyteller: Manchester Herald, 11/25/10

TWENTY YEARS AGO THIS WEEK (1890)

- Electric lights were substituted for kerosene lamps in the North end.
- The Town Assessors taxed bicycles for the first time.
- W.L. Buckland caught a coon that weighed 20 pounds, less than a mile from Cheney Hall.



OLD MANCHESTER...The Storytellers

ONNECTICUT COURANT.

PRINTED BY

EORGE GOODWIN.

EEN RODS NORTH-WEST OF THE STATE HOUSE, HARTFORD.

ice Two Dollars per annum, navable in nce-a liberal discount made to companies.

vertisements not exceeding a square inserted times for One Dollar-every after continua-I wenty Cents.

accounts will be opened for advertisements from a distance.

From page 2-5th column

he report was then ccepted, petition ranted and bill in incorporating he town of MAN-HESTER, passed y a large majority

HORSE HIDES.

400 HORSE HIDES, of the first quality, will be sold very cheap—apply to OLMSTED & HOLT. May 5, 1323.

Bottled and Draught

THE subscriber wishing to accommodate the citizens of Hartford and others. above article of the best

It was moved to re-consider the vote on the manner, ha report of the Committee respecting the potition reller for from the Society of Orford, praying to be incor-PU.Mporated into a new town-motion carried. motion was made to continue the petition to the meat session of the assembly, which was rejected. The report was then accepted, petition granted, and bill in form incorporating the town of Man-

ed chester, passed by a large majority. on the besiness of make at his old establishment in Waterte has constantly on hand an assortment of Shelf CLOCKS, warranted to be equal to any made in the State. Those who wish to purchase Clocks for market will do well to call and see for

themselves. MARK LEAVENWORTH. Waterbury, May 15. 6w43

POTATOES.

750 Bushels of POTATOES, for sale by AUGUSTUS THACHER.

ALSO. A few barrels of Cider, good SALT-Afloat.

5000 Rushels, the Cargo of the Schooner Fairplay, from T. Island. ALSO.

1500 Bushels Liverpoot Blown Sait,

WATKINSON & COLLINS. May 17.

Marble Manufactory. MIAN OSBORNE,

tautly on hand and for sale Marble ents, of every description, and will ments or Grave Stones either of Stockhridge Marble, at the shortaledges himself that his work shall and his prices as low as the ders directed to him in Canton, or PARD BACON, of Simsbury, will entled to.

rus TRACHER, of Hartford, will re and forward orders for Monuments or Grave-Stones. Canton, May 1.

COTTON Manufacturing Establishment FOR SALE.



THE Jewett City Manufacturing Company offer for sale. their real estate and machinery in the village of Jewett City, town of

Griswold, and state of Connecticut, consisting of two Cotton Factories-one, eighty by thirty-four feet, three stories high, containing 1584 spindles, with all the apparatus necessary for the same. One half of the machinery is in prime order. The other Factory is fifty-eight by twenty-two. feet, one and a half stories high.

CONGRES

O.V CO.VS Dezen CONGRI put up expressly weeks since, for sale by

Ballstown and

ters will be furnished to

At the sign of D' E. W. B. Has man a person residing at the im to furnish his custon nd a a remenuable price May 12

Spring Good WHOLESALE JULIUS

Has full received a con and fash

DRY G

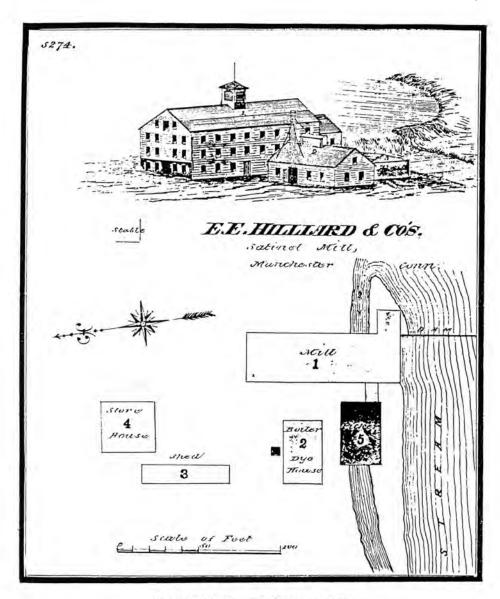
Thick were purchased w Auction, and selected ! from the latest importan customers and the pub to mil and examine to elerhere.

AMONG HIS TATO Cases superior A Crapes.

Heary Nankin ; French best blk. and col'd It white ha'd Levantine and plain Thule Lac real Merino Shawls : ! A grat assetment Ca ather frame Hilbir.

MEDINO MOOT

Waterwheelers and Old-Time Dealers



Sketch of E.E. Hilliard's Mill, June 1878



Storyteller: Hilliard Family Biography as supplied to Sue Way

WOOL

Elisha Edgerton Hilliard a.k.a. E.E. Hilliard

It was said of Mr. E.E.Hilliard that he could tell all about a piece of woolen cloth by the "feel". When his son wanted to install the new invention, the telephone, between the various scattered mills, he is reported to have said with some reluctance, "Well Clint, go ahead and put it in but you can't feel a piece of cloth over that wire." A God-fearing, upright, honorable, tax-paying and successful citizen.

Elisha Edgerton Hilliard was one of five children born to Marcia Dunham Hilliard and Ambrose Hilliard of Norwich. Mother Marcia died in 1809. Elisha was fourth to be born and all children were orphaned when their father died in 1816. Elisha was then short of ten years old.

A pathetic little letter from Elisha's sister Mary, age 13, from Mansfield on April 22, 1817 tells a story: "I want to see you very much. O' that we had our father's house that we might live together as brothers and sisters, but be it far from me to murmur or complain" and "why was it so ordered that we are separated, some in one place and some in another. God only knows." She says she is going to live with Widow Barrows next door to where she lived last winter. "I am going to take care of her silkworms this summer if my health is spared me."

Elisha, five years old when his mother died, was, I suppose, apprenticed to someone but by tradition had "bought his time" at the age of eighteen and was thereafter free to choose his own calling. In November, 1824, he apprenticed himself to Sidney Pitkin of Lebanon, to learn the woolen business. The following is the certificate of his

satisfactory completion of this apprenticeship:

"This, to whom it may concern, certifies that Mr. Elisha E. Hilliard commenced his apprenticeship with me in November 1824 for the term of three years and some months, the occupation of which has been principally at dyeing and dressing cloth with a good opportunity at the practice and art of carding and I further certify that the said Hilliard has faithfully served his apprenticeship and as a young man of industry possessing a good character, steady habits, peaceable and a good workman." (signed Sidney Pitkin, Lebanon, February 2, 1828)

It is to be noted that this certificate is dated at Lebanon and was signed only a month before Sidney Pitkin purchased the Buckland Woolen Mills mentioned later. It is probable that the apprenticeship was served in Lebanon or its vicinity and it is possible that Elisha lived in Lebanon from 1817, the date of Mary's letter. The traditions however, I give as told me by my mother.

The Aaron Buckland mill was built about 1780, in what is now Buckland, in the Town of Manchester. Manufactured plain cloth by primitive hand methods with a little machinery. It has since had a record of continuous operation, certainly since 1794. Aaron Buckland had sold it to Andrew Williams and Simon Tracy on September 20, 1824. Soon after, Manchester was set off from the Town of East Hartford and on March 13, 1828, Williams and Tracy conveyed the property to Sidney Pitkin. Mr. Williams, evidently no writer, signed the deed with his mark.

To the Buckland Mill in 1828 came Sidney Pitkin bringing with him his young assistant, newly released from his apprenticeship. Three years afterwards, July 31, 1831, we find record of the sale to Elisha Hilliard of a quarter interest or in the language of the deed "one-fourth undivided fourth part, of three described acres of land with two dwellings, barn and other buildings" also one-fourth undivided part of a woolen factory standing on the same and the water privilege connected therewith and also the dye house near the factory and all the machinery belonging to said factory for the purpose of manufacturing woolen cloth."

Ten years afterwards, April 26, 1842, Pitkin sold out his remaining three-quarters interest in the mill, to Elisha Hilliard and quit-claimed the ten acres, house and barn, etc. "where the grantee now lives." That the relationship between Mr. Hilliard and Sidney Pitkin continued friendly is attested by the fact that Pitkin chose him to be his executor to settle his estate.

Seven years afterwards, February 4, 1849, Mr. Hilliard sold a quarter interest in the original mill, or "satinet factory" as it was for the first time called in the record, to Ralph E. Spencer and the business was for some time thereafter known as Hilliard & Spencer.

Eventually, about 1871, Mr. Hilliard again became sole owner and conducted the business alone and with his son Elisha Clinton Hilliard, under the name E.E. Hilliard & Company, and its corporate successor the E.E. Hilliard Company, until his death in 1881.

Elisha E. Hilliard was also whole or part owner of various other woolen mills, notably the Charter Oak Mill in South Manchester, The Vernon Mill in the Town of Rockville and the Eagle Mill in Glastonbury and from these names came the trade mark brands of the product of the Hilliard Mills.

The old Buckland Mill is said to have made blankets for the army in the War of 1812 and certainly made cloth for uniforms in the Civil War of '61-'65. Some of the very fine cloth, dyed in the old-fashioned but effective "Indigo pits", is still to be seen as samples at the mill. Elisha Hilliard's son, Clinton, succeeded as proprietor and manager of the business for a number of successful years.

A Man of Substance

Elisha Edgerton Hilliard prospered and was a man of substance through years of careful and successful business, deacon of his church in Manchester, a representative in the State Legislature, Tax Collector of his school district and honored and trusted by his neighbors.

The inventory of his estate filed in 1891, shows property appraised at \$325,385.15 including, in addition to real estate of \$43,770, investments in various Connecticut companies.

Storyteller: Saturday Herald February 4, 1882

"The Union Mfg. Co. are driven to fill your needs. They are now employing 300 hands and are finishing 50,000 yards of gingham per week."

COTTON

Storyteller: The Saturday Herald September 6, 1886

THE MILL AT UNION VILLAGE

In 1794, the first cotton mill put into successful operation in Connecticut was built in Union Village. Of this mill, Samuel Pitkin was the principal owner, John Warburton the chief designer and operator. The machinery was made under his supervision, and would be considered at this day a prodigy of clumsiness. Sometime previous to this undertaking, Mr. Warburton brought from England some valuable secrets about cotton spinning which were of great service to the enterprise. Tradition says that he brought important designs concealed in a false bottom of his trunk. The spinning of cotton was a success, and people came from afar to see the wonderful machine capable of making the fabulous amount of twelve pounds of good yarn in a single day.

Watkinson and Brothers of Hartford, having purchased this mill with a tract of land adjoining, erected a large stone mill and a company was incorporated under the name of the Union Manufacturing Co. In 1854, this company erected a fine brick mill, which is operated in connection with the stone mill.

> Storyteller: The Hartford Courant September 6, 1886

WHO'D A THUNK IT-THOMAS PLUNKETT STOLE A MILLION-RAN AWAY

Receiver Appointed for the Hartford Silk Company

Mr. Thomas F. Plunkett of this city, well known in business and social circles, president of the Hartford Silk Company, whose mills are at Tariffville, and Treasurer of the Union Manufacturing company, whose mills are in Manchester, has not been seen here since August 28th, a week ago last Saturday. On that day, he left the city ostensibly on business for the companies with which he was connected. He was seen in New York City on the following Tuesday, August 31st, but that is the last trace of him to be had. When he left, it was to go to New York and Philadelphia and he was expected back at the Union mill in Manchester on Thursday last.

The first impression of his anxious friends was that he had been injured or killed in New York city, but a further investigation of affairs has led to the belief that his departure was premeditated. A search among the papers reveals written resignations, which he had left behind, giving up his various offices.

Mr. Plunkett is a genial and companionable man, popular wherever he is known, and with all this good fellowship was reckoned a very shrewd and competent business man. He is a director in the Aetna national bank of this city and in the Weed machine company and other organizations. He has always been found open-handed, generous and straightforward, and the appearance of signs of dishonesty distresses his many friends as deeply as does his disappearance.

Notes

Mr. Plunkett's private property has been attached to meet some of his obligations.

Plunkett was at one time in India, and so some people think he has started for that country. Others think that he is dead. A week or so before his departure he said, half in jest and half in earnest, to a friend: "Come, let's take some prussic acid and get out of this d____ d world."

United States Bank Commissioner Mygatt was in the city Tuesday. He says nine national banks here have Union or



Plunkett's Mill, 1870s-1880s, Union Street, Manchester, Connecticut

Silk Company paper. The average holding is small and the endorsements are good and no loss is going to occur. On all sides, the Union company is regarded as good regardless of endorsement. Mr. Mygatt goes from here to Providence to see to what extent the paper is held there.

A strange circumstance is that Plunkett did not go near the parties with whom he was expecting to place the paper.

The baggage which Mr. Plunkett took with him consisted of one small handbag.

Several of Plunkett's friends have said that if he had only faced the music in a manly way they would have carried him through and thus saved much loss to outside parties and all the disgrace of the present flight.

A Rather Better Look of Affairs Yesterday-No Signs of Injury to the Union Manufacturing Company.

It was found yesterday that of the \$51,000 of the Hartford Silk company's paper which Plunkett was known to have disposed of, \$10,000 was with a broker, not sold. It was found further that \$5,000 of the money received from such paper as had been negotiated had been used to pay a debt of the company. This reduces the possible loss from that source to \$36,000. As said before in The Courant, he took also \$25,000 of the company's paper to negotiate but it does not yet appear that he did place it. He certainly did not put it where it was expected that he would go, and shrewd business men, familiar with the market, say he could not have disposed of it in any new place. Paper of that sort is not being sought after and to offer it at too great a discount would be a confession of weakness that in itself would check negotiation. From this it is argued that \$36,000 covers the probable extent of the direct loss, though as yet this is only conjecture. The Silk company having an insufficient capital, has been running largely upon borrowed money and, of course, this episode brings its credit and its career to an end, and leaves the valuable property to await another opportunity to be utilized.

The investigation of the day revealed no evidence of loss by the Union manufacturing company of which Plunkett was both treasurer and bookkeeper. On the other hand, the belief grew that he had not plundered it. This was strengthened by the discovery that the \$5,000 with which he paid a debt of the Silk company was paid to the Union company, with which the Silk company had dealings. This looked as if he was inclined to keep the Union company good. There may yet be further irregularities discovered, but at the present time this is the extent of the difficulty, so far as it is known. He may, for instance, have made use in the past of the proceeds of paper regularly discounted and known to be out, but this is not yet ascertained.

Some of Plunkett's former friends, looking the field over, express the belief, now more strongly than before, that he has not run off; but that, thinking he had come to the end of his rope, he has killed himself. Others think he took a moderate sum and "skipped" and still others look to see large figures eventually.

The Courant has neither had nor shown any desire to shield Plunkett. It did withhold the news of his singular absence, in the hope that he might put in an appearance, but, when that chance passed, it told the story before any other paper and has ever since given all the facts ascertainable. It is very easy to get up a sensational account, figure up several hundred thousand dollars of losses, and make a "breezy" and "enterprising" narrative. All that it requires is a little invention and considerable ignorance. Some people have taken the total amount of Union company's and Silk company's paper that is now out and have reckoned that all a loss and the measure of the present trouble! Such reports simply make mischief and mislead the ignorant. To all appearances the Union company is not hurt at all. (Ed. Note: Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! Union Manufacturing went "bellyup" and soon ceased to be. Their mill was ultimately sold to Cheney Bros. and the granite blocks became foundations for the Cheney Bros. factory buildings in South Manchester.)

PAPER

Storyteller: Mrs. Frank Atwood from The Manchester Herald 4/13/66

1769 FORMULA FOR HARTFORD COURANT PAPER

The paper maker was a craftsman. All day he stood over a vat of macerated rags, on a low platform, slatted so the water could drain off. All day he bent, scooped up just the right amount of stock with his mold, stood and shook it with what was called the "vatman's shake". The mold was made of closely woven wires, often with a water mark—place, name, symbol, mill owners' name—formed by a thin wire embroidered in at the top or side or center. The mold had a removable wooden frame or deckle which held the stock on the wire.

When the form of the sheet satisfied him, the vatman laid the mold on the stay, a simple narrow platform on one side of the vat where it remained for a few minutes while the stock became firmer. The frame (deckle) was then removed, the mold passed to the coucher.

The coucher leaned the mold at an angle against the "horn," to drain surplus water; then he laid it flat on felting. Then grasping the mold firmly, he turned it over with a sort of rocking motion and laid the wet sheet on felt. The empty mold was returned to the vat man, who replaced the deckle and started another sheet. This operation went on in perfect rhythm with two molds and one deckle until 144 sheets, between felts, had been built up on the coucher's tray. This collection was put in a press, and the combined strength of all workers was exerted to pull down the long wooden lever, expelling more water.

A lay boy, the third worker, removed sheets from the felts until he had a ream—usually 480 sheets. After another pressing, he gathered four or five together and took them to the drying loft where, with the aid of a T-shaped stick, they were placed on cowhair ropes to dry. When dry, the paper was sized and ready for use.

Storyteller: Rev. S.W. Robbins in Memorial History of Hartford County reprinted in The Saturday Herald September 6, 1886

THE BIRTH OF OUR INDUSTRIES

Union Village

Early manufacturing enterprises on the Hockanum river created the settlement called Union Village. Near the present paper mill of Keeney & Wood Manufacturing company (now Keeney Bros.) was built the first paper mill in Connecticut with one exception. The news of the battle of Lexington was printed in the Connecticut Courant on paper made at this mill, then owned by Ebenezer Watson and Austin Ledyard. In 1778, the mill was burned by an incendiary, and the legal representatives of Watson & Ledyard brought their memorial to the general assembly stating their loss to be \$20,000 and claiming that this mill had supplied the press of Hartford with eight thousand sheets weekly, and had made a great part of the writing paper used in the state, besides large quantities for the Continental army and its officers. Permission was granted to hold a lottery to raise the sum of \$7,500.

In 1784, on a site a little farther west. Butler and Hudson erected a mill which afterward came into the control of John Butler. After Mr. Butler's death, Increase Clapp, Timothy Keeney, James B. Wood and Sandford Buckland, who a short time before had formed a partnership under the name of Clapp, Keeney & Co., purchased the mill property of John Butler's estate. This firm was the first to use paper shavings in the manufacture of paper. These shavings, which before had been taken from the bookbinderies in New York to the beach and burned, were bought at a very low price and converted into paper at a great profit. On the death of Mr. Clapp, this partnership was dissolved. In 1850 it was succeeded by the Keeney & Wood manufacturing company.

Oakland

At Oakland, in 1832, Henry Hudson of Hartford, purchased of Joseph Loomis the

privilege already occupied by a sawmill and grist mill. These he converted into a paper mill. In 1842, the property was deeded to his son, Melancthon Hudson, and, in 1844, a second mill was erected. The Hudson paper mills were managed by the Hudsons for thirty years, Melancthon Hudson being succeeded by his sons, William and Philip W. Subsequently, the Cheney Brothers came into possession of the property, rebuilt and enlarged the old mill, putting into it the best modern machinery, improved the dwelling houses, and adorned and beautified the grounds, making Oakland an attractive village. In former years, the Hudson paper mill filled large orders for the United States government. In 1878, the property was sold to the Hurlburt Manufacturing company, which has since

been reorganized under the name of the Oakland Paper company.



CHENEY BROTHERS FIRST MILL (1838)

Ed. note: shown below is an "artistic" view of the site of an Oakland mill where bank note papers, newsprint and printed books became part of the history of successive owners of the mill situated there.



The Oakland mill pictured here was home to many paper manufacturers over the years.

Storyteller: Mrs. Frank Atwood The Manchester Herald, April 13, 1966

THE PAPERMAKERS

The Hartford Courant's young editor, Ebenezer Watson, promised to pay three pennies a pound for rags. This same man started a mill at "Five Miles," (Union Village) in August 1775, with Austin Ledyard, on the Hockanum River. Construction lagged. The December 4 and 12 issues of the Courant were printed on wrapping paper. Finally, in March 1776, the mill turned out good paper. Watson died of small pox in 1777. His 27 year old widow, Hannah Bunce Watson, carried on to support five children under the age of seven.

On January 1, 1778, Hannah became partner to George Goodwin. Within weeks, the mill burned down. Widow Hannah and Widow Ledyard applied to the general assembly for help. The assembly voted a state lottery—6,000 tickets at \$6—\$500 to rebuild the mill and \$3100 for prizes. Somehow the widow and Goodwin got the paper out while the mill was rebuilt.

In 1779, Hannah married a neighbor, Barzillai Hudson. The paper company became Hudson and Goodwin, a partnership which continued for 36 years. Hudson and Goodwin shortly owned more than one mill, made bank note and other types of paper as well as newsprint, printed books including Noah Webster's Blue Backed Speller and a handsome Bible.

Rogers Co.

Peter Rogers, from Amsterdam, in 1832 leased of Robert McKee the privilege occupied by a powder mill, converted the plant. and made press boards and binder boards. In 1841 Peter died and in the same year the lease expired. Peter's son, Henry, purchased the property, and in 1849 erected another mill; others in 1852 and 1860. One burned in 1869. The Rogers mills were on Charter Oak St. and Hartford Rd.; the company was incorporated in 1901, expanded by additions in 1901 and 1916. Now the Rogers Corporation makes dialectric board, dialectric sheeted paper, molding boards, plastic forms and other kinds of board, rubber and plastic articles, at its plants in Manchester, Willimantic and Rogers where it has the largest board making machine in this country.

Bunce

Charles Bunce Sr. started a mill on Hop Brook, the first in the western part of Manchester; he'd come to Hartford in 1788, and about 1800 he bought of Elisha Pitkin an unfinished building designed for an oil mill. In 1811, his son, George, became a partner; five other sons, Charles Jr., Herman, Lewis, Walter and Edwin, became associates and successors in the business. There were, Mr. Willard Case noted, three mills on the same stream. The one owned by Charles Jr. made press papers by hand; it was sold to Norris and Collins Keeney for making news print, largely for The Hartford Courant. The second mill, that of Edwin and Walter, made candle paper, bonnet boards and press papers. The third mill, owned by Lewis Bunce and sons Henry and Edgar, was destroyed by the flood of 1869.

Case Brothers

After less than two years of apprenticeship with the Bunce Mills, in their early 20's, A. Willard and Frederick Case, with a capital of \$135, hired an old mill near the present Catholic cemetery.

Not long after 1862, the A. Wells Case mill, for washing cotton waste, at Highland Park became the business site of Case Bros.; first products of the first mill there were album boards and binders boards. For many years, and now, an important product is pattern boards—cards used by the textile industry, especially lace-making. A hundred or more punched pattern boards are laced together to guide the needles on the jacquard looms. There is also press paper for school notebook binders, and other papers for many business and commercial uses.

Manchester companies have achieved a few firsts: In 1838, Clapp and Keeney was first to use paper shavings, previously burned as waste, in new paper stock. In 1893, Rogers Co. devised and patented a method for bleaching (removing ink from) old paper.

Keeney Brothers

Keeney Brothers established their important enterprise in the year 1878. Their plant was large and commodious and perfectly equipped with all the most modern and improved machinery used in the manufacture of paper. They give constant employment to a force of about 75 operatives. The products are binders' paper and straw board which are noted for their flexibility and durability, and the excellence of the paper edges.

White & Keeney Paper Mills

This enterprise has been conducted here by Messrs. White & Keeney for about 30 years. They manufacture Book, Card and Ribbon Paper and are now also manufacturing a very superior quality of Wall Paper.

Storyteller: Hockanum River Linear Park CommitteeOctober, 1982

PETER ADAMS - 1891

The Peter Adams Paper Mill was established in Manchester in 1858 by the purchase of existing mill buildings by Peter C. Adams, an owner of a paper mill in Paterson, New Jersey. He came to Manchester and made his first acquisition of 35 acres of land, a paper mill, other buildings and Hockanum River water privileges in 1868 from the National Exchange Bank in Hartford for \$15,000. Additional adjacent purchases of land, houses and barns were made between 1869 and 1876. The present building was constructed in 1880. The Adams Mill flourished until Peter Adams death in Paterson, New Jersey in 1896.

The Adams Mill and earlier paper manufacturing operations on the present site owed their existence here in Manchester to the Hockanum River which flows through the woods several hundred feet behind the building and crosses under Adams Street about 500 feet south of the mill.

The earliest industrial developments in Manchester were various types of mills located here, from about 1672 through the 1800s due to the abundant water power available along the 6 mile course of the Hockanum River through town. Many dams

were erected along the river to harness the water for power to run the various mill machinery.

The Hockanum, an old Indian name meaning crooked or winding, originates as a river at the Shenipsit Lake in Vernon and Tolland. From there, it courses through Ellington, Vernon, Manchester and East Hartford to enter the Connecticut River

next to the Charter Oak Bridge.

Many mills prospered along the Hockanum River and its tributary brooks through the mid-1800s, then suffered major damage from a devastating flood in 1869 which disrupted many mill operations and destroyed all dams along the river except for the Union Pond dam which survived. Financial decline and failure closed most mills by the 1880s and 1890s leaving now a few standing old buildings and many ruins along the river banks. The present Adams Mill building is one of the best preserved structures close to the Hockanum River. A large pond, Adams Pond, created by an extensive system of dikes and sandstone dam across the river brought an abundant water supply right to the mill buildings. This dam and pond were destroyed in the 1938 hurricane. These historic structures are still visible behind the mill.

Storyteller: 1923 Centennial Herald

THE FOULDS GROUP

Clustered around a railroad siding at Parker Village are three mills owned and operated respectively by the Lydall & Foulds Paper Company, William Foulds & Co., and the Colonial Board Co. They are allied in ownership, although operated independently.

They owe their existence to the purchase 40 years ago, by William Foulds, of a small paper mill at Parker Village formerly operated by Salter & Strong. Mr. Foulds was a needle manufacturer, but soon saw possibilities in the paper business. The little mill, which he bought from Salter & Strong, was making about 500 pounds a day of strawboard. Realizing the need of a more modern

mill, Mr. Foulds bought a mill site at Lydallville and built a one-machine mill. This was afterwards burned and was not rebuilt, but the Lydall & Foulds mill was built to take its place at Parkerville. Then, the original Salter & Strong mill was burned and was replaced by the William Foulds & Company's mill adjoining the Lydall & Foulds mill. A short time ago, Boston capitalists combined with the Foulds interests in building the Colonial board mill, which was started on April 1. These three mills form the nucleus for a growing village. They have the advantage of a siding on the main line of the New Haven road and all are built of brick. Their product consists of paper box boards at the Lydall & Foulds mill, leather board at the William Foulds & Company mill, and binder's boards at the Colonial mill. From a small beginning of 500 pounds a day at the original Salter & Strong mill the product has grown to upwards of 35 tons a day.

Storyteller: Mrs. Lenora Hibbard Geissler as told to Betty Walker, April 18, 1972 and to The Manchester Herald

THE HIBBARD STORY

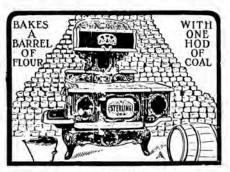
The Tin Man and the Iron Road

My family is an old family which settled in Manchester along about the middle and last part of 1700. Walter Hibbard, who was my great-grandfather, was a drum major in the War of 1812 and he was about sixteen years old at that time. He came to Manchester and they lived on Union Street. Edwin Bishop Hibbard was a son of Walter Hibbard and he was born March 1819 and died March 17, 1877. He is one of the early promoters, may I say, of Manchester. He was interested in the railroad which was to be put through Manchester and the depot was to have been in Parker Village. But due to his efforts with Warren Coopercut and William Jones, they bought land from the White tract and gave it to the town of Manchester so that the depot could be situated on Depot Square. We, as a family,

always felt very proud that it was our ancestor that was the means of having the station where it was.

Manchester Green was the first settled portion of Manchester; North Manchester was the second settled portion and then South Manchester was settled within a year or two after the North End.

Walter Hibbard was a stone mason and later became a tinsmith. He taught his son, Edwin Bishop Hibbard, his tinsmith trade which he later taught to his son, William Ely Hibbard, and William is my father. The store, at #280 North Main Street, (it used to be #87) was built in 1848. In the front there was a salesroom and an office partitioned off-in the back was the workroom and there, there were all these tinsmiths' lathes, folders, stakes, pipes, and tin which at the present time are in Sturbridge Village, Mass. Sturbridge Village came down to me before I sold the house, and they took a great many-in fact they took all of the old tools of the tinsmith and the blacksmith.



W. E. HIBBARD

61 North Main St.

Manchester, Conn.

The Railroad-Force for Growth

As South Manchester narrowly missed the opportunity of owning a college many years ago, when the application for an institution to have been located in the neighborhood of Center Park was turned down, so in like manner did Manchester narrowly miss becoming a town, as towns are known today.

Business Elsewhere. It all happened in the early days before the coming of the railroad at a time when the Green, Parker and Union Villages were flourishing. At that time, the business of the town was done along the stage line from Hartford to Bolton which split the heart of the Green. The old mills at Parker's Village and at Union Pond were the centers of industrial life. Manchester, as an industrial community, had not as yet reached the point where it could dictate in any sense the future improvements of the community.

Visioned Center. There were men in those days, as there are today, who were dreamers and who, after looking into the future, saw the possibilities of a town at the head of Main Street where Depot Square is now located. At the time, North Main Street was but a crooked lane, skirting the low lands along the Hockanum River and then coming up again to the high ground as it approached the Buckland tobacco farms.

First Railroad. Shortly before 1833, this group of Manchester men, John Mather, Royal S. White, Samuel Kellogg, Solomon Porter and Henry Hudson, incorporated the Manchester Railway Company. Their charter gave the right to construct, equip and operate a railroad between Hartford and Bolton Notch. Money was scarce in those days and it was years before enough capital could be interested in the railroad. The incorporators revived the charter from time to time until it was taken over by the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill Railroad in 1849. This company began at once the construction of the road.

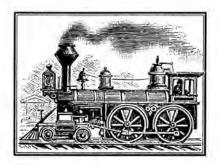
Decide on Station. After a survey of the section the railroad, officials decided to locate the depot at Parker Village, a busy little village near to the Green, where a thriving village was in the progress of development. Those who had been instrumental in interesting the railroad to put a line through Manchester saw their dream of a station at the head of Main Street passed.

Gave the Land. They got together and organized the Manchester Improvement Association and bought the land where the present station is located, and deeded it to the railroad. The land surrounding the station, now Depot Square, is a part of that land originally given to the railroad as an inducement to locate the depot in Manchester.

Developed. This proved to be the cheapest investment ever made in town from an industrial standpoint, for, from the date of the erection of the depot at the head of Main Street, Manchester, as an industrial community, continued to develop and soon outdistanced all the other villages in this respect.

Business Thrives. The new depot, which in 1850 made Manchester the business center of the town, caused the steady growth of commercial interests along North Main Street. Stores were built and many large stables and grain stores were located adjacent to the railroad yards. The cheapening of transportation charges was marked acceleration to industry, especially, in Manchester, due to the proximity to the freight yards. During the years immediately following the coming of the railroad and the erection of the depot at the North End the Pacific Manufacturing Company erected two mills, one at the Green and another at the North End later occupied by the Lydall and Foulds Company. A new cotton mill was put into operation by the Union Manufacturing Company in 1854. Mills were built by the Rogers Paper Company in 1849, 1852 and 1860, within ten years of the coming of the railroad.

Brought Success. The present industrial and commercial growth of Manchester must therefore be credited to those men with vision who saw what the coming of the railroad and the erection of the depot at Manchester would accomplish for the betterment of all and who backed up their dream with real American dollars in bringing success to themselves and many others.



NEW ENGLAND BUSINESS DIRECTORY North Manchester 1860

Blacksmiths

Daniel Wadsworth

Mowry W. Stone

Samuel Stone

Union Mfg. Co.

Boot & Shoe Makers

Eli. P. Fox

L.A. Squires

Butchers

Charles S. Williams

Fuller & Wolcott

Carpenters & Builders

Columbus Parker

C.D. Parsons

A.W. Phelps

Carriage, Coach & Sleigh Builders

E. Alonzo Bliss

M. & R. Cone

John T. Loomis

Samuel Manwarring

Country Stores

Charles Annis-Buckland

A.B. Jones-Buckland

J.O. Spencer-Manchester Station

Union Mfg. Co. - Manchester

Station

Dentist

G.G. Griswold-Manchester Station

Grist Mill

Union Mfg. Co.

Harness Manufacture

J.C. Robertson-Manchester Station

Hosiery, Shirts & Drawers Mfg.

Pacific Co.-Chauncy G. Keeney

Wm. H. Jones-Woolen Stockinettes

& Stockings-Manchester Station

NEW ENGLAND BUSINESS DIRECTORY North Manchester 1860

Lawyer-D.S. Calhoun

Hotel

Erastus Weaver-Manchester Sta.

Paper Manufacturers

H.& E. Goodwin-Hollow Mills,

Buckland

Keeney & Fitzgerald & Co.

Keeney & Wood

White, Keeney & Co.

Physicians

Dr. O.B. Taylor-Manchester Green C.W. Jacques-North Main Street

William Scott-North Main Street

Stables

Charles Annie-Buckland

Erastus Weaver-Manchester Station

Stove Dealers & Tin Smith

E.B. Hibbard

Tailor

William W. Risley-Manchester Sta.

Teachers

S.B. Forbes (Academy)-Manchester

George Spencer (Academy)-

Manchester

Woolen Mfgs.

Hilliard & Spencer (Satinet)-

Buckland

Charter Oak Mfg Co.-E.E. Hilliard,

Agent-South Manchester

Cotton Goods Manufacturers

Union Mfg. Co. (Ginghams, Plaids,

Stripes)-Manchester Station

Globe Mill-Joseph Parker, Agent

(Satinet Wraps)

THE GOETZ BAKERY,

FRANK GOETZ, PAGE.

MANCHESTER, CONN.

SPECIALTIES:

IMPROVED FIG BARS

For Over 60 Years



HE name of House has been associated with the clothing

business in South Manchester. Three generations of this family have catered to the needs of well dressed Manchester men.

Today the family name stands for the best in men's clothing, furnishings and shoes.

South Manchester's largest clothing store offers an unrivalled stock in such well known makes as Kuppenheimer and Clothescraft Clothes, Ducheas Trousers, Adler Gloves, Guyer Hats, Notaseme Hose, Cheney Silk Cravats, Emerson and Douglas Shoes for men, Dorothy Dodd and Clarice Shoes for

COMPLETE OUTFITTERS FOR BOYS

C. E. House & Son, Inc.

The Big Store With the Little Prices
C.E. HOUSE H. B. HOUSE F. G. BALKNER T. A. BRENNAN

AARON JOHNSON'S GROCERY STORE.

12 Chestnut Street, below Monument Parky

you can always find a Full Line of the latest, the freshest, the best and the cleanest

Groceries, Provisions Health Foods
At the Very Lowest Prices.

COWLES * HOTEL,

C. W. ALLEN, PROPRIETOR



JOSEPH POHLMAN

Manufacturer Pollowing Brands of

→ FINE * CIGARS: ⊬

SNUGS, SILVER WAVES, ROVER, INNOCENCE.

Tobaccos, Pipes, Etc.

33 DEPOT SQUARE,

MANCHESTER.

EDWARD GRISWOLD

DEALER IN

Anthracite and Bituminous



COAL

ALSO GENERAL TRUCKING

2 MAIN STREET (Near Depot), MANCHESTER SOUTH MANCHESTER OFFICE, F. W. MILLS' STORE



GEORGE H. ALLEN DEALER IN

... Fine Carriages ...

Wagons, Harnesses and Horse Furnishing Goods

Hest of Gonds and Prices Resentab

LINERY, FEED and SALE STABLES

Repository, Spencer Block, Depot Square

MERCHANTS

Storyteller: Illustrated Review of Northeastern Connecticut, June 1891

THE BAKER MAN

Manchester Bakery, Frank Goetz, Proprietor, Manchester, Conn.

The leading bakery establishment located in Manchester is owned and conducted by Mr. Frank Goetz, who established business here about four and one-half years ago. Mr. Goetz is a German by birth and is possessed of the push and energy for which his people are noted all over the country, he is a thoroughly practical and skillful baker and supervises his business personally. He supplies the leading families of Manchester with his goods. His shop and bakery are models of cleanliness, as a personal inspection will convince the most critical. His premises are 145×65 feet in dimensions, and the building erected thereon by himself is one of the best business blocks in Manchester. He makes a leading specialty of the genuine New England Bread, which is immensely popular with his customers. Other special features are Ice Cream and Soda Water, and his popular parlors are the resort of the people of Manchester for these delicacies during the summer months.

It is worthy of note that Mr. Goetz is one of the youngest of Manchester's business men, being but 28 years of age and yet he possesses one of the best mercantile establishments in Manchester.

THE COAL DEALERS

E. Griswold, Dealer in Coal, Wood, Lime and Cement

In Manchester, Mr. E. Griswold, whose office is situated near the depot, and yards adjacent, possesses the very best facilities for handling coal and can unload and screen while unloading a very large quantity at a time. The storing capacity also enables him

to keep on hand extensive quantities of thoroughly dry wood in all seasons of the year.

A force of ten teams and several men attend to the patronage enjoyed, all of which Mr. Griswold personally supervises.

H.L. Vibberts, Coal and Wood, Manchester, Conn.

Mr. H. L. Viberts, formerly of New Britain, Conn., who inaugurated his enterprise here about one year since, has during his residence in this community built up a very lucrative patronage. He keeps constantly on hand large quantities of both Coal and Wood, and is thereby enabled to take advantage of the fluctuations of the market and to purchase at the lowest figures, so that his prices are always right and his weight correct. He also deals extensively in masons' supplies and fertilizers.

DRY GOODS

A.H. Skinner, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Notions, Boots and Shoes, etc., 17-21 Hartford Road

One of the largest and most important mercantile establishments of South Manchester is that owned and conducted by Mr. A.H. Skinner who inaugurated the enterprise in 1881. He carries at all times a full and complete stock of choice family groceries. He also sells under his own name spices and baking powder which are unexcelled by any in the market and are warranted strictly pure. In connection with his grocery department he also carries a full stock of the best brands of flour and does a general feed and provision business. He also carries large lines of crockery and glassware as well as boots and shoes.

Mr. Skinner's stock of boots, shoes and rubbers is always full and complete, and in this line he has the reputation of giving better value than can be obtained elsewhere in Manchester and his trade is consequently very large in these goods.

Ed. Note: This building, known as the Rogers Block, was located west of Prospect Street on the south side of Hartford Road.

FURNITURE

Watkins Brothers, Furniture Dealers and Undertakers,

The representative furniture and undertaking establishment of Manchester is that conducted by the above named firm in their new block on the corner of Main and School Streets. The individual members of the firm are Clarence G. Watkins and F. Ernest Watkins. The business was established by them in the year 1875 and from its inception the trade of the house has been large and constantly increasing.

Their new building is 44×100, three stories high, presents a very attractive appearance, and is furnished with all necessary appliances for handling their goods easily and quickly. The stock carried is not only extensive but embraces all kinds of furniture, also carpets, draperies, wall paper, &c.

GENTS FURNISHINGS.

C. E. House, Merchant Tailor, Gent's Furnishings etc.,

This enterprise was established by Mr. C. E. House about six years ago, and has grown to be in every way the leading business in its line in Manchester.

Mr. House is a practical and experienced tailor, and personally supervises all work done in his establishment, thus guaranteeing perfect satisfaction in all cases. His trade is very large and comes from the most desirable classes of this part of Connecticut. He also carries a full and complete stock of ready made clothing and gent's furnishings, embracing everything worn by men, except shoes.

Mr. House is a native of So. Manchester and has spent most of his life here. He travelled for a Rochester house for a couple of years before embarking in business for himself. He is well and favorably known in the social, commercial and political circles of Manchester, and is the present Registrar of the town, to which office he has been elected several times and which he has filled with credit to himself and to the satisfaction of all.

Storyteller: Manchester Herald - July 1899

GROCERIES

Aaron Johnson - Success Story

A SELF MADE MAN

Remarkable Career of a Prosperous Merchant.

CAME FROM SWEDEN TWENTY YEARS AGO, POOR AND IGNORANT OF OUR LANGUAGE.

Today the proprietor of the Largest Grocery in Eastern Hartford County.

The subject of our article this week, Aaron Johnson, is well known as one of our most successful business men. His career is somewhat remarkable. Twenty years ago he landed in America alone, without money and ignorant of the English language. Today he is proprietor of the largest grocery business in eastern Hartford county, and owns a charming house. His success has been due to his natural ability for merchandising and his constant efforts to master his business.

Aaron Johnson was born in Koinge, Halland, Sweden in 1857. His father was a farmer and, after receiving as thorough an education as the excellent public schools of that country afforded, he worked at home on the farm, until he decided to come to America. He had acquaintances in South Manchester through whom he obtained a place in Cheney Brothers' silk mills. He worked there for two years and a half. The confinement affected his health unfavorably and he secured a place in the east boarding house, where he remained for a year. During all this time he spent two hours every night studying the English language. He permitted nothing to interfere with this study and as a consequence at the end of three years he spoke and wrote English fluently. Then he entered the grocery department of Cheney's store and was fairly started on his life work. He remained here 14

years. He thoroughly mastered the business and was steadily advanced until for the last five years he was head clerk and buyer for this, the largest grocery store in town.

When W. H. Cheney's store sold out in August, 1894, Mr. Johnson started a store of his own in the basement of a house on Chestnut street. It was an out-of-the-way place for a store and his quarters were neither roomy or attractive. But his business prospered and he soon was able to build a store across the street. Here he established a model grocery, neat, light, and well ordered. Gradually his trade increased until two years ago he was forced to build an addition to his store, doubling its capacity. He now employs seven clerks and keeps five delivery wagons on the road.

He insists that all goods shall be fresh and pure, and by studying the interests of his patrons, has commanded their confidence.

Mr. Johnson was married to Miss Christine Magnell June 24, 1885, and has four bright daughters. His pretty home at the corner of Myrtle and Linden streets is one of the most attractive residences in town.

Manchester Herald - June 28, 1885.

The most important social event in South Manchester for a long time was the wedding of Mr. Aaron Johnson and Miss Christine Magnell, held last Tuesday evening at the residence of the bride's parents. There were between two and three hundred invited guests. The ceremony followed the Swedish form and parts of it were read at intervals until nearly morning. Between the fragments of the ritual there was feasting, dancing and singing. The bride appeared very charming in a white satin dress, a tulle veil, and a coronet of green. A large cloth enclosure in the rear of the house furnished a cool retreat from the crowd within doors. Prof. Courtney's orchestra furnished music. Among the many wedding gifts were a lounge from Cheney's clerks, a silver tea service of four pieces and a sum of money from the Swedish choir, \$25 from other Swedish friends, hanging lamp from O. Magnell, two silver water pitchers, silver cake baskets, butter dishes and knives, a China tea set and many other useful and ornamental articles.

Storyteller: Manchester Half-Weekly Herald March 30, 1906

MORTON & DWYER CO.

New Grocery Firm

A stock company has been formed in Manchester to be known as The Morton & Dwyer Co. The new concern includes the well known groceryman J. E. Morton, Edward F. Dwyer, Mr. Morton's head clerk, and W. T. Morton.

J. E. Morton is president and treasurer and Mr. Dwyer is secretary. The company will conduct the grocery business heretofore carried on by J. E. Morton in the Morton block on Depot square. The capital stock is \$11,000, all subscribed and paid in.

J. E. Morton has been in the grocery business in Manchester for the last quarter of a century. Mr. Morton began business in the old Union store in 1888. He bought out Parkhurst & Havnes and continued business at the old store for several years. His business foresight directed him to Depot Square. It was a good move, for after the closing of the Union mill there was little demand for a store in that locality. Mr. Morton built the block in which the store is located and moved to it during the summer of 1891. Part of the building is used by the post office and on the second floor are the offices of the Lydall & Foulds Paper Company.

Flour is now bought by the car load, mill feeds are bought direct from the West and paid for long before the goods are received, sugar is bought and shipped direct from the refineries and in fact every thing is purchased in large quantities this saving the middleman's expenses. Besides storerooms on the second and third floors of the Morton building, the concern has a large barn in the rear and also uses Mr. Morton's barn on Hudson street and J. M. Williams' barn on Williams street for storage purposes.

Edward F. Dwyer has been employed by Mr. Morton for seven years. Previous to that time, he had a year and a half of experience in conducting the Buckland grocery store for H. S. Keeney. He was also employed at the Manchester freight station 32

for a time. He is a competent bookkeeper and during the past two years has assisted Mr. Morton in the management of the store. His many friends will be pleased to learn that he is now to become a member of the firm.

The new firm will expand the business and intend to reach out to all parts of the town. They now have three delivery teams on the road and give employment to six men.

Storyteller: Illustrated Review of Northeastern Connecticut, June 1891

HOTEL

The Cowles Hotel C. W. Allen, Proprietor

The leading, and in fact only, hotel in Manchester is the Cowles House of which Mr. C. W. Allen is the genial host. This gentleman has a long experience in the hotel business and is eminently qualified by training and natural adaptability to conduct a first class house such as the Cowles Hotel is.

This house is capable of accommodating a large number of guests and its cuisine and dining room are par excellence, giving the house a widespread reputation among the travelling public. Manchester is quite famous for its attractiveness during the summer months and those coming to this place to spend a few quiet and enjoyable weeks or days, have always the certainty of being comfortably provided for at one of the best hotels in the State. Mr. Allen possesses the enterprise and faculty for running a first class caravansary and is also one of Manchester's representative citizens.

LIVERY STABLES

G. H. Allen, Livery and Boarding Stables

The leading livery stable of Manchester is that conducted by Mr. G. H. Allen, in the rear of the Cowles Hotel and close to the depot of the New England Railroad. Mr.

Allen keeps a number of first-class driving horses and rigs of all kinds, so that anything in either a light or heavy hitch can be had at any hour of the day or night.

These stables offer especially fine accommodations for boarders, and some of the owners of fine animals have them stabled in this house where they receive the same scrupulous care and attention that is bestowed upon the proprietor's own stock. Mr. Allen is an enterprising and progressive business man and always ready to assist in any enterprise having the welfare of Manchester in view.

R. M. Rood, Livery, Feed and Sales Stables, Main St. near Forest

One of the leading livery and feed stables of South Manchester is that owned and conducted by Mr. R. M. Rood. This enterprise was established by the present proprietor in 1889, and always has received a liberal patronage both from the public generally and the owners of fine animals; these stables having a high reputation for their excellence of service. He keeps all kinds of carriages and vehicles and a light or heavy hitch can be had at any hour of the day or night. The neatness and cleanness of everything turned out of these stables is a feature that recommends them highly to drivers.

C. H. Strant, Livery Sale and Boarding Stables

The establishment conducted on North School Street, corner of Main, by Mr. C. H. Strant, keeps constantly on hand a very fine line of carriages, sleighs, wagons, hacks, etc. for livery purposes, and also a superior quality of stock. He conducts a sale and boarding stable, and many of the leading men of Manchester have their horses cared for there, as they know their stock receives from him the same scrupulous care which he bestows upon his own. Mr. Strant is an expert horseman and trains horses for owners at reasonable terms and with the greatest success.

PHARMACIST

Chas. H. Rose, Pharmacist

The leading Drug Store of Manchester proper, is owned and conducted by Mr. Chas. H. Rose, in the "Rose Block," an elegant block which Mr. Rose erected two years ago. Besides a regular line of Drugs, Chemicals, Dye Stuffs, Perfumery, etc., Mr. Rose carries a full and complete line of Stationery, Cigars and Paints, Oils and Glass. He is an educated and experienced pharmacist, and personally supervises the dispensary department, prescriptions being a specialty and most carefully compounded. The "Rose Block" is the finest block in Manchester and is used for business purposes strictly, several of the leading firms of Manchester being located therein.

Mr. Rose has been the manager of the Postal Telegraph Co.'s office in Manchester for five years, and of the Telephone Co.'s office since it was opened.

Storyteller: Richard S. Childs, June 1973

A SOAP OPERA

The Inside Story of Bon Ami

In Glastonbury, not far away was the J. B. Williams Soap Company, makers of Williams Shaving Soap-its leading itemand a full line of other soaps. It made from locally mined ground quartz a scouring soap like Sapolio, which was one of the greatest trademarks of that era. The quartz was crudely intertwined with its chalkier and softer white cousin, feldspar. The latter was cobbed off the chunks of mineral by hand at the mine, and it occurred to someone to grind up some of that pile of discarded feldspar and offer it in a gentler soap for polishing rather than scouring, naming it "Brightness." But neither product was ever promoted effectively by Williams and the sales were negligible.

J. T. Robertson, their plant superintendent, quarreled with the management, resigned, and came to Manchester to set up

a parallel business of his own in an old idle mill with water power which my grandfather Childs owned. Local men, including Father, took shares in the enterprise and the J. T. Robertson Soap Company began to make a line of a dozen soaps like Williams, including "Brightness." A minister named Burgess on the board of directors, being of a literary turn, was assigned to coin the new trademarks, and the soft mineral soap was baptized Bon Ami. It was not an ideal trademark, for there were soon at least five useages of its pronunciation, and how many grocers who called it Bonamy turned away customers asking for Bon Am-Eye will never be known.

Robertson knew nothing of selling or promotion methods and consumer advertising ventures were foreign to his character. Father spotted opportunity in Bon Ami — it was different from Sapolio—housewives liked it for windows and mirrors for which Sapolio was too gritty and sharp. It could go its own way without being affected by Sapolio's big advertising. But the Robertson Company's board had no funds or nerve for trying that long road; Father could try it with his own money if he wanted to, and they would make it for him.

My Father took the opportunity to his Cousin William H. H. Childs in New York. His cousin was 17 years older and a millionaire who had already found him "good for his undertakings." So the firm of Childs and Childs obtained Sole Rights to sell Bon Ami and we moved to New York. Housewives liked Bon Ami. The sales grew. The sampling gangs distributed small samples of the cake from house to house in expanding areas and repeated every three years—a "still hunt" that gained ground but did not alert other soap companies to bring out a competitive product.

Bon Ami continued in family hands and became one of the great national trademarks without ever encountering a precise competitor. The trademark, a little yellow chick just out of the eggshell with the slogan, "Hasn't scratched yet," is still remembered. The stock was put on the New York Stock Market while the family retained enough for some years to elect the Board of Directors, and the sales expanded to profitable millions. The controlled stock

descended by inheritance into the hands of grandchildren of no pertinent experience and was finally sold to a Philadelphia wholesaler of good repute, who, however, accepted an offer within a year from a new group originating in Las Vegas. They proved to be a group of crooks who turned every asset of the company into cash, stopped all advertising and promotion, and left it a dismantled wreck. For that, two respectable-looking principals went to Atlanta penitentiary after which the imperishable trademark was picked up by individuals and corporations in a succession of ownerships, and is now in the ambitious hands of the Faultless Starch Company of Kansas City. It has begun a studious attempt to restore the sales with modernized forms of production, including the original cake, the powder form in the sifter can, and a trigger-canned spray.



Storyteller: Violet Shearer Reid as told to Barbara Potterton, June 1989

GOING, GOING... THE AUCTIONEER FAMILY

Vi Shearer Reid was born in Manchester in 1908. She went to the one-room school-house in the Oakland section of Manchester for the first five years of school. She skipped the sixth grade and went to the Union School for 7th and 8th grades. Vi's mother was a teacher. After high school, Vi worked at the Hilliard Mill in Buckland.

Most of the neighbors in the Oakland section worked in the mills. The Superintendent of the mill lived in a big house on the hill above the mill. His name was Campbell. There were no organized social activities at the mill. The sections of Hilliardville and Talcotville had their own stores; but there were also people who toured the area selling their wares: George Brown was the butcher, Lyman's delivered milk, Fred Jones was the grocer, and Sam Southswift took orders.

Vi's husband's business started with his father who came from Scotland as a boundout boy (indentured servant) and worked for Lee Hayes and hung around a livery stable at Charter Oak Park in Hartford. One day the auctioneer didn't show up for work, and Mr. Reid took over. He started selling farm animals, and then met C. Elmore Watkins who was a financial manager for an estate. That started him in antique sales. Bob Reid, started work as an auctioneer in 1908, Ray Reid started in 1928, and Gordon Reid started in 1938.

The Reids operated the Strawberry Auction on Charter Oak Street, with Ray as the auctioneer and Vi as his secretary. The bank had charge of finances. It was a wholesale business—big trucks came from as far away as New Jersey to buy truck loads of crates of strawberries. They liked Bolton strawberries because they were firm and rode well. When the farmers started to sell from their farms, the buyers stopped going to the auction. Vi said the auction helped the farmers during the depression, but the farmers didn't stick together well.

The Reids also sold chickens and horses by auction at Steve Pearl's place on Woodland Street. They conducted many farm auctions selling livestock, machinery and household goods.

Vi Reid said she could remember that Ray Reid went to school for the first day, left school, hid somewhere, and finally went home. His father drove him back to school with a whip in back of him.



Storyteller: Earl Yost from The Manchester Herald, 11/15/56

CIGARS

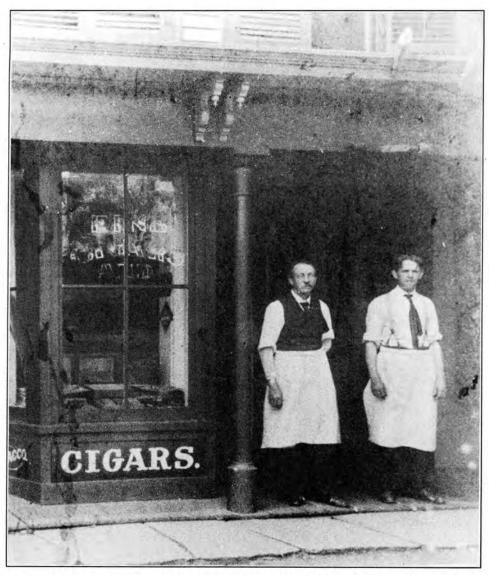
Fred B. Pohlman, Cigar maker.

"Days of the specialized business is gone," Fred B. Pohlman of 46 Hudson St. mused as he prepared to lock the door last Wednesday afternoon on Pohlman's Cigar Store on Depot Square after 75 years of continuous business. The cigar store was the oldest in point of operations on the Square, and one of the oldest businesses in Manchester. Cigars rolled by members of the Pohlman family have been sent to customers from Maine to California. There won't be any more hand wrapped cigars produced by the Pohlmans, and all that remains of what was once a flourishing business is many pleasant memories of past service and the rare cigar store wooden Indian figure which measures seven feet and is now on display at the Pohlman home porch on Hudson Street . . . The wooden Indian, which is hand carved, was purchased by Fred W. B. Pohlman, Fred's father, in New York in 1881-the same year the Pohlman's opened their first cigar store at 22 Depot Square.

Fred W. B. Pohlman made cigars for 72 years before retiring last August. He is now 86 years old and has been happily united in marriage for 52 years. His birthday falls on his wedding anniversary, June 2. Fred Sr. was, in his day, one of the top producers of hand made cigars in the East. He averaged between 250 and 300 cigars a day, and made as many as 350 in one day's toil. He started making cigars at the ripe old age of 14, and smoked on the average of six a day ever since he was 15. Three generations of Pohlmans were engaged in the cigar making trade. One of the top "brand named" Pohlman-rolled cigars was the Silver Wave. which was the title of a piece of music that years ago was featured by most piano teachers.

Both shade grown and broad leaf tobacco were used at the North End store. The Pohlman store was in three locations, starting at 22 Depot Square, later moving to 241 North Main Street, and in 1940 the business was moved to the site until liquidation at 209 North Main Street on Depot Square, the site of the old Cowles Hotel block...Fred B. rolled cigars just five years, although he spent 23 years, since 1933, handling over the counter sales and the book work for his father.





Joseph and his son, Frederick Sr., in front of their tobacco shop in Depot Square, circa 1890s.

Previous page: The first Pohlman cigars were "rolled" at this site in the late 1800s—the home of Joseph Pohlman on the east side of Oakland Street, two blocks north of North Main Street.

Storyteller: Unknown

PEDDLERS

My mother would make two or three trips during the year, by bus, into Hartford. There were a lot of peddlers who would go door-to-door. You would have a bread salesman, a meat salesman, Watkins products, Fuller Brush and there was a peddler who came from Springfield who would sell dresses and housewares. Many items you didn't have to go out of your house to buy, different peddlers would come to the door. Wholesalers would come as far as New Haven selling can goods. You didn't have to depend on transportation—there was a way to buy stuff at home which is different than the way you buy items today.

Yes, there was one peddler that came around and carried all kinds of dresses. yarn goods, also kitchen items. You were able to keep going with the stuff you could buy at home rather than run down to the store every day to pick something up. In those early days, you didn't run every time you needed something. Being on a farm, we had our own milk, we had a hundred chickens, so we had eggs, and spent hens for meat products and we always raised a calf or two so we had a supply (of food). Basically you didn't have to buy too many items to keep the household going. You were dependent upon your own products for your eating needs.

Storyteller: Manchester Saturday Herald

NOT JUST PAPER ... WATER

October 10, 1885

"Case Bros., with characteristic enterprise, are actively introducing their spring water and are finding a ready market. They have satisfied themselves by a thorough analysis of the water that it has qualities of curative merit and these indications are confirmed by the experience of those invalids who have used it. The real value of the water having been proven, the Messrs. Case spare no expense in giving it a thorough introduction.

"The Herald reporter found a large gang of men at work at and near the spring last Thursday. The mineral spring flows from a steep embankment and, to prevent any possibility of a future wash-out, retaining walls of heavy masonry are being placed against the bank for two or three hundred feet. In digging for this wall, a stratum of peculiar half-crystallized soil has been encountered. It is through this soil that the mineral water flows.

"At the foot of the ravine, a substantial bottling house 20 by 40 feet is in process of construction. This will be completed in a few days and will then be equipped with a bottling machine with a capacity of 1,000 dozen bottles per day, a Baxter engine and such other machinery as is necessary to do the business in a first class manner. The spring water is conducted by an underground pipe directly into the bottling house.

"Arrangements will be made so that the water will not be exposed to the air between leaving the spring and being sealed in the bottle. A second spring of very pure water has been conducted into the bottling house and this will also be aerated and bottled for table use in cities and places where pure water is not easily obtainable. As soon as the medicinal advantages of the mineral water are fully proven, and generally known, there will, without a doubt, be an influx to this town of visitors who can combine to advantage the use of the water fresh from the spring and the pure mountain air in that vicinity.



Highland Park Water



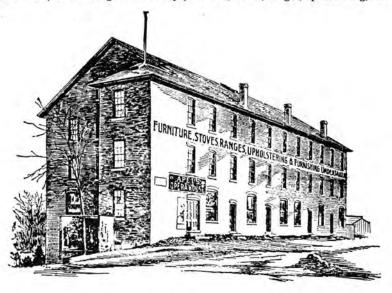
Storyteller: This early glass plate photo has its own story to tell. There is no evidence of electricity to the house and the pump and drain indicate that there was no indoor plumbing; the two chimneys were probably for a kitchen stove and fireplace in the room on left side of building; the clothing is typical late 1800s. From what we can observe in this photo, our detectives think it is probably circa late 1800, before the 1890's when town electricity and water began to appear. Can anyone identify the house and location for us??

The North End <u>Was</u> Manchester



B.C. Apel and his opera house—a north end landmark.

The side of the building tells the story: furniture, stoves, ranges, upholstering, undertaker.



Storyteller: Gladys S. Adams from The Manchester Herald, 2/28/91

APEL'S OPERA HOUSE

Bernard C. Apel came to Manchester and, in 1877, he bought a large house that stood on what is now Apel Place. It was built by W. H. Jones as a boarding house for those employed in his silk mill on Oakland Street. Once situated there, Apel established an undertaking business and a furniture store, and in 1887 he began to erect a brick building that became known as Apel's Opera House.

"Work has begun on Apel's brick building. Some of the longest timbers that ever came to town will be used in this building," the Hartford Courant reported March 16, 1878. "The first floor will be divided into three stores, two of which Mr. Apel will occupy with his funeral business. This will be the first brick building ever built in this town."

Soon after, Apel's Opera House became a community center within the town. It was the local people, however,—the churches, organizations and schools—who made their own entertainment at Apel's.

In February, 1891, the Courant wrote, "The first masquerade ball ever given in Manchester was held at Apel's Friday evening under the management of the Manchester 91 Club. There were 50 couples in the grand march led by Charles A. Balch and Miss Nora Horan. The gallery was packed with spectators." On March 1891: "Pupils of the Eighth District School will give an entertainment at Apel's tonight. Proceeds will be used for the school library."

In 1892, the theater was renovated. The reserved seats were reupholstered and a large cloak room was added. The interior was painted and two large chambers were installed.

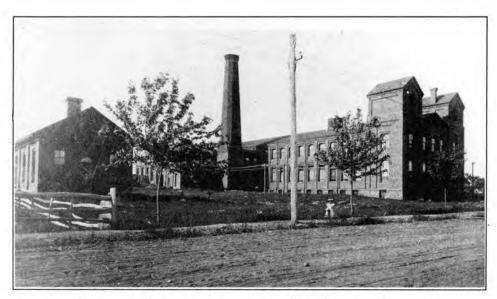
Then came more masquerade balls, dances, concerts, etc. A comic opera, "The Frogs of Windham," was performed. Composed by Burton Leavitt, and directed by his father, Nason W. Leavitt, it was based on this 1745 Windham legend: One dark night the inhabitants of Windham were awakened by a "horrible cacophony of ear-splitting noise" and they were sure that the wrath of God had come upon them in the form of an Indian attack. The men seized their guns and powder horns and stood guard all night. After the sun came up, a search was made of the area. There was not a sign of an Indian, but what they did find was thousands of dead frogs, who had fought to the death for a few puddles of water, on the parched ground.

In the play, Leavitt's cast of 15 included historical characters Col. Dyer, Squire Elderkin, Chief Uncas and a tribe of eighteen, a large chorus, a fifteen piece orchestra and two spectacular bands of young ladies. The first scene is Capt. Follet's kitchen where there is dancing and singing, including "A Dashing Ladies Man" and a drinking song "Good Old Windham Flip." Lord Linwood is captured by the Indians and tied to a tree in their camp, while on a rock above the camp, Scarlett Feather, daughter of Uncas, sings "The Pale Face is in Danger." A scene of gypsy dancers is followed by Col. Dyer's daughter, Dorothy, singing "My Home on Windham Green." Then came the Frog Ballet that "caused much merriment." There was a wedding and Lord Linwood and Scarlet Feather lived happily ever after.

B. C. Apel died in 1908. He is said to have been a kindhearted man who helped the less fortunate and he had many friends. After his death, the building was used at different times as a feed store, tobacco warehouse and a farm machinery salesroom. In 1942, the property was sold to the Central Conn. Cooperative Farmers Assoc.



74 Woodbridge Street, early Childs family home.



This photo shows the Bon Ami Building, on Hilliard Street (gravel road), in all its glory.

Storyteller: Richard S. Childs from The Manchester Herald, 1973

A MANCHESTER BOY IN THE 1880s

The request to contribute reminiscences to the Sesquicentennial, of old days in my beloved home town, takes me back to a happy boyhood. I was born here in 1882 (Dr. Whiton's charge was \$10); but I was taken off to New York in 1892. So these notes reflect only a boy's recollections of how different life was here and then.

In those days, there was North Manchester, Manchester Center where the town hall stands, South Manchester, Manchester Green, Oakland and Buckland—separate neighborhoods—mutually remote to a populace in which few had their own horses and carriages. A spur railroad from North Manchester to South Manchester was the only internal transportation. The trip of eight miles to Hartford was by railroad; if we took our buggy or the two-horse surrey, the horses must be given liberal rations of oats the night before. Many of my schoolmates had never been that far.

So, it is just North Manchester that I am telling about, and the social life that centered around the North Congregational Church on Main Street.

The Cheney colony, with its fine homes, spacious lawns and impressive well-kept factory buildings, was in another world which we could drive through when we were showing sights to visitors. But when I got to Yale, the classroom seating was always alphabetical, so, for four years, I sat next to Russell Cheney. I told him that my mother's mother had helped out the original immigrant Cheney family with old shoes and clothes.

Culture was brought to town by lecturers and singers in Cheney Hall. Apel's Opera House furnished occasional vaudeville, and amateur entertainments included "Tableaux"; for example, my Mother read excerpts from Evangeline in a loud, clear voice, and the curtains parted from time to time to reveal changing scenes posed rigidly by actors behind a row of big kerosene footlights.

My playmates were John Fitch; the Robertson boys, William and Herbert; William Ferguson, Charles Hughes. Laurence Dart, Harlan White, Ernest Hilliard, Arthur Griswold, Ned Barber.

There were, in Manchester in the 1880s, no telephones, no bicycles, no automobiles, no public water supply, no bathtubs or flush toilets, no cameras (except in the portrait studio), no safety razors, no electricity, no street lights, no phonographs, no movies, no wars, no income taxes!

My statistical expectation of life was 46 years (vs. 70 now).

Our grocery faced on Depot Square under the name of Fitch and Drake. It had two parts, one for groceries and the other for dry goods. The grocery part was operated by Mr. Fitch, and a fair replica of such stores in such days was lovingly reconstituted, fragrance and all, in the New England exhibit at the latest World's Fair in New York.



It was before the days of machine packaging, and a pound of sugar was scooped out of a barrel of granulated sugar and weighed into a paper bag on the big brass scales. Coffee beans were weighed out of big containers into the top of a lovely grinder with a wheel three feet in diameter and ground for you on the spot, with many turns of the great red wheel, making at the same time a charming noise. For a small boy with a penny, which was money in those days, lemon drops were counted out by hand from an open tray—six for one cent. Once, in a moment of opulence, I bought thirty-six of them.

Oranges were seen once a year at the Christmas Sunday School festival. Bananas were all red.

Thrifty people bought their white flour and graham flour by the barrel and, at home on Thursday, which was bread making 44

day, scoop it up from the barrels that were open at the top and stood under a lifted counter in the pantry. Every Thursday afternoon, as the children came home, six loaves of new bread would come out of the oven and the tops would be buttered while still hot, changing the color to the usual brown and giving off a perfume as good as any ever put on a lady's handkerchief.

Divided Village

North Manchester, in the 1880s, was a divided village. The Irish immigrants were a separate clan, living compactly in their own district without much intermingling, except in the course of employment. They were Catholics, and we were Protestants. My father, in those days, had a business rule of never hiring a Catholic! His idea was, as I heard him explain, that they considered their conscience cleared as soon as they made confession and were thereby less dependable than those of our religion, with whom a sense of guilt for a dereliction might linger and guide their conduct forever after. He forgot his rule soon after we moved to New York.

However, the Protestants were for "Temperance" whereas the Irish thought it no sin to drink whiskey and probably furnished a disproportionate share of the drunkards, whom the constable occasionally had to dry up in his little jail.

Every two years, a referendum was held as to whether the sale of liquor should be permitted in the town for the next biennium, and the vote wavered from time to time. The churches held meetings of their parishioners to get out the vote for Temperance, and noted orators were brought to town to solidify the Temperance vote in special church meetings, a rather futile maneuver, since I could see for myself that there might be nobody in the audience who had ever touched the stuff.

There was a jingle for young ladies: "Lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine."

My father, superintendent of the Sunday School, was conspicuous enough on the side of the angels to be admonished by some of his most important customers who ran public livery stables, renting horses and vehicles and were patrons of his solitary function of selling "Hay, Grain and Feed" for horses, cows, and hogs. Their anger included threats of setting up their own supply, but he replied bravely that it was a matter to him of principle and conviction. They actually organized a rival service in revenge and it made a desperate difference in Father's sales.

News of his martyrdom reached his cousin, William H. H. Childs, in New York. Cousin Will was a millionaire and turned up, unannounced, in Father's little office on Depot Square, next to the railroad siding. He was there to learn how he could help. Father had plans and a hope to someday build a little storage elevator that would enable him to buy his stocks in the harvest season when prices were low, instead of getting them little by little through the year from a New Haven wholesaler; but it would cost \$5,000. Cousin Will said: "All right, I'll stake you to the elevator. When is the next train due back to New York?"

The elevator was built and still stands, although Father's name, once painted in big letters on the railroad side, has washed away.

The loan was so meticulously handled that his cousin was happy to join him again later in a larger undertaking, namely, the firm of Childs and Childs, sole agents for Bon Ami, one of the ten soaps made by the J. T. Robertson Company; whereby my Father's fortune began.

Electric Lights, Town Water, and...Photos!

In that decade of the 1880s, I saw the coming of electricity, the town water supply, and photographic portraits. The electric light was promptly adopted with a narrow choice of lamps and wall fixtures and chandeliers of shining brass. I staggered the hired girl by forecasting that we would get light without using matches, and she scorned me for telling an obvious fib. However, it came and brought with it, in our house, the complete discarding of kerosene lamps.

Such lamps, in their day, had reduced candles to transient ornaments, but brought to the household one of the incessant chores. The handling of kerosene to fill the lamps had to be separated from everything else in the household on account of the smell and

spillage. Special rags had to be used in handling it, and important table lamps had to be brought to the heavy can for frequent filling. The can itself had to be taken to the grocery store to be filled from the tap in a barrel.

Our drinking water was drawn from a well in a bucket cranked up for the dining room pitcher on a chain wound around a horizontal wooden cylinder. Well water conveyed the ground minerals which give water a better taste than rain water. Our well, for the convenience of the horses, adjoined the barn and nobody that I ever heard of in those days put together the fact that there were five horses in those barns, living on wooden floors that drained into the gravelly soil alongside the well water twenty feet below.

The coming of reservoirs did not mean in those days the instant adoption of indoor toilets and bathtubs. In our house, it meant only a faucet replacing the cistern pump over the kitchen sink and an outlet outside the foundation to take a garden hose to lay the dust in the road and water the grass and flowers.

Baths were reputed to be the universal Saturday night festival in preparation for putting on best clothes for church the next morning. For me, at that age, it involved having a round blue washtub rolled into the kitchen and filled with pails of cold water from the faucet, modified by hot water from a kettle from the stove. Then the curtains were pulled down, the outer door was locked against casual intruders, and, after my sister was soaked and washed by the hired girl and sent off to bed, I got my turn; possibly in the same water, but I am not sure about that.

Photographic portraits were taken in a little studio with a skylight and involved long exposures. The stiff poses frequently seen among the results can be attributed to the heavy stand behind the living objects with an uncomfortable clamp raised to the suitable level where it could provide a firm grip on the back of the victim's head, so that he would not blur the plate by an unintentional movement. The photographs were exchanged among relatives and put into handsome bound albums to adorn the parlor table. If a young lad came to call on a young

lady, her entertainment would be to conduct him through the family album with appropriate confidential irreverence of the relatives there displayed.



Whatever happened to ...

People born since 1920 are unaware of what houseflies used to be like. Windows were screened, but the houseflies infested every kitchen, and as the joke ran in cheap restaurants, they turned apple pie into huckleberry. They were fought with Tanglefoot Sticky Flypaper, and children could watch an incautious fly struggle unavailingly against slow death. When it was time to cook dinner, the first task was to chase out flies by opening the screen door, pulling the shades down so as to leave one bright opening, and flaunt towels all over the place to effect the temporary reduction in the fly population. Mosquito netting was always over the baby carriage.

A similar relief has since developed in getting rid of mosquitoes which rendered some localities almost unfit for residence and kept people indoors rather than sitting out on the porch.

The house I lived in on Oakland Street, facing the road and railroad, has lost both the porches that it had in my time. Every house had its porches and rocking chairs, but I daresay that the present occupants of that house do not miss them. Porches and rocking chairs went out of style several decades ago, and I don't know why.

What has happened to the attics? On a rainy day or in a strange house, they were fascinating places for a lonely boy. There would be a spinning wheel there, although nobody, even Great-grandmother, knew how to use it. The wheel would spin until we broke the pedal. There were decrepit bureaus full of obsolete objects and packages of letters, preserved from a previous generation. There were old books, running

back half a century, to be searched for illustrations. They were rare, and crudely printed. In my great-grandfather's library, a small boy was directed to the only one in the bookcase, a life of George Washington, which had some pages that were crudely illustrated in color. Photoengraving was yet to come. Pictures would usually be steel engravings or woodcuts.

Old chairs were commonly black horsehair, and when that slippery fabric got old, it projected sharp whiskers and made it impossible for one to sit quietly on them.

A prize discovery in an attic drawer might be a set of false teeth. My uncle and grandfather both saved money on dentistry by having all their teeth pulled out and getting a false set, which lasted them for the rest of their lives and were kept at night in a glass of water at the bedside.

A Lesson in Law

My paternal grandfather, Gordon Hicks Childs, dwelt in the white painted brick cube on Oakland Street, which still stands now. He owned the valley bottom behind the house, back to the school yard, a charming grassy vale. Alongside the house, ran a canal connected under the road from the pond on the other side, and leading to a grist mill and a waterwheel. The spillway from the pond was under the bridge where the brook still flows, providing a copious waterfall, and the stream wandered across the valley bottom beyond my youthful horizon to Union Pond.

A gravel bar in the stream provided for a group of us boys an ideal playground, for, in bare feet and with towels, we could divert part of the stream through our little area of land and make our own watery landscape, including a pool, a waterfall, and a spinning waterwheel. We called ourselves "The Company" and collected there on our way home from school in the afternoons.

One day, as we came to our waterworks, we beheld disaster. Boys, in our absence, had stoned the scene, destroyed the clay pipe and the spinning wheel and drained our little lake. One of our own number was suspected of having participated in the vandalism, and our discussion developed noisy heat. The oldest boy, John Fitch, secured order and said: "This is very serious. We

must have a court." At the age of eight, we hardly knew what a court was, but he went on: "I will be the judge, because I am the oldest." He named a prosecutor, and the other three of us became the jury. The alleged culprit was brought to trial, and with a slow solemnity that would have graced the Supreme Court, the suspect was slowly reduced to tears and confession.

The penalty doomed him to repair the damage, but soon we were all helping him doing it, ending in peace and amity. I treasure the memory as my first lesson in law.

Where The Water Wasn't

Came a great day in my schoolboy life when a row of three wooden stores on Depot Square went up in flames—no school that day—and nearly burned up the big wooden Cowles Hotel next door. The fire was vainly fought with splashing buckets from a distant pump, passed along a frantic line of men, and with wet quilts hung down from the hotel roof.

Everybody said, "We ought to have a water company here," and it was my Father, Will Childs, who did something about it.

He located the logical head waters, got engineering advice, learned about the rights of the downstream owners, and organized a few competent neighbors into the Manchester Water Company. For his stock, he contributed his father's water rights and \$90 of cash outlays, and then the task became one of getting a long-term contract with the town to supply hydrant service at an annual charge sufficient to protect the prospective bonds of the Company.

Forty years later, in a business group, when each member was called up to relate some personal epic, Father selected that two-year battle through the town meetings as his contribution to the reminiscences.

At our home table, as he reported the successive events with joyous energy, I listened and comprehended. The provision of fire protection would raise the taxes, of course, although this would, for some people, be offset by lowering of insurance rates. To those rural dwellers, running water was a novelty, its installation in the household would cost money and, although everybody would face the increase of taxes, many had

no interest in the new-fangled convenience. Solemn old codgers averred, "What was good enough for my parents is good enough for me." "Water through miles of pipe couldn't be fit to drink!"

Father delighted in the scrap, emerged buoyantly from defeats and delays in town meetings to turn up again with a revised proposal and a few more votes.

His tactics were always to draw the fire of the adversaries and upset them at the tag end of the debate. His silences were disturbing. Even after victory, there were efforts to reverse the decision. One call for a town meeting conveyed the surprise "warning" that it had been found that the water source was impure. Father got samples and shipped them to the State Laboratory in New Haven. The report came back in chemical gibberish on the morning of the meeting. Father caught the next train down and was back at the opening of the session. He sat silent until the adversaries had all testified to their unsupported convictions that the water from that pond was impure and a committee was created to verify that fact. Then Father produced the letter he had brought back-"second best quality of all the public water supplies in Connecticut." The committee chairman took a slow look at the letter and resigned on the spot.

And then there was the attempt to invalidate the contract because the pressure would be below the contract of 70 lbs. He met it by obtaining pressure gauges which wrote a wavering pressure line on a clockdriven roll of paper-we had one in the house for awhile-and others were set up in store windows. The record ran regularly at 90 lbs. pressure and the notion that there would not be enough to deal with a fire was disposed of finally in a great Water Festival when every twin-breasted hydrant around Depot Square was equipped with hose and nozzle for a water battle as rival teams joyfully drenched each other and the roofs and fronts of the buildings without any important effect on the pressure.

Father's \$90 cash investment ultimately yielded \$1,500 a year.

Storyteller: Mrs. Agnes Fuller Hayes as told to Betty Walker, 2/1/71

WORKING GIRL

A Cracker Packer

I was born in Manchester in 1888 on Oakland Street and I lived there until I was married. I lived on Oakland Street for thirty years. I was married when I was thirty. I quit school young because there were four of us in the family and we needed money, so I went to work when I was fourteen. I went to school until I quit, of course, and then I went to evening school. I wasn't about to give up learning; I wanted to learn.

Evening school was in South Manchester and it was held in what is now the recreation building across from the high school. I took up bookkeeping. I don't know why, because I hate figures. I took up bookkeeping because I could never get a trial balance. I didn't want to quit school. Then I decided to do office work and I studied shorthand and later on went to business school. I worked here and there even before I got out of school. At that time, there used to be a cracker factory right next to where St. Bridget Church is and I used to work there after school. I used to pack crackers. They made cookies, crackers of all kinds. It was something to do and we got a few pennies. Like the kids peddling papers, we made about as much money and we didn't have to be out in the elements.

Goetz paid us about a dollar a day. All the crackers you could eat if you wanted them. I used to fill up on graham crackers. I could have all the marshmallow and decorated ones I wanted, but I didn't want them. They made all kinds of fancy cookies. They also had a Dutch Bakery downstairs, where they made jelly rolls, donuts, and whatnot, that the men used to peddle in a cart. It was a horse-drawn cart and a Mr. McCarthy drove the horse and cart for years. They called him "Johnny, the Baker."

Then, later on, they had a bakery down on Kerry Lane down almost to Union Pond. This was run by different people than Frank Goetz, who ran the cracker factory. The ladies of the church used to go to Kerry Lane to get things for church suppers. As I remember, they never had a cart. Their customers came to the door and got what they wanted.

My mother, Margaret Patterson, came here from Ireland when she was sixteen. They lived down on North Street. That was all settled by Scotch Irish. There was a mill down there. It was way up at the end of North Street across from the waterfalls. It was a textile factory. I think they made gingham. My mother never wove. She inspected the cloth. The mill owner's son ran off with the payroll and the mill closed down. His name was Plunkett. Plunkett's son ran off with the payroll. That left all those people without jobs, but by that time, Cheney Brothers had come into existence, so everybody worked at Cheney Brothers.

My father, George Henry Fuller, came to Manchester from Columbia-down in the sticks. He was born in Welles Woods. He lived on a farm but he wanted to get off the farm so he could better himself. He walked up here-eighteen miles a day-and did a days work. He apprenticed himself to a carpenter, Joe Osmer, who lived on Oakland Street. He learned his trade. That's how he got to Manchester. Later on, he bought a tract of land from Joe Osmer and that's where he built our house where we lived on Oakland Street. I know all that property up there because I know all the people who used to own it-the Palmer girls. There was an Osmer who owned the place where they now have apartments. There was a Mr. Upton who had a big barn with a lot of horses. His name was Jim Upton, Behind our house was all woods, but it's all built up now. There were chestnut trees up there. Everything on the street has changed.

I was the oldest of four—three girls and one boy. They are all gone—I'm the oldest at 91 and the only one left. We had a good life. We walked everywhere then. We didn't have central heating in our home. We burned coal. We had a coal stove in the kitchen and in the living room. We used to sneak down there to dress in the morning. The sleeping rooms were awfully cold but we didn't always have enough blankets to keep us warm.

We all congregated in the kitchen. We didn't have a telephone or a radio or a television, but we had books and we had lamps attached to the walls, so we could always have good light—kerosene lamps. That was somebody's job to clean the lamp chimneys. My mother's table was always covered with a white linen table cloth. Each week it was changed. It kept clean because we had good manners. I was responsible for the table—kept the salts and peppers filled, etc. Each of us had chores.

My mother baked all her own bread. We had a milkman—Lyman. We used to have a butcher who came around. We bought our meat from him. We kept pigs one time before there were so many houses on Oakland Street. We always had chickens and we always had our own fruit.

We had a good life. We didn't go out looking for anything else. We used to go sliding and skating. We didn't stay up all night. If boyfriends came to my house, they left at ten o'clock at night. If they didn't, they were asked to leave.

Make Do

My father was a carpenter. At that time they didn't do much carpenter work in the winter, so he worked summers and he had to make enough summers to carry him through the winter. We always had good credit in town because we always paid our bills. We never bought things we didn't need. We bought the necessities and what we couldn't have, we went without. My mother did quite a lot of sewing and my father cobbled our shoes for us. He had a cobbler's kit and he could do it. He cut our hair if it needed it. We did everything for ourselves then. My father's people, of course, lived in the country and they would butcher a beef and we would buy a quarter of beef. We cured it ourselves. We had one room that was as cold as a refrigerator. We could keep our meat in there. We made our own dried beef and corned beef. We had our pigs so we had pork, beef and chicken. We always had plenty to eat. We never were without food. We had three good meals a day. We had a dress for Sundays and one for school. As I said, if we didn't have it, we went without it. We didn't run great big bills and have the bill collector at the door. You helped your neighbors, too, if they needed it.

Home Remedies

We kept pretty well and when we were sick, my mother doctored us—usually with home remedies—unless the doctor was very, very necessary. I remember when we had the measles and mumps. My younger sister had whooping cough when she was only about three months old. She would have choked to death if my father hadn't been home that winter. Mucous would gather in her throat and he would have to shake her up by her heels.

My mother used to use quite a bit of molasses. When we had a cough, Mother would take a cup of molasses, cut up an onion in it, put it on the back of the stove and cook it real slow, and we kids loved it. We'd get sulphur and molasses in the springtime to help our blood. If you had an earache, Mother used a little bit of melted lard. She'd put it in your ear—melt it and drop it in. We even had skunk oil. It was used for earaches too. Oh, we had all kinds of home remedies in those days. You didn't go to the store and buy aspirin—they didn't have it.

I remember my sister came down with the flu during the flu epidemic. We almost thought we were going to lose her. We called the doctor and he finally got up there. It so happened we had about a good shot of whiskey-no more-but I remember giving her whiskey and warm water. My sister was grown up at the time, and I was married. I was living near here on Henry Street, but I went home and stayed with her overnight. My mother was afraid I would get it, but I didn't. Doctor came and he didn't give her a shot as I remember. She had a hard time breathing. She sat up in bed and just tore her hair out. Doctor finally came back and gave her a shot of something. I also gave her aromatic spirits of ammonia. That helped some. She came out of it all right.

Church Time

My mother was a member of the Methodist Church for fifty years—the North Methodist, but when I first started to go to Sunday School, I went with a cousin and I went to Second Congregational. That's where I've stayed ever since. I never changed. My mother went to church when

she was able, which wasn't very often. My mother didn't go to church too often—unless the weather was good. If they ever needed anything down there for suppers or anything, they'd always come to my mother and she'd always furnish it.

I taught Sunday School for about sixty years at Second Congregational. I had two groups of Campfire Girls, and when I was married, I had a Campfire wedding. I had twenty-two attendants. They wore daisy chains on their hair and their dresses were very simple. I was married on June 30, 1918. I was the only one in our family married at the church. Neither of my sisters was married in church. On my honeymoon, we went to the Maine woods-way up near what they called Moxey Pond. We stayed in a woodcutter's shack. We fished and hung around in the woods and just had a good time. We went up by train and hiked into the shack. When we wanted to go back, we hailed the train. You got around better by train then.

Our Home

I came to Henry Street as a bride . . . but not to this home. I came to 113 Henry Street. My husband built that house. Then we sold it in 1943 and went to Florida. That was a big mistake. We came back and bought this house in 1946 at 182 North Elm. It was an old house, built by an old carpenter by the name of Annis. This house is over 100 years old. My husband put this room on the one upstairs. He did a lot for the place. There weren't any shelves or places for anything. The only thing that this house had to recommend it was that it was on Henry Street. We looked everywhere but I only wanted to live on Henry Street as I had for twenty-five years before we'd gone to Florida.

This house looked like an old dilapidated thing in a wooded area when we bought it. There were only a couple of houses on the street. Summit Street wasn't cut through then. It was all woods beyond this house. It was all woods where White Street, Summit Street, and all are today. There was a little brook that ran back there at one time. When my youngster was six years old, he started out and went fishing in that brook one morning. He was so small to be going

off fishing all alone. He came back with a tale—"I almost caught six, Mommy, but they got away. That brook is covered over now.

Early Times

We didn't have lights then like we do now. The town was more or less darkened. There weren't any automobiles and we didn't have any horses or carriages. The only horses I knew about were out in the country where my father's folks lived. We never owned a horse because it was too costly. You wouldn't have the food to feed it, and you couldn't afford to buy it. If you wanted to go anywhere, you went on your feet. We went skating out on the back road—right across from where the Howard Johnson is now. It used to be called Boggy Stow. It was just a big bog, but a real good skating place.

We built our house during the depression. The first year we built it, we were afraid we wouldn't get any heat, so we put off getting married that year. It had a coal furnace and we didn't have enough radiation in the house, when we did get heat, to be comfortable. My husband built French doors between our living room and hall to save heat. We bought our coal from Glenney's. They never questioned us. If we wanted fuel, we got it. We had good credit.

My grandfather was dead when my grandmother and my mother, who was sixteen at the time, came here from Ireland. They came here because they thought they'd have a better life here. My grandmother was a cook and took care of the children in a wealthy family over there. In the meantime, my aunt and my uncle had come over here. They liked it here in Manchester, so my grandmother and my mother decided they'd come over. It was about 1859. Shortly after they came here, two of the children where my grandmother worked died. In those days, they didn't fumigate for contagious diseases as they do now, and these people who had black diphtheria in their family threw the bedclothes beside the road, and those children played in them. They, and the young woman who rescued them, all died. About a year after that my mother and my grandmother went home again. They called it "home", but they didn't stay.

Getting Around

When we went to Hartford, we walked down Oakland Street to the Depot and took a train. There wasn't even a trolley car. I remember when trolley cars were put in. I was probably ten or twelve years old. They cut quite a bit off the front of our yard, and mother was quite upset about it. It didn't bother my father. He was the easy going type of person. There was a switch just above where we lived called Bissell Switch. That's where the cars switched. We went by trolley some, but we were in the habit of using our two feet. We didn't have a lot of money. It cost money to travel on trolley cars, so we walked.

"Cap" Lilley's School

I never went to school in the South End until I went to evening school and I went by trolley. All my early schooling was in the Eighth District School and "Cap" Lilley was the principal. Believe me, he had good discipline. We went to school to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic. When you got through, you knew what you were doing.

I remember every teacher I ever had. Down there at the Eighth District School, Mr. Lilley had a daughter and she married several times, so we called her Lily Mae Minor Howard. She was my first grade teacher. Then we had a Miss Segar-she was my fourth grade teacher and she was a lovely lady. She was a maiden lady, but she was a dedicated, lovely lady. She used to give us a beautiful picture card if we got ten spelling papers right. There was Anna Mae Swift; she was from Hartford. She was pretty, vivacious and she let us have plays at Christmas time. She was the first one to show us mistletoe, because out in the country we didn't know what mistletoe was. She lived in the city. We had a little poem or play about holly and mistletoe, so she brought the mistletoe out from Hartford. In sixth grade, I had Dorothy Touhey. She taught in the Eighth District School until she was over 70 years old. She was my son's teacher when he was over at the Bentley School. Then I had Linna Beebe and Henrietta Devin. She was in the eighth grade. I didn't graduate. I quit school in the eighth grade. It seemed to be the necessary thing in those days.

Apel's

Back in those days in the North End, Apel's Opera House was used for everything. That's where they had the graduations until they had a school with a hall in it. I think Robertson was the first one. I remember the last graduation held in Apel's Hall and they were a bit frightened because there were too many people in it. All the Eighth District graduations were held there.

There was a gallery—it was fun sitting in the gallery. The St. Bridget's people used to have a dance almost every Saturday night. There was a German Society, too. They used to have a dance. My neighbors were Germans and they used to go. They'd take their little baby, feed it there and put it on a bench and dance. The Germans loved to dance.

Everything that went on was in Apel's Opera House. I remember one time these people came through—I suppose it was Fine Arts—and all the kids in school took part in it. It was really a big thing. If you weren't up there singing, you were nobody! That brought out all the people. Another show was people selling medicine—Kickapoo Indian medicine—and they had one or two people dressed up like Indians. Everyone went to that. They sold Kickapoo Indian worm medicine for about one dollar. They peddled that stuff like hotcakes.

Hard Work

I worked at Cheney's. I worked for a Mr. Keating on the runovers. You run one spool of thread on to another. I did this before I went to business school. Then, I worked at the Bon Ami Company.

That was hard work. We wrapped a gross of Bon Ami every half-hour. There were cakes and you loaded them onto a bench. You got a big pile beside you. There was a glue pot in front of you and a brush, also a package of wrappers. You put your cake on the wrapper, wrapped it up and put some glue on one side of it, put it up beside you and when you got 12 dozen—a gross of them—all wrapped, you "buttered" them—put glue on the top of them and then you flopped them over and sealed them all. Our fingers flew. It was hard work to do a gross every half hour. I did this in my early teens.

Of course, at the time I was growing up and went to evening school and everybody was working in an office. I hated working in the shop. I figured I could do something better, so I went to business school. I started working as a billing clerk down at Cheney Bros. That was the last place I worked. Lots of times there wasn't much work but they never sent you home. We used to go on the old "Goat." I walked down from Oakland Street and then took the "Goat". Got the "Goat" every morning at seven o'clock. We had tickets. Then when I worked in the office and got into the Campfire Girls, I used to walk every morning down to the office and then home at night. I walked five miles a day and loved it. That was quite a trip, but it didn't seem far in those days.

Storyteller: Manchester Herald, 12/21/48

THE GABLES

"Gables" property, a seven apartment house at 118 Main Street, with two acres of land, was sold to the Second Congregational Church. Known to older residents as the Peter Adams property, it was built in the late 1880s by Peter Adams, paper manufacturer of Buckland, for his grandson, Dr. Frank B. Adams and his bride, Miss Jennie Carter, sister of the late Joseph C. Carter businessman and resident of the North End, Dr. and Mrs. Adams and their three sons and one daughter lived here until the death of the parents and the children married and moved away. The site originally included the entire land to Woodland Street. Later, Walter and E. A. Lydall built a two flat house at Woodland and Main which was later acquired by the late Dr. Harry Sharpe and the site between Sharpe and Adams was bought by the late Edward E. Segar.

Storyteller: Vera Keevers-Smith as delivered to the Historical Society by Leona Keevers Lavery, April 1995

THE PRIZE OF THE FAIR

It was 1902 and it was Father Murphy, himself, who said we should have a fair. For there we were, in the little country town, with only a basement church; and how would St. Bridget's ever be built if we did not obtain the money ourselves, the children as well as the grown-ups!

So, every year our church held a fair, and for six wonderful nights in the fall, the Opera House was like fairyland, with its gay booths full of all sorts of articles donated by kind-hearted people for the purpose of raising money by means of the raffle.

Patient housewives made countless aprons, both fancy and practical, or embroidered the choicest of linens, beaming with pride as they saw them displayed to tempt the passer-by to "take one chance." Other homemakers contributed rich jellies, cakes and confections to fill a booth called "domestic". Young girls dressed countless dolls. and sauntered through the crowds at the fair, winning admiration and selling chances at the same time. Tradespeople all over town sent in their clocks, dishes, pictures, rugs and knick-knacks. Grocers did their part with barrels of sugar, bushels of potatoes and baskets of miscellaneous goodies. Even a ton of coal was donated every year by the local coal company.

But the charm and excitement did not end there. The highlight of the week of wonder was the entertainment provided by the talent of the young and old. Even the five-year-olds were trained in chorus and pantomime by Father Murphy himself, aided by his sister, Flora, who was the organist at the church. And a good job they did of it. The eight-year olds had individual songs and dances to perform, the older lads put on humorous skits. There was such a variety that one hated to miss even one night of the magic.

How we children loved the fair! Our parents were indulgent enough to let us go with them on at least one or two of the nights. Alas, bad luck was with us this particular fall, because both my brothers and I had been laid up with a succession of ailments: chicken-pox, tonsillitis, and last, but not least, the mumps, so we were not able to attend the wonderful festival. Our mother, too, perhaps worn out by her constant attendance on us, had been on the sick list too and five lovely nights of the fair had already gone by. But how surprised we were when she appeared, dressed in her best clothes, and announced that, sickness or not, she was not going to miss the last night of the fair. Wasn't this the evening when our brother, Matthew, was going to be the funny man in a play? And, Leon, the oldest brother, was to play on the violinour mother had taught him the piece just recently. This was to be his first public performance.

So, though she seemed to be rather weak, we knew that her will-power would enable her to walk the short distance to the Opera House, to look upon the superb performance and to cast an eye over the delectable articles to be raffled off on the last night. How we envied her, as we watched her go!

It was impossible for two youngsters of seven and four to remain up until her return. Our father saw to it that we were snug in bed at an early hour, dreaming, of course, about the wonderful week of the fair.

We did not live near the center of the town, and, in those days, the telephone had not been heard of, nor was there much communication of any kind to be had from hour to hour. So, the following day, when our father came home from work, we were in line for a great and almost shocking surprise.

"Did you know that you won the horse and buggy at the fair?" said my father very abruptly, as our mother served him his supper. "What?" exclaimed mother, in a weak voice. "That is impossible; I only took one chance the whole night."

"You were pretty smart," father continued, "that was the top prize of all, and when I went to the drug store at noon, the clerk told me you were the winner." Of course, Mother had not stayed late enough for the drawing, but had come home soon after the boys' entertainment was over.

"Father Murphy came to me as I was leaving," Mother went on, "with the last remaining ticket, and as I had a quarter in my purse, I could hardly refuse. I didn't even ask what the article was, I was so anxious to get home—and to bed!"

"Well, what shall we do now?" asked Poppa, "Since we haven't any barn? Now we have a nice horse and buggy. We can go riding." He looked at all of us with his bright, dark eyes, his mustache expanding in a pleasant smile. It seemed as if problems had begun right along with new, anticipated pleasures.

It was a few days before we could see our prize. A stall was rented in the livery stable downtown, temporarily, and on Sunday Father and Mother and a friend or two went for a ride around the town. We were promised that we too, my little brother and I, would have a ride as soon as we were over the mumps, and we tingled all over at the thought of it.

After the first try-out, however, it was found that the horse was not in top condition. He had a sore on his right front leg. This was something that intrigued my father very much, and he was determined to cure it. Our next door neighbor was called in, and together, the two of them conferred as to what kind of poultice might be most effective. I think they tried many kinds, for every night, after supper was over, the ritual of poultice-making went on in the kitchen accompanied by the strangest odors. We were only sorry that we could not see the applying process.

The horse was stabled nearby now, and received constant care from Poppa and his friends. At last they reported improvement in the case and to celebrate, the following Sunday night we saw them take off—our parents and the kind partner in medicine, Mr. Lawlor. I can see them still as they got ready to go. A light snow was falling and the scene was so pretty. Brother and I leaned our faces against the cold window pane, and how we longed for our turn to come to ride in the horse and buggy!

One forgets time—it was only a few weeks later that I was walking home from school one afternoon. A big girl passed me by and turned and spoke to me. "You should hurry home," she said. "I saw a moving van at your house this morning and you must have something new."

A moving van! What could it be? I not only hurried, but I ran faster than I thought I could run. Into the house I bounded, out of breath.

"A girl said we have something new," I gasped, as my mother came to meet me. She wore a mysterious look and a smile that I'll always remember. She led me into the parlor. "Look," she said, "it is for you."

"A piano," I shouted, "for me?" What a surprise it was. I immediately sat down on the shiny stool. The keys were snowy white and a little stiff with their newness. There was a book on the rack with an orange cover. It said "The Beginner's Piano Lessons." The pages were very stiff and I could smell the glue and the crisp paper. I opened the first page of lessons and found the right C to start the scale. My mother was there to help—so we had a lesson together—the first one.

The horse and buggy were sold, but with the money, we had obtained our first piano, and the years stretched out ahead with music and singing to liven our time in the little yellow house in the country.



Storyteller: Sherwood Bowers as told to Betty Walker, January 30, 1973

THE BOWERS TRADITION

As a child, the house I lived in was at the corner of North Elm and Woodbridge Streets. We came up here to Deming Street in 1925, when I bought my mother-in-law's farm after the death of my father-in-law. The farm had 300 acres and the house on it.

The owner at the time was a widow with

several children who lived there including a beautiful young daughter. She agreed to throw in the girl with the deal. And three years later we were married. So, we live in the original Deming Homestead. The house was built right after the Civil War—between 1865 and 1870. That's the Deming background.

As to the Bowers family, it came here around 1840. They came from Mansfield, Judge Bowers was my father. He went into the legislature in 1907 or something like that-he was there a couple of terms-it might have been 1909. He was instrumental in having a bill passed and made into law that set up Manchester's first town court and he got himself named the first judge. He didn't hold the position too long. It was a town court-it's like the circuit court here today. Some years ago-about 15 years ago-the state did away with our local court system. The judges alternate around the state. It's the same-local offenders mostly, that come into the courtautomobile cases, burglaries.

My father went through the local elementary schools-Hartford Public High School; they had no public high school here at the time-that was in the 1880s. In order to get enough money to go to Yale College, he took time off and taught school in East Hartford. His salary was something like \$3 a week. Besides teaching school to earn money, he got hold of the curriculum he was expected to have in his first year at Yale-he studied so that he was admitted as a sophomore when he finally went to New Haven. Before that, my uncle, who was twelve years my father's senior (that is Arthur) went to Yale also and graduated in the class of 1883. My grandfather at some time or other died of cancer and my grandmother made the homestead a boarding house.

Bowers School is named after my father and mother, both of whom, at different times, were chairmen of the Manchester Board of Education. In my father's day, it was known as the Board of School Visitors. That was what the state statutes allowed it to be called. After his death, my mother was persuaded to run for the Board of Education and she served for several terms. The last term she was on, I think she was

chairman. Their interest in education gained them the honor of having a new school named after them.

My father served I think two terms in the State General Assembly. My Uncle served in office too. He was a selectman for several years; then he went to the General Assembly as a representative and also served a couple of years in the State Senate. His farm was where the Bowers School is now. The school was built on some land that my Uncle Arthur owned a half interest in with a friend of his—someone named George H. Hall; they owned it together. The land was sold eventually to Robert J. Smith who developed it into house lots. He called the tract Elizabeth Park.

It had been an apple and peach orchard previously, cared for by Mr. Hall. My uncle worked for a magazine publishing company and he wasn't around to do the planning or any of the work. Uncle Arthur's farm was there and the family homestead was at North Elm and Woodbridge Streets.

My uncle also built the Bowers block on Main Street. It's down where the Manchester Savings and Loan is now. He built it as an investment. It was a three story building. The first floor was occupied by the Manchester Trust Co.—Trust and Safe Deposit Co.

I started out to be a farmer—fruits and vegetables—I ran a roadside stand out here for many years. Then people came along and wanted to buy a lot to put up a house. I started selling off a lot here and there—opened up a street and found it paid a lot better than farming. So between 1935 and 1955 the place up here on Deming Street was pretty well developed. After selling all the land, I'm down to an acre and a half.

I still remember getting to school from Woodbridge Street. There was only one high school in town; that was then known as the South Manchester High School. We walked down to the end of the trolley line and took the trolley at Woodbridge and North Main Street. There was a trolley car that went over to South Manchester to where the bus terminal is now where the Carter Chevrolet building is. Parents were responsible for any expense like trolley fare; we could buy tickets for about one-half or one-third of the regular 5 cent fare, and we

went back and forth on the trolley.

The trolley would come down from Rockville through where the bridge is now, down Oakland Street to the north end. It would stop along there. It would turn west at Apel's Corner and head down North Main Street to Buckland, make a sharp turn to Hilliardville—then turned to the right on Hilliard Street, went through the woods where East Catholic High School is, until it made the junction to switch at the track that came down East Center Street. Right on to Hartford—Rockville to Hartford that was the trolley ride.

Storyteller: Unidentified, loving 75 yr. old from The Manchester Herald, 2/9/73

AN IRISH BLESSING

Dear O. C.

We all Know "Depot Square" has had its face lifted. It is a thing of modern beauty with its broad expanse of concrete, its traffic lanes and lights, and, I might add, its traffic jams.

An old North Ender feels lost and confused when he revisits the area. Gone are all the old landmarks.

The Depot itself, Balch & Brown's Drug Store, Dan Curran's Barber Shop, Buckland's Furniture Store, and most important of all the old post office.

Yes, in the old days, the North End had a Post Office, which it does not have now. I was a grade school girl then, attending the old Union School. Children, then, were not allowed to loiter around the Post Office. However, I had the privilege of picking up a newspaper that came in the mail and delivering it to an elderly couple, who lived a short distance down the street from us.

That paper was the "Irish World." It put sunshine into those old hearts who read the news from their beloved homeland.

There was a reward in it for me, too, because there was always an apple, some cookies, or a slice of homemade bread and jam. But, most precious of all, was the Irish blessing that they said for me.

Today, the grandson of those people is

one of, if not the most successful, businessmen in Manchester. I'm sure that he must have received that blessing many times, also.

Now, I am nigh onto 75 years old. Living in the country where, at times, it is difficult for me to walk out to the paper box to get a paper.

But, I am fortunate. I have four wonderful little children who bring it to me. They are the great-great-grandchildren of that old couple that I used to bring the paper to when I was a little girl.

They are the children of Michael Lynch and the late Mary Margaret Moriarty Lynch, namely, Sharon, Mary, Michael, Frank and Matthew.

And, for them I will say the Irish blessing that was so often said to me.

"May the road come up to meet you.

May the wind blow always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face.

And the rains fall gently upon your fields.

And until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of His hand."

Storyteller: Mrs. Nell Packard Nodden (Mrs. Basil T.) Manchester Herald, 2/16/73

NORTH END NOSTALGIA

Dear O. C.

In last week's paper someone wrote about their feelings when they go to Depot Square.

I, too, get nostalgic whenever I go there.

My father also had a drug store right next to the Post Office and we lived in the "old white house" as it was called in those days, now the (Community) "Y".

What a beautiful place that was. Every fruit tree you could name was there and grape arbors galore.

When I turn right from the stop light, I can still see the old stone wall with the brook running along beside it, then the old barn with its hay lofts and horse stalls. We had many a fall into them while playing in the hay loft.

Then, a little further down, one goes right through the vegetable garden that my grandfather used to plant every year. I can still see him trudging down that path with our Boston bull dog tagging at his heels.

Where the bank is now, we had our own

private tennis court.

We used to play under the bridge on Oakland Street. Pagani's store, where we could get licorice for a penny. Marty's barber shop and the office of Dr. Harry Sharp—a god to many North End families.

We used to be able to lay in our bed and watch out the window the crews unpacking at the old railroad station, a big thrill for

six young kids.

Yes, I sure get nostalgic when I go to Depot Square, but then progress has to be made.

We six girls used to attend the old Union School.

In 1914, my father built the third home, then on Henry Street. At the same time, he bought the drug store in the Odd Fellows building at the Center.

We also had our own private tennis court on Henry Street, but I don't get nostalgic going over that way as I do when I travel beyond the stop light at Depot Square and turn right to Oakland Street.

Storyteller: Grace E. White Wright from The Manchester Herald, 3/4/86

GOOD-BYE DEPOT, PICKLE BARRELS, JELLY DOUGHNUTS

It is difficult to place the buildings in proper perspective since there have been so many drastic changes in the North End.

The Willis Lumber & Coal Co. was where Farr's is now. Coal was delivered by truck. A chute went from the truck, through a basement window, connected to the coal bin. The coal created a lot of dust as it slid down.

The railway depot was located where the driveway to the shopping plaza is now, off Main Street. It was a favorite spot of mine. I took my first train from there to Hartford. The train also went through Bolton Notch

to Willimantic.

When the circus came to town, we children would get up early in the morning to see the animals being unloaded at this depot. Later, a circus parade would come down Main Street, with the animals in their brightly colored cages, the elephants holding the tail of each preceding one, right down to the baby. Music from the calliope accompanied the parade. Such memories!

There was a small green next to the depot, where our flag always flew. I really think the depot should have been spared or

moved to another location.

Opposite the green was a railroad watchman's shed, where he dropped down the bars so the cars and horses couldn't cross when the trains were coming. He told us children when to cross.

The stores were on the opposite side. There was a lovely old water trough for horses in front of Pagani's ice cream store. Down the street, in a building with twin pointed towers, was Nichols' paper and candy store. I spent many pennies in there for Boston Baked Beans, which were red sugar-coated nuts. I still have a small red clay pot that was used for measuring a penny's worth.

The first street beyond this was North School Street, where Tommie Smith had a meat market and grocery store, one of my favorite memories. Mother would go there to shop with the other ladies. Mr. Smith would give them all a milk cracker with a slice of raw tripe on it. Crackers, pickles, etc. were in large barrels and you just helped yourself, just as you did with the cookies in square tin boxes with glass tops. Of course, I had a cookie while they had the tripe.

Mark Holmes opened his first funeral parlor on the corner of North School and North Main Streets. I remember the building as I attended my first funeral there.

The Second Congregational Church was in the same spot as it is today. I grew up in that church, and even brought my husband there from St. Mark's Episcopal.

Further down North Street to Kerry Street, I went to the bakery for jelly doughnuts. Sometimes the owner would allow me to fill them myself with a hand pump. You may be sure my jelly doughnuts were wellfilled! I loved them and can almost taste that red jelly now.

Back to North Main Street and on the opposite side of the street, across from the present housing for the elderly, was Hibbard's Hardware Store, where I went for kerosene for the lamps. Mr. Hibbard always pushed a potato on the spigot of the gallon can to prevent me from getting splashed.

The trolley track ran all the way from Rockville to Manchester and on to Hartford. At that time, it was our only means of transportation to downtown Hartford. We got on near the railroad watchman's shed.

Where the farmer's co-op now stands, was the Checkerboard Grain Store. Bags of grain, corn, and mash were delivered here by rail and resold, by the bag, to the farmers. There was no processing done then as there is today, and the area was much cleaner.

Sometimes I wonder why everything has to change. The memories are so dear. But, "that's progress", they say.

Storyteller: Anna McGuire, June 4, 1971

THE CABBIE IS A JITNEY MAN

In my Manchester childhood, early 1900s, one of the most colorful and popular North Enders was Charlie Sweet. He was a big, noisy, and garrulous man. His wife, Jeanette, was almost as well known as Charlie. She was his antithesis—tiny, pretty, gentle, and quiet.

Memory does not recall his horse-drawn express wagon, but I have never forgotten the "motorized" Charlie. He was one of the first to own an automobile—a taxicab—Manchester's first. A shrewd businessman, he operated a flourishing business.

He met all the trains that stopped at the North End railroad station. His principal fares were the drummers (traveling salesmen) who required transportation to South Manchester where stores were located on Main Street. Charlie was a veritable town crier for the drummers. Enroute, he gave a thorough report of all the local events and gossip that had transpired since the trades-

man's last visit. They, in turn, exchanged news of the outside world which Mr. Sweet later imparted to all who listened.

Another source of revenue for this cabby was his Manchester tour service. When outof-town relatives and friends visited Manchester families, fathers invited Charlie to drive the guests on a conducted trip to Manchester's high spots. The agenda always included the Cheney Silk Mills, Cheney homes, Cheney Hall, Hilliard Woolen Mill, Manchester Green, Highland Park, the stores on one side of Main Street, the new South Manchester High School, and sometimes even Laurel Park.

The final remark from my memory book is not intended to be unkind, but the epithet given to this man was a vital part of him. It was a term of endearment; even Charlie enjoyed it. All who knew of him always spoke of him as Charlie Sweet with his "ten-acre feet."



Storyteller: Henry Brooks, a.k.a. "Bud" as told to Shirley Fitzgerald, 7/18/88

THE ULTIMATE NORTH ENDER— "BUD" BROOKS

A "Sweet" Trip to be Born

I was born April 15, 1919. It so happened to be my mother's birthday and my family was, at that time, living in Manchester. I was born in Hartford at St. Francis Hospital. I have been told that Charlie Sweet's taxi was the mode of transportation to and from the hospital.

I guess you would have to call him a North End character, but he was also a constable by the name of Charles "Charlie" Sweet. And I recall now, he would sit there and he had a cab that was painted yellow and he always seemed to be wearing a derby hat. That is the picture I have of him. And when my mother went to Hartford to have one of my sisters, I recall my father telling the story about calling Charlie Sweet's cab. Charlie was the one means of transportation into Hartford Hospital. My mother was saying the rosary and saying "Damn it, Charlie. Hurry Up!" every other word. He would go about twelve miles an hour.

School

I grew up in the North End of Manchester and except for a few years, I would say from the early days until the early thirties, my own age of thirty, I lived in Manchester and then I moved away. Spent about five years in the service and then about ten years in the Greater Hartford area and then moved back to Manchester the past 15 years. This covers quite a span.

I went to school primarily in Manchester and attended, in the early days, the old Union School on North School Street, which has since been demolished. In those days, we all walked to school. We would walk down the tracks to the old Union School. After the fifth or sixth grade, we would be transferred to Hollister Street School.

At Hollister Street School, I attended seventh and eighth grades. Graduated there in 1937 and then went on to Manchester High where my freshman principal was Edson Bailey and it was such a long walk for us in those days from Woodland Street to the high school. But it was lots of fun because we would go in groups and the time passed, except in the cold weather. Winter was really brutal, when I look back, but we didn't seem to mind it that much.

And if you were fortunate enough, you had a few city bus tickets to spare when the cold weather did come. By and large, most people, most of the children, walked back and forth.

In those days, it wasn't Cheney Tech, but it was the old so-called Trade School and many of the fellows that I palled around with would split up and go half a day to Manchester High and half a day to Cheney (the Trade School), located in then what is now the Bennet Jr. High.

Eight years old and Working

In those days, I actually started working selling newspapers when I was about eight years old. I can remember delivering the Manchester Herald for one-half cent per paper and I was very fortunate because I took over a route from a young woman and had the Bon Ami as part of the route. I could go into the Bon Ami with about 25 papers and wait until 5 o'clock when they were dismissed. I would stand there and sell my papers. That was very good until, somehow, someway, there was a ruling put out that I could no longer do that. So then I had to get out of there and work harder, but to me, that was quite a deal. I think the happiest, proudest I was when I could earn two dollars a week and come home and give it to my mother. We were a family of four and it was during the Depression. Fortunately, my father worked . . . he worked for the New Haven Railroad and he was fortunate enough to work all the time. But I recall he made about \$27.00 a week to support a family of four, plus helping relatives at that time.

Living on Woodland Street, some neighbors had steady jobs. We were very much aware of the children who didn't have. Things were tough at home and they would come to school really without breakfast. But, all in all, there was a feeling of closeness within the neighborhood. As Bob Pearl would say, "No matter what my mother would give to one of us, then she would give to them." They would all sit down and enjoy yourself or help yourself.

Leisure-Time Work

As far as leisure time is concerned, I recall picking strawberries when I was in high school. Getting up at four o'clock in the morning and being trucked out to Bolton and picking strawberries until noon and then going to school. Novelli's farm is one I recall. And then there was the big strawberry auction down on Charter Oak Place. We picked in the morning and brought them all to the auction. I can recall getting one-half cent per basket to pick berries.

Working Tobacco

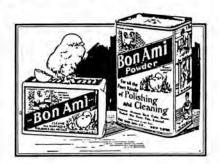
I was twelve to fourteen or fifteen back then. In the summer, the biggest deal was

to get a job on tobacco. I remember having my mother pack the lunch and going down and lining up and waiting and hoping to get a job. And, as I look back, I can recall having older men standing in line and you realize we were competing with them for a day's pay. The girls worked on tobacco, but they worked in the sheds sewing tobacco or doing something. In the fields, the men and boys worked and I think it's about the toughest job I've ever had in terms of physical activity. Dollar a day, I guess, was probably a pretty good price. If you think it's hot and tough today, you ought to be out under those tents working and suffering and picking tobacco. But again, everyone was doing it. You had discomforts and you had all the problems, but you were sort of in a group.

Working at Bon Ami

The Bon Ami Company, what I first recall, was the place to work in town. People thought they were great in the North End of town because they gave big, they gave Christmas bonuses and it supposedly was a very solid company.

Somewhere during the Depression, or shortly after, I think they went into financial hard times. But as a kid, we used to go down to Bon Ami, had showers. We were allowed to go in and use the showers after we played baseball, things of that sort. And it was a community kind of thing. And I always felt Bon Ami did have that kind of spirit, community spirit.



Baseball

Almost everyone played baseball, and you had teams from all over town. Growing up, I remember playing baseball in the North End. We would play teams in the South End at the West Side and this was even before high school types of activities. And I can recall playing in lots all around town. We didn't have a sponsor. We were just a bunch of "pick-ups" in a sense, and people just sort of naturally fell into positions and so forth. I don't recall having a baseball. In most cases, we had something that was taped up, you know, a little ball that was taped up with tape.

The North End was Different

The old North End was quite an interesting place. We had a doctor, and we had a dentist and you had a drug store. There was Dr. Moran that I recall, and Dr. Thrall was the dentist. He was right upstairs. For a dollar, you could get your tooth pulled. I don't recall too many fillings, mostly pullings. And there was a garage; Nichols' news store, where everyone went to get the paper; Pagani's and a soda shop.

The other thing I recall is that all goods were delivered by horse and wagon or a small truck, cart. I can remember the fish man coming, the ice man, the fruit man, the vegetable man, the baker. The kids would follow the ice man down until his back was turned, so we'd get a chunk of ice. And I can remember the fish man. I think his name was Seastrand. He would blow his horn for customers to come and buy fish.

We all had gardens. I can remember a meal being made out of potatoes, string beans and tomatoes. And, once in a while, we had a little salt pork that went with the beans or something. We would also can tomatoes along with blueberries. I was always hung up on home-canned tomatoes for that reason.

The housewives did jam making. I can remember going out and picking wild strawberries. In those days, there were a lot of them around. Blueberries were the big deal. And I can remember in the garden, the garden being planted, we had to go out and pick the bugs off the beans. There was no such thing as an insect killer. We had to go and pick them off and drop them in a can.

North vs. South

The town was pretty well mixed. Except for North Street and North School Street. The area at that time was mostly Irish. The Irish had lived there and then the Polish people were there and the Lithuanians.

Being in the North End, I never saw the Cheneys much. I recall having seen the Cheneys with their electric car. The Cheney sisters used to ride around. I can recall them driving in and parking in front of House and Hale with that electric car of theirs. They would go about 12 miles an hour, I guess.

Being from the North End, I could see the feeling of difference. I guess for one thing, the North Enders always felt that the South Enders looked down on them. There were more struggling people over at that end, you got the feeling, and it was an area where the railroad tracks were. You know, better homes and fancy homes were in the South End, not in the North End. I know that there were at least two cars full going back and forth on commuting in the morning and evening, so a fair number of people worked at the Cheney Mills.

Other Businesses

In the North End, I recall the nurseries were very active. The C. E. Wilson Nurseries as well as the C. R. Burr Nurseries were very big in those days. They shipped goods all over. I worked after high school one time for Brackett and Shaw, putting farm equipment together. They were hay spreaders and that sort of thing. The farms around here were good prospects for business and, of course, the railroad ran right through the North End.

My dad was a railroader. He had a big Hamilton watch and he pulled it out to check and see if the train was on time. The Cheney "goat" ran between the North End and the South End and connected to the main line at the North End Station. Four a day, the main line train would go through Hartford, Manchester, Willimantic, Putnam, and then up to Boston, Franklin, Mass., in that direction. In those days, you know, the railroad was a big thing. I recall during the Depression when the railroad workers would bang the coal cars together pretty hard so the coal would fall off and all the kids could pick it up. And we all knew about it.

Religion

My family attended St. Bridget's Church. They had a pastor by the name of Father McCann. He was an old Irish priest and very strict. During the Depression, I remember going into church and he would keep everybody after Mass and he'd conduct Catechism class himself. No helpers. We'd be cold in church and he'd say, "You're not here to be warm, you're here to pray." He just felt the people couldn't afford to have it that well heated, so he kept it as cool as he could to get by, and he did many, many things himself to keep other costs down. And that's where you could get the feeling that there weren't too many people who could contribute to the church.

I can remember Father McCann, as gruff as he was, and tough. I can recall sitting in the pew at Catechism and someone's talking and he'd step down there and come over and make everybody in that pew stand up. And you'd step out and get a cuff right there.

But I can recall that he would visit the hospital with a big bag of oranges and pass out an orange to the patients on his own.

Special Times

In those days, we'd celebrate the Fourth at the old Golf Flats where the high school is today. Everybody went to the fireworks and they had a big dip in the hill and we all sat on the hillside and there was a big display on the other side.

In those days, also, circuses came to town quite frequently. They'd come in to the railroad siding down below Bon Ami and most of them were up at Pearl's lot there on Woodland Street.

In those days, they had a big ring and a light pole and so forth. And they'd have the noon parade, up and down town with the calliope and all the kids would be following and then the rest of them would come up the road there and the elephants and... They were good size circuses. We're not talking about a small carnival.

Football

Because Steve Pearl had those football lights, I recall the Majors football team practicing at night because he had lights. It was one of the few places in town that had lights. It was the Majors in the North End, then they had the Cubs in the South End. And earlier than that, the Cloverleafs out of

the North End. Hickey's Grove was where they played football in the North End.

Hickey's Grove was right next to St. Bridget's Cemetery, just a little bit further to the north. It's still got sort of a semi-circle in there that's overgrown, but Dr. Moran used to set up his tent there on the sidelines for those that got injured. And I guess they used to bring in some pretty good semi-pro players out of Providence and other places to play. Everybody went and on Sunday what would you do? Everybody would go to the football game.

Swimming

It's since been drained, but most of us went swimming down to Hilliard's Pond. That was right off the turnpike there. It's now just a wetland, but it had a dam in those days and Hilliard's Pond. And then earlier than that, there was Adams Pond on the other side, near Woodland Street. And then I remember in the earlier days the YMCA built a little pool. They had a pool set up out at the YMCA and we'd go there.

Union Pond, in my day, swimming there was taboo. That was a "no-no" on Union Pond because the story was there were a couple of kids who had drowned earlier because of some debris underneath, you know, in the pond. It was not considered to be clean. And they got caught in the undertow. So . . . we didn't go there. The debris was thought to be tree trunks or something, so we kept well away from Union Pond.

Depression Times

The biggest thing that comes back to me is the fact that you sensed you were living on, I wouldn't say borrowed time, but you were waiting-waiting and hoping that your father would work next week. And you'd still have a job. And, as I say, we were fortunate that he did. But still, there was a lot of pressure. And I think it sort of got over you. But you think of family activities. I said I worked on tobacco and we all did it. so that was great. I can remember family outings where we would go up to Bolton and pick blueberries. And as a kid, I could pick twelve quarts of blueberries a day and bring them home and can them and all winter long, our dessert was always blueberries, canned blueberries.

We had a car. We had these old secondhand cars. I can remember my father paying \$50.00 for one that just about perked along. But that was it. And I can remember it was almost like a touring car. It was a Chevrolet or a Star, either one. I think it was a Chevrolet, come to think of it. Then he got a Ford or another Chevy, it was a square box. But always second-hand cars. I never remember a new one.

I recall people going to the Center Church, getting a blanket and a can of Dinty Moore stew. It sort of sticks in the back of my mind. I think it was just the distribution point. I don't know who was paying for it.

I can remember my grandmother making me some shirts during the Depression. I needed them. I hated to wear them, but she made them out of something. And there were a lot of hand-me-downs. I remember paying 75¢, I think, for a pair of sneakers for the summer. And from the time I started working on tobacco, I would buy my own clothes for the school year.

During the depression, we didn't have a telephone. There was one telephone in the neighborhood, as far as we were concerned, and that was over at Mrs. Woods and at Pearl's. So we went over if we had to use the telephone. After the Depression, we got our own phone. I can remember the biggest deal was when we got a radio, one of those console big ones that sat in the corner. My father would sit down there after dinner at night and he operated that radio and no one else would dare touch that radio. A big item was Father Coughlin. Oh boy, I still can hear him.

Getting Around

I can recall Woodland Street, the lower part, before Broad Street was developed, from there, that point down being a dirt road. And when we were kids, we would go down where the old race track was, and there were still some barns, or sheds if you will, and you could still trace the outline of the racetrack.

Between Broad Street and where I keep thinking of Schaller's, right on top of that hill, that development in there, that's where the race track was. They raced horses there, but before my time. You know, Steve Pearl was the one who raced in the earlier days, but by my time, I recall it was pretty overgrown, but you could go around the track itself. From what I gather, it was a circle for horse racing, and the sheds and so forth were to keep the horses a day or two while the meet was going on.

Health and Medicine

I recall my mother had a growth—a goiter I guess it would be called. And once it was diagnosed, she was sent to Manchester Hospital. There was only one surgeon available to do the operating and that was Dr. Caldwell, and the figure of \$17.50 for the operation sticks in the back of my mind. I remember going there and being tested. She had to have a blood transfusion and they were going to test me as well as others for the transfusion. In those days, they just took and cut the vein or artery and just poured it into a bucket. When I saw that, I just fainted dead away. I was only about fourteen at the time. I was too young.

I remember Dr. Boyd was our family doctor. And going earlier than that, before the Depression, I remember Dr. Higgins. I think delivery at home was fairly common when babies came. I can recall, well in my own family, a hurried up call to my grandmother and she would come, and then the doctor would come when the time was near.

They all made house calls. This is another interesting thing. When I was probably about eight or nine, I stepped on a nail and, of course, one thing lead to another and it started to get in pretty tough shape. I remember my father taking me on the trolley from over north to South Manchester to Dr. Higgins' office, where I got a tetanus shot. And then, getting back on the trolley and going back to the North End.

Dr. Higgins office was somewhere in the general vicinity of Watkins or some other place. I also remember doctors making house calls when we all had the measles. There was a sign put on the door and they pulled all the shades and that sort of thing.

Loyalty-Rogers 47 Years

I started working at Rogers Corporation shortly after high school. In fact, before I graduated, I started. They were in both ends of town. Their main office was on Hartford Road where Adler-Dobkins had that small operation there. And their manufacturing plant was up on Charter Oak Street, where the Manchester Water Supply is today. The Manchester Highway Department on Charter Oak Street where the wells are located. Rogers made paper...insulating papers for electrical transformers. I remember when they would make these large sheets of paper and lay them out in the sun to dry a little bit and then load them on, like a big old hay wagon with a horse and wagon and haul them past the Cheney Brothers down into the Rogers' west mill where they would be finished and shipped.

I was with them all my career except when I was in the service. I just recently retired. There's been quite a change in that operation from paper being hauled by horses to sophisticated electronic material which is what it's involved with today.

In 1932 they bought a plant in Goodyear, Connecticut which was formerly a cotton cord twisting plant owned by Goodyear. Goodyear had the company store down there. They had a hotel that you could stay in and I think during the Depression, Goodyear went out of business there. Rogers bought that plant, but they did not move there until 1938...The operation from the Charter Oak plant in the West Side of Manchester moved down to Goodyear at that time.

Eventually, I wound up as Vice-President of Marketing for the Rogers Corporation. It was an interesting forty years. I probably have set a record in terms of, I believe, in terms of number of years of service. I had 47 years. It's not likely that anyone is going to beat 47 years.

The South End was South Manchester



The Orford Block, circa 1920's, then home to the Orford Hotel& Restaurant, Quinn's Pharmacy and Manchester Plumbing and Supply Co. now home to Marlow's.



Storyteller: George Marlow as told to Shirley Fitzgerald, March 1993

A HISTORIC STORE

My family came from Russia and the early days included New York City, New Britain, and Hartford in as many as nine stores before they came to Manchester. My father knew Sam Kress of S.S. Kresge, forerunner to K-Mart, also Woolworth and other 5 + 10 cent stores. From 1911 to 1924 our store was at Brainard Place and Main and during that period I was born in 1914. The store was too small, so in 1924 Marlows moved to the historic Orford Hotel Building. E.J. Holl enlarged the vertical portion of the building and in 1938 my family bought it. Our store has been the current size since 1948.

I think of our family as the "Last of the Mohicans" because of the total family connection with Marlows. It is in the blood line with my sister Ruth showing very successful retailing record in New York City, increasing her business each year.

Thursday nights on Main Street

It was an event. The streets were black with people, out to see the sights and participate. We were not afraid to put on a show . . . Easter time we had a Parade of models and a full orchestra. In those old days there were not barriers—people came to Manchester. When you consider that after the trolleys arrived in 1888 there were trolleys every fifteen minutes to and from Manchester to Hartford.

The Success of Main Street

There was J.W. Hale with his carriage trade. There was Burtons with William Rubinow. There was Fred Blish who had his successful hardware, sold it then returned later to become Manchester Hardware, F.T. Blish, owner. There was Patsy O'Leary's Bake Shop in our building. McClelland had a 5 and 10 cent store on Main and Woolworth came in 1913. My parents liked the town and Marlows upgraded from a 5 & 10 cent store to a Junior and Senior Department store.

The Cooperative Effort

For ten years I was Chamber of Commerce Chairman—not because of any mission on my part, but because nobody else would serve. I just felt it was there and somebody should do it. The situation in Manchester was always an enlightened one because of the Cheney situation. They kept rents down and believed in the town and I always believed that fundraising for good causes helped everybody. The United Way covered Hartford. By the time I got through with discussions, we in Manchester became part of it and Manchester people were included in the help.

Charge plans were not originally a part of Manchester commercial life. When I see it now, I can't believe the change. I was, or seemed to be, treated like a "Country Clod" for a time by bankers, even those who had enjoyed our deposits ranging in the low millions each year. Finally I convinced the banks that the average small retailer doesn't need to be or want to be a banker and ultimately the banks began to give credit through our downtown stores.

My History and the Town's

As a tank platoon leader in World War II, I decided that one of my principles needed implementation because I was there very early when instead of a tank, in 1942, I had a jeep that carried a sign "I AM A TANK."

The principle that needed implementation was "Get the merchandise moved to the proper place."

I also served in view of my law degree as an Army trial judge advocate and my purchasing agent experience did no harm either.

The depression in Manchester was unpleasant but not as bad as many places. The Cheney influence and strength of character helped everyone through since they essentially taught people "thrift."

1930, '31, '32 and '33 were o.k. Then in the late 1930s, PWA in East Hartford helped raise the economy. Our first loss as "Marlows" was in 1934. It was \$1400. We are all proud of our record. Manchester has had stability in its merchants—and flexibility. Look at Watkins with four generations: Clarence G., C. Elmore, Bruce and now Lee.

Historically, the trolley changed the pattern and then the automobile changed it again. Manchester, with its history of progress, was the first town for rotary dial telephones and was highest per capita in telephone use.

The Future

The biggest change for Main Street and Marlows has been the virtual destruction of the family unit. Families don't shop together like they used to and after World War II I felt that the family attitudes had been destroyed. It bothers me a great deal. What used to happen in New York and Bridgeport now happens in Manchester.

Does Main Street have a future? There will always be a Main Street—but it will be different. There will be some activity. The street at one time was 92' across—now it's 50'. There will always be some good independent merchants although we realize that the banks, the doctors and the lawyers cluster downtown.

My dream is for a strip mall on Main Street with two levels of entry from the rear. I predicted Main Street change years ago. My yearbook comment for me: "Nothing great is ever achieved without enthusiasm." That's still my attitude. Retirement is a feeling. I believe we gain some intelligence from experience.

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations from The Manchester Herald

ONE-MAN POWER

Because woolen clothes became unfit for further use while they still contained much wool in most parts, it was salvaged as shoddy. Small machines that could operate with only one-man power were used to pick the cloth apart to get the fibers to card and spin into new thread for weaving. The resulting product was called shoddy.

It was inferior in wearing quality because so many fibers were short and already partly worn out. The operation required so little water power the New England brooks were sprinkled with shoddy mills. Nearly every town has a Shoddy Mill Road.

A small earthen dam three or four feet high, just enough to turn some water into a small ditch, was ample. The ditch followed the original brook bed but on the contour of the bordering banks or hills until the brook bed had descended enough lower than the ditch to create sufficient fall of the water to turn a wheel with its weight. This power relieved a family of the hand work.

Such one-man or one-family shoddy mills were very plentiful. They acquired the raw, rather second-hand material from neighbors and from Yankee tin peddlers who took rags in trade for the wares carried on their wagons.

One of O.C.'s ancestors was such a peddler, before the Civil War. He told that it was quite common to find a stone in the bag of rags to be weighed. Because he made fair profits on both the rags and his articles for sale, he usually did not question the weight unless it felt exceptionally heavy. Once he felt sure a woman was cheating with too large a stone but he threw the bag on the wagon and let her have a broom for a price that would make up for the stone. On getting home, he emptied out a very heavy copper pot that had a leak. He would have gladly paid many times over rag prices for the copper if offered copper.

In planning a trip for making sales only and no trade, the horse, harness and wagon were the cheapest available. The last of the load might be sold in New York state where the whole outfit was sold and he would make it home walking or accepting rides which were offered by almost everybody driving the same direction.

Of course, if he thought the horse was worth keeping he could ride it home bareback. There were always places along the way where a little work could earn a night's lodging and keep for a man and horse.

There were many angles, and the Yankee tin-peddlers knew them all.

WORK!

When school closed for summer vacation, O.C. got a job with a roofing crew. One job was a big roof on Cases' paper mill. It was a terrifically hot spell, but one old fat fellow wore red flannel winter underwear, a suit with vest, overalls and jumper. He said. "Anything that keeps out cold will keep out heat out, too." Sweat poured from his nose and chin and his face was crimson, but he didn't die and his favorite song was then popular "In the Good Old Summertime." At noon, we would go down to eat lunch on the fireman's bench in the shade of the big square chimney. After eating, old "Summertime John" would fill a big corn cob pipe for a smoke before returning to the roof. O. C. would take the water-pail down to the spring for fresh cold water for lunch.

KID-WORK

O.C. had a large garden and got spending money by peddling vegetables to a few selected customers. School sessions started at nine o'clock then, so, by getting up early, O. C. could gather the vegetables, rhubarb, radishes, beets, lima beans, lettuce, rare ripe onions, peas, cucumbers, summer squash. After being cleaned and tied in bunches they were loaded into a little handdrawn express wagon with a few bunches of sweetpea blossoms, and taken to the kitchen doors. Customers were a Mrs. Ramsey who had a rooming house on Wells Street and served a few meals to boarders,

the "paid teachers" boarding house on School Street, the Eldridge sisters on Main St. and Mrs. Verplanck. She asked O.C. to come to her first, and he did.

TO-YOUR-DOOR-DELIVERY

Now that there are one, two or three cars in every dooryard the housewife can go to the stores to make her own selection.

It was not always so. Even when a few stores had telephones, there were none in people's homes.

All dealers in foods had horse-drawn wagons. When the driver made a delivery, he took orders for the next trip. The horses learned the routes and knew where to stop for the regular customers.

Some even learned to perform without the driver.

When he went into the last place that he regularly stopped, the horse would go ahead a little, cramp the front wheels, back up, go ahead and if necessary, repeat it until the wagon was headed in the opposite direction and waiting for the driver to take off when he returned.

A Mr. John Quish had a very well-trained horse with his grocery wagon. Hale and Day store on Charter Oak Street seemed to have the biggest grocery business in the south end of town. The white butcher carts with tops like baby prairie schooners had rear ends that lifted up to make a braced roof for shelter for the man and his customer. The tail gate lowered and became the counter for cutting and wrapping meat.

The butchers had hand bells to alert folks of their approach.

Regular fish peddlers had similar rigs but used a tin fish horn instead of a bell. Every spring alewives swarmed up the Connecticut River. Then a number of out-oftown men would come with toe-board wagons filled with what they called "eel wops" and peddle them out at very low prices.

One fellow tried to prove the freshness of his wares by yelling "Eelwops, eelwops, with their eyes wide open."

No milk was pasteurized. No milk peddler had ice in his wagon. A blanket was sometimes thrown over the big cans to keep the sun off.

Regular customers set out a pail or pitcher. The milkman carried a can and tin measure to the door and measured the amount requested and left. It wouldn't keep sweet very long in summer and would freeze quite soon in winter.

Patti Burgess would sing out "Fresh milk, skim milk, butter milk, sour milk, and milk for the baby." If a kid showed Patti a cent he would pour a little into a can cover for the kid to drink then put the cover back in the can.

Joe Sardella, who lived across Middle Turnpike from where Shady Glen is now, used to make and peddle ice cream. He had a bell he rang with his foot as the trolley motorman did. For a dime, he would fill a fair sized bowl. A mother was either broke or hard hearted to refuse a dime when that bell sounded on a hot day. Joe had ice and the ice cream was always well-frozen when folks got it.

O.C. was told that he had had three cents per pint milk when he was a baby. He only remembers milk at twelve cents a quart.

SEAMAN'S GOLD TONGS

There was no manufactured ice. Only nature's own, cut from ponds and stored in ice houses insulated with wood sawdust and some also sprinkled between layers so they wouldn't freeze together.

Carl Seaman sold most of the ice in town. There were other dealers. A cake of ice can't be hung on a weighing scale alone. It has to be picked up by a pair of heavy metal tongs. Of course, the scales were adjusted to compensate for the tare weights. Not knowing that, some folks claimed Carl's tongs were worth more to him than their weight in gold.

WASTE NOT

Mrs. Digney, who lived on the east side of Church Street about opposite Laurel, paid O.C. 50¢ a week to mow her lawn, trim turf along the walks and carry out ashes

from the cellar and sift them to pick out the black coals.

Pick out the black coals?

Sure, everyone except the wealthy sifted anthracite ashes, and even they paid someone else to do it for them.

The old saying was, "Waste not, want not."

It must have been true because we wasted little and wanted little, but be sure to use the right meaning for "want".

Mother used to pay a woman up the street always one dollar and a big bar of brown Lenox soap to do our family's washing each week; just wet wash, and mother hung it on our own lines to dry in the sun.

One summer vacation, O.C. offered to do the washing and the ironing of the flat pieces for 50¢ a week and landed the job. There was no washing machine. Clothes were scrubbed with soap and hot water on a zinc corrugated rubbing board in a round wooden wash tub. Water was heated in pails on the kitchen range with a wood fire.

There was no wringer. Things were twisted or squeezed out of the wash into the rinse tub of clear water, then again into a tub of bluing water, then finally wrung out ready for hanging on the line.

There was no electric iron. The sad irons were heated on the top of the stove and held near a cheek to judge the heat. If not hot enough, they went back to the stove. If too hot, a quick hissing dip in a pan of water corrected it. No steam irons.

Clothes too wet were left on the line a little longer. Those too dry were hand-sprinkled with a little water and rolled up until the moisture had spread evenly throughout the piece.

We knew how to be happy then without riots and protests.

LEARNING TIME

When the boys worked for "Old Hen" in North Coventry, their bed was a tick stuffed with dry corn husks. When we moved, it rustled like the palm fronds in Hawaii but not as inducing to sleep.

Hoeing pigweed and pusley all day did that. The bedroom floor rose and fell like baby ocean swells. When walking across it, one got a sample of the sensation that comes when the last top stair is not there in the dark or a sudden shock on the floor prevents a foot going down to the last step at the bottom that isn't there.

Haying and hoeing can't be done while it is raining, so "old Hen" put the boys to work in the blacksmith shop. Come pay day, he deducted two dollars and twenty cents from each kid's pay because we had lost that much time from haying and hoeing for which we were hired. When told we were kept at work all that time in the shop, he said we were learning something we could use later in life and should be willing to pay for it.

After poor Nitchie's (the hired hand) knee (both injured and burned with horse liniment) had recovered so he could work, and all the hoeing needed to regain control of the weeds was done, "Old Hen" didn't need us anymore. He paid us off in full, except for the \$2.20 lost in the shop because of rain. Several times we tried to collect it but never did.

O.C. could never see where he had profited two dollars and twenty cents worth from his "learning".

WORK IS WORK-HOT OR COLD

There was a large dairy farm that abutted almost the whole length of the east side of the old road now Autumn Street. On the Porter Street end it included what is now Grandview Street, which, of course, was not there then. The house and large barn were on Porter Street.

Mr. "Mike" Maguire owned and operated the farm. He was father of "Bill" Maguire who later had streets laid out and converted the whole farm into residential developments called Manchester Heights.

For his time and age, Mr. "Mike" was quite a "modern" and progressive farmer. He raised silo corn and had two silos, one square one inside a corner of the big barn and another high round one outside close to Porter Street.

Mr. "Patsy Calhoun had a farm on the west side of Oak Grove Street. He always had a fine team of bay work horses and took many jobs for other people. He didn't keep a steady gang but picked up whatever crew he needed for each job.

O.C. worked for him sometimes. Once, we were filling the silos for Mr. Maguire. The corn was very large (some as much as twelve feet tall) and such thick stalks at the ground they were hard to cut. When cut, it was laid on the ground to be picked up again to pile on the wagon and hauled to the chopper and blower at the silo.

No one was required to go into the round silo but someone was needed in the square one to keep the stuff leveled and stomped into the corners. That was O.C.'s job. Hot! There should be a better word invented to tell the whole thing.

Another job Patsy took was harvesting the ice on Whittle's Pond at Bolton Notch. Cold? Oh, Boy! The sun didn't get down in there until nearly noon and then pulled out again early in the afternoon. If there hadn't been a good fire of old railroad ties to huddle up to, we might have frozen when not exercising while eating lunch.

And back to Patsy Calhoun. Some boys made a big paper balloon with a torch at the bottom to keep the hot air expanded in it. It rose downtown and gained good altitude.

Over the high ground east of town and wind made it rock so that the flame contacted the paper and the whole thing burst into fire and started to plummet. It landed in Calhoun's hay lot and set fire to a windrow of hay.

Mr. Calhoun saw it fall and with a pitch fork separated hay from fire so there was not much lost. He didn't hasten to hire a lawyer to sue some kid's father. He just saw the funny side of it and had a good laugh. He didn't want the boys to be punished.

That's the kind of man Patsy Calhoun was. O.C. is thankful that he lived when there were men like that in Manchester. We could do with a lot more of them today.

UNIFORM LAW AND MUSCLE MEN

O.C. remembers when there were no uniformed, full-time policemen working in

Manchester. There were town constables and county sheriffs and their deputies.

The first uniformed policeman O.C. remembers was "Al" Thomas who came from the Hartford department. Later, Sheridan came and became the first chief. He was also from the force in Hartford. He built the Sheridan building for a hotel on the east side of Main Street, a little north of Pearl Street.

Sam Gordon also became chief of Manchester police. He had been conductor on the first trolley each day, which left the terminus at Main Street and Hartford Road at 5:45 a.m. It was crowded with men who worked in Hartford. His motorman was Henry Bissell.

One of the early Manchester policemen was a Swedish man named "Charlie" Johnson. One very hot night, O.C. and a companion found Charlie sitting on a step near Main and Maple with coat wide open, helmet and night stick beside him and sound asleep. We didn't want to be mean to the poor guy so we let him sleep and never did hear who found the hat and club that was left around the building in the dark.

There were surpluses of applicants for jobs on the city police forces and the most liable to be accepted were the large men. There were not many men seeking that kind of employment in small towns like Manchester, so size was not as important. There were two very short men on the force, Glenney and Crockett. They proved that size had little to do with doing a good police job.

It seems that the average height of men is now greater than it used to be and of women less. Perhaps that is an illusion because they appear so in comparison with the taller men.

Muscle

There were two really big men in this small town, Wilbur (Wib) Warner and Gideon (Gid) Brown. They were large in every dimension but not noted so much by the up and down as all the way around in the middle.

There were also two brothers, Bill and Tom Grady, who were large but most famous for great strength It was told that their father sold a large steam boiler with engine attached for driving a sawmill. When the buyer said he would return with some powerful tackle for loading it, the father gave a loud whistle.

The two sons came in from the field where they had been pulling tree stumps and lifted the ton of steel onto the cart and went back to pulling tree stumps.

TWO-WAY TRADE

When there was only one bridge across the Connecticut River at Hartford, it was a pretty busy thing. The city folks depended on the farmers from over the river for much of their food supplies. Loads of vegetables, berries, fruits, hay, wood and charcoal, lumber, poles and posts.

All utility poles were native chestnut. Wood was in great demand for fuel. The charcoal oxcarts were like big baskets so huge they could barely squeeze through the covered bridge.

Loads of fruit and vegetables from around Buckland would pull up to the curb on Main Street in Hartford and all the women would buy it all out in a short time. Often the farmer would return home with a load of manure from the livery stables.

There was one big four-horse wagon that made a business of hauling immense loads of the stuff out to the farmers. Never heard of the commercial chemical fertilizers then.

> Storyteller: Earl G. Seaman, age 95 as told to Betty Walker, 1/17/75

BUSINESSES

The Hardware Men

I was born in Manchester on January 5, 1880. If you can figure that out, I have only a short way to go to be 100. Well, I always lived here in Manchester. I didn't go into business with my father, although my brother did. I went on my own. I worked in Cheney Bros. in their office—I think four or five years with them. They told me there was a hardware store for sale down the

street. I said, "Where is it?" and they said "down the street" and "They would have the man come and talk to me."

We did pretty well—it was on Main Street in the Tinker block—and I own that still.

It's called Blish Hardware. It's one of the oldest concerns on the street. I'll tell you how that came about. I'd like to have put my name on it. But a man named Blish, from Marlborough, came up one day and said, "Why don't you buy that store of mine?" I said, "Let me see your books. Get them ready and I'll look them over to see how much you have done here in a few years." So I looked them over and said, "I'll take it." My son, when he graduated from college, came in with me. And that's the way it's been until Roberts who lives over here bought it out.

Going Back

My father was in the ice and coal business in Manchester. He came here from Long Island—moved over here—married a Bolton lady—my mother. He was in business until he died.

For ice, he had Globe Hollow and on Bidwell Street he had a pond there—the ice houses that were there—Hartford Road—I think he had three ice houses there. Then he bought the coal yard going down Center Street. There is a restaurant there now. We had a track running there on an elevation—the coal—a carload would come in from there to just below and they would go down into the bins. He was a hard-working man—he worked too hard.

We lived on Hartford Road—it's still standing—below West Street going west towards Silver Lane. We had a pond—they called it Seaman Pond—nothing unusual about it. He built three ice houses there and he had the same over on Bidwell Street—at the Bidwell Pond. He bought that land and put up three ice houses.

When I was younger, I was in the Keeney Street district because our land—our home was so that it just divided it—put me in the Keeney district—I had to walk a mile. The school was one room and had about 22 pupils. It took in Keeney Street to the Glastonbury line; down to Bunce's Corner—the boundary then cut right across

Bridge Street.

Nora Walker was our teacher. I went to Keeney Street School until I was old enough to come up to the high school here— 14 years old.

I went to school with Mrs. Starkweather as teacher for one year, then I went to Hartford Business College.

My first job was in Brooklyn, New York. I heard of this Brooklyn and I went down and asked them if they would board me. It was a typesetting machine company. They made typesetting machines—maybe you will remember—they moved over to Manchester from Brooklyn, New York. I had that job with them down there so I came up with them here to where the Orford Soap Co. was.

It was called Unitype. They made typesetting machines. You would have two or three operators—one would operate one board and for this news there might be another. He was punching it out the same as a typewriter. Then it went into a press what we called the galley—it goes into a machine—the machine keeps turning around printing that piece of paper like this. I stayed with them for awhile.

Then I went down and got a job at Cheney's—I stayed there four or five years. There was the main office—let's see—there was Fred Bendall, George Finley, myself; C.S. Cheney—who was father to the man who walks down the street at Johnson block—I worked for his father. He walks down here once in a while. He left him money—his father did—so he'll be well taken care of. His mother was the sister of George Rich, the insurance man. Jacob Weidman of the Weidman Dye Co. of New Jersey is a relative of his. His name is Weidman anyway—Weidman Cheney.

A Gay City Connection

Watson Gay, my great-grandfather, married into the Tryon family. The Gay's don't own anything there now. We go down there quite often just to look it over. As you go into Gay City, there is a little cemetery—my great-grandfather and great-grandmother are buried there, and the Sumners of Bolton are buried there.

When the Foster girls bought the land, gave it to the State to take over as a park, well they took that house apart, carried it up to Sturbridge Village—that's the old Gay house. Charles Gay, Watson Gay—two brothers—the Foster girls of Hartford, (the old A.L. Foster Co., a clothing concern on Asylum Street, they accumulated a lot of money. The two brothers died and left the two ladies plenty of money, so they left Gay City to the State of Connecticut.

The Cheney House Auction— A Quick Fit

As a boy, I remember when Cheney Bros. was very small. They didn't do too well-they had to sell all their stuff-their houses. I've got the records all in one book. I had nothing to do with it. Mrs. Seaman was interested in one or two, but she didn't buy them at the time they auctioned them. We were opposite the Episcopal Church on Church Street. I bought a house there for \$3,200 one day and sold it for \$7,800 in two weeks. Father McGurk bought it. He wanted it. I said I didn't want to sell it. I said I would sell it for \$7,800. He said, "I'll take it." The parochial school is on it now. I didn't have to go to church on Sundays. I'd go out on the veranda, open the doors and listen to the sermon. There's a lot of oldtimers in that section-Jim Hutchinson, John Davidson, Charles Treat, Fred Best. George Fitts the Shoeman-I had a lot of good neighbors around me. R.O. Chenev property was the second house down, R.O. used to operate one part of Cheney Bros. That was Richard, but we always called him R.O.

> Storyteller: Edward Noren as told to Lennart Johnson for the Manchester Historical Society

THE MAN IN THE MARKET

It must have been about 1915 when I went to work for the Eldridge Street Market. In those days, it was always with a horse and wagon, delivering orders, driving to the homes, and picking up orders for the next day's delivery.

We opened up about 7 o'clock every

morning. We closed at six. This was for six days a week and a couple of nights a week we were open to 9 o'clock The stores were all open Thursday nights and Saturday nights, never on Sunday.

Most everything was bulk. Coffee was bulk—coffee came in 50-lb. bags and 100-lb. bags. We weighed it up for regular coffee bags; we had a coffee grinder. Some people wanted their coffee ground; a lot of people in those days bought the coffee beans because they had a little coffee grinder in the house themselves.

We bought from grocer wholesalers in Hartford and there were just coffee merchants—I think Boardman & Sons used to sell nothing but coffee. The bulk goods would come out by freight and would be picked up by an expressman and brought to the store. They are practically all gone. Perrett & Glenney used to do an awful lot of trucking. For cookies, National Biscuit Co. had their own team of horses. They would deliver the cookies. The cookies would come in bulk and people would order a pound of mixed cookies. There were very few packaged cookies.

With sugar, we had to buy extra-heavy bags to put the sugar in—paper bags, but extra-heavy. You couldn't put them in the bags they give them today.

We did buy potatoes from farmers. Most fruits and vegetables were sold by vegetable men who used to go around with horse and

wagon from house to house.

I was there from 1920 to 1946. We went from horse and wagon to truck when we bought the business on Center Street. That had a little Ford truck—then I bought a new Dodge truck in 1921. Everybody was using Fords but we thought this Dodge was better. Then business changed a little. We didn't call on people to take orders—everything was on the telephone.

They would call in the morning and they wouldn't give us big orders—every morning they would call for a piece of meat or something—everybody had dinner at noon. They came home from work at the mills at noon and had dinner at noon. We had to hurry up and get the orders ready in the morning and put them up and deliver them so they would have time to cook them for dinner.

Everything changed from weekly to

daily deliveries. We would deliver in time for dinner at noon. Some of the same people would call in the afternoon and would get something for supper.

There were some big orders over the phone to be delivered the next day.

When we were on Center Street, we used to buy about two carcasses of beef a week—a couple of hindquarters and a couple of forequarters. We got that delivered from the north end—Morris & Co.—where the bus stop is now at Woodbridge Street. That was a meat house and we used to get all our meat there. It was delivered to us by horse and wagon, later by truck.

Don't forget, we never charged for delivery. Everything was delivered free. There was very little cash—it was all credit. Some paid once a week, or once a month—most of them paid every week. We didn't charge a penalty like the banks. We were lucky to get the payment for the merchandise.

Our own horse and wagon were stored at Stenberg's Stable. We had a horse and wagon there and where Sander lived, we had a barn there where we had a horse. We had more than one team. That was the first job I had, to make deliveries. I was then 15 or 16.

Some old brand names are still around. Libbey's still is around. Canned goods—we used to buy "futures"—we used to say 50 cases of peas for future fall delivery and we would have enough peas and corn to last us all winter. We would get a good price then, during the harvest.

And then we used to get fruits and vegetables from Hartford—Louis Beard used to come around—he would sell you a dozen lettuce or celery, oranges, and so on, in the early 20s.

In later years he had a wholesale place in Manchester. He delivered to the store. For butter and eggs, we got them from J.S. Brown. We bought all our butter and eggs from him. Of course, he had the Creamery—but when that went out, he had Land-O-Lakes. That was the only butter we sold. He lived on Henry Street.

Milk we got from local dealers— Trueman and others—it was all bottled there wasn't any cartons. They used to charge 5¢ for a quart bottle—they used to have it in pints too. I can remember when the milkman delivered to homes—he came around with a ten-quart can—had a quart measure—measured it and put it into the customer's container.

No sales tax, but we had a Connecticut tax—1% of gross receipts we had to pay to the state. It went back in the late 20s or early 30s—I forget. We had income tax to figure since 1914. There was an unincorporated tax—that was what it was on business.

If we sold oleo margarine—that was another tax. That oleo was in a package—it was never colored. There was a little berry in It—people had to mix it themselves. One thing I thought was very funny was that you had to have a federal license to sell that. I think it cost about \$5.00 a year. What amused me a lot—to buy that license you had to have a certified check to pay that \$5.00 What amused me is that they would take your check for income tax for hundreds of dollars, but for a \$5.00 license, you had to have a certified check.

We worked long hours and, of course, we put up orders at night—late at night. They had to be totaled up by hand—there was no machine. My wife used to take the slips down to the mill—they would total them up for me. That was the running accounts of the customers' grocery bills—you had to put the balance on top and then add up all the other things. We didn't have a really good cash register. I don't think we ever bought a new one. It came with the old store.

Storyteller: Edward Newman as told to Jim Tierney, 9/20/88

HAPPY WORK—CHENEY WORK

Family

My father was born in Germany. He came over here when he was three years old. My mother was born here but her mother and father were born in Ireland.

My grandfather came from Ireland to Newington. He came over during the potato famine, and he fought in the Civil War. He joined the Union Army when he was here. In some later manufacturing operation, he lost an arm, and, of course, he had a pretty big brogue and my sister would say to him, "Are you working, Grandpa?" "Yes, I am," he'd say. "What are you doing?" "Watching." He was always watching, night-watching, you know, but he'd say just "watching."

Dye House Work

My father worked in the Cheney Mills here, but he got work in the Dye House and his skin erupted. He didn't take to the dyes. You can see how concerned Cheney Bros. were at that time. Of course, they didn't have the medicine and things to take care of that in those days. But Cheney Bros. did send him to Newport. That was a pretty fashionable place in those days, and they paid for his two weeks. He was to bathe in the salt water every day, and that cleared up his skin. And when he came back, why, they put him back in the Dye House, but he was there no time at all when it started to break out again, so he quit.

He went into barbering then, you know, the barber trade. He went down to Norwalk and he had his own shop, barbering. He met my mother down there and they were married there. He figured that he was going to hit the big time-New York City. He'd probably do better getting into a well-to-do barber shop down there-he'd do better there. Well, they had hard luck there, because they hadn't been there-I think, I don't know-a year maybe, a year and a half or two, when-in those days they lived in apartment houses and they had wooden chutes that they used to shoot the cinders down. There was not central heating. Every apartment had a pot-bellied stove or a cooking stove and somebody took the ashes and threw them down the chutes when they were still hot and started fire to the place. So they were burnt out. They lost everything. The only thing they came back to Manchester with was the clothes on their backs.

Hard Times

His people were pretty well established in Manchester. My grandfather had worked for a number of years at Cheney Bros. and they stayed here. He started a shop up here and didn't make out too good. "I can't understand what happened to him," my mother told me. But my father seemed to lose all his strength. I think he had rheumatoid arthritis, something like that. He didn't work for five years. My mother had—let's see, one, two, three—four children to take care of and she got a job at Cheney Bros., sixty hours a week, ten cents an hour in the Ribbon Department. She worked there. Then my father got so he could work again and when he did he got a job up at the car barns. He worked up at the car barns until, I'd say around 1920, or something like that.

Work-Depression Time

In 1929, when the Depression started, I was 21 years old and lived on Flower Street with my mother, father and sister. At that time, I was woodworking in Hartford at Hartford Store Fixture Company. I went there from two years in high school, a cooperative course with trade school and high school. After I finished two years of that, I went to trade school and I completed the number of hours in trade school in carpentry.

Well, the banks closed. The Manchester Trust Company closed. And there was another bank there—I can't remember the name of it. I think it was in the Orford Building. That closed up too.

There were a number of businesses that should have gone out, I think, but they didn't. But the bank took the paper on them and kept them going. Like I heard that Manchester Lumber—that was in bad shape. They and Anderson, he was manager, for Hale's Store and he was in bad shape. Of course, all of it you don't get in the papers. A lot of it you heard rumors, you know, at the time. E.J. Holl was in very bad shape. And you know, it's funny with E.J. Holl—he was in such bad shape that the town never foreclosed on him—he owned so much property in town. And he came back again in later years.

Where I worked, of course, that was fifty hours a week at that time there was no time-and-a-half pay in those days, and they cut it back to five days and then it got so slow that we were laid off, and I think I went back for a couple of weeks and I was getting rubber checks.—they bounced. And it was shortly after that that the company

folded. There were too many stores that had gone out of business in the city of Hartford. So, of course, there was no need for more store fixtures to be built. It just went out. And then I was just left with no job at all.

There was no union then. That was a shop that sat in back of the Grand Theater in Hartford, you know, and it was formerly a horse stable and we worked there in very primitive conditions. There were two potbellied stoves that kept us warm in the winter time. I used to wait for the sun to come up in the winter to feel warm. But, of course, we were doing physical work, which was a help. But it was a pretty cold place to work. I would work until four o'clock and then I would walk down to State Street and get on the trolley car, you know, and I wouldn't be in the trolley car very long before I'd be asleep. You know, be in that cold place all day and then you get in the heat of the trolley car, you know.

I think I started in that place at forty cents an hour. And then, before I was through, I got fifty cents. The top pay, I think, in those days would be somewhere in the vicinity of seventy cents an hour for a top, you know, real craftsman—their top cabinet maker.

Out in the Cold at Pratt & Whitney

I looked for a job in woodwork, but there was no jobs in that. And the metal shops and things weren't much better. In fact, I remember going to one place to look for a job and it said on the sign, "We have no jobs." "Get the hell out." And then, of course, Pratt & Whitney was starting up in East Hartford but that was just a brick building. There was no place to interview people or anything. It was just a brick shop, you know, and you'd stand over there. Of course, it was in wintertime when I was out of work, and you'd stand over there, in subzero weather outside the door and once in a while the door would open and a fellow would say, "Well, what do you do?" You know, he'd just put his hand out, like that, and if it was something he wanted, or something, he might take you. So one day we were all standing out there and he put his hand out like to an Italian gentleman and he said. "What do you do?" And the Italian gentleman said, "Me pusha da truck."

"Come right in," he says. So we all laughed We thought here we were thinking the Pratt & Whitney was looking for skilled workmen and here the fellow that could only push the truck got the job!

They were just starting up. You know there was no employment office. You just stood outside the building and waited until the gentleman opened the door and he'd point to-first he'd ask, you know, if there were any tool makers out there or anything like that, and then he'd come down the line and, of course, maybe take one or two fellows in. But we'd stand there hoping he'd come out again. You know, in the morning it was nothing to stand there for three or four hours. You'd talk to each other, you know, around the group. You'd talk about the times and how hard they were, and what your troubles were, with each other and then, once in a while, the door would open and somebody would get a job.

I was out of work for about two years. Now, we did little things, like my landlady wanted the house painted—it needed paint. And I said, "Well, I'll paint it." And she says-she was a Yankee lady-and she says, "Well, how much was you thinking of charging, Ed?" And I says, "Well, about fifty cents." "Well," she says, "I was thinking about twenty-five cents would do it," she says. "And, you know," she says, "Things are pretty hard here today. You live right here. You wouldn't have to go anywhere." So I took the job and painted the house. So that kept me busy with a little pin money so I could go to the dance Saturday night. That was the big thing in my life in those days.

And then there was a gentleman by the name of Robinson and he owned Robinson Farm that set on the division of Bolton Road and Old Bolton Line Road. For the price of a dollar—I was to get a dollar—I was to work from noontime until it got dark. It was a distance of about four or five miles and then I walked home.

Paul and Me-Chance-Vought

Then I got a chance to get a job in Chance-Vought. And I got that because my brother had cut lawns for—oh, what's his name—a gentleman there. He was the head of Chance-Vought—for him and so he told

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Paul to go down and ask for a job. So Paul said, "You come along with me." And I went along. So Paul told Mr. So-and-so had sent him down to look for a job and he didn't say anything about me. So I suppose the fellow assumed that, you know, I was with him. He's my brother, and I suppose the fellow thought John might assume that the both of us was looking. But we got a job anyway. And that lasted until just after the holidays and the whole bottom seems to fall out at that time in the aircraft industry. That was probably nineteen thirty-three or thirtyfour, somewhere around in there. They had a large order, they told us, at that time for the South American countries and they had completed that order and there was a slow time for them. So we were laid off.

So then-I can't remember now whether it was the next fall after that-I got a job in Cheney Bros. The reason we got the job was because they had a pretty good order spinning the yarn in the spinning mill. The girls worked there days and they had been working over, I think five o'clock, and the Legislature in Hartford enacted a law that women couldn't work after a certain time. I don't know, I forget just what the hour was now, at night or day, but they couldn't work after that. So what the Cheneys did in order to give the men work-they were concerned about the town, Cheney Bros. were-the men worked the second shift and the third shift, and the women worked the first shift. So I worked there. So then the orders began slowing up and when it began slowing up, why the single men worked one or two weeks a month and the married men worked a full month. But we could work anytime in between that-maybe some married man was out sick, or something like that, maybe one of us would be called in. But, that was, like the rule. We only worked one week or two weeks of the month and, of course, that was at twisting.

So from that—that began to slow up in that department—so they transferred me down to the Finishing Department and that was down in the Old Mill over by the brook. And that was finishing broad goods. The printing was down there, and the dyeing was down there in that section. And I worked there until I was called up in the Navy. When I came back from the Navy,

why, of course, they built that mill then between Elm Street and Pine Street and that was to be the new Finishing and Printing Department. So I went back there and I worked there until Stevens—remember Stevens?—came in and bought it out, and then they had another firm that had taken over the mills. Stevens had sold them out. I went from there up to the Velvet Mill and I spent the rest of my time in the Velvet Mill then, until I retired. I worked for Cheney Bro. for thirty-eight years.

The "Move Man In"-Cheney

Coming to Cheneys, you know, of course, I wanted to get married. I was praying I'd always get a good job, you know, and my boss from Cheney Bros. called me up and told me that what they called the "move man in"-the trucker-it was a fairly steady job-had a job over at Pratt & Whitney and he wanted to know if I wanted the job. I said, "Sure." God, I ran down there to get it. That's how I started in Cheney Bros., and it took me through the war period up until they went out of business. And I was very happy there in those years, working. We got married and things were going pretty good. But I don't know as I had—up until 1941—I don't think I really had what you'd call full employment. Sometimes you might get some overtime, but there were a number of times when you'd have to take a day off or two or three days off. But, you see, the trucker was a steady job because "the truck of the room" had to know all the operations of the room and it was his responsibility to move the goods around. I mean, you brought the raw goods into the room and then to the different processes. There would be ten or twelve different processes that you'd have to bring the goods to. So, you'd have to know what you're doing or you could make a mistake. If you put something at the wrong machine, and the fellow didn't look at the route card-some of them couldn't read-if he just put it through the machine, it would be your responsibility, you know. I got to bebefore the war, before I left-I was assistant Foreman in the Finishing Department. And then I got my job back. After I came out of the service, I got my job back again. Those are good words-I got my job back!

Storyteller: Herbert Bengtson as told to the Manchester Historical Society

THE SWEDISH CONNECTION

My father, in Sweden, accumulated enough money to bring his fiancée to this country. He had been engaged in Sweden, and came here in 1900. He raised enough money so that he brought my mother over in 1901. When he came to this country in 1900, he was 20 years old. He had been working on a farm for board and room, after his mother died in 1888, for about 12 years. As a boy of 8, he went to this farm and worked there until he was 20 and then my grandfather sent him passage to come to this country. My father came to Manchester, where my grandfather had eventually moved, after remarrying in Willimantic. My grandfather and his wife came to Manchester and they had a boarding house here on Maple Street. This is where my dad came when he finally got here in July of 1900. He went to work for a contractor in town by the name of Pat Gorman. He did a lot of digging cellars and stone work. He helped build the stone bridge and the stone work in Highland Park when he was working for Pat Gorman. He was also trying to raise money so he used to go out on Saturday afternoon and chop wood for some of the farmers around the area. He used to get \$1.00 a cord chopping wood. He was anxious to get as much money as he could. When my mother came over in 1901, she came to marry my father. She was 22 at the time and she got a job here in the teacher's hall, here in Manchester, in the kitchen. She stayed there for the few months that she was here before she was married. They were married in November of 1901.

They got a rent on Spruce Street and here my oldest sister was born. There's six of us children in the family, I being the youngest. They lived there for a short time and then they moved to Maple Street for a couple of years. Then they moved to School Street, where I was born. I was only two years old when we moved to Summer Street from School Street.

We were a very close family. Swedish was spoken almost entirely at home and I was four years old before I learned to speak English.

After we left Summer Street, we moved to Hartford Road, on the corner of Fairfield Street, and we lived there for about 10 years. Then we moved to Gardner Street, in Highland Park, and we've been up here since that time.

I lived with my folks for ten years. Then when I was married in 1940, I moved next door. I've been in the same house all my married life. Our home life was very congenial. We were a happy family. We never had much money cause my dad, while he worked all the time, my mother never worked. She raised the family. As the older brothers and sisters became of age, in the neighborhood of 15 or 16, they went out to work. They all lived at home until they were married and then they went off to live on their own.

Neighbors from the World

On Hartford Road, we all lived in a huge development of Cheney houses that the Cheneys had built right around the first world war, 1918-1919. We moved into one of these Cheney houses. As far as the neighborhood was concerned, there was a lot of different ethnic groups. On the other side of us, there was an Irish family, and for a time, an Italian family. Next door to us, we had an English family. In the three-family house was an English family and a Swedish family. Across the street there was a twofamily house where French people lived. Across Fairfield Street from us, there was a German family and a Lithuanian family and next to them, up on Fairfield Street, was a two-family-there was a Swedish family and a Polish family across the street from them. Next to us, on the north side of Fairfield Street, was an English family. Across Hartford Road, there was a fourfamily house with three Italian families and one Polish family. On West Street, there was a two-family with an Irish family on one side and a German family on the other side. We had quite a group of people, not of one nationality or ethnic group. We were very friendly, everybody was friendly with each other. In those days, there were no

family feuds, you might say.

As far as I can recall, I think all the neighbors worked at Cheney Mills including my father. He had started to work for Cheney Bros. back in 1907 and had started in the machine shop. He worked in the machine shop all his working years. He retired in 1950.

Schooling

I went through high school and what they called the trade school at the time. The first trade school was a Cheney school next to the present MCC campus building on Hartford Road. Cheney's had started a trade school-textile school-there probably around 1911-1912. Then the town took it over and moved up to the present Barnard building which is one of the buildings of Bennet Jr. High School. They outgrew that building and a new building was built on School Street. That is where I went to school, at the School Street building. We took what is called a cooperative coursecooperative textiles—which was the one I took. We went half a day to high school and half a day to trade school. We completed a certain number of hours in trade school and certain requirements in high school and received diplomas from both trade school and high school. The number of pupils outgrew that building and then the new Howell Cheney Technical School was built over on West Middle Turnpike. We took standard courses-English, History, Mathematics, Science, etc.—so we had the basic requirements for high school graduation.

A Cheney Weaver

I graduated in 1931, the class of '31, Manchester High School, and I went to work at Cheney Bros. as a weaver for a short time. The depression had started but Cheney Bros. tried to find work for all the students, particularly in the mill somewhere. We were all placed in jobs at the mills. I was weaving for what they called broadgoods at the time. Then I was working in the ribbon mill which is now the coat factory (Manchester Modes). I worked there for six or eight months and then the orders petered out and I was laid off. I couldn't get back into Cheney's until 1935 when I went to work at the Velvet Mills in the shipping

department. I worked there for several months and then I had the opportunity to go into the scheduling and planning office. There we laid out the work for the velvet department, ordering the material for the velvet cloth to be woven in the department. We had to arrange for dyeing and finishing the goods. I stayed there until 1940.

I left Cheney Bros. in 1940 and I went to work for the State of Connecticut at the Veterans Home and Hospital in Rocky Hill. I was there until December 1944. At that time, my former boss in the office at Cheney had passed and they were looking for somebody to take over his job. I inquired about it, and got the job. I came back as the manager of the scheduling and planning office in December 1944 and I was with them until early 1956 after Cheney Bros. sold out to Stevens Co. Then I went to work for Pratt and Whitney for a short period of time. I left Pratt & Whitney to go to work for the U.S. Air Force in the contracting office that they had in Hartford. I worked there until 1965 until all the services combined their contracting requirements together. Then they became the Defense Contract Administration Services. I stayed with them until I retired in July, 1977.

The Silk Story

Cheney Bros., when they started in 1838, just made silk thread. They tried to raise the cocoon, raise their own silk here. That was not feasible. The mulberry trees didn't take to this climate. Cheney Bros. started importing cocoons from China, Japan, India, Italy. Most of them were from Japan but other countries did supply Cheney Bros. with these cocoons. They came in huge bags and they were brought into the back of the cloth mill-the spinning mill as we called it-and then it went through various operations there to get the gum and dirt out of it. A cocoon looks like a spider web. There's a secretion on there that glues it together. I guess this is what held the thread together and this glue had to be softened and washed out so the threads could be unraveled. On the pierced cocoon, this is before the moth had a chance to develop and get out of it, they were able to find the loose end and just line it in a continuous filament from the cocoon. This

was all done in the spinning mill. When the cocoon had broken through, the moth had broken through the cocoon, then the silk threads were broken and there was not, and could not get a long, continuous filament from it, then they took this and carded it and they spun velvet very much like you'd take a hunk of cotton or a hunk of wool and card it and make it into a thread, spin it into a thread. This type of yarn they called spun silk instead of raw silk which was the original filament that came from the cocoon. This went through various operations until it was made into continuous lengths of varn and woven and became a piece of finished cloth. At one time, Cheney Bros. was the largest in the world that handled silk directly from the cocoon to the finished product and shipped it out as a piece of cloth. Right after the first World War, in 1919 through the early '20s, Cheney Bros. had in the neighborhood of 5,500 employees. Practically all my experience-60 years of it-was in the velvet department.

The Difference was "The Homes"

If you've been to some of the textile towns throughout New England and compare them with Cheney Bros. in Manchester, Cheneys were a very good family to work for. You've seen the surrounding around the mills. They built a lot of homes for people and they were not the row-type homes that you find in other towns around the area. The homes built by Cheney Bros. were individual homes, for the most part. In the little area that they called Cheneyville-around Cooper Hill Street, West Street, Fairfield Street-in that area, they did build a mixture of single homes and multiple-family homes, two-, three-, and even four-family residences for the employees. You didn't find this in a lot of the other textile communities around the area. This is one reason why the Cheney historic district was established and accepted by the government-because of the uniqueness of the Chenev complex: the mills, where the Cheney owners had their homes right next to the mill property; the small, individual homes for the workers; more elaborate homes for the superintendents of various mills. They were all intermingled in a reasonable walking distance of the mills. I think that was one of the reasons why some people came to Manchester to work rather than going elsewhere.

The Sale of "The Homes"

In the early 1930s, the Cheneys applied for bankruptcy. The bankers took control of the material and everything-the assets of the company. This went along until 1937 when things got so bad that the Cheneys had to unload a lot of surplus property. Of course, there were all the homes they had acquired around town. They unloaded all of these at a big sale they had in 1937, and people had the opportunity to buy these homes at a very low cost. Some probably paid as low as \$1,000 for a home. Some of these three-and four-family houses probably went for \$5,000 or \$6,000 dollars. It was just unbelievable what people paid for these homes. Most of the people bought their own home and if they didn't, someone else did.

Don't Forget All The Cheneys Did

Cheney Bros. established their own electric light company and gas company in the early 1900s. They put in a lot of water and sewer systems. They built schools and rented them to the town for \$1.00 per year. They gave land to a number of churches so they would have a piece of land to build on (particularly the churches that were built after 1880). They had their own street lighting system, first it was gas lights in town and afterwards electric lights came in. They had a boarding house for their female employees, and one for men, whose families were not in town. They built Chenev Hall for social activities for the people of the town. They built the teacher's hall which was a boarding house for female employees of the school system. This was another building that they rented to the town for \$1.00 per year. Cheney Bros. did an awful lot for the town.

Cheney Bros. were generous people. I don't know if they were just handing out their money indiscriminately, but regarding anything that seemed to benefit the town and thereby their own workers they seemed to be very generous.

For instance, in 1867 they built Cheney Hall. They used to have plays and recitals down there; they have a huge organ in there; they had dances and movies, and different groups in town—fraternal groups or other groups, I guess—would put on plays. This was one of the few halls in town that was readily accessible. At Cheney Hall, you only walked up a few steps and you were in, so it was especially convenient for older people.

Cheney Family Life

It seems as though Swedish girls were much in demand by the Cheney family for doing cooking and housework. They were always looking for Swedish girls to do the work in the house. If you read any of the novelettes that some of the Cheney women have written, they'll tell you about some Swedish girl that worked for them.

As far as I know, the Cheneys used only cooks and maids. They had gardeners but they were employed by the company. My grandfather was a gardener for many years with Cheney families. He worked a lot on the landscaping for various homes.

The Cheneys also had two farms. There was one farm on the west side of town near Hackmatack Street, Prospect Street, Keeney Street, and that general area. They had a huge farm up there where they raised a lot of cattle and chickens, so they supplied the families with milk and cream and eggs, butter and that sort of thing. Then there was another farm near the East Cemetery in the development that's called Hollywood now. This is the area bounded by East Cemetery, Parker Street, Autumn Street and Porter Street. That farm, mostly for raising horses, was called the Hackney Farm because the horses were of the Hackney breed. The individual families had little flower gardens that they had people take care of. Mary Cheney had a garden down the back of her house on Hartford Road. That's the building that is now New Hope Manor. She had a tremendous garden that was open to the public, but again, she didn't do the actual work. She just loved flowers and supplied her home with flowers during the season.

The families had chauffeurs to drive their cars and, before that, to drive the horse and wagon teams they had for transportation.

The Cheneys were down-to-earth. They

were not afraid to mingle with people. A lot of people who came over around the turn of the century came from foreign countries and landowners and different types of people were looked up to such as clergy, the mayor of the town or city, or mill owners. I think that a lot of people who came over still had this feeling in respect to the Cheneys. They put them on sort of a pedestal. They looked up to them, of course: they were their employers. I don't think that the Chenevs went out of their way to deliberately encourage this. Their kids went to public school. They had private schools for lower grades, but when the kids became of age, and were in high school or seventh or eighth grades, they went to public schools. A lot of them did go to prep schools and private schools.

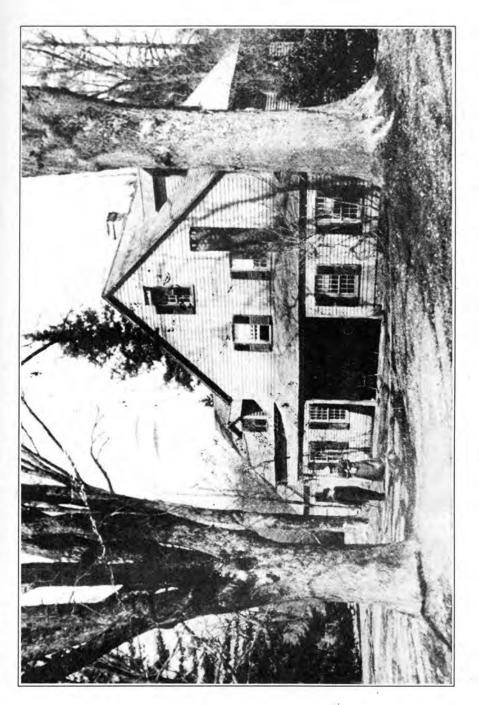
The original Cheney Bros., who founded the industry, were all gone before the turn of the century. The second generation carried on pretty much in the footsteps of their fathers. They were superintendents of the various mills and in the main office as well as sales department and that sort of thing. I recall some of the third generation who worked in the mills. There was Horace and John Learned whose mother was a Cheney. For a short time, Horace was superintendent of the velvet mill and his brother, John, was superintendent of the dye and finishing department. There were a couple of other brothers who had jobs in the mills about the time I was working there. They both passed away.

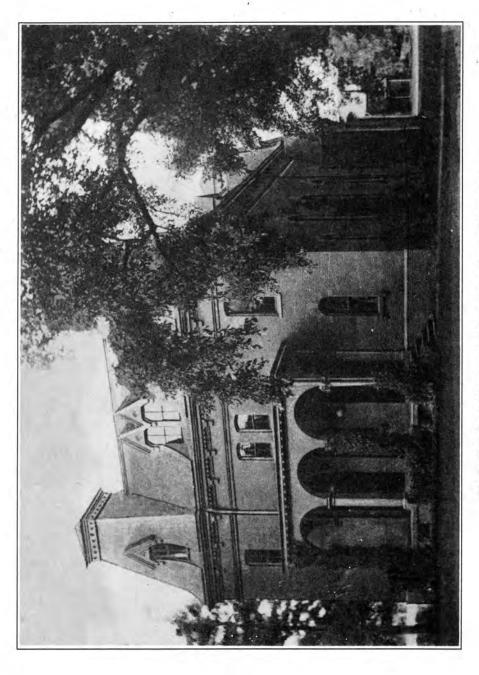
When Cheney Bros. sold to Stevens Co., that was the beginning of the end. The children had all grown and moved away. As the family died away, the homes were sold. There are no Cheney family members living in the old homes any more.

Most of the Cheney workers were too old to find other work, so they just retired. Others found work wherever they could. Stevens Co. sold off all the properties. They didn't operate any of the businesses of the Cheneys here. They sold the whole velvet department as a going concern. They had about 350 to 400 people who stayed on there. A lot of people went into the aircraft; some went into small shops around the area—wherever they could find jobs.

Times change, memories remain.







Storyteller: Earl Clifford as told to Jim Tierney, 6/30/88

I was born up in Miller's Falls, Mass. My father pitched baseball for the town team in Miller's Falls then worked in the factory in Miller's Falls Tool Company. In August 1914, he had a chance to come down to Willimantic, Conn. to work for the telephone company, selling telephones house to house. He worked his way up to be paystation collector, cashier, then finally got the chance to be manager over here in Manchester in 1919. That's when we moved to Manchester.

I graduated from the Robertson School over north, which is still standing, and then I went four years to Manchester High School and graduated in 1924.

We All Worked

I worked part-time for Stewart Dillon in his grocery store, fifteen cents an hour, when he had the grocery store up in the Orange Hall building, across from Cavey's. I know I wanted to run on the track team one Saturday afternoon. He wanted to know when my event was. I said, "Why?" He said, "Well, you better come back right after the event. If you don't, there'll be a new fellow here next week and you'll lose your job."

After high school, I worked for Glenney and Hultman. I started on July 7, 1924 for \$15.00 per week, working 58 hours. For part-time work, I used to deliver the telephone books about twice a year. If I didn't have that, I'd be broke. I worked for Glenney and Hultman until they split up in February, 1925. Glenney went and opened up a store near Birch Street and I stayed with Hultman for 11 years and 11 years later I bought the store from him in 1935. But before then, it was whatever job I could get.

In those times, we all lived at home. My father worked for the telephone company, my sister was a part-time telephone operator and my brother worked down at Cheney Bros. for a short time and then he worked for Manchester Construction Company as a timekeeper when they built the Nathan Hale School. And then, in 1923, when they were going to have the Centennial, that's

when my father got sick. He was sick for nine years and we lost him in 1932. He had resigned from the telephone company in 1929. Things were really rough then. We had nurses around the clock at the hospital for him, \$84.00 per week. That wasn't very good because at the time I was making \$22.00 a week. You didn't get very far ahead on that.

We Made Out, Somehow

Between my sister and my brother we somehow made it. Of course, rents were much cheaper in those days, you know. Rents were only \$25.00, \$30,00 or \$35.00 for a five-room flat. But it was tough going. Of course, bread was only a nickel a loaf, butter and eggs were cheap, milk was cheap. Milk was only about five cents a quart. I used to mow lawns and shovel snow—like kids don't do today—to earn any money, but I used to mow a lawn for twenty-five cents, walk from Munro Street all the way down to Main Street to collect my twenty-five cents from Jimmy Johnson.

We all worked. My sister was a parttime telephone operator and after she graduated from high school, she got a job as a secretary for Dr. Barry. My brother worked for the telephone company in Hartford as an installer, after he left Cheney Bros. and Manchester Construction Company.

We walked to high school. We walked everywhere. I didn't have a car until 1925. I paid \$45.00 for my first Model T Ford. In fact, when I was in high school, I had a chance to go to Washington or get a graduation suit. My father said, "Now make your choice." So I took the suit for graduation. I never did go on the Washington trip with the class. It was a \$50.00 bill and we couldn't afford it. I was one of the few who didn't go. There was one girl, the valedictorian of our class, who sent me a card.

The mothers stayed home and made bread, pies and cakes and did what they could to save money in the food end. They didn't go out to eat. Ice cream and those things were cheaper. I can remember when I graduated from high school instead of going off somewhere to have a big picnic or something, we went up to Farr Brothers, which was in the Cheney block at that time, and got a college ice and then went home.

We didn't go on a picnic or have anything like that.

Speaking of Cheneys, when I was in the clothing business I sold Cheney ties. They were good sellers. The Gainsborough tie that they had was one of the finest promotions in neckwear the country's ever seen. They had a suede velour cloth that was one of the finest cloths for making neckwear. And the girls took pride in making them right and they were made out of the Mallard duck, the partridge, the pheasant and—what was it?—the grouse. And the patterns, oh, they were one of the prettiest ties. I wish I had one today.

Work Hard, Save A Little

The average Cheney worker down there knew enough to save a little of his money. He didn't have to bet on the horses, all that stuff, every day. They saved money and they took pride in their work and they were well-dressed-about everyone that worked in the mill. Willing to keep up, you know. Make it nice. But the system they put in there spoiled the business. When they put a time clock on a man, that was no good. But they made pretty good money, some of those fellows, particularly the ones in the Weaving Department. They made good money. And the girls making the neckwear made good money. They made bathrobes that were beautiful. They made scarves and then, of course, during the war they got into the nylon business for making parachutes. Mallory was the head of that. That branched out and was one of the best parachute companies the country ever had.

Main Street was prosperous in those days. The people used to like to walk up and down Main Street and meet their neighbors and go shopping.

Even in the Depression, they didn't have any big lay-offs. They didn't have much work, of course, but they were paid pretty good money, basically, for that industry at that time. Of course, a lot of them were willing to go to school to study and go further. They went to the trade school and learned more about their business and they went ahead in life. They didn't just sit down and want somebody else to pay them, you know. But they put money in the bank.

Every Kid Went Ahead

In the department stores, they used to pay the kids twenty, twenty-five cents an hour to work. I wouldn't have kids work for me for that—kids going to high school. If they couldn't get thirty-five cents an hour, I didn't want him because I'd only get ten cents work out of him. Every kid that I ever had went ahead in life. They made a pretty good success of themselves.

I used to have a lot of fun in business. The kids used to come down to my store in the afternoon. They'd sit on the rug in the Shoe Department and we'd have a bull session there. The mothers used to say, "I wish I could get somebody else to talk to my kids the way you do. I even got my boy now so he'll wash dishes." I said, "Why not? He eats off them." Sure, a lot of women used to come in and tell me how nice it was that I talked to a lot of them. I could tell you some of them-one guy is a real estate guy in town. He's making good money. The other guy was going to be a National League umpire, but he changed his mind. Now he's got a better job. He's making good money. A lot of these kids-I straightened them out. You didn't need the police in those days when I was around.

Storyteller: John F. Lenti, Age 64 as told to George A. Potterton, 11/27/89

FARM WORK IS HARD WORK

A Farm Family

I was born in Manchester on January 27, 1925 on 403 West Center Street which was the Olcott Farm and is now the site of the Arbors Retirement Village. At that time, my father and uncles were running the Olcott Farm in the 1920s. The Olcott Farm was primarily a vegetable farm. Their main product was asparagus; the asparagus was grown on a bed which is now the site of the Lynch Toyota dealership on the corner of West Center Street and Hartford Road. In 1925, my father purchased a farm on Gardner Street, built a new house there and in 1926, we moved to Gardner Street.

I've lived in the Gardner Street area all my life. I am now 64 years old.

Schooling

I went to school at South School on South Main Street. When I started school there were three classrooms in the South School. Each teacher taught two classes. By the time I got into the fourth grade, it was changed. There were only two schoolrooms and each teacher taught three classes, so the teacher would start in one class for an hour then moved to the second class, then the third class. When the other class was held we were made to study. From the South School, I went to Barnard School, spent two years there, and then to Manchester High School. In 1938, I started four years of high school, Mr. Bogton was my freshman Math teacher.

In South School, the size of the classes were smaller because we had three classes in one classroom. We had ten or twelve pupils per class, that was thirty-six pupils to a classroom. The individual classes ran ten or twelve youngsters per class. The size of the class was smaller, but the room held as many, if not more, pupils than today's classrooms. When we got down to Barnes School I don't think there was too much difference (in size) from today's classrooms than the classrooms in the 1930s and 1940s. High School ran about the same. I graduated in 1942, our class had 306 pupils. Probably today's high school classes are a lot larger than they were then.

We walked to school. It was many a day that the snow was kind of high. The hired men would take a horse and snow plow and make a path for us to be able to get to school. There were no snow days in those days. I don't remember any day being called off because of bad weather. The only days I remember being called off was in the 1938 hurricane when I was in high school. I think they did suspend school for a couple of days. The trees were down the complete length of Gardner Street and it took about a week before they got the streets well opened. They did not have any power so we had to depend on gas motors to run things and kerosene lanterns.

In the early days, in the 1930s, I barely recall when they cut ice and put up ice in the ice house to cool the milk. In the early 1930s, we had one of the first electric refrigeration systems in the area. I remember the power company put up a meter on the refrigeration system to see how much it did cost a day to run the electric refrigeration system.

Part-Time Work

In high school, the first year I took a general course. In the second year, I switched over to a business course and took the accounting course. I worked for six years for a certified public accountant in Hartford, after school during the winter months, doing tax work. We did tax work on various companies in Hartford, New Britain, Bristol and New Hartford. I was able to see quite a section of the Connecticut territory driving around to the different locations. We did auditing of firms and their tax work and so I got quite familiar with doing tax returns.

When I first started working at the certified public accountant's office, the first week all I did, all day long for eight hours a day was add worksheets of figures to improve my ability to add faster. For the six years I worked for him, I never used an adding machine, just a pencil, to add all our worksheets up. In those days, we had a manual typewriter. We had no adding machines just a pencil.

The Family Farm

I had three brothers and sisters in my family. I was the fourth child. I had two sisters and one brother. It was a family farm so everyone worked home most of their lives until the 1940s. My brother and I continued the farms after my parents passes away. At one time we raised 75 acres of sweet corn after we gave up the fruit end of the farming because it was hard to get pickers for the fruits.

In the early days, in the 30s and 40s, there were a lot of strawberries raised in the Manchester/Bolton area. There was a strawberry auction down off Charter Oak Street every afternoon during the strawberry season and it was nothing to have a hundred different farmers come in with loads of strawberries. There were buyers from all the big cities around the area that came to

buy strawberries to take to their markets.

Manchester auction market was cooperative owned and run by the local farmers. It was nothing to sell probably 5,000 crates of strawberries in one afternoon. A lot of the farmers came in with a hundred crates of strawberries.

The farm on Gardner Street had a few dairy cows, and was mostly a vegetable and fruit farm. Our main crops were asparagus, strawberries, raspberries, spinach, cauliflower, sweet corn and a few apples. In the first years they had the farm, they planted a 1,200 tree peach orchard. In 1932, a tornado came up from Wethersfield and knocked the peach trees over and knocked down a tobacco shed. On Gardner Street, at that time, there were about seven tobacco farms. Gardner Street was called Germantown because it was primarily people of German descent living there.

I was the youngest of four children. My brother and I did most of the work into the 50s when my father decided not to farm as much. We gave up the vegetable farm in 1952 and started to increase the size of our herd. In 1953, we purchased a second farm on Gardner Street and started raising beef cattle too. We kept about 50 head of feeder steers and had about a hundred head of dairy cattle. Besides these two farms, we had a farm in Bolton, where we raised corn and hay.

In all, we used to cut 20,000 bales of hay a year so it was enough to feed all the cattle we had, besides having enough to sell three or four trail loads of hay a year. We kept the dairy and beef herd until 1979 when the dairy herd was disbanded. We split farms, my brother kept the home farm and I kept the 319 Gardner Street farm and meadow land in Glastonbury. At that time, I gave up farming and rented out the land for a few years until I sold the land for development.

Mostly we delivered to stores in Hartford. I remember we did deliver to J.W. Hale. In Manchester, we also delivered to the Manchester Public Market and Pinehurst Grocery on the corner of Main Street and West Middle Turnpike. When it was delivered locally, it was brought to the store within a day or so. Whereas if it was delivered to a warehouse it would probably not get to the store until the second day.

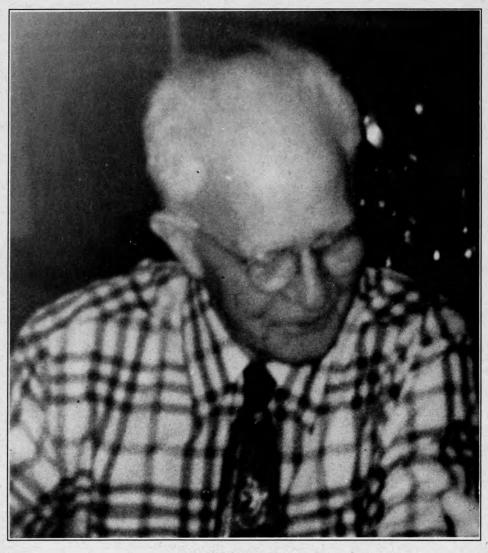
During the Depression years it was a lot easier to find help on farms. The wages were low—most of the wages were a dollar a day plus board for workers. We would have the strawberries picked for a cent and a half to three cents a quart. Children who came in to pick strawberries were able to pick, probably 100 baskets a day so that in reality they made more per day than the elderly person working on the farm because they were able to make a dollar and a half to three dollars a day, where the other workers were getting a dollar a day for their labors.

That was good money for those days.

In the summer time when we had sweet corn, we had to load three trucks. My father would take one truck and I would take another. My route was to service the stores and his route was to deliver to the wholesale market in Hartford. After I got through with my route, I would go help him finish unloading the truck there and then come back home and get the third truck and go delivering to the Manchester stores. In those days we did service the outside fruit and vegetable stands that were located in the area. Every morning we would bring fresh picked corn to the nearby roadside stands. The local people had an opportunity to get fresh picked vegetables a lot easier then. In the grocery stores of today, the stuff is two or three days old before it gets to the market.

Most farm families seemed to be obligated to work at home. You didn't think of going to look for a job outside because there was always enough work at home. There was never enough help and the hours were never long enough . . . you did a lot of work at home. If one went to school, you got out at 3:00 o'clock; we were expected home by 3:30 to get out and help in the fields. There were always stones to pick up, if there wasn't anything else to do, or weeds to be pulled. All crops had to be hand-weeded or handhoed, where today everything is sprayed so there is very little, or no hand hoeing to do. Members of the farm family, even the girls, were expected not look for outside work because there never seemed to be enough people to do all the jobs that were necessary to do on a farm.

Pranks, Capers and Humdingers



Knight Harrison Ferris known affectionately to Manchester Herald readers as "The Old Codger"





NOW IT CAN BE TOLD!

The crumpled hat, checkerboard jacket, heavy eyebrows, mustache and smoking pipe ... that was The Old Codger, whose columns in The Herald were all-time favorites with the citizens of Manchester from 1970 through 1976. He admitted in his column one day that his memories and experiences in Manchester covered only the years 1890-1910, but his intellect, curiosity, and continuous interest in all things human were always in evidence. Above all, his sense of humor is what endeared him to "his public". The readers of his column were not allowed to know his name or identity, but after much pressure, the "Codger" finally agreed to have his picture printed in the paper. When it was printed, it showed the back side of his head! Need we say more?

Now we are pleased to present "The Old Codger" in person, as viewed from the front. His name? Knight H. Ferris, born December 10, 1888 in Manchester. He was the valedictorian of Manchester High School, Class of 1906. He was an athlete, teacher, life-long student, National Guard sgt., hunter, expert marksman, fireman, woodsman, forester and engineer, and the list goes on! His label for himself was "an ordinary swamp Yankee." Swamp Yankee, maybe—ordinary? Never!

Storyteller: The Old Codger as published in his column of "Codgitations" in The Manchester Herald, 1970–1976

AMBULANCE? WELL, IT'LL HAVE TO DO.

It must be hard for many people in Manchester to picture in their minds how things were less than a lifetime ago. There was no hospital in town. There was no ambulance. There were few telephones. The doctors were driving horses instead of cars.

Four or five young fellows used to meet in the office of the livery stable at the north end of Purnell's Row. When that happened, it meant an evening of setback of "a nickel up and down." The boss didn't object, because it kept some drivers handy if a call came in for a "rig."

One evening, a doctor drove in with his horse in a lather. He had just come from Bolton where he had been called for a patient with acute appendicitis. His order: "Get him over to the Hartford Hospital as fast as possible."

All hands jumped to it. A "hack" has two seats, one facing forward and one backward. A wide board kept for the purpose was laid across the two seats and a bed chiefly of horse blankets made upon it. At the same time, a couple of other fellows had harnessed and hooked in the span of the fastest and most spirited blacks in the stables.

In not more than ten minutes, O. C. was speeding through the night toward Bolton. Heading for Hartford with the patient and his wife, O. C. could hear the groans down below because the wheels had solid rubber tires and were very quiet. In fact, there wasn't much noise until we hit the hard roads in East Hartford when the team's shoes made a loud clatter.

Those horses were not accustomed to being real close to trolley cars, so when they found themselves between one and the curb, the sidewalk looked like the lesser of two evils and, inspite of all the driver could do, the off horse took to the sidewalk and the wheels on that side jumped the curb. Until we had bumped down into the street again, O. C. was too busy to pay attention to the groans of the woman from below.

The poor man was delivered in one piece, had his operation and recovered O.K. One must believe in miracles.

NO FAULT

One day a sophomore class came in for geometry. Those sessions usually started by having the previous day's problems assigned. Then all scholars went to the blackboards to draw the figures for their problems and returned to their seats. When all were ready, they were called on, one at a time, to explain their problems and their solutions.

Once, all but one were back in their seats. She stood shifting from one foot to the other, apparently in a dilemma. Finally she turned around, put her hands on her hips and asked, "Mr. Gardiner, do you see something wrong with my figure?" The volume of snickers from that class was added to from those hard studying seniors in the rear of the classroom.

A fault would have given an easy way out, but after biting his lower lip a few moments, and blushing at the gills, "Billie" had to say "No, Miss Blank, I can't see anything wrong with your figure."

FIT FOR LIVIN' IN

Old Uncle Finn was a good old chap,
He never seemed to care a rap.
If the sun forgot to shine some day,
Just like as not old Finn would say,
"Uncommon dark this here we're in,
"Taint half bad as it might have been."
But a big cyclone came along one day
And the town was wrecked and blown
away.

When the storm had passed we looked around,

And thought at last Ole Finn had found,
The state of things he was buried in
About as bad as it might have been.
We dug 'im out of the twisted wreck
And lifted a rafter off his neck.
He was bruised and cut—sight to see.
He was ruined, but he says, says he,
With a weak look 'round and a smashed
up grin,

Taint half so bad as it might have been.

After all it's the likes of Finn that make
this world fit for livin' in.

When days are drear and skys are dark It's good to hear some old sage bark, "Now look here son," with a cheerful

"Taint half so bad as it might have been."

CINNAMON BARK

Another SMHS episode comes to mind. The boys were allowed to practice basket-ball at the gym after school on Friday nights. One lad went into the cooking room to get a drink of water at the sink. When he returned, he said to O.C., "The cooking teacher is in there and she wants to see you."

Now the cooking teacher was a very pretty girl and it would be a very odd fellow indeed who would pass up an opportunity to make her acquaintance. O. C. lost no time rushing in, and met with quite a surprise.

The conversation went like this:

"Hello?"

"Hello, is your name 'So-and-So'?"

"Yes."

"Well, 'So-and-So', you see that glass jar

on the shelf in this cabinet? What you see is cinnamon bark. Did you know that?"

To himself: "How the heck did she get a line on me?"

Aloud: "Yes."

"I had noticed that a little of it disappeared each Friday and when I reported it to Mr. Verplanck, he suggested that I check with 'So-and-So'. Have you been getting into my cabinet?"

"Could be."

"How did you get a key for that lock?"
"I didn't."

"What did you use to get into it?"

"This little drawer under the counter by the sink has some tools, among them this screw driver."

"I couldn't find a scratch or slightest mar, so how did you open the door with that thing?"

"I didn't."

"Oh, you tormentor!" She set her jaw, clinched her pretty fists, and stamped a cute little foot. "Then show me just how you get my cinnamon."

"OK. I just swing the cabinet away from the wall like this. In less than no time, I remove these four little screws that are now getting rather loose. I take off the panel like this. I take out the jar like this. Unscrew the top like this. Take out a piece of bark like this. Put it into my mouth like this. Mmm! Then I put everything back just as I found it."

"Oh, I don't know what I-I-I should do." Then abruptly the puzzled frown was replaced by a most radiant smile. "I'm not going to bother Mr. Verplanck any further with this matter, and any Friday night that you feel famished for a taste of cinnamon bark you may find the top right-hand drawer in my desk unlocked. Oh, by the way. Have you ever explained or demonstrated your system to any body else?"

"No."

"Well, don't."

Without fail there was a little piece of cinnamon bark in that unlocked drawer every Friday night and Miss Ritter had acquired an admiring friend. Her home was in Harrisburg, Penn.

PATTY'S WHEELBARROW

The lawns and other outside grounds around "the old mills" and Cheney Bros. main office south of Hartford Rd. were kept clean and in order by a very conscientious old fellow, He had a little tool shed where he kept his personal utensils.

One St. Patrick's Day, in the morning, the old man came into the office very much upset and angry. "I'll not touch that wheelbarrow." Asked what was the matter, he said, "Ye can go see for yourself, I'll not even say the word."

So "Mr. Frank" went out and opened the shed door. There stood the most beautifully orange-painted wheelbarrow anyone could desire. No doubt Mr. Cheney had the proverbial "laugh up his coat sleeve" but he said, "I don't blame you, Patty." "Why don't you take the day off. Go home and celebrate and come in in the morning.

On the next morning, Patty found that he had a brand new green wheelbarrow and was "happy everafter."

> Storyteller: Richard S. Childs June. 1973

A BACKWARD CHILD

It was the decade of the Lord Fauntleroy velvet suit with broad, white lace-edged collars. It was customary in those days for my Mother and other ladies to dress up in their best clothes on an afternoon and visit some other lady, without telephoning the victim first-since there were no telephones in private homes of that day in Manchester-bringing along a reluctant child also dressed up in his newest clothes. Such a suit was inflicted on me for occasions such as this. Boys hated such expeditions, for they had to sit squirming on a chair while the women conversed on subjects that were not worth listening to, and drank tea.

So, dressed up in my black velvet suit, waiting to be taken out on a call, while my Mother finished her dressing, I was let loose under certain restrictions not to go across the street where a cesspool was being bailed out.

It was an interesting operation, for the cover was off and the solids which had failed to drain away through the porous stone walls were being laboriously bailed out by pails fastened to the ends of long poles, to be carried away to some empty field or flowing river. I tempered my sense of disobedience by being very careful to stand well back from the brink of the pit. but when some sudden movement was made by a workman, I stepped quickly back and fell into a foul pail, to the ruination of the Lord Fauntleroy velvet. Penitently, I waited for my Mother to view my disaster. The call was postponed, and, happily, the suit was beyond restoration.

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald

A DEAD GIVE-AWAY

Having been unavoidably delayed, O. C. left home in a fluster for the banquet and failed to take his dentures. When he was served a wonderful big steak, he confided his dilemma to his elbow-antagonist, who whipped out a pair of dentures from one of his pockets. Too large. Another pair, too small. Then, one just right.

After enjoying his steak, O. C. remarked about the strange coincidence, and how lucky he was to have been seated next to a dentist. "I'm not a dentist. I'm a mortician."

"ZIP'S" POTTED FLAG POLE

Between the high school building and teacher's hall was a white wooden flag pole much bigger in diameter that the present metal one, but the same height. It had a big gold ball on top.

Now in those days, most sleeping rooms had chamber sets of several china pieces. Two of them had handles and, like the battery on a baseball team, one was the pitcher. Now wouldn't that heaviest piece look fine on top of that flag pole?

Of course, if it was pulled up by the hal-

yard it could just as easily be pulled down again by it. That wouldn't be right.

So one night when it was raining hard, a fellow shinned up to the top with that china ware hanging on him by a piece of insulated electric wire. The next morning, the ball had a white hat down over its ears to its neck and the handle wired to the neck.

The decoration remained there all day, but the next morning it was gone. Only the wire was there, and it probably was still there when that pole was replaced by the metal one there now.

Jeff Moriarty was the custodian of the building then. We always thought Jeff was a good tipster about news from above, but now it is thought he probably was a twoway street and could leak tips up as well as down.

Jeff was at the door with a big grin when O. C. arrived that morning.

He said, "Zip shot it down with his rifle." "Shot what down?" (Oh innocent baby!)

Anyway, Zip said, "I'm pretty sure I could put my finger on the one who put that up there. But anyone that would try to get up that slippery pole in a hard rainstorm, carrying that thing with him and then wiring it in place, doesn't deserve any punishment."

Do you wonder why the guy didn't have his pal send the freight up to him with the rope? He was not able to climb without the rope to hold on to and had to get it around his leg in order to stay up there to work.

Ed. Note: We can guess who "potted" the pole.

MR. HAWLEY'S WHISKERS

One fourth of July time, several families "chipped in" to buy enough fireworks to put on a real neighborhood display. A post was set up near the cellar on the Dan Green lot for the set pieces. A big door step stone was just right for the ground pieces. Two boards nailed together to make a trough were braced up in the road front of Joel Hawley's driveway. It was to launch the rockets to the south west across Green's lot and Oak St. to land in Eldridge's pasture.

Quite a gathering of people had assem-

bled waiting for the show to begin, while girls with sparklers stood near their parents. But boys were running everywhere shooting cap pistols and fire crackers. At last it was dark enough and operations got underway to the accompaniment of many "ooh's" and "ahs." The store of fireworks were in Mr. Hawley's shop and he brought them out as needed.

Once he just reached the street with a box of sky-rockets across his arms when somehow or other a fire cracker landed in the box and the rockets began to fly in all directions. Folks lost no time scattering and the only casualty was the burning of Joel's long whiskers.

It was generally known where that fire cracker came from.

Editor's Note: We can guess where that fire cracker came from ... who else but ...

THE CANNON "DEPUTIES"

There were no real nuisance laws, but it was generally understood that there was to be no firing of guns or fire crackers 'till daylight. But one of the fellows had a little brass cannon which had a terrible bang. Beginning as soon as it was dark, this was fired in various parts of town, the firing squad moving quickly from one part to another. One year, the protests from annoyed citizens became so great that the sheriff and one of the selectmen hitched up horse and buggy and went out to find the culprits. It was not until four o'clock in the morning that they ran across two of the boys sleepily headed for home and bed, dragging the offending brass cannon behind them.

The conversation which took place is remembered as follows:

The sheriff: "You weren't planning to use that 'till daylight, were you boys?"

The boys: "Oh no, sir. We are just taking it home to get it ready."

Then on closer look they found the two boys were their own sons! There was a whispered conversation in the buggy and then the sheriff said, "How would you like to be sworn in as deputy sheriffs, wear an official badge, and scare the daylights out of those kids who are keeping the old folks on edge with their infernal noise?"

Boys, in unison: "Great!"

Thus a truce was agreed upon and the whole town slept happily ever after.

EARLY DAZE

The town farm was where Highland St. turned to become Campmeeting Rd., east of Highland Park. The new highway has crossed over the site. One of the inmates was a man named John Cowan, a big man physically. He used to walk every day down to town and back in the forenoon and again in the afternoon.

Maurice reacted in a way that was typical of all the boys in that Madden family. He felt sorry for old John with those long walks, so he gave him a good bicycle. John continued to make his regular two trips a day with his bike, but always walking and pushing the wheel.

When asked, "Why don't you get on and ride, John?' his answer was always the same. "I can't today, I'm in a hurry."

THE NIGHT BEFORE

In the old days, an important part of the celebration of our Nation's birthday began the night before.

Phase One: The first objective was to get control of the bell in the Center Church steeple. The group of young men selected for this job were chosen for their daring. The only way to get into the church was to crawl through one of the narrow basement windows and, hanging onto the ledge with both hands, drop to the basement floor some seven or eight feet below. There was no knowing what object a volunteer might drop onto, crippling him for life.

That hazard past, there was the climb in the dark to the belfry tower and attaching a strong cord to the clapper and throwing the other end to the boys below. They, in turn, carried it down to a group of trees which stood where the Mary Cheney Library now stands, where it could be tolled from time to time throughout the night.

There is no record of anyone being caught; of course, no normal adult would want to make the ghostly trip to the belfry tower.

Phase Two: Every third of July night, someone managed to get into the old Center Church and ring the bell. To prevent that, one year a Mr. Henderson was hired to spend the night in the church to act as watchman. Imagine his state of mind when the bell began to toll but he couldn't find anyone at the rope. Well it was possible, as the church was constructed then, to get on the roof of a rear porch.

From there to an ell roof and the main roof was easy. From there the low open belfry would have been difficult for one person, but was not too much for one very tall lad and one lightweight. It was then very simple to attach one end of a wire to the tongue and throw the coil to the ground. By the time the climbers were back on the ground, the other end of the wire was up in the woods on the hill across Main St. Simple? Yeah.

THE CELEBRATION IS OVER!

At the east end of Hartford Rd., in front of the long building on the south side of Charter Oak St. which housed the town's leading stores, there was a large open area. All during the night, hard-working young patriots worked dragging into this square miscellaneous pieces of rolling stock and home and farm utilities. There were two horse dump carts, lumber box wagons, surreys with fringed tops, hay tedders, ploughs, churns, and always three or four out-houses or Chic Sales. Over the door of a double Chic Sale one year, was a sign, "Ladies Waiting Room." A couple of fellows riding bicycles had managed to take this down from the Goetz Bakery at the North End which had an ice cream parlor, and between them, still riding their bikes, carry it down to the square.

This sort of celebration came to an end when a hearse and two fine hacks were somehow dropped into Gould's Pond at the foot of the falls. Storyteller: Harry Cowles from "My Random Memories", published 1982

A MINUTE LATER, SIX INCHES OVER . . . OH WELL,

I can't remember when I first got a partial plate of false upper teeth. It was shortly after I was married. I had not had them too long when I was going into Hartford one day in the old one-ton truck that I had built the body and cab for. It had no windows, just an opening and I could not get into it on the driver's side, but had to slide in from the other side.

I had just gotten off the Buckley Bridge and had turned south on the boulevard when suddenly I had to sneeze. When I sneezed, I sneezed out my teeth and they flew into the street. I pulled over to the curb and stopped, got out, and went back for them, when just then a big truck came along and ran over them, smashing them into a hundred pieces.

Why couldn't that truck have been just one minute later . . . or six inches more to either side?

WITHOUT BENEFIT OF CLERGY

Right now, I am thinking of a story told to me by a friend, about an incident that happened in her family. Her Uncle Leonard had been left a widower some years previously and had recently married for the second time. But before the marriage, he and Margaret had lived together without the benefit of clergy.

A little while before the marriage, even before he had brought Margaret around to introduce her to members of his family as his intended wife, Len had trouble with his television set, in the apartment where he and Margaret lived. So Len called his brother, John, who did television repair work to come and look at it.

John called at the address Len had given him and said to Margaret, who answered the doorbell, "I came to look at your television. Len said it wasn't working right."

Margaret didn't know who Len had

called to repair the set nor who this stranger was at the door, but she felt called upon somehow to explain her presence in Len's house, so she said, "Well, Len isn't here right now. I'm Len's sister."

John extended his hand. "I'm awfully glad to meet you," he said, "I'm Len's brother.

Storyteller: Jim Duffy, Trolley Motorman as told to everybody who wanted to hear about it.

TOM QUISH'S BEAR

"When I was a boy, Thomas Quish, grandfather of Mike Quish, the funeral director, was a motorman and, in his spare time, was a keeper of the animals in their winter quarters. One day, Tom, who was quite a practical joker, moved the bear, which was really very tame and harmless, from his usual place of confinement to the foot of the stairs and chained it there. One of the delivery men for a local bakery, whose job it was to bring stale bread to feed the animals, came down the stairs into the semi-dark cellar with his arms loaded with loaves, over which he could not see the chained bear. As he stepped off the bottom step, the friendly old bear greeted him with a welcoming embrace and a polite, loud "Woof," as he smelled the fragrant bread. Whereupon loaves of bread flew in every direction and the delivery man took off out the back door into what is now Center Springs Park. For months afterwards, the bread for the animals at the car barn was delivered at the head of the stairs.



Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald

THE BANGING NIGHT WALKERS

One year there was to be a competition between the companies of the 1st Regt. CNG to see which could excel in scores shot on their annual field day at the Keeney Street range. They could come early in the morning or the night before and bivouac with pup tents.

"G" assembled at the old Wells St. Armory and marched down early in the morning. Co. A or K in Hartford had many members who were supposed to be wealthy and "high-class". It was known as the "collar and tie" Co. When it was learned that they were going to bivouac, an idea suggested itself. If they were kept awake all night, wouldn't they be too sleepy to shoot good scores the next day?

After dark, six fellows turned off Keeney St. into the fields. One had a muzzle loading cannon with about 1 inch bore, plenty of powder and fuse. Another had a Winchester 10 gauge saluting cannon and good supply of blank cartridges for it. A couple had shotguns well supplied with black powder shells from which the shot had been replaced with extra wads. Several had .38 caliber revolvers and good supply of blanks.

Where the Darling development is, there was a high steep hill. From the top, one could look down on the company street of tents, but it was a very dark night.

If six men separated like skirmishers, fire shots, then move sideways a few yards to fire again, and so on, wouldn't it appear from the flashes that there were many men there? Well, that's what happened as soon as the camp quieted down and all lights went out.

Lights appeared and men pulled out into the street, but since all was quiet and no more shooting, at last the camp appeared to be asleep again.

Then another volley.

That got a shouted threat, "If you don't cut that out we'll send some hot lead over there."

Answer: "Go to heck" or some such thing.

Well, the next volley was from a different point of the compass. And so it went through the night.

Once a squad sent out to reconnoiter was coaxed into a swamp full of briers. The last round of the Winchester cannon shot a cloud of smoke right up the company street.

Before daybreak, the six with cannon and guns were coming across the intersection of Hartford Road and Pine at the old steel watering trough. There stood Officer "Bill" Madden.

"Hello Bill."

That's all.

The Herald told that the soldiers phoned for police and Officer Madden went down on his motorcycle but couldn't locate the hoodlums. What a joke! We knew that if Bill came to catch us he would have done just that, Bill knew us well.

Remember we recently talked about that noisy night that Co. K had at the old Keeney St. rifle range? Well, that must have been about the summer of the year 1907. The raiding party enjoyed it many times over and some still do.

The late Laberge Geer was the one who lugged his heavy muzzle loading cannon around all night. And it was very heavy too, at least twice as heavy as necessary for safety. The bore was only one inch in diameter but the steel shafting from which it was made could easily have accommodated a two-inch bore. But "Berge" was a pretty husky fellow and was game. Only a couple of months or so before his death, he remarked to O. C. "We sure gave them a reception to remember that night."

THE CANNON CAPER

South Manchester High School administered a most satisfying wallop to Rockville High at the old Hyde Park fairgrounds, so when they reached home they were chanting, "Do! Do! What did we do? Rockville 44, We 82!"

It was agreed that a good celebration was in order, so that evening would see the greatest ever. Many townspeople joined the high schoolers in a big parade around town with colored torches and firecrackers, songs, speeches and cheers for half the night. But O. C. and a couple pals had to miss that for more important business.

It was known that Mr. Scott Spencer, who lived on the north side of Park Street, almost down to the bridge, had a fair-sized cannon mounted on a pair of small wagon wheels. Well, O. C. could supply all the cannon powder and fuse needed. The others had to gather a generous supply of old papers for wadding.

After dark, when the big racket had started on Main Street, the three found the barn unlocked. There were lights in the house. The driveway was paved with round top cobble stones which would produce a lot of noise with those steel-rimmed wheels. But going off the drive would cut up the man's lawn.

After very carefully and very, very slowly moving over the cobbles, the thing reached the smooth highway and away it went. For half the night, it spewed a mess of torn and crumpled paper over first one street intersection and then another. And what a beautiful noise it made!

It seemed that everyone in town must have been so pleased about the victory over our old rivals, Rockville, that nobody bothered any of the celebrators at all.

After all the streets were emptied and the dark night (rather morning) was quiet, there remained the job of returning the cannon without awakening anyone. But even the neighborhood dogs cooperated and did not make any alarm. With plenty of time and care, the cannon was replaced in the exact place and position it was in the previous evening.

O. C. had never known of that cannon ever having been fired before or since that time, and wonders if Mr. Spencer ever knew it had been out of his barn or if he suspected that the one he must have heard banging around town that night was his.

A GET-BELL, GET-WELL EVENT

We had one fine dual meet with New Britain High at the Trinity field in Hartford, but the one most vividly remembered was with Rockville High at Hyde

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Park in Rockville.

They surely had a well-drilled cheering section in the grandstand. Their best athlete was one Mr. Murphy. It is still easy to imagine the air ringing with "Jump high, Jump high, M-U-R-P-H-Y," They had a large bell hanging by a piece of rope to a rafter at the top of the grandstand and a chord to pull the tongue over to toll it when a Manchester lad failed, and to clang it wildly when a Rockville fellow did something well.

That had to be stopped somehow!

Three Manchester men, who had completed the events they were entered in, dressed rapidly while planning strategy. One with a sharp jackknife got up to the bell, cut the cord to the tongue and the hanger rope and let the bell fall over the back of the grandstand to the other two waiting below.

They threw it over the fence, followed it and ran as fast as they could while unscrewing the tongue eyebolt's nut. Pursuers almost overtook them when the tongue came loose. It was carried through the back yards until it was possible to throw it down a well.

FREE FERTILIZER

Pere Reese had the livery stable before Archie Hayes and Arb. Hollister. When the spring freshet water rushed around the edge of the big horse manure pile, it picked up an additional load of fertilizer that the Cheney lawns on Hartford Road got free.

MELONS BY MOONLIGHT

Old Doctor Vail lived on top of a hill south of Spencer Street. His melons seemed to disappear as soon as they got ripe. You know, moonlighters acquire skill by practice. Just snap your finger on a melon and on the ground beside it. If the two sounds are exactly the same, just a dull thud, that long striped melon is badly in need of picking.

If it rings, it's green both ways.

The shorter "ice cream" melons with

lighter pink meat require a different test. Bear some weight with your hand on top of them. If they make a crackling sound, get away as fast as you can, but take the melon with you—it's ready.

Word got around that Doc Vail injected generous doses of jalap into a couple of his melons. They disappeared. He had urgent call to do something quick for two or three boys of the neighborhood.

He prescribed blackberry brandy and advised them to avoid melon patches after dark.

ALL DUNN

This is about a woman named Dunn who lived in Ireland. Her son had been in America for 12 years without writing to her. She asked a friend who was coming over to look him up. All she knew was that her son lived in Connecticut in a little white house.

The New York host of the visitor brought him to Connecticut for a ride and stopped at a station for gas.

The visitor asked the attendant, "Is this Connecticut?"

"Sure is."

"Well, I'm looking for a little white house."

"Ha Ha. Oh sure. Just go around the corner and you'll see the path leading to it."

Sure enough, there was a small white house and a man leaving it was buckling up his belt.

"Are you Dunn?"

"Sure, I'm done."

"Then why don't you write to your poor old mother in Ireland?"

O. C.'S ADVICE

Accidents can happen. One day O. C. tore a big hole in the front of his pants while "swinging" birches. His buddy tore a big hole in the back of his. Most of the way home was in the woods, but near home it was necessary to follow the road. So when a carriage was approaching, the two boys started a game of wrestling in such positions that one front and one back were con-

cealed from view until it had passed.

What's best to wear, a patch or a tear? Some think the former, because it's warmer.

O. C. thinks the latter, when considering the matter.

For often a patch, with the clothes doesn't

Whereas, with a tear, who'd expect a match there?

WELL WATER Y'K NOW

O. C. remembers an open cellar hole, now overgrown with brush and trees, on the opposite side of the road from Villa Lousia and nearer to the Manchester line. There lived his grandfather when his mother was a girl. The well for watering stock was just inside the barnyard fence. Not planned for nice walking. So grandfather moved the fence to the other side of the well and ran water into the barnyard with a trough. First time younger sister Alice saw the change, she ran into the house all excited, "Mamma, Mamma, somebody moved our well!"

WAGS TAILS

O. C. once met a man with a little dog waddling along beside him. It seemed to O. C. that the pup must be very cold. In developing, he had used up all the dimension of length for his body, so there was none left for his hair.

He had his legs drawn up into his body, like a kid's hands in his coat-sleeves, so it appeared only the feet and ankles were outside.

Once read a rhyme that described it better. Can't see how it looks, but it sounds like this:

"There was a little Dachshund once so long he had no notion

How long it took to notify his tail of emotion.

So while his little eyes were full of present woe and sadness, his little tail kept wagging on because of previous gladness.

When O. C. was a little fellow, he had a dog with a very short, stubby tail. One Sunday, a young man was escorting his lady friend down the street, probably heading for church. Wishing to impress her with either his own cleverness or the boy's dumbness, he said, "Hey, boy! What did they do with that dog's tail, cut it off or drive it in?"

The kid picked up his pup and said, "Musta drove it in. See where it comes through on the bottom?"

OLD JOHN'S SIESTA

One year, Cases were having a lot of that beautiful stone work done around the park. Mr. "Pat" Gorman was replacing the old wooden bridge in the glen near the "Tonica Springs" bottling house, with that fine stone twin arch you see now. It was necessary to blast a little for a footing at the northwest corner of the bridge. The blasting powder grains were about the size of BB lead shot.

When O. C. went for the noon water, he got two grains and put them in John's pipe under some of the tobacco. When John's siesta was interrupted by a sudden "Fuff" it brought O. C. to his feet. He was not the least bit startled but thought it prudent to be ready for quick take-off. However, when John succeeded in getting his lids back on his protruding eyeballs he simply said, "Damn you boy."

A SNAKE TALE

O. C.'s little daughter was sick with some kids disease. The monotony of being bed-bound was eased when a pretty snake was brought to her. She kept it in bed and played with it a couple of days until O. C. gave it its freedom in the garden.

Editor's Note: While compiling this book, I talked to Faye, O. C.'s daughter. She said, "That's me! I loved that little snake."

Storyteller: Leona Keevers Lavery as told to M.K. Adams, April 1995

THE KEEVERS KAT (THE FISH MAN COMETH)

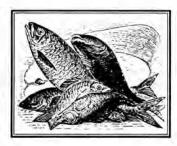
When I was a little girl, we had a very lazy, but much-loved cat. Her favorite spot to sleep was in the attic beside a window, where the warm sun coming through the window would lull her into a state of near-death. She would move slightly in her sleep, and, of course, we could see her breathe but otherwise—nothing.

But, if you were there in the attic, only one incident would rouse her. Seastrand, the fish man, blew his fish horn as he

approached the neighborhood.

When that happened—cat-as-trophe! The ears sprang upright, the eyes opened and she sprang down the stairs only touching every fourth or fifth one. She rocketed out the door, raced up to the Seastrand fish wagon and waited for the ultimate reward—fish heads.

O, glory! Can there be a finer life for a cat!



Storyteller: The Manchester Herald Elwood S. Ela & Co., January 1882

Oh, I married me a scolding wife
Just twenty years ago.
And, ever since, I've lived a life
of misery and woe.
Oh, she worries me. She hurries me
and it's her heart's delight
To bang me with the fire shovel
'Round the room at night.

Storyteller: Unknown

Life was great,
a wonderful time.
When candy was a penny
and movies a dime.
And a good time was had by all!
Laugh, clown, laugh
Let the games begin.

Storyteller: The Manchester Herald January 7, 1913

EDITOR "STUFF" (BEWARE OF DANGLING MODIFIERS)

Most any one can be an editor. All the editor has got to do is sit at a desk six days out of the week, four weeks out of the month and twelve months out of the year and "edit" such stuff as this: "Mrs. Jones of Cactus Creek let a can opener slip last week and cut herself in the pantry." "A mischievous lad of Piketon threw a stone and struck Mr. Pike in the alley, last Thursday." "John Doe climbed on the roof of his house last week looking for a leak and fell striking himself on the back porch." "While Harold Green was escorting Miss Violet Wise from the church social last Saturday night, a savage dog attacked them and bit Mr. Green several times on the public square." "Isaiah Trimmer, of Running Creek, was playing with a cat Friday when it scratched him on the veranda." "Mr. Fong, while harnessing a broncho last Saturday, was kicked just south of the corn crib." -Ed.

HOUSEHOLD "HINT" - "KOFF, KOFF"

To remove insects from a plant, place the plant in an empty tin bucket. Then crumple up a small bit of newspaper and lay on it an eighth of a cigar, split with a knife; light the paper with a match, cover the pail over tightly and leave it for half an hour. If the plant is very large, use a wash boiler with half a cigar split."

MAN

Two monkeys sat in a cocoanut tree, Discussing things as they're to be. Said one to the other: Now listen you two, There's a certain rumor that can't be true That man descended from our noble race. The very idea is a disgrace!!

No monkey ever deserted his wife, Starved her babies and ruined her life, And you've never known a mother monk To leave her babies with others to bunk, Or pass them on from one to another, 'Till they scarcely know who is their mother.

And another thing you will never see,
A monk build a fence 'round a cocoanut tree
And let the cocoanuts go to waste
Forbidding all other monks a taste.
Why, if I'd put a fence 'round a tree
Starvation would force you to steal from me.

There's another thing a monk won't do, Go out at night and get in a stew, or use a gun, a club, or knife To take another monkey's life. Yes, man descended—the ornery cuss, But Brother, he didn't descend from us!!

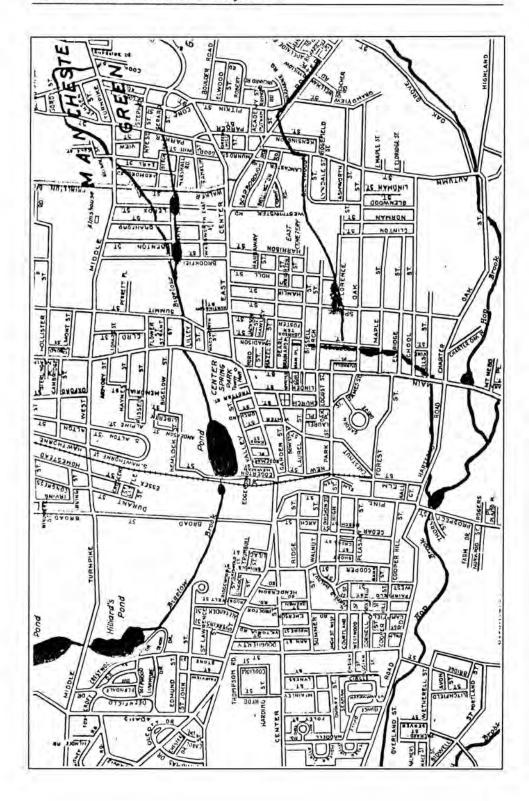
KINDNESS

I would rather have one little rose From the garden of a friend, Than to have the choicest of flowers When my stay on earth must end. I would rather have a pleasant word In kindness said to me. Than flattery when my heart is still And this life has ceased to be. I would rather have a loving smile From friends I know are true, Than tears shed around my casket When theis world I bid adieu. Bring me all the flowers today. Whether pink, or white, or red; I'd rather have one blossom now Than a truck-load when I'm dead.

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I have to live with myself, and so I want to be fit for myself to know; I want to be able as the days go by Always to look myself in the eye. I don't want to stand with the setting sun And hate myself for the things I've done. I don't want to keep on a closet shelf A lot of secrets about myself. And fool myself as I come and go Into thinking that nobody else will know, The kind of a man I really am; I don't want to dress myself up in sham I want to deserve all men's respect, I want to go out with my head erect. But in the struggle for fame and pelf. I want to be able to like myself. I don't want to think, as I come and go, That I'm bluster and bluff and empty show. I never can hide myself from me, I see what others may never see: I know what others may never know. Whatever happens I want to be Self-respecting and conscious free, I know I can, God helping me.

Where It Was (and Where They Were)





THEY "DITCHED" THE BROOKS AND BURIED THE STREAMS

Ed. Note: On the facing page we have portrayed on a street map our version of "The Old Codger's" study of the spring time brooks and streams that are now buried and forgotten. If space had permitted, his commentary would have been included in this book in total. We have, reluctantly, been forced to incorporate his descriptions into a map along with our capsule commentaries from "The Old Codger."

Starting on the east side of the map, you'll note that he spoke of a spring brook that started at the "pond hole" at the corner of Adelaide Road and Porter Street, paralleled Porter, crossed Pitkin, then dove under Porter and headed southwest to what is now the eastern edge of the East Cemetery, south then west, then southwest again to roughly the juncture of Holl Street and Florence Street where it dried up and became an area known in 1900 as "the 'Sand Blow'—a desert-like area of sand." He cautioned his readers to recognize the fact that he was referring to early times before there was a Holl St. or Florence St.

The Codger continually reminded us that in Spring Freshet time, these little streams grew active and flooded into the so-called "dry crick" that then ran in Purnell Place just west of Cottage Street. At high water times, there were small temporary ponds from Oak Street to Eldridge, as shown on the map.

The "dry crick" ran diagonally southwest near the rear of the old Watkins Furniture building at the northeast corner of School and Main, went under a bridge on Wells Street then crossed under Main Street, behind the old South Methodist Church. When in spring freshet time, it proceeded to dump residual "waste" onto the south portions of the "Great Lawn" then exited finally into Hop Brook via a culvert that ran under Hartford Road.

In the northeast corner of the map, we have

shown the route of Lyman's Brook which was called Bigelow Brook as it dove under the Glastonbury Knitting Mill building at the Green, headed north for a time then ambled west southwest, crossed Parker and disappeared under East Middle Turnpike near Earl Street. This same brook ultimately crossed under Main Street and became a Center Springs brook (and when dammed) a Center Springs Pond. The tiny satellite pond shown west of the railroad tracks was a purposeful dammed pond to supply water for a trolley line power house. At one time, according to the Codger, the hopper cars could stop on the railroad and dump their coal chutes directly into the power house.

The other discoveries we learn about are the swimming holes of the Codger. Walker Pond, approximately at the low point on Walker Street, and Durkin Pond, west of Walker, were the Codger's joys. He said that Walker Pond was less used because the boys were not attired in swim suits and that pond was "in sight of a house." Durkin Pond was more popular because "there were no houses near." The greatest objection, according to "Codger," was "the abundance of black blood-suckers." But after they came out of the water, the boys took turns searching for and picking them off one another.

The Codger summarized by pointing out that the entire Summit Street area was a deep ravine and the present high school property required shearing off hills and filling ravines and ditches.

CALL IT "CODGER TOWN"

We earlier indicated that villes and towns grew up on water rights or stage roads or railroad centers. Invoking writer's privilege, we are, in this book, inventing a temporary town called "Codger town." This imaginary location flowed from the memories and reminiscences of Knight H. Ferris, born in 1888, who resided in South Manchester through his rambunctious youth, left in 1912 to seek his fortune and returned in the 1970s to become the Herald's secret raconteur known as "the Old Codger." Although he roved far and wide, his home site was in the vicinity of Cottage and Oak Streets.

As you read on, you will be transported back in time to discover "Where It Was" and also who and where the people were.

Storyteller: The Old Codger, in his 80s, printed as his "Codgitations" in The Manchester Herald, 1970–1976

CHARTER OAK STREET

(Ed. Note: The original Business District prior to 1898.)

Great changes have been made in the appearance of Charter Oak Street as O. C. remembers it, as it was before the turn of the century.

On the south side, next to Main Street, was William Cheney's store. That location was then the business center of South Manchester, so the one store sold everything from shoes, clothing, millinery, groceries, toys, kitchen furnishings to costume jewelry for humans, dogs and horses.

In the east end of the building was Walter Cheney's drug store. There, O. C. was introduced to the first "soda-water" fountain he ever saw. When asked for his order, all he knew was "soda-water," just "soda-water." So a little carbonated water was given for a trial. It stung his throat to make him cough and tickled his nose to make him sneeze. That settled it. Sodawater was not for him.

On the opposite side of the street, where the Chevrolet agency is now, was a small brown house occupied by Dr. Parker, with his office, too. Later, it was the home of William Flood, editor and publisher of the Weekly Manchester News and later by his son and successor, Joseph Flood.

Evidently, from Main Street to about the point of now Spruce Street, Charter Oak is along what was a steep side-hill. Stone retaining walls from four to eight feet high were erected on the south side to retain the fill on which the road was located. Next to the drug store, the wall was at least eight feet tall. There had been built a large platform a few feet above the road level for a stage for outdoor performances of traveling vaudeville medicine shows.

Just east of that, a roadway went down a steep incline to the old Charter Oak Woolen Mill building. A branch from this road turned eastward into what now might be called a miniature Parkade. An L-shaped building housed a "steam laundry," the first case of using any power for washing clothes. There was also a meat and fish market, and Arnold Hausman's paint and glass store, later moved to Spruce Street. O.C. believes there was at least one additional business there but he can't remember it.

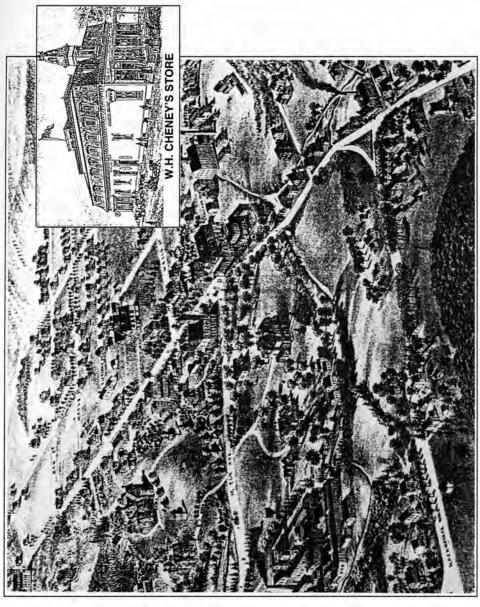
Back up to the street level and just a little further east was E.T. Carrier's tin shop and stove store. The floor was about at street level but extended out from the retaining wall supported by wooden posts. It spanned over the old race ditch that had brought water to the Charter Oak Mill.

Mr. Carrier lived in a home on the north side of the street, opposite his store and shop.

The big meadow, south of the street, which extended over to Mt. Nebo hill, must have been swampy originally, but at some previous time had been under-drained with tile so that it was a fine hay mowing lot when O. C. was a little fellow. During the big depression, the town plowed quite a large area of it and allocated sections to the unemployed for gardens.

A little farther east than Carrier's store, but on the north side of Charter Oak Street, was a blacksmith shop. These were common gathering places for men to swap stories, discuss news and politics while waiting turns to have horses or oxen shoed.

Sometimes it was very entertaining, though not particularly elevating, for a boy. There were some pretty rough tricks played on some unsuspecting fellows who did not appear to be tough-gutted enough to fight back. Then a misappraisal could lead to a good fist fight. And how we enjoyed witnessing that!



This 1800's aerial view showing the original business district which included Cheney's Store and the area east of it, on Charter Oak Street.

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Next across a driveway from the blacksmith shop, was Hale and Day's store, carrying general merchandise and groceries. Mr. Judson (Judd) J.W. Hale left the partnership as the business of the "south end" moved north. He then joined with C.H. (Charlie) House in the House & Hale Co. and lived in the south apartment on the second floor of the three-story they built at Main and Oak.

Mr. (George) Day continued the store for many years and was succeeded there by his former clerk, Phillip Lewis. Mr. Day also had a livery stable in the back of the blacksmith shop and sold all kinds of horsedrawn vehicles, harnesses, etc.

On the northeast corner of Charter Oak and Spruce was the home of the Hales who had the paper mill further east on the opposite side of the road. Then the area between Charter Oak and School Streets was occupied by a very high hill covered with woods and extending to where the brook crosses the street. That has all been carted away and replaced by a large housing development.

On the south side of the street was the Rogers upper paper mill. Then the Hale's mill next to it.

As soon as the brook crosses under Charter Oak Street, it turns to the west nearly paralleled with the road for a short distance. On that narrow space between brook and road was the home of Billie Ryan, a jovial blacksmith, who in earlier days was a member of the old Charter Oak Mill baseball team. Billie's later working days as a blacksmith were in Cheney's Machine Shop.

On the north side of the road was the only house between the brook and Autumn Street. A family named Law lived there.

On the south side of the road there was quite a high hill all the way from the brook to Gardner Street. The east part of it is still there. Most of that hill from the brook to opposite Autumn Street has been hauled away and replaced by a large development of apartments.

Only that part between two excavated entrance roads is left to show how the few houses sat up on the hillside. The one now farthest east was where Ed Snow's family lived. His big barn was even higher up the hill in back of the house. Mr. Snow kept fine draft horses and big wagons. One of his teamsters was George Griggs. Mr. Snow's teams hauled all the coal and bales of paper stock from the South Manchester freight yard to Case's paper mill at Highland Park and all the freight to be shipped away from the depot.

On the southeast corner of Highland Street and Gardner Street was the Miner home and next, east of it, A. Wells Case who had the machine shop on Gardner Street in the deep valley that was filled for the new Rt. 6. (now I-384).

Highland Street went up a steep grade to Gardner Street, then leveled off for some distance before it started to climb another steeper part to Case's mill entrance road. About at the east end of this level stretch and on the south side of the road was John Buck's wood yard. The wood was teamed in from the Birch Mountain section mostly. It was in four-foot lengths known as cord wood. Before delivery to customers in town, it was sawed up into stove or fireplace lengths with a buzz saw driven by a steam engine. The engine and its upright wood-burning boiler were mounted on wheels.

Across the road from the wood yard, and set back quite a distance from the street, was Patsy Hayes' saloon. The semi-circular driveway afforded plenty of room for a lot of carriages and wagons to park off the highway. The longer a man could enjoy relief from worry about his team, the more his enjoyment would cost him.

Wells Street

Mrs. Sarah G. Cheney had a home at the southeast corner of Main and Wells Street. The driveway to the barn went in from the Wells Street side. There were very large spruce trees all around with heavy branches to the ground. The house was almost obscured from folks on the street. The "drybrook" or "crick-bed" crossed under Wells Street onto Mrs. Cheney's front yard and immediately turned west to cross under Main Street.

On the north side of Wells Street and farther east from the "dry-brook" was the public library which had been started by Cheney Bros. primarily for their employees, but in O. C.'s boyhood days, had been given to the town though mostly supported by Cheney generosity. The big Ninth District school fire took out the library building, but the contents were removed and saved to be located in the old Eldridge Mansion on Main Street.

At the northwest corner of Wells and Vine Streets was another of the slate colored houses. It also went in the same fire. It was the home of Captain Bissell. He had two sons who also became military officers.

On the south side of Wells Street a little east of Vine Street was the old wooden armory building that served as the home of Co. G of the First Regiment, Connecticut National Guard, until the present Armory was built on Main Street opposite Leonard Street, now Legion Drive.

The building and its drill floor ran south from Wells Street toward Charter Oak with shed-type ells running full length along the east and west sides. Kids often climbed to the ell roofs to watch through the high windows whatever was taking place below.

Sidewalks and The Sticky Walk

All the sidewalks on Main Street were hard-packed gravel cinders hauled from the boiler rooms of mills. Cheney Bros. laid a tar walk along the south side of Hartford Road from Main Street to the railroad tracks. After the hot mid-summer sun worked on it, it became soft and sticky. At that time, folks often walked on the lawns or streets to avoid getting their soles stuck. If you stepped on it with bare feet, you were in real trouble. We know!

School Street

A little farther east than the present fire station of School Street was a small, light-brown wooden building, the hose house for Company No. 4 South Manchester Volunteer Fire Department. Next was a boarding house for the salaried school faculty, most all unmarried women.

Then was the home of Col. John Hickey, Near him lived a Mr. House who was the caretaker of the old armory. He was succeeded on the job by (it seems) Mr. Hale or Haling.

On the south side of School Street between Vine and Spruce lived good old William "Bill" Gleason the head janitor of the big Ninth District School. A goodnatured, hard-working man was Bill, and many who passed through "his" school must have had pleasant memories of him for many years. Isn't that better than medals?

Mr. Gleason lived in one of several adjacent houses, all of which bore target-like decorations on their facades. They were known as the "Painter Houses," probably built or owned by a Mr. Painter.

East of Spruce Street there were only 2 or 3 closely spaced houses on each side of the road. From there on, School Street was only a cart path through the woods fairly straight until near Autumn Street. It had to swing south around the town dump. That end of the street is now right over the dump.

That was once one of the "sink-holes" left in the sand and gravel hilly country at the eastern edge of the Connecticut river valley. The hole was very deep in the center which had a small pond of water most of the time. Only surface water could get into it. There were no inlets, outlets, or springs. A typical eastern Connecticut "sinkhole." The deepest part and probably nine-tenths of the area had been filled with the town's refuse when the surrounding areas were so developed and used for human habitation that it had to be abandoned and covered over. Just a small and shallower part of the hole can now be seen north of School Street near Autumn. It is overgrown with trees. More than other places, the old dump developed rifle marksmanship. It was alive with rats that required quick shooting. We expected to break bottles thrown up by buddies or ourselves and sometimes (not always) could break the biggest piece with a second shot before it reached the ground.

Main Street-School Street to Eldridge Street

Watkins Bros. furniture store and mortuary was located at Main and School Streets in the same building now occupied by the Blau (and later Peter's) Furniture Store.

Next north of Watkins was the Magnell building. Magnells lived on the second floor. On the south side of the first floor was Magnell's tailor shop. On the north side was Magnell's candy store where also could be purchased school supplies, games, greeting cards, etc.

It was necessary to climb two or three steps to the front porch of the store.

O.C. cannot remember any store at that

time which was built right up tight to the property line. Footage of land was not as expensive as it is now. and businessmen were not inclined to slice their meat quite so thin.

Then came "Dan" Shaw's barber shop. Dan claimed to have been a member of the old Charter Oak baseball team. Dan's son. John ("Bep"), worked with his father, and succeeded him as proprietor.

"Bep" told us to

stop in for haircuts on the way home from swimming at Globe Hollow rather than on the way over for our swim. He said it was easier cutting our hair then. Boys paid only ten cents at first, O.C. can remember, and later 15 cents then 20 cents for hair cuts. Saturdays were his busy days and he refused to take on boys' work then.

On the corner of Main and Eldridge was a harness and other leather work shop. The proprietor was a French man named Achille Moreau who lived on the northeast corner of Spruce and School Streets.

Eldridge Street to Maple

The whole Main Street frontage from Eldridge to Maple Street was part of the large Sam Eldridge estate. It extended about to the line of Cottage Street and also included the area from Maple to Oak and from the "dry brook" course to Cottage Street. Also another part of it composed a large part of the woods east of town, later known as "the Heights."

On the corner of Main and Eldridge was a house used as home and office of Doctor Bradley. The Eldridge Mansion was on the north with a large lawn that included about three-fourths of the frontage and extended

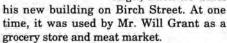
in the rear to the course of the dry brook. The big barns were east of the brook.

The house was a large, square building with a mansard roof. It became the home of the public library after the old one on Wells

> Street burned in the big school fire. O. C. remembers the two elderly ladies. Miss Miss Carrie and Emma, daughters of Mr. Sam, because as a boy he used to go to their rear door to peddle vegetables from his garden.

There was a store by

building on the northeast corner of Main and Maple, which was Hugh Moriarty when he had to move from the site of Bennet Junior High, until he built



Watkins Bros. furniture store and mortuary

When Eldridge Street was "the Lane" and "Mr. Jim" quieted the Crowds

Eldridge Street was known as Brown's Lane and often referred to as simply "The Lane." Sam Eldridge owned all the land between Eldridge and Maple Streets from Main to a point almost opposite Cottage Street and several other tracts, when O. C. was a boy.

The barn was very large and painted dark red. It was located a long distance from the mansion on Main Street because the "dry brook" ran across between them, and at this point it flooded very wide in freshet time. For the same reason, the first houses on both Eldridge and Maple Streets were located far east of the barn. In this block there were no walls or dikes to confine the water.

The first two houses on the north side of the street (Eldridge) were painted the "Eldridge brown" and accommodated two families each. From there to Spruce Street was a row of smaller houses, mostly single family. They were the standard Cheney

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slate gray. South of the street, the brook course was walled on both sides, to street level to School Street. Close to the top of the wall was a very small house, the first of a row of slate-gray "Cheney houses" extending to Spruce Street.

When the wave of immigrants came from different countries they tended to settle in national groups. So, Brown's Lane was a little Sweden. Now, when the Irish groups staged a Donnybrook, there were fists flying, make no mistake about that, But, with the Swedes, there was a lot of yelling, crowding and pushing one another around without any real blows being struck. One night there was a great hullabaloo on the Lane. James Cheney lived on top of the hill west of Main Street and could look right down on the lane. He didn't usually carry a cane, but had one when he appeared at the end of the lane. The wordpassed: "Here comes Mr. Jim." The noise stopped, the crowd just evaporated, so Mr. Jim almost had the road to himself and went home for a quiet night's sleep.

In later years, all the Cheney houses were sold off and many are so altered and painted that they can't be identified as of yore.

Charles Stenberg built a large livery stable, with dwelling apartments above, just east of the bridge and on the south side of the street.

A short distance east of Spruce Street on the north side of Eldridge Street was a dance hall (now the Italian Club) believed to have been moved there, but O. C. can't recall from whence it came. It was known as one of the "Con Sullivan Buildings."

Eldridge Street ended right where the street grade changes quite rapidly. It did not extend up the hill; only trackless yellow pine woods from there to the Autumn Street cart path. At the foot of the hill lived an elderly gentleman named Mr. Reardon. He kept and raised many pigs to sell both alive and butchered.

East Side of Main-Maple Street Up

Going north on the east side of Main Street from Maple next to the corner market was the home of Milo Russell, a contractor of painting and wallpapering. It was a flat-roofed house with porches on west and south sides. Large lawns and numerous large trees surrounded it.

In later years, the Bowers Block was built on the south part of Russell's yard. It was used at some time by the post office and bank.

The Russell house was added to and converted into stores that extended front to the sidewalk. The northern part of the Russell property was built on for retail stores. Couche's candy manufactory and store there was succeeded by Murphy's restaurant and bowling alley. Now it is the Nassiff Arms Co. store.

Between the Milo Russell property and that other Russell home at Oak Street, Main Street must have been cut through a hill at some time. On the east side was a high bank on top of which were two typical Cheney gray houses. One was occupied by the Weir family whence came the late Tom Weir, tax collector of our South Manchester Fire Department for many years. These houses were moved. The hill was removed to provide a site for the Cheney Building which was built when the business center moved up town from Charter Oak Street.

The space at the south end of this building was used for the post office at one time.

Next store in the building was Tiffany's jewelry, then in the most northern store was Martin's ladies dress shop and millinery.

Maple Street

Of the Atwood family on the southeast corner of Oak and Cottage, only the man "Uncle Lucian" Atwood lived in the attic rooms of the ell south of the main part of the house. He rented all the rest of the house, barn and land. The Ed L. Snow family lived there, later the "Gus" Leidholdt family.

Between Atwood's and the house on Maple Street corner was a large plowed lot for gardens. Along the Cottage Street side of the garden and next to the hard earth sidewalk was a strip of briars where we could pick blackberries. In back of that garden was an orchard of eight apple and two pear trees. Those trees were never sprayed, yet bore large crops of sound fruit. There were russets and delicious golden sweets which we never see now.

East of the orchard was another large garden patch, still in the Atwood property. North of it was a shed formerly a chicken coop where Burdett Hawley often gathered a group of girls, much younger than he was, to play school and keeping house. He never played with boys.

Later, two houses were built where the garden had been, next to Cottage Street. The Dennis Wall family moved into one, Skewes family in the other. Oldest Wall son was Robert (Bob), then Richard (Dick) who died in his minority, then a girl, Ruby, who also died in her teens.

Mr. Pat Gorman bought Eldridge's pasture on north side of Maple next west of Cottage and built the three double houses there. Walls moved into the west side of the middle house and it was there that the blind girl, Agnes, was born.

At 27 Maple was Ed Dunn's place. A nice white house and barn. Always a beautiful

spirited carriage horse. An apple orchard where the British-American Club is now. Then a large mowing lot at the corner of Maple and Spruce.

Going east on the south side of Maple Street next to Sullivan's was an open lot with a large garden at the rear. Later, a two-family house was built here and occupied on the west side by Eddie Yost, an undertaker and member of Co. No. 3 Volunteer Fire Department.

Ed was killed in a fall from the fire truck swinging the corner of Main Street and Purnell Place.

On the south side of Maple Street a wooden picket fence extended from Main Street to only a barway's width from the wooden bridge over the "crick." Across the street on the north side was Ralph C. Ball's shoe shop then a "Cheney house" dwelling, later occupied by a Fraser family. Then followed Milo Russell's paint shop. An open flight of stairs on the west side led to a platform front of a wide door. Ladders, tools, supplies and paint ingredients were stored on this upper floor because the lower one adjacent to the "crick" was subject to flooding.

From the "dry brook" to Cottage Street was Eldridge's pasture which was also bounded on the north by Oak Street. The spring freshets made a pond that extended at least a quarter of the way up to Cottage Street.

Maple Street ended when the road grade began to be steeper. Mrs. Russell's home on the north side was the last house. Her large mowing or hay lot crossed the end of the road and extended some distance to the left and right of it. To the east, her lot went to the woods. Opposite her house was a very high hill on the top of which was a large

white house occupied by a Shay family—and in the back of it, a small brown house where the Black family lived. Henry Black was a teamster for many years.

None of these, Wells Street, School, Eldridge, Maple and Oak Streets extended as far as present maps show them, intersecting with others. Only cart paths went through to Autumn Street from the ends of Oak and School Streets. In



#27 Maple Street, home of Ed Dunn.

the area bounded west by the ends of these streets, east by the cart path that became Autumn Street, south of Charter Oak Street, and north to about where Cromwell Street is now, there were not streets. It was almost solidly occupied by quite large trees. Largely yellow (pitch) pine, a little white pine, and variety of hardwoods, oak and chestnut in top story. Much of this area had

been part of the big Eldridge estate. There was evidence that before the pines took over, their site had been under cultivation and the remains of a sizable apple orchard were evident.

Moving Along

Moving along Main Street, next to the site later taken by the "Cheney Block," was a wooden building owned by C.E. House (Charles). He had a tailor shop and haberdashery. His tailor was Isiah Symington who lived upstairs above the store. Mr. Symington had two sons, Harold and Richard.

After Mr. House moved his business into a new building, the old store was occupied by Rolston and Brookes Grocery—Frank Rolston and "Ned" Brookes.

C.E. House occupied the store in the south side of the first floor. There was still a green lawn between his old and new stores.

J.W. Hale used the north store on the corner as a dry-goods and dress shop. House's also sold shoes.

On the second floor J.W. Hale had an apartment on the south side. At the front part of north side were offices, one dentist's. The rear part of second floor was an apartment where the candy kitchen Couches' lived. Later, a dressmaker, Mrs. Smith.

The third floor of this building was the Odd Fellows Hall and accompanying small rooms. It was completely consumed by fire and replaced by the present building on the site.

A driveway from Oak Street led to Walter Luettgens Bicycle shop in the southeast corner of the basement floor.

Like all the other streets in town in the early 1890s, Oak Street was only surfaced with gravel from the Wells Street pit. Both sides had gutters lined with cobble stones also from the same source. There were only worn footpaths for sidewalks except where the abutting property owner improved them by spreading gravel or cinders from some mill fireroom. The town government had the gutters paved and the roadways kept passable but did not attend to the sidewalks. It was not absolutely necessary because folks could always walk in the road. Public debts were not popular then and the people enjoyed more peace of mind.

On the north side of Oak Street at Main were the apartments of two of the Ferris families who built the structure in 1880. On their property next to the east property line was No. 3's original hose house. Then came a double house painted the typical Purnell brown. Jacksons lived in the west side of it. Next was another Purnell house close to Oak Street but facing Purnell (also called Keeney Court). Then Oak Street crossed "the crick" on a low bridge. From the crick to Cottage Street was a large open lot. The lower (western) part of it was a pond in flood time. In the northeast corner of the lot was a large cellar hole overgrown with brush and briars. Dan Green had owned the house that burned there. Dan also owned the old house at the corner of Maple and Cottage. That was later occupied by one of his descendants, the late Attorney Fred Manning.

Mrs. Russell (generally referred to as "Grandma Russell") had a yard that extended along the south side of Oak Street from Main Street to a big barn (House's) abutting the roadway and next to the "crick." Later that barn was moved southward in back of House's tailor shop. "Grandma's" house went to the former barn site and became a barber shop. That cleared the way for construction of the first House and Hale building on Main Street.

From the "crick" to Cottage Street was Eldridge's pasture that extended to Maple Street. Mr. Pat Gorman purchased it and also the one-story, four store building for the site where S.M.H.S. (now Bennet) was to be built. That building was cut across at the middle and the sections moved to the crick on Oak Street and rejoined again. Another story was then added on top. It was known as a "Gorman" building.

In 1880, Ferris Bros. opened a hardware and stove store in a new wooden building on the northeast corner of Main and Oak Streets. It was a two-storied, flat-roofed building.

The store took up the north part of the first floor and the senior William Ferris had an apartment above the store. The south part was two "rents" up and down stairs and facing with their porches on the Oak Street side and an apple tree and grape arbor beyond the building on Oak Street.

The store itself had a veranda quite wide in both directions and up a couple of stair steps above sidewalk level. The sidewalks were only cinders from some boiler room.

The senior Mrs. Ferris had a door yard a little below the sidewalk level and occupying all the space where the Savings Bank of Manchester now stands. Her clothes lines for drying the family washings were along side the Main Street sidewalk.

On the Main Street side, the lawns were lined with square posts about a foot and a half high connected by loose hanging chains. Many falls were taken by boys trying to walk them, and some men coming from the saloon next door, with problems of balance, fell over them without trying to walk on them.

Mrs. Ferris' yard contained one nice apple tree and was bounded the full length of the north side with a hedge of rose bushes and some flower beds.

A driveway from Oak Street led to the tin and plumbing shop in the rear of the store; also to a two-story warehouse, a barn, a pigpen with two pigs, and a row of woodsheds. This was also the place that held No. 3's original fire hose pumper house. There was also a small shed in which were barrels of oil and gasoline, all to be drawn through spigots and measured with hand cans. There were no filling stations in Manchester then because there were no cars to patronize one.

When the building on the north side burned, the heat blistered paint and broke windows in the store building and set the corner of the warehouse ablaze several times but they were saved from destruction. As a safety precaution, the barrels of oil and gasoline were loaded into a dump cart and hauled away.

From Ferris Brothers to Watkins

After the old original store building was moved back from the corner of Main and Oak Streets a new three-story brick building was built. A Mr. Mercer was the general contractor.

The new building had three stores on the first floor. Next to Oak Street was Wicks and Quinn drugstore. Later Oliver Wicks left and Mr. James Quinn employed Albin Peterson who later had his own drug-



Ferris Block, home to the Williams Cash Grocery, Ferris Bros. and Wickes & Co. Pharmacy.

store in the north end of the Johnson building when it was built.

The north store was John Porter and later Ferd. Williams grocery store. The store in the middle was the Ferris Bros. hardware store. It extended to the rear of the building and then in a T-shape across in back of the other stores taking up the width of the building there.

In the basement floor was a box-ball bowling alley and the South Manchester Rifle Club had a range for smallbore low power practice and contests. The second story was occupied by offices and a studio with a small apartment in the rear. The third floor was lodge rooms and facilities. In the old wooden building, the William Ferris Sr. family had all gone. William Jr. had built the home on top of the hill west of Foster Street, south of Pearl Street. There had been a damaging fire in the building. None of the younger generation were interested in carrying on the business, so it was decided to close it out. Watkins Bros. bought the property and had the threestory brick building moved to where the old wooden building had been cleared, and turned it to face on Oak Street where it is now. Then the present Watkins building was built on the site from which the other brick building was removed.

The Savings Bank of Manchester now occupies Mrs. Ferris' door yard where she hung out the family wash to dry. The older wooden store building was moved to the east end of the property and turned to face Oak Street.

Mr. George Ferris left the building and built the large home atop the hill on Pine Street, next to arch Street. The second floor became two apartments for the William Sr. and William Jr. families. Two stores were on the first floor. In the east one, Frank Balkner had a shoe store. In the west one, a Mr. Johnson had a jewelry and clock store. It was later Miss Effie Richardson's millinery store.

Going north from Oak Street, on the east side of Main, was a row of hitching posts lined up for customers to park their horses just as they do now with their cars.

About opposite St. James Street was the American Hotel building with offices on the first floor north corner. The south half of the first floor was a saloon run by Mr. Patrick (Patsy) Calhoun. Mr. Dan Phelon was proprietor of the hotel. In the rear were barn and horse stables reached by a driveway between the building and Mrs. Ferris' rose bushes. Dan also raised pedigreed fox terrier dogs to sell.

Just north of Weldon's was a two-story wooden building. The south store was for candy making and selling along with fruit, roasted peanuts, etc. The proprietors were recent arrivals from Italy. The lettering on the awning across the store front was "Felix Candy Manufacture Farr."

The store space north of Farr's was a bakery at one time but was put out of business by a fire. It was rebuilt for other occupants. Mr. Patrick (Patsy) O'Leary had a big white lunch cart next to the sidewalk. When he disposed of the cart, he opened a restaurant there.

West Side of Main Street

When O.C. was a boy, the land on the west side of Main Street was higher than on the east side all the way from Forest Street to Center Street. As the business center of town developed, the west side has been cut down and east side filled until the terrain has little to suggest how it formerly looked.

According to O.C.'s earliest memories, next to the north of the old South Methodist Church was the parsonage, which was later moved to Spruce Street. Next was the Tiffany home. Mr. Tiffany was a jeweler with a store on Main Street. In later years, an "open air" school was built north of Tiffany's and used for several years for children who needed special care to improve their health conditions.

Then, next in line, was the "teachers hall." It was said to have been a former hotel or men's boarding house, but had been added to and used to house the "Normalite" teachers. They were undergraduates from the New Britain Normal School (now Central Connecticut State College). They came in groups twice a year for practice teaching under the supervision of salaried teachers in the Ninth District School.

North of teachers hall a Mrs. Rogers owned a small house about where the Bennet flag pole now stands. In it, Dr. Maine, dentist, had his office.

The "Con" Sullivan building was located where Bennet Junior High now stands, set back from the street more than the school is and higher on the hill. It was one-story high, flat-roofed and had four stores. B.F. Ball had two stores on the south end, and then there was a Chinese laundry, and Hugh Moriarty's hardware, stoves and tinshop in the north end. Rood's livery stable was in the rear where the tennis courts are now

Mr. B.F. Ball had the south store in the "Con" Sullivan building. He sold fruit, candy, bottled soft

drinks and school supplies and various other things to please the young fry. He also had a showcase of cigars, tobacco, pipes, etc. for men.

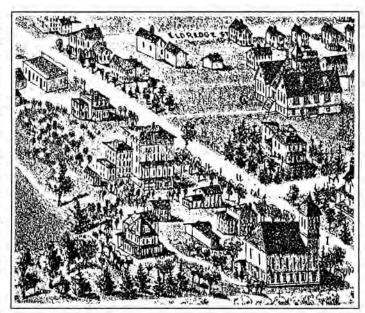
When it became necessary for the tenants to move out to permit building the new high school, Hugh Moriarty located at the northeast corner of Main and Maple until he had his own building put up on the south side of Birch Street near Spruce.

A little north of the "Con" Sullivan building was the residence of Mr. Fred A. Verplanck, superintendent of schools. Then a house occupied by a Dielensnieder family on the corner of Main Street and "New Mill Hill Road" now Forest Street.

The old Sullivan building was purchased by Mr. Pat Gorman, cut into two pieces and moved to Oak Street where it was put together again and they had a second story added on top.

Main Street-West Side of School Street

All of the Main Street frontage from Forest Street to St. James Street was Mr. James Cheney's lawn. The middle part of it was a very steep bank rising from the edge of the sidewalk space to about the height of



The "Con" Sullivan Building (with flat roof) can be seen in the upper left corner of this aerial view.

that bank which is now left west of the stores and parking lot. From that point, the ground sloped at a more gradual grade to where the houses sat, about where the highest apartment buildings are now. The banks left by cutting Main Street through the hill had all been turfed over on both sides of Main Street at O.C.'s earliest recollections.

There was a wonderful place for coasting from the top of the hill, out at the intersection of Main and Forest.

The area between Forest and Park was where Mr. Jim, Mr. John S., and Mr. R.O. (Dick) Cheney and Mr. Maro S. Chapman had their homes. Around them were many large chestnut trees. If one got there first in an early morning following a very frosty fall night, he would find the burrs opened wide and a plentiful scattering of nuts on the ground. It was possible to gather a good quantity, take them to a store and sell them for five cents a quart, before going to school in the morning. Mrs. Chapman seemed to enjoy coming out to help a boy fill his chestnut bag.

It was Mr. Chapman who established the Hartford, Manchester and Rockville Tramway Co. to give Manchester its first electric trolley line. His daughter married Elwood S. Ela, publisher and editor of The Manchester Herald.

St. James Parish house where the priests lived was right where it is now as long as O. C. can remember. But between it and Park Street was the home and office of Richard (Dick) Rich, real estate and insurance agent. There were fine shade trees around the house. It required a flight of several steps to get from the sidewalk up to the lawn. Next on Park Street was Finley's, then Walter Cheney (later Sherwood Cheney) at Park and St. James Streets.

"S" as in Smythe, Salvation, and Spruce Street

On the east side of Spruce Street, bordering on the south side of the "Sand-Blow," was the large lawn of the Smythe family home. Yes, the home of Francis "Bub" Smythe who played on the original "G" basketball team.

Theirs was a brick house that sat far back from the street. There was a barn where they kept one cow.

Set back far from Spruce Street, about where Florence Street is now, was the home and barn of William "Billie" Hewitt. He was a kerosene oil peddler, and the only competitor of Mr. Moffitt on Maple Street. Later, Mr. Stroker had a retail wood yard there and sawed cord wood into stove lengths with a power buzz saw that could be heard for blocks around.

The large apartment building on the northeast corner of Spruce and Florence was the meeting place for the Salvation Army before they built a new "barracks" across the street where the Nathan Hale School is now. On the west side of Spruce Street, next to where the cemetery brook ditch crossed, was a small building—Woodhouse's—in which was a saloon; later a store and then "Bill" Green's bicycle shop. In the rear was a house where a McCann family lived.

Where the Nathan Hale School stands was the Salvation Army barracks. We never heard the word Citadel used until the new building was erected as it is now on Main Street. O. C. thinks when the barracks was moved it was located on the south side of

Birch Street between Main and Cottage and converted into a commercial building. That move was to make a site for building the school.

Just west of Spruce on the south side of Birch Street, Hugh Moriarty built that large wooden building for his hardware and stove store and tinshop after being located at two places on Main Street.

On the east side of Spruce Street Mr. William H. Schieldge operated a printing shop which was later conducted by his son, William C., for many years.

The old South Methodist Church parsonage was moved from Main Street to the west side of Spruce Street where it is today next to the old Abbey home that faces on Charter Oak Street. Ed Scranton lived on the east side of the street. He drove a one-horse wagon selling groceries in the farming areas around the outskirts of South Manchester.

He was a genial man and very well liked by his customers. In later years, he built a small store on the west side of the street opposite his home. A Keefe family lived on the southeast corner of Spruce and Wells.

On the northeast corner was Jim Burke's grocery and grain store on top of a bank several steps higher than the road. Burke's saloon was in the rear of the store. The law then required all saloons to close at 11 p.m. For some time after that hour, the sidewalks were not wide enough for many men who wound up in the streets or someone's door yard.

Just north of Burke's store and saloon on Spruce Street stood the town "lock-up." It was a brick one-story building with a steel plate door on the street side and two barred windows on the north side. Inside were two cells with front and doors of steel bars and locks. The cells took up about the south half of the building. In front of the cells was a wood-burning stove, a pile of four-foot cord wood, a sawhorse, and buck saw. O. C. doesn't think the cells were usually locked. Just the outside door. It was chiefly used to keep drunks overnight when found in a helpless condition that caused a complaint to be lodged with one of the constables.

That large house on the northeast corner of Spruce and School belonged to Achilles Moreau, who was a harness maker with a shop and store at corner of Main and Eldridge Streets. Later, Edgars lived there. Yes, the well-known baseball player, "Pop" Edgar. Next came Foys. Lee Foy was a horse lover and was seldom seen on the street without a horse. Houses were not crowded on Spruce Street, and there were many open lots big enough for playing sandlot baseball.

Dwyer lived on the corner of Spruce and Maple and "Kittie" Burke across Maple. An open lot,, mostly in gardens, took up all the space between the corner houses at Maple and Oak Streets east of Spruce.

The Woods and Autumn Street

The earliest O.C. can remember of Autumn Street was a house perched high on the hill west of the road north of the bridge near Charter Oak Street. That house burned down later. There was not another house before reaching Porter Street.

On the west side, there was solid woods the whole way except a small, cleared lot north of where Oak Street is now, and a farm north of the cemetery brook (which has since disappeared in pipe underground). That farm became the "Hackney Farm," so called, where beautifully stylish carriage horses were bred and trained.

On the east side of Autumn cart path was mostly open farm land, part of the "Mike" Maguire dairy farm. Overhanging the path a little north of where Oak Street now crosses were two large and old black oxheart cherry trees. Although the trees were never sprayed or given any care, those cherries ripened large and sound.

There was a spring in a small clump of trees about opposite where the cemetery is now.

The West Side of South Main Street

Let's take a walk down the west side of South Main Street which then went straight through from Hartford Road to Hackmatack across a big valley.

At the corner of Hartford Road was a socalled watering trough. It was an upright steel cylinder about three feet in diameter and three feet tall. A small piped stream of reservoir water was constantly trickling in, except when frozen, to replace what the horses or oxen drank. The overflow of the slightly lower south rim followed a little ditch down the hill to the brook.

The open area at the street intersection in front of the trough was the forum of



Mary Cheney (far left) and friends.

South Manchester. Here were held the political rallies, the organization of parades, and occasionally a fight almost big enough to be called a riot.

Here also the fly-by-night "fakers" set up their stands and kerosene torches to sell all kinds of trash and nostrums. To assemble an audience, they usually shouted or sang while performing some sleight-of-hand tricks. Sometimes with musical instruments or feats of strength. One, stripped to the waist, used himself as a human pin cushion until he looked like the real thing.

Infection? Pooh! Germs had never heard of it then.

Going down to the foot of the hill, there was the raceway by which water from Gould's Pond was let along the contour of the hill until the more rapid fall of the brook created enough head between the two levels to generate power. Probably this was the power source for the original Cheney's silk sewing thread factory and the grist mill that preceded it; in later years its water (called "ditch water") was piped into the "old mill" on Hartford Road, and used for washing furnishers and cold boxes and hosing down the concrete floor in the printing room.

The brook followed the foot of the hill and was the north boundary of a broad meadow. The south boundary was the Globe Hollow brook which ran nearly parallel until it turned to join the other behind the old Cheney homestead. This valley was very beautiful, with a vast variety of wild flowers. Miss Mary Cheney had her gardens here, which she generously shared with visitors. That valley was known to the townspeople as "Paradise" and rightly so.

The new Rt. 6 (I-384) highway has completely obliterated this valley. The millrace is gone. The south brook has been put into a pipe, never to be seen or played in by children again. Ho Hum!

Hackmatack Street took its name from the trees that the Indians used for their dugout canoes. They are also known as Tamarack (probably also an Indian name) and Larch. They grew straight and were easily dug out by fire-charring and scraping with sharp-edged stone chips.

Farther south was the Watkins homestead before Ernest and Clarence Watkins built their fine mansions to north of it.

Then came Dwight Bidwell's home down on the north side of the Globe Hollow brook. It stood lower than the present highway which dipped quite steeply to cross on a wooden bridge.

Going south, there were several farm houses with large old sugar maples. The hill before reaching Line Street was known as Tracy's Hill because a family of that name lived in the house under the south side of the hill and west side of the road. Later, Richmonds lived there.

The military rifle range used by Company G had its firing line at the base of the steep hill below where a golf tee is now. The target butt was across the field and swamp to the northeast at the bottom of the hill where the old Nike site was later.

Digny's Ocean

There was not a concrete, black top or macadam road in town. If a road had anything added to form a hard surface it was gravel, usually from a very large pit at the east end of Wells Street in the woods near Spruce Street. There was no power equipment for loading, hauling or spreading road material. It was shoveled by hand into one or two horse dump carts then dumped in piles and spread by hand. When dumped, the gravel was compacted more than between piles where it was thrown so after traffic had been using it for a while the road was very wavy. John Digny was the town road foreman and South Main Street was known as "John Digny's Ocean."

East Side of South Main

On the southeast corner of Main and Charter Oak Street stood the old "Cheney Block" a two-story with basement, wooden frame, flat tin roof and painted the early Cheney slate-gray. William H. Cheney had his general store on the street level floor and carried in stock almost everything needed by people of that time. That was the business center of South Manchester.

When the post office moved out, Madden brothers (Bill and Maurice) took over with a bicycle sales and repair shop. The Manchester Weekly News had its printery on the second floor until it was gutted badly by fire. Then it moved to a lower floor in a

building next door to the south. William Flood was the publisher and editor. Later, his son, Joe Flood, took over the business, but was not able to compete successfully with The Herald, so closed out the business.

This old business landmark was later home to several business concerns until, with the other Cheney buildings south of it, it was razed in 1969 in connection with the building of the new Rt. 6 (I-384) highway.

Just east of South Main Street at the brook was the dam of "Gould's Pond." Next, south of the pond, was George Gould's home. He was the sexton of the South Methodist Church.

Next, south of Gould's, was Robert (Bob) Blyth's candy and notion store on the corner of Nebo Ave., a dead-end but long enough to have about a dozen homes on it. All that was removed for the new highway. On the opposite side of Nebo Ave. was Couche's blacksmith shop, later operated by Dennis Wall. Later a man named Matchett had a blacksmith shop and carriage repair a little south of where Globe Hollow brook crossed under Main Street. Still a little farther south was Franklin's carriage and blind shop over the brook. Later "Pete" Baldwin's paint shop. The Franklins had the big flatroofed house on the knoll east of the brook. It was later home of the Seastrand family of fish peddlers for many years. It also had to make way for the new road work.

Next, to the south, was a cow pasture, through which went a well-beaten path worn by bare feet going to and from swimming at the old Globe Hollow pond. On the east side of South Main, about opposite the entrance to Hackmatack Street, was the home of the Weiman family. All musicians, they composed their own dance orchestra. Many pleasant evenings of dancing were enjoyed in Manchester for years to the good music of the Weimans.

Next, south of them, was the home of a Taylor family. High on the hill in the fork of South Main and Lewis Streets was the home of Charles Bloom, a building contractor. His daughter, Ella, became Mrs. Fred Bendall.

Next south was the Harriet Brown home with its narrow "secret" stairs up from the kitchen and cellar that was little more than a crawl space. Later it was fitted with more modern conveniences and used for a few years as a public tea room.

Next south was the school house. It stood slightly southward of the present school that replaced it. Only its big red sandstone step remains in place near the pond. There were no cars or motorcycles then, so fellows took the girls for evening walks, and that stone step was a convenient place to sit (to rest, of course, even if you were not tired). O. C. knows.

South of the brook was the Joe Albiston farm, where the golf course and Country Club building is. His home was the house on the northeast corner of South Main and Fern Streets.

O. C. does not remember who lived on the south corner then. Later, it was occupied by the Miners.

About where the Frank Simon home is there was a very old house, the home of Gardiner Warren. The ceilings and doors were very low.

Just north of Frank Simon's home is where his father Scott Simon had lived. That house was built and lived in by Mark Cheney.

There had been a house on the east side of Main Street opposite the Tracy home on the south slope of the hill, but it was only a cellar hole when O. C. was a boy, born in the 1880s.

At the corner of Main and Line Streets was the home of Harold ("Cap") Keeney Sr. About 100 yards back of the house and barns, "Cap" had a cider mill. Instead of using burlap to wrap the pulp in as at modern mills, it was spread between layers of clean straw. Everyone who visited the mill was welcome to drink all the sweet cider he wanted. Apples were ground into pulp by horse-power. We used to feel pity for the horse that had to walk continually up hill on the tread mill without ever getting ahead.

Toby's Hill and the Big Swamp

The site of East Catholic High School was know as "Toby's Hill" because it was said to have been the place Chief Toby and the remnants of his tribe lived when the Hop Brook area was first settled by the white colonists.

The big swamp in back of it was the

place of refuge and hiding when hostile tribes were coming to raid the village. O. C. believes the more probable location for the village was atop the high bluff that rises behind the old E.E. Hilliard Mills. That had a wide view to the north and east, the directions from which hostile Mohawks and Narragansetts were wont to come. And before the New State Road was built the big swamp extended nearly to Adams Street.

"Toby's Hill," covered with large trees, mostly old white pines, was known as R.O. ("Dick") Cheney's woods, in O. C.'s day.

Storyteller: Herbert Swanson The Manchester Herald, 9/14/66 and from research furnished by James McVeigh

AROUND AND ABOUT

Down Main Street, South Manchester

Walking down Main Street on a Sunday morning at the turn of the century, you were apt to see a display of spirited horse racing, for some of Manchester's horse fanciers would be out with their pacers and trotters and sulkies for a few trial runs. A number of Manchester's leading citizens of the day were ardent horse fans and had their own entries in the nearby country fairs.

Being just a dirt road, Main Street made a good race course. Back in the early part of the century, massive trees actually grew in a parklet of grass which extended from about Ford to Bissell Streets. It was possible to drive on both sides of this park.

The east side of Main Street, had a score of houses in the early twentieth century, some of them also used by doctors as offices, and plenty of open lots.

Hunniford Farm

Beginning at the Center, the Hunniford house, facing Center Street, was situated where the Odd Fellows Building now stands. The Hunnifords were one of Manchester's early Irish settlers. The section roughly bounded by East Center Street, Summit, Flower and Main Streets was known as the Hunniford Farm. Their Main Street holdings also included land bounded by East Center, Main and Pearl Streets to a point where Madison Street is now located.

The Hunniford house was followed by a grocery store which was operated at the time by John Alvord as a temporary store when his Manchester Green store was burned out, and later by George Howe and then James Robinson.

Next was a duplex house, half of which was the home of the Curran family and



Main Street, Manchester, looking south.

which was later moved to Ford Street. South of Ford Street was another double house, one side of which was owned by the Hunniford family and the other by John Hyde, father of Judge William Hyde. The John Taylor family, followed by the Warnock family, lived in the Hunniford side for a good many years.

The Rolston home and the Abram Smith home were separated by Hazel Street and on the north corner of Main and Pearl where the Sheridan building now stands, the Robert Deweys lived, parents of Robert and Albert T. Dewey who later bought out Fred Mills, stationer and eventually formed the Dewey-Richman company.

The John Dougan family lived on the south corner of Pearl and Main Streets and to the rear was a barn in which George Smith started Manchester's first garage. The Brainard home stood on the north corner of the street named after the family . . . Brainard Place . . . and Main Street. The south corner was an empty lot which George Anderson closed in with an eightfoot cloth fence during the summers and in which the new innovation, moving pictures were shown.

Medical Staff

Manchester must have been a healthy place in the early 1900s. There were eight doctors and dentists on Main Street alone, to make sure folks were well. Some lived and practiced from homes; others used homes as offices; and two doctors had stores as offices. A brick house, now at the rear of the blocks built by Aaron Johnson, was the home of the Treat family, then Pierre Reese, and later, Dr. Noah Burr used it as a home and office.

At the north corner of Main and Bissell Streets was the residence and office of Dr. D.C.Y. Moore. Between Bissell and Birch Streets were the residences of the Bissell-Purnell families, the Herbert B. House home, built around 1910, and the Charles House home, later moved to Birch Street.

Across Main Street at the corner of Locust was the home and office of Dr. William Gillam. One of Manchester's best known photographers of the time, E. Martin Ogden lived where the Tinker Block now stands, and had his studio in the second floor of a building which formerly occupied the spot where the Purnell Building now stands. This building was moved to Purnell Place and was later used as the home of Hose Co. No. 3.

Next to the Ogden residence was the shoe repair shop of John Nelson, then the watch and clock repair shop of Jules LaLange. Mrs. Bolen had a dressmaking shop there on the second floor.

Shopping area

The section of Main Street from Purnell Place to Maple Street was the hub of activities during the turn of the century, nearly every inch of space devoted to commerce. In the Park building, built by Samuel Purnell and now the home of Burton's and Harrison's, John Porter and Oliver Toop, two former clerks of the B.S. Carrier Grocery at Highland Park, conducted a popular "Citizens Cash Grocery" store. Fred Mill's stationery store was followed by William Carr's harness shop, Harry Fay's bicycle store and Wilson's shoe store. This shoe store was later operated by Alexander Rogers, father of Willard B. Rogers. Karle Kulle had a cigar factory on the second floor of this building.

Next, the brick building, now occupied by Marlows, was the Orford Hotel, built by Samuel Purnell and owned by James O'Brien. Later operators of the Orford were William Tucker and Michael J. Moriarty. John and William Joyce's barber shop was located next door to the hotel lobby and then Fred T. Blish had his Blish hardware store where Quinn's Pharmacy is now located. Patrick (Patsy) O'Leary had this same location for his restaurant, but at the time, he conducted Manchester's first lunch room in a cart a few steps further south.

Fred Horton had a drug store in the Orford building and then followed a Chinese laundry, Selwitz shoe repair shop, Walter Luettgen's bicycle shop, Tom Scott's funeral home, which was later another site of O'Leary's restaurant, and John Cairn's Jewelry Shop then Felix Farr's confectionery store.

In the building which now houses Regal Men's Shop, Patrick Dougherty opened a barber shop in the section vacated by Weldon Drug Co. The original Weldon Drug was located in the center of the building with the south corner reserved for Dr. Thomas Weldon.

Manchester's first movie theater, "the Central" conducted by James Ryan was south on the street, followed by the American Hotel managed by Daniel Phelan. Saloons were always a part of the old time hotels and the American was no exception. The saloon was operated first by Phelon, then Edgar and later Patrick Calhoun.

Ferris Bros., plumbers and tinsmiths, had a brick building at the corner of Oak and Main Streets which was later moved around the corner to face Oak Street being replaced by the building which is now 13-17 Oak Street.

Watkins Bros. made this old building a part of its new store in 1920. E.M. House, father of Charles E. and grandfather of Herbert, had his home on the site of the present House and Hale building with his tailoring shop occupying a wooden building next door to the south. Two other residences were located at the rear of these two buildings, one having been occupied by the Gleason family.

The Cheney Block, built in 1904 to take care of the stores that were burned out when the Cheney building at the corner of Charter Oak and South Main Streets burned, was occupied by a Harry Martin, clothier; George Smith, shoes; Tiffany Jewelers; the Cheney Drug Store; and South Manchester Post Office. Milo Russell. one of Manchester's leading painters of the day, lived to the south of the Cheney block and on the north corner of Main and Maple was a store that was used first as a tinshop by Hugh Moriarty, then a meat market by William Grant, and, before being demolished for a new building, by George Strant's feed store.

Library

There are those old-timers in town who will still remember the big Eldridge home-stead of three-story French Mansard roof design, located south of Maple Street. After the school fire in 1913, it was used as the town's public library. Dr. Mark Bradley had a residence at the corner of Eldridge Street which served also as his office.

Across Eldridge Street on Main, Dr.

William Tinker occupied a store as an office, followed next door by Oliver Magnell, tailor, and then the building Watkins Bros. built as a furniture store in 1880 and now occupied by Keith's.

On the west side of Main Street on the present Bennet Junior High School property was a one-story wooden building with porch occupied by a Chinese laundry, B.F. Ball's candy shop and Hugh Moriarty's first Main Street tin shop. This building was later cut in half and one part moved to Oak Street in order to make way for the new high school building. A second floor was added and the building is now 40 Oak Street. Dr. Myron M. Maine's residence and dental office was to the south of these stores, and a livery stable operated by Rollin Rood was at the rear. Rood later became postmaster and a Manchester police officer.

> Storyteller: John Hyde as told to Betty Walker, 11/6/74

TOP OF MAIN

When I was a young boy, my home was just below the center on Ford Street. I was born in a house back about 300 yards from Main Street, on what is now Ford Street and then we moved into the house at the corner of Main and Ford Street. At one time when the house was built, it was on a level with Main Street—two different times they filled in Main Street to reduce the grade so that left our house in the hole.

First we had a gas station—it was filled in for the gas station, then Howland's Real Estate office. It was painted with two different colors—that house at Main and Ford Streets.

The house was owned by my uncle, Bill Hunniford. When he died, he left the south part of the house to my mother outright and the north side of the house he left to my brother Bill with the proviso that Mrs. Hunniford who survived would have the life use of it. Well, in all such cases where there is money involved, there was a family scrap—Mrs. Hunniford had a fallout with

my family and for years she didn't make any repairs—it needed painting very badly so my father decided to have our half of the house painted—perhaps shaming her into having her side painted. Our half was painted and she refused to have her house taken care of.

We had no electricity, no running water. We got our water from a cistern. Most of the houses in that vicinity had cisterns-a beehive-shaped cistern underground that caught the rain water from the house-then from the cistern was pumped into the house with a hand pump. Of course, in the wintertime it froze sometime-then that was a problem to get it thawed out. In the wintertime we drank that water. In the summertime we went to Center Springs Park for water. The spring is down in back of the Congregational Church-I would say directly north of the Congregational Churchdown at the Bigelow Brook. There was quite a grade to get down to the brook to the spring, but it was pretty hard work climbing back with pails of water. We carried two pails through the woods. The church was there and still is, but different. They made the church over-part of the structure is still there I believe. Behind it to the west were car barns. People came to church some days with horse carriages-they put their horses under the shed. We didn't go to that church, which was right about where it is now.

I went to the Ninth District School on School Street through junior class in high school. I left to go to business college. A lot of the young people in those days went to business college rather than regular colleges. So I went to Huntsinger's Business College in Hartford by trolley.

After I attended business college, I went to work for the Whitney Chain Co.—that was located down at the Colt factory on Huyshope Avenue in Hartford. I worked there a short while, then I came to work for the Thrasher Clock Co., which was then in the Herald Building on Hilliard Street—the building is still there. It was a digital clock invented by a Mr. Thrasher—he came from New Haven—he was superintendent for the Society for the Prevention of Bias in Connecticut. He invented this clock and I don't know how, but he came to

Manchester. I was Thrasher's bookkeeper until he went out, then I went to Cheney Bros. I rode a bicycle to get there . . . or walked. Funny thing, bicycles went out of style for a while and I used to walk to work. The route I took was by way of Chestnut Street. Chestnut Street originally extended into Main Street just about opposite our house on Main Street where the Mary Cheney Library is now. They closed that portion of Chestnut Street when they revamped the park.

It was Frank Cheney's widow who gave the park, but the library was named for Miss Mary Cheney, daughter of Frank Cheney. As long as I can remember, Miss Mary Cheney subscribed to the libraries until she died, she was on the committee.

Nostalgia . . . and Memories

When we first moved to Main Street, there was gas on the street. There were one or two gas lights and I remember a man coming around every night to light them, but I think we got water about 1890 at my house-in the 1890s Cheney's were extending their water. I believe it was about 1890 when they got up to Center Street. I don't remember when we first got electricity. We used kerosene . . . and coal. No furnacescoal parlor stoves which was a task to bring down from the attic when the cold weather started. Everybody had coal bins-we had a cellar. We had one parlor stove and a kitchen stove, but the kitchen stove we kept all year. My mother used to like to cook with wood-she thought she got better results from wood than she did with coal. It set the chimney on fire quite often. Many mornings I had to get up in my shirttails and rush downstairs and take the stove pipe out of the house. We bought wood by the cord-sometimes ready for the fire and sometimes in four-foot lengths and chop it. Then, the coal was used overnight.

Remember many years ago, from the Center to the north—that was country. There was one house just beyond the Bigelow Brook on the right hand side there was a blacksmith shop on the corner. Charlie Ratenberg had a blacksmith shop there. Very few houses from there to the north end. We walked the route before the trolleys.

The only paved road in town was a tar walk from the corner of Hartford Road down to the Cheney Mills. It was a favorite walk on Sunday nights for different people.

In heavy snow times originally, in the early days when Cheney Bros. wanted to get their help to work, they sent plows driven by a horse—drawn by a horse for the streets below the Center, and also the Town did some plowing by horsepower. They did this from the town offices across from Center Church mostly for the south end. In those days, when it snowed, you had to walk unless you had a horse.

Going east on Center Street, there were very few houses on Center Street in the early days. It was two lanes with a park in the middle for a ways then two lanes up past Manchester Green, which was like the edge of town. Manchester Green was a small settlement—the Glastonbury Knitting Co. was there—the mill still stands.

Storyteller: John A. Johnston from The Manchester Herald

AROUND AND ABOUT

There are many places around town drastically transformed from their onceupon-a-time looks. Some persons will be able to recall buying meat; having prescriptions filled; indulging in a milkshake, ice cream soda or sundae (neé college ice); having lunch; or getting a haircut in the Odd Fellows Building. Others now or soon can boast of sleeping or dining where looms once crashed or reels spun.

The Chestnut Street Centennial Apartments are on the site of a favorite neighborhood sliding place. This was Treat's Hill. Not overly long, but steep, its summit provided a startling place for many rips (never called rippers).

At the hill's foot began the long sweep down Garden Street. Then came the decision to turn left toward the roundhouse or right into the coal yards, about where Mr. Steak is.

At one time or another Harry Seaman,

Archie Hayes and Samuel Richardson distributed pea, buckwheat and chestnut coal from there. What a delight for a youngster to be on the spot when a train of coal cars pulled onto the siding, opened their bellies, and dumped their contents into the bins.

The central fire station is approximately where motormen and conductors began and ended their daily runs to Hartford or through town at the Connecticut Co. office. Tracks from the Center Street line ran past it and back to the car barn.

Southern New England Telephone is now located where an automobile agency and garage stood. Stephens and Conkey moved there from Center and Knox Streets. Hoffman Bros. later took over the East Center Street property.

A few yards down Main Street at the Connecticut National Bank location. Clarence Barlow conducted his auto and almost any other kind of repair business in a small and cluttered wooden shop.

Still farther along on the street, the renovated supermarket that became Manchester State Bank had replaced an early library. It was also a renovation of the Eldridge family home.

Parkade shoppers walk on at least a portion of what was once euphemistically called a sanitary land fill. Manchester's governing board of that period had to obtain Cheney permission to use the land for a dump, as it was better known.

About a mile apart on Hop Brook, the Rogers family built and operated two of its three local paper mills. The Charter Oak Street one has since been used by two municipal departments, first the Water and Sewer, and now the Park and Cemetery. At the one at Hartford Road and Prospect Street, which houses several small enterprises, a tragic explosion occurred more than a half century ago. But that accident is a story for another day.

The "Golf Lots"

The high school's Memorial Field may provide a variety of athletic facilities; however it lacks the rustic charm of the old Golf Lots, which it replaced. The sweep of land between East Center Street and East Middle Turnpike was the setting for many events, not all involving sports, until its character change in the 1950s.

Two hills, the south one still there, formed a rough ampitheatre. The north one was removed to make a level school site. Part of the rough terrain between was once the Oxford Golf Course. Some of its natural hazards were still evident when the transformation to its present usage took place.

The shingled clubhouse was near the crest of the south hill. Jack Cheney lived where the Ivy Manor apartments stand. Rumor has it he purveyed refreshments to the clubhouse during the "noble experiment" of Prohibition.

The hills were a natural for the annual Fourth of July fireworks display. The professionals set their equipment for the show atop the north hill. The south one became a grassy grandstand for spectators. Everyone had an unobstructed view.

In the summer of 1923, the town celebrated the 100th anniversary of its becoming a municipality. Oldtimers still refer to the week-long series of events as The Centennial. The parade through town reviewed the historical past with emphasis upon—what else?—the silk industry.

Most, if not all of those in the parade capped the observance by taking individual or collective roles in a gigantic pageant staged in the Golf Lots. Indians were even imported from Maine to lend authenticity to historical events. Hatch's Band from Hartford played appropriate concert music about where the baseball dugout was.

Storyteller: Elmore "Binky" Hohenthal from The Manchester Herald, 12/11/70

OLD OLCOTT STREET

As I watched the Manafort Co. demolish the house at 467 Center Street, in which I was born, to make way for a Burger King (hamburger joints are getting thicker than gas stations), I had a few thoughts for a story to give the Old Codger about Olcott Street. You see, when I was born in 1905, that 467 Center Street was then 38 Olcott Street.

Olcott Street, in those days, began at the intersection of Center and West Center Streets and ran westerly to Bunce's Corner which today is the intersection of West Center, Spencer and Hartford Road. In those days, this part of town was known as Frog Hollow.

North Side

Let me take you on a trip down Olcott Street from its beginning to its end; let's go down the north side first. The Moynihans lived in one of the two houses that were torn down recently to make way for Lynch Motors. Just to the west of Lilac Street was the Shea homestead. It is between the West Side Package Store and Bolands—they were the ones who originally built the gas station; they were also related to Harold Garrity who is a prominent attorney in

town today.

The Kanehls ran a soda shop on the northwest corner of Griswold Street and they lived upstairs. Mr. Kanehl was also a builder.

A little further west, but in the rear, was the Lashinske's home—a large, flatroofed house—it's still there. This is where Charley and Art Lashinske lived. Art was a captain of Hose and Ladder Co. No. 1 for years.



Orford Golf Club House, So. Manchester, "The Golf Lots".

Next came the Hunniford's store which was directly across from where Willie's Steak House is today. The store was in front and the family lived in the rear and upstairs. Bill Hunniford, Jr. was my best man when I was married February 13, 1932.

The house on the northeast corner of Roosevelt Street was built by my uncle Joseph Nipper who, because of his wife's health, moved to California in 1921, taking his five young sons with him.

On the other corner is the house where Arthur Bronkie lived. He had a brother, Herman, who played third base for the St. Louis Browns.

My Homestead

Then came my homestead, 38 Olcott Street, the house just demolished. I have many memories about the old homesteadhere are a few. Maybe the most vivid is when my mother died in 1917 after a cancer operation; I was only 12. My grandfather Nipper, who lived with us, kind of took me under his wing. He lived to be 90. I remember our old white horse Fanny-the carriage with the fringe on top, our first car-a 1910 Cadillac purchased from Brown Thompson Co. in Hartford in 1912 (I have several pictures of it), our phone number, 199. We were the last house in the old Ninth School District-kids west of us went to the Bunce School.

Next came the John Stone farm with its big barns and sheds (they always had bobtailed cats; the story was they chopped off their tails when they were born), their smoke house and the pond and hills in the rear where we went sliding and skating. John was Alex Jarvis' uncle and Alex developed this farm and lives there today, four houses from mine.

Matt's Father

On the northwest corner of Perkins Street is the home where Pat Moriarty lived: he was Matt's father and he was a barber. We kids used to go to this house to get our hair cut for a dime or so. On the corner of Stone Street ,where the Johnson Apartments are today, was the Merkel homestead. I believe all the land to this point on the north side belonged to the Griswold family at one time, one of whom was burned to death with his horses in the woods across from my house. There is a stone marker there in his memory.

In those days, the trolley cars ran down the north side of the street; there was a switch at McKee Street (you guessed itcalled McKee switch). Then where Olcott Street begins today, they crossed to the south side. In the area where McCann's filling station is today, stood what we called the blue house, because of its color; this was the home of the Burkes, where the mother of Tom and Walter Ferguson, co-publishers of The Manchester Herald, lived. Further down Olcott Street across from Verplanck School up in the woods in Mrs. Faulkner's home; she was Walter Olcott's sister-this is part of the Olcott farm-hence the name Olcott Street.

Before you got to the Bunce Corner there was one more house; it was on the corner by the Town Garage and belonged to the Hayes family; it was built of granite. Next came the Bunce School which today is the home of the Grange. This completes our tour down the north side of Olcott Street.

South Side

Let's go back to the beginning and take a trip down the south side.

First place I remember was Nelson's blacksmith shop which was located where the First National parking lot is today. Then came the big Jarvis house and its large barns and shed which reached to West Center Street. The Matchets also lived there. The Proctor Farm came nexttheir house was about where the First National is today. The farm covered all the area between Olcott Street, West Center, as far west as Dougherty Street; there was a pond on it which we used for skating.

Next house was at the corner of McKee Street. As I remember, it contained a tailor shop; the building is still there. This is also where the McKee switch was located on the trolley line. Next was Harrison's store, still doing business under another name. Just west of Harrison's store, behind the house that now is the real estate office, was a place called Thompson Bungalow-it was a well-known place for its dances and social parties in the early 20s.

Schaller Home

Next came the Schaller home where Henry lived; he developed Schaller Motors where McCann's service station and the Honda is today. Bob, who ran Manchester Olds, and Gus, who runs the Olds place in New Britain, also lived here. There were a couple more brothers and at least four sisters—quite a large family.

There was only one more house, about where South Adams Street crosses Olcott today—it bordered on the Olcott farm and was owned by the Tiecherts, who ran a small farm.

All the rest of the land west to the Bunce's farm and south to West Center Street was owned by the Olcotts who raised strawberries. We kids used to get up at 4 a.m. and pick strawberries for two cents a basket; they had to be in Hartford at seven for the market. They also were famous for different species of grasses that they grew, on land that is just about where Verplanck School is today. Then came the Tar Brook, and the meadows where they raised hay and piled it in huge stacks. The last house on Olcott Street was the Bunce Homestead that dated back to the days before the Civil War.

This is the story about Olcott Street to the best of my knowledge, and I hope you enjoyed it.

> Storyteller: Reginald Baker as told to Betty Walker, 2/24/72

THE PERKINS HOMESTEAD

310 Hackmatack Street

I call this the Perkins homestead, but actually the real Perkins homestead is the second house east of us. The little house next to us used to be my great-granddad's cider mill down back of the church almost to the swamp on the side of the hill. My grandfather sold the farm to a Walter Brown many years ago. Brown had a big team of horses—big, husky horses. He worked for Cheney Bros. and had come down from Tolland, I believe.

Changes have been made since those days, but the real homestead is the second house which has a long hill. When I was a youngster, it had a hill which was twice as long. There was no running water in the kitchen, but there was a well out on what they called "the stones." You had to go out and crank up the well and carry the water into the kitchen. The next part of the ell, running south, was the store. My greatgranddad had a little store there—just one room. He sold groceries and also feed and grain.

I call this the Perkins house because, you see, my granddad, my mother's father, built the house and then after he was married they lived here.

I think they moved up from Glastonbury about 1840 and lived in the old house. My mother's father, George E. Perkins, built this house, and his younger brother, Willard, and his family lived in the old place for a number of years after my greatgranddad died. Eventually, they rented the house and then sold the whole farm—everything but this piece of property, and we have about two acres.

The old farm went from the fence down west to the red house and that's John Mora's house. Where the fence is and where the property line still is, we used to have a wire fence and R.O. Cheney used to have cows that used to feed in the pasture over there.

It went from there to the Manning property on Prospect Street and to the property where Pierre Marteney lives now. His house belonged to the Newman girls—a couple of old maid sisters. The house on this side of that, which is not the original house, is where the Mannings lived. Dick Manning was boss carpenter for Cheney Bros. He had a little beard.

My folks used to say that my granddad, George E. Perkins, and his father, William Henry built this house. Some of the windows have been added. The parlor is the same and some of the furniture stands exactly as in my kid days. I insist on calling it the parlor which my wife doesn't like. They built the house in 1865. My grandfather Perkins and my grandmother, Adeline, lived here all their lives after it was built. My mother was the oldest daugh-

ter, the oldest of three girls. She was born in what we call "the little house." William Henry and his tribe lived there. They enclosed the porch and put windows all across the front. The folks always knew that as "the little house."

There were no fireplaces in the house. It was built after the Civil War and then they were beginning to do away with them. They had stoves and coal and such things. They didn't want the old fireplaces. The old place had a fireplace in it, but the people who bought it after Walter Brown just took it out. That fireplace was so big that you could walk in it. It had an enormous crane. It was built-in and they just tore it out. This house had mantels in it, but no fireplace. There was one in the parlor, but no fireplace.

There was no dining room. The whole ell was the kitchen, At the north end was the big stove. They burned coal in it for years. Then, when oil began to come in, they had it made so they could put a bottle of oil in the back and use it. There was a mantel on the wall, no fireplace.

The Other Side of the Street

There were no houses on Hackmatack Street until you got down to Prospect, but there was one that was right opposite here which is gone now. Mrs. Mahone lived there. She was as Irish as they come. She just had a little spot with her house on it and the rest was the Cheney farm. The farm went all the way to Keeney Street. They had a big barn down near Keeney Street where they stored hay for the horses and so on. John Kongiebel lived in the square house over on the Cheney farm. Where you go east from here where the old Chenev drive used to be-a dirt drivewaythere's still the house-in fact, two houses were there. The square one with the mansard roof was Mr. Kongiebel's. He took care of the barns and horses and supervised all of that end. His daughter, Anne, married Earl Seaman. Earl worked at Cheney Bros. as an accountant and eventually bought Blish Hardware, Earl's father was Carl Seaman who ran the Coal and Ice Co.

Race a Pacer, Beat a Taylor

I can tell you about trotting horses with Taylor. The market that used to be opposite Carter's was Taylor's market for years. The Taylors all lived down South Main Street. It was a grocery store and meat market. They did their own butchering down in Taylor Town which was four or five houses of Taylors down South Main. The Taylors used to keep pacers. There's a difference between a pacer and a trotter. In a trotter, the opposite legs move at the same time, but in a pacer the legs on one side go forward and then the legs on the other side move forward, so it's like a rocking motion. When they go down a street or a track, they rock. The Taylor's had one that could go really fast. I'd come down from Springfield in the summertime and my granddad would ask me if I wanted to get the mail. There was no home delivery then. The post office was in the Cheney Block, where he had a box. My granddad hitched up his trotter to the light buggy. I got up the street and hitched the horse to the hitching post and got the mail. When I started back, one of the Taylors was going by with one of the pacers, so I, being 16, couldn't resist a race. I hit old Barnham one slap, he took off and I was half a length ahead of the pacer when we got to the store. There was a stone watering trough on the corner toward the Cheney houses, so I let the horse have a few sips. Then I wiped him down and drove down Hartford Road all the way to Pine Street. There was an iron watering trough there-a big round one-and I let him have another sip. Then I walked him up Prospect Hill and then to Hackmatack Street to our house. Next day, granddad decided to go up to town to get a haircut. When he came home, he told me he had heard about the race and also that I had beaten the pacer by a half a length. From then on, I could always drive a trotting horse, as long as I had beaten a Taylor.

Storyteller: Susan Vaughn from The Manchester Herald, 5/20/85

"GERMANTOWN"

A weathered gray tobacco barn—the last one remaining from an era of tobacco growing on Gardner Street in southern Manchester—may not be standing much longer.

The barn stands 350 feet from the road at the top of a slope that is being bulldozed for a new 62-lot subdivision. Reed's construction company is doing the site work for the subdivision, which is to be called Mountain Farms.

Nearby is the home of John Lenti, whose family bought the property in 1952 and who recently sold it to Reed.

The barn and 69-acre farm surrounding it have seen many changes since they were bought 90 years ago by German-born Adolph Kissman, according to Kissman's son Paul, who lives on Charter Oak Street.

The seventy-three-year-old Kissman is the only one of his family of 11 who still lives in Manchester. He bought the land on Gardner Street where he and his Germanborn wife, Annie, proceeded to raise nine children. They farmed five acres in broadleaf tobacco, raised dairy cows and sold apples from their orchard, Kissman said.

Kissman said his whole family, particularly the six boys, helped with the farming.

His father came to the United States as a young man with only 50 cents in his pocket. He made his way from New York to Manchester, where he first worked in the Cheney Mills and was paid 50 cents for each 12-hour day.

In recent interviews, Kissman, Lenti and Herbert Bengtson of the Manchester Historical Society recalled five or six tobacco barns along Gardner Street from Spring Street to Fern Street until the mid-1930s. At that time, they said, tobacco farming died out—either from natural causes, such as hurricanes or by government incentive.

The southeast section of town was called Germantown in the early 1900s because of a large number of German families who settled in the area.

Other families on the street at the time included names still familiar in the area including Keish, Rohan, Schendel and Tedford. Albert Schendel bought the Kissman property from Freitag, then sold it to Paul and John Lenti in 1952.

Storyteller: Mrs. Marion Richmond Eddy as told to Betty Walker, 2/11/72

SOUTH MAIN STREET MEMORIES

I was born here on South Main Street and so was my mother. My grandfather built the house in 1867. The original part was this square house four rooms up and four rooms down, and the kitchen and back room were two rooms from an old house on the property.

My grandfather lived in that old house with his first wife. When he bought the property, that was all there was on it. That house was at the back and the well in the backyard supplied the water. He began building it in war time. This was about 1864.

My grandfather married sisters, and his first family was born on this property, but not in this house. His name was Calvin Tracy and his first wife was Hannah House. My grandmother was Jane House. They lived a half mile down the street. The house is still there in Glastonbury. That was where the Houses lived and my grandfather came down from Coventry.

I believe this property was marked on an old map as the Watrous. (Ed. Note: On the 1848 map, the Watrous home is seen on the west side of South Main very close to the Glastonbury line.) There was sixty-four acres, but when Shallowbrook was being built, they took six acres, for drainage, from the far corner. It was a farm with a barn which had a corn house on one end with a corn grinder. They raised horses, cows, pigs, chickens, etc. We used to play in the hay there. After my grandfather died, my father was no farmer. For many years he milked cows, but not because he wanted to. He also kept chickens. After the barn was no longer used, it deteriorated, and the hurricane of 1938 took off the roof and the shingles, so there wasn't very much left. It was taken down. This building out here that we use as a garage was the carriage house, so-called. The slots were made for carriages.

Over there, the Keeney house is old. It was Woodruff Keeney who built that one. Then there was another Keeney up on Line Street. This one right at the beginning of the development is also old. I'm trying to find out if that is where Gertrude Albiston once lived, because her mother was an Avery and that was the Avery Place.

My maiden name was Richmond. My father came here when he married my mother. My mother was the youngest of her brothers and sisters, and the only one born in this house, in 1870.

We lived upstairs in this house until my grandfather died in 1902. Then my grandmother moved into the corner room. This had been her bedroom with her husband. Mother and father, having a growing family, moved downstairs and used that for theirs. We children had the upstairs. There were six of us—neatly arranged—two girls, two boys and two girls. They are all living now. Three of us live in Manchester.

Of course, when I was going to school, there were houses on both sides of the street. I went to South School which had two rooms. There were two teachers. One room had grades one to three and the other, four to six.

I really don't remember walking to school. I do remember walking home. Father used to work at Cheney Bros. and father drove a horse, so many a time we rode in seventh and eighth grade and high school. High school began at twenty minutes to nine, and we had a permanent excuse because father didn't go to work until nine o'clock and he didn't want to get there early. It was just a dirt road and before the reservoir was built, there was a dip there just before we got to the little school. There was a little hill down and a little hill up and a brook ran across the road. You left the main road if you were driving a horse so you could go down to the brook and give the horse a drink.

That brook went under a stone arch under Main Street, so when you went by, you didn't know it was there. It was only when you drove down you could see it. There were stepping stones there, so we could go out the other side.

The Watkins house is one of the older houses. Of course, on South Main Street when I went to school there was no reservoir. There were houses on both sides of the street. All the houses are gone. The only reason we're here is we are not in the watershed. Everything that was on the other side of the hill drained into that reservoir, so they took the houses down. There was one just on the other side of the hill. You can still see the line of maples as you go down the hill. They were in front of the house down there. The original Taylor Town was the five houses belonging to the Taylors that were torn down. Then there were two Albiston houses. One now is on the corner of South Main and Fern Street. that is Gertrude Albiston's house. Across from that was a square house where a brother of his lived, James Albiston. The one next to Gertrude's was owned by Dr. Knapp, which was not a very old house.

From about where you turn into the country club now, and all the way to the school there, was just a meadow. It was lovely in the spring, because it was muddy and it was the kind of mud you could put your feet in and make it awfully soupy. There was a teacher who lived across, but the house is gone now because of the reservoir. Doris Bidwell was her name.

The Harriet Brown/Tieman House

After I got tired of teaching, I came back to Manchester and went to work at Watkins. They were at the corner of School Street. I worked there a couple of years, and then Mr. Watkins decided to develop the Lakewood area. That was on both sides of the street and across the street by the reservoir. There were only a couple of houses on South Main Street and nothing in back. By that time they had built the reservoir, of course.

Mr. Watkins owned this property known as the Harriet Brown property and decided to rent it to us. After we decided to run it as a tea room he sold it to us. It was the Tieman House. Ruth Chapman and I ran it together as a tea room for something like four years. And did we work hard! We papered and painted, my husband-to-be laid a brick wall out the back. They think it was built about 1750. After Ruth Chapman died, her sister and I owned it for seven years and rented it. By then we decided we were never going to run a tea room again, so we sold it. Mr. Tieman bought it from me. It had always been called the Harriet

Brown house, but it later became known as the Tieman house. Harriet was the daughter of Col. Ireanus Brown.

The Old South Methodist Church

I believe the present South Methodist church is the fourth church built. I think they started to have a group of Methodists in 1790 in a house on Spencer Street. After four years, they built a church on Spencer Street. Then business seemed to be on Main Street in Manchester and at the Center. The Congregationalists had built at the Center, so they built where I believe the Temple is now. That is the second church. Then, in 1852, three interested gentlemen bought the corner down there where they are now. They then built a church and that was finished and dedicated in about 1854. That's the one I grew up in. That was changed and enlarged. I was painted a dingy brownish-yellow. You got into it by going up Main Street, because it was quite close to Hartford Road. The church property ran right across Hartford Road, and apparently when the Cheney's built their homes, like the Mary Cheney home, and the Cheney Homestead, they faced the back. I believe there was a road back there, but not Hartford Road. Later the town wanted to run Hartford Road through there, so they bought some of the land from the church.

Coming up Hartford Road and turning up Main Street the church was much nearer Hartford Road than it is now and it faced East. The trolley track came down and stopped right there in front of the church. There was a good lawn out to the street. You had to drive up a bit and then turn in, cross the trolley tracks and come around to the north side of the church where there was a stone wall. You stopped your carriage there and stepped out onto the stone wall. Then you drove the horse down the church steps going over a small bridge to get there. It came down back of the stores and crossed Wells Street with a little bridge. It went under Main Street and then it was open water again. In the spring, there was quite a flood between the church and parsonage to come down to go into the six or eight church sheds. That's where my father put his horse and then he walked down to the Cheney office. As we grew older and went to high school, if we for some reason didn't feel like walking home, then we took the horse. Then we had to go back for father. My father liked horses. He had a yellow rubbertired buggy. We also had a surrey with the fringe on top. We went to school in a single buggy or a single sleigh. We still have the single and double sleigh.

School Days



The Old South School was situated on South Main Street, just north of the area now known as the Globe Hollow Reservoir and the Manchester Country Club. The structure which followed this wooden school is now known as the Lutz Children's Museum.



Students and teachers gathered for a group photo on the steps of a side entrance to the old Ninth District School, circa 1910.



THE BUILDINGS

Storyteller: Arthur H. Illing Manchester Herald, 4/24/68

THE FIRST SCHOOLS IN THE FIVE-MILE TRACT

The first school within the limits of the present Town of Manchester had its origin in a Town Meeting held in 1745, at which time it was voted "that those persons living in the Five Miles of Land in this Society have their Rateable List of School Money amongst themselves by direction of the School Committee." With this authorization in hand, the inhabitants of the area proceeded to prepare materials for the erection of a school building, cutting the trees, hewing timbers, cutting planking and shaping wooden pins.

Before John Gilbert's erection of a school building, school was held for about five years in a room rented for that purpose. This appears to have been in the home of John Gilbert, which stood where the former Bunce School, now the Center for Mentally Retarded now stands. This John Gilbert had been awarded a 200-acre tract for his part in the French and Indian War. This section of the present town, naturally, was the first to be settled, as population moved eastward from the Connecticut River.

At a Society meeting held in November of 1751, it was voted to allow a school house to be built "to accommodate Lieut. Olcott, Sargt. Olcott, the Simondses and those living near them."

The Raising

Because of their foresightedness in preparing the materials for a building, the men of the district were able to gather together that same month, on Thanksgiving Day, and on that day they erected the frame of the building and put up the clapboards to enclose it. This, presumably, was one of the early instances of a New England "raising", at which time a group of neighbors joined together for a day of work and festivity.

Bunce School

The school so proudly displayed stood across the road from the old Bunce School which succeeded it in 1863. Thus, it is seen, this first school served its area for over a century.

One of the former pupils of the old school described the interior as having desks along three walls of the building with low benches in front, with a raised platform for the teacher's desk, and a large box stove in the center of the room. Drinking water, pail and dipper style, was carried by pupils from a nearby house.

This early building was eventually moved to W. Center Street and served for several years as a dwelling house. It was succeeded by the main central portion of the Bunce School, erected on the opposite side of the street, and this, with two later additions which made it into a three-room school, continued in use until 1950 when the nearby Verplanck School was opened.

At the same meeting of November 1751 at which approval was given for the erection of the school just described, it was also voted to allow four other schools to be kept. Large families of children made these necessary in other parts of the Five Mile Tract. Records of thirteen families indicate that between them they had one hundred and eleven children.

These four districts which were given permission to maintain a school were: one at Jambstone Plain (Buckland), one near Ezekial Webster's (Manchester Green), one between Saj't. Saml. Gains and Alexander Keeney (Keeney Street), and one near Doctor Clark's (the central part of present South Manchester). It was stipulated that these schools were to be built without any cost to the Society.

The school on Keeney Street was erected soon after the one at Hop Brook. It stood on the west side of Keeney Street opposite the site of the later building which was in use until the present Keeney Street School was opened. The districts themselves were well established by the time the Five Mile Tract was designated as Orford Society in 1772, and all of them had probably built schools before the year 1800.

School Growth

The Verplanck School, as previously indicated, is a successor to the first Hop Brook School and the Bunce School which followed it. The original Keeney Street School, incidentally, is still in existence, serving as a tool shed at a farmhouse farther up the street. It was moved to that location in 1948 and the building which is now in use as a Community College Administration Building replaced it on the opposite side of the street. This school, expanded, continued in use until the present Keeney Street School was opened in 1956. The one at Jambstone Plain eventually developed into the present Buckland School, erected in 1922. Manchester Green, in 1816, was the first to depart from the single-room frame building when it erected a brick building with two classrooms and a meeting room. By that time, Manchester Green had become one of the most populous and thriving sections of Orford Parish.

The remaining district, near Doctor Clark's, eventually became the Ninth District with several schools, chief of which was the one which burned in 1913 and from which there sprang the Lincoln, Nathan Hale and Washington Schools.

This vote of 1751 set the pattern for the school system of Manchester.

One of the early settlers closely identified with schools was Thomas Olcott Jr. a grandson of the original Thomas Olcott who came to Hartford with Thomas Hooker. He was early identified with the schools of the first two original districts, and hired first a man who divided his time between them and later a schoolmaster for one part of the

year and a school dame for the other part.

As in most of these early schools, teaching was done by a man during the six months of the year which included winter. During the five other months of the year, when the help of men was needed on the farm, teaching was done by a woman making the school a Dame School.

The Backing

The necessary money for the operation of the early schools was provided for by a vote in 1723 which stipulated that "all male children over seven years of age and under fourteen, and all female children over seven and under eleven years, whether they go to school or not, shall pay their equal part in the charge of the schooling." The Society further empowered the school committee to demand of the parents or masters of the male children their part of the wood, and stated that any parent neglectful in bringing in his part or parts of the wood for the fire of the school one week after being so ordered, such parent shall forfeit to the committee the sum of four shillings each load.

> Storyteller: William Coe Manchester Herald, 10/9/68

A DYNAMIC FORCE

In this same year, 1871, Cheney Bros. was prompted, because of a sense of civic duty which matched the mushrooming population of the Ninth School District (it contained the silk mills) to underwrite the \$15,000 cost of a brand new four-room school at School and Vine Streets.

Later to be raised to a second story in 1881, with four more rooms added as the ground floor,, this original school building was followed by further additions in 1887 and 1893. And the rambling 300-foot long wooden monstrosity that resulted was to serve the district for the next twenty years until destroyed in the greatest holocaust this town has ever seen—the notorious school fire of October 23, 1913.

The point here is that this great old structure, begun just 92 years ago, was to symbolize the tremendous changes that would have to be wrought in educating the young in an industrial society; changes which continue to thrill us and plague us and challenge us today in an ever-accelerating complexity.

That Ninth District School became a great beehive of educational ferment, and for many years housed under its several roofs a bewildering variety of educational activities. Besides the usual eight elementary grades, there was a kindergarten, rooms for manual training (including "sloyd," or wood working, cooking, and sewing), a gymnasium, baths, a library, and a laboratory school for undergraduates of the New Britain State Normal School, who were learning how to teach.

In the 23 years of this latter program's existence, some 1,400 neophyte teachers got their practical classroom experience at this school. Here a good part of the type of comprehensive school we know today was born.

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald

NINTH DISTRICT SCHOOL

The Ninth District school house was parallel to and about 10 to 15 yards from the south side of School Street. The original part was set back from Main Street to the west line of present No. 4 fire station. It was of two stories and basement with two steep gable roofs side by side with gables facing Main Street. As the population grew, so did the school, with one addition after another until the building reached the sidewalk on Vine Street.

Each of the additions were of two stories and basement with flat tin roofs. One long wide hall extended from end to end of the building on each floor with wide stairways in the center of the halls. The original building and each of the additions contained four rooms on each floor.



The Ninth District School, circa 1910, corner of Main and School Streets.

Cheney Bros. largesse made it possible for many children to get more education than they otherwise could. It was mostly taken for granted. Probably most benefiiaries did not know from whence it came.

Another long, narrow third story, with a flat roof was added, extending over most of the length of the additions. This was the gymnasium at the east end and domestic science department at the west. It was a very flashy fire trap. When it burned to the ground, with several other nearby buildings, the fire was so hot the firemen could not fight it, so directed their efforts to trying to save other properties.

That the building full of children was successfully emptied ahead of the racing inferno, without a single life lost, was due to Principal Verplanck's foresight and close attention to organization and drilling of children and staff. Many parents and those who were children then owe him much.

In the Ninth District, there were several classrooms for each grade up to and including sixth. Each of these were taught by an undergraduate (known as a normalite) from the New Britain Normal School (now Central Connecticut State College). The undergraduate teachers were under the control of salaried supervisors.

The kindergarten was on the first floor, next to Vine St., and extended across the end of the building with two entrance doors from the end of the long hall. Next, toward the west, were rooms for first grade, then second and third and so forth until they reached the west end of the building. Each grade had rooms on both sides of the hall. On the second floor the grades again started at the east end with numbers where they left off below and continued to the west nearly to the old original part of the building. At this point began what was called "Grammar School," (now probably junior high). Two large rooms, the seventh under Miss Wilkenson on the north side of the hall and eighth with Miss Annie Stark weather on the south, both salaried teachers.

Next on the north side of the hall was the high school library and study hall. Next to it on the northwest corner of the building was the large room of the freshman and sophomore classes under the supervision of the high school principal.

Storyteller: The Manchester Herald

LINCOLN SCHOOL—THE TAXPAYERS' SCHOOL

There were five school districts in the Five Miles (Manchester) in 1751, and one at the Center "near Dr. Clark's" was called the First District and later the Middle District.

The 1849 map of Manchester shows the school house on the south side of East Center Street just before it intersects Main Street. In the late 1860s, it was described as "totally inadequate, the most imperfect and unsufficient in town." A new school was built and it appears on the 1869 map on the north side of East Center Street near the Center Academy. When the districts were numbered, it became the ninth and went as far south as Charter Oak Street.

After the Civil War, Cheney Bros. business increased and the children of their employees more than filled the school. A report in 1872 by Dr. O. B. Taylor reads: "In the Ninth District, including Cheneyville, the number of children has been increasing—until more ample accommodations became an absolute necessity." There were meetings, discussions and plans, but the District Committee found that building a four room school was beyond them. Cheney Bros. built the four room school near Main and School Streets at their own expense.

In 1881, four rooms were added and the building continued to be enlarged until 1913. At that time, the building housed kindergarten through eighth grade, rooms for manual training, cooking, sewing, gym and baths. The high school classes had been included until 1904 when South Manchester High School, now the Bennet Apartments, was built. This complex, called Educational Square, was owned and maintained by Cheney Brothers.

A new school house was needed at the Center in 1907. Chairman of the School Board, Howell Cheney, stated in 1908 that "increase accommodations were necessary." However, the Ninth District taxpayers voted "Nay" to a new school at the Center several times.

Cheney Bros. offered a piece of land near Center Church, but, for the first time, the taxpayers were going to have to foot the cost of the building. "Never before in the memory of most of the residents of the Ninth District has a tax been laid." (Courant, May 1911) "Lincoln School, the first school in South Manchester to be opened by the taxpayers in the Ninth District, started yesterday. It was planned to have the school completed by the first of September but there were delays." (Courant, Nov. 15, 1911)

In January 1913, it was noted that a "movement to dissolve the incorporated Ninth District, which is separate from the other eight districts and is governed by its own school board and has no real connection with the other districts." The Ninth School District school report was a separate issue and when it was included in the town and annual report it had its own section.

On October 23, 1913 the "East School" building near School Street was destroyed by fire. Cheney Bros. put up new brick buildings and the Ninth District added a section onto Lincoln School. In 1915 the Ninth District built the center section of Washington School.

In the 1920s the question of town ownership and control of the high school and of possible consolidation of all school property under town management was the subject of a special committee.

About this time, the textile industry was in financial difficulties and Cheney Bros. began divesting itself of school, recreational and library facilities. All of the Cheneyowned school property was sold to the town. In 1927 the high school, for which the town paid \$24,601.49 became Manchester High School, a school for all the districts.

The class of 1927 was the last class to graduate from the old South Manchester High School.

The class of 1928—sixty-four boys and sixty girls—had the honor of being the first graduated from Manchester High School.

The class of 1955 was the last class to graduate from the old high school on Main Street. The class, garbed in caps and gowns, marched up Main Street to the theater, now Full Gospel Interdenominational Church, 745 Main Street, where the exercises were held. The class of 1956 entered the new high school on Middle Turnpike (formerly

the golf lots).

Lincoln was used as a school until 1972. Since then it has been the home of town offices and the board room.

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald, 3/1/74

SCHOOL CENSUS: FIVE CENTS A HEAD FOR THE "ENUMERATOR"

An indication of how our town's population has increased is a comparison of the number of children in the old Ninth District when O.C. took the enumeration.

The boundaries were, on the north Middle Turnpike, on the east Oak Grove or Autumn Street and Gardner, on the south Spring and Hackmatack, and on the west Keeney, McKee and Adams Streets. The enumerator was paid five cents for each name he picked up.

The law specified that the work must begin on October 1 and be completed by December 1. But the hunting season also started October 1. So O. C. went out on October 1 and did a couple of short streets and then went hunting for two weeks.

Charles Cheney was secretary of the school board and wasn't exactly satisfied with the progress, but since he couldn't contact O.C. by telephone he had a very uneasy two weeks. After things got to moving again, he asked for more frequent reports on progress.

Since Mr. Cheney lived in the house directly across the street from Cheney's Main Office, it was convenient for him to require O. C. to meet him there evenings. The state paid the town a specified amount for each name; he made sure none were missed.

Two books were carried, one for the previous year and the other for the current year. Of course, people were moving about and even leaving the district and the town. Every one had to be accounted for, which meant much back-tracking and sleuthing.

Considering all the extra time and walking, some of those five cents were well earned. In those days, five cents was five cents and didn't grow on trees.

However, there were bright spots. Some houses would yield a dozen names. When the check finally came around Christmas, it was quite a windfall.

Storyteller: William Coe from The Manchester Herald, 10/9/68

THE "GREEN" SCHOOL

One early school, which is interesting enough to warrant some narration, was constructed on the site of the Manchester Green School in 1816.

At this time, the Green was the center of village life, and the most prosperous section of town. To cope with the burgeoning population (estimated at about 1400) a two-room brick school was built on the site of the present Green School. It was to be the first improvement in Orford Parish over the one-room wooden school.

The contract for the construction, let to Chauncey Bryant on February 29, 1816, called for a building of only one story at a price of \$340; but almost immediately afterwards it was decided to add a second story to provide an upstairs hall for community purposes, and the sum of \$200 was added to the contract price.

Specifications

The building on the first floor was divided into two rooms, each about 12×15 feet with floors of rived oak; at either end it contained fireplaces. Desks were in the form of "writing benches," continuous slanting board slabs 20 inches wide, that were made fast to the walls around the four sides of the room.

Seat specifications called for planks "at least one half inch thick of sutible wedth for convenience to be one seting bench around the room for the riters."

The teacher's desk was placed in the center of the room. The children worked with their backs to her except when reciting. Then they had to swing their legs out over the plank benches and face her.

The upper room served as a meeting

place for social gatherings, and was used as the first lodge room of the Manchester Masons. Sometime later it became known as Hosmer Hall, after a clergyman named Hosmer who conducted "select" or private school classes there.

This brick school was replaced during the Civil War era with a white frame building that served the Green district until 1921, when the present brick school was built. Containing four rooms and an assembly hall, it cost \$42,000.

(Ed. Note: This brick building is still in community use as the Senior Citizens' Center.)

THE TEACHERS

Storyteller: Mrs. Gertrude Albiston, Age 96 as told to Betty Walker 2/18/72

FROM THE CLASS OF 1894 TO TEACHER

I was in the first graduating class from Manchester High School in 1894. There were six of us—five girls and one boy. Mr. Verplanck was the principal. It was his first year. He said, "Where are the people who went to school here last year? If they all come back for another year, then I'll graduate them." That's when six of us went back to school—Alice Belcher, Mary H. Gray, Agnes Henderson, Minnie Johnson and Rueben Gray. Only three were in the next class—Alice Anderson, Charlie Hills and Robert Duggan.

I was born August 13, 1876. I was nearly 18 when I graduated from high school. I went right into teaching without any normal schooling or anything. When I taught at Buckland, I lived with a family by the name of Newberry in East Windsor. I had a long walk. When I wanted to go home, I had to take the train at Buckland and change to the cross-town train.

The first school was up in the country which is now called Wapping. I would walk up to the Cheney train and take it across town to the through train—the Willimantic-Hartford. I would get off at Buckland

Later, when I taught at Porter Street School, I had about twelve students: I had Gertrude Carrier and Helen Carrier, I don't remember the others. There were two rooms—one for the lower grades and one for the higher grades. I boarded with the Pitkins when I taught at Porter Street School. They kept boarders and that's where I lived. I used to go home on weekends. I taught the primary grades—reading, writing and arithmetic.

Storyteller: Harold E. Turkington 1953–54

FROM ONE-ROOM SCHOOLS TO ALL THE SCHOOLS

The Verplanck Story

In reviewing his life, Verplanck said "I would say as did the late T.R. (Theodore Roosevelt), I have had a 'bully time.' If I had my life to live over, I would teach school.

Three score years ago, Manchester noted the birth of its first high school. Sixty years later, at the age of 93, Fred Ayer Verplanck

vividly recalls the meager beginning of the system that has outlived two buildings and will have new quarters within a four year period.

Enjoying the twilight years of his life at his home at 23 Elwood Rd. with his wife, "Zip" (an affectionate nickname) reviewed his life's history with us.

"It was 60 years ago that I first came to Manchester," he said. "I don't recall the exact date, but it was on a Thursday, sometime around the 20th of August. Charles D. Hine, who was secre-

tary of the State Board of Education, reached me by telegraph on the Massachusetts shore and told me he wanted me to go down to Manchester and look over a position that was open in the school system.

Hitched Mare to Buggy

"I did. Mrs. Verplanck and I hitched our roan mare to the buggy. When we arrived in Manchester, I went to Cheney Bros. to see about this new post. It was vacation time and I returned here the following Monday and set to work preparing the foundation for a high school that opened two weeks later."

The first high school class contained 38 students, Verplanck recalled. Classes were held in the old 300-foot long wooden building, the Ninth District School, that housed 30 classrooms and school activities on four floors. This school burned in the great fire of October 23, 1913. It was located on School Street and reached from Vine Street almost to Main Street.

Found Only One Senior

When he had completed separating the students into classes, Verplanck found he had only one senior, a girl. Through interrogation, he discovered that five classmates

had left school. Verplanck lost no time in visiting these students and enlisting them in his first senior class. In 1894 when the first senior class received their diplomas, there were six graduates.

Verplanck laid the foundation for a trade school here. With the cooperation of Cheney Bros., the class was a course in silk. The school was limited to the work of the weaving department. Two practical workers from the silk mill did the teaching.

Practical academic subjects were provided



Fred Ayer Verplanck

and taught by high school teachers. It was the only trade school in silk in the country, Verplanck said.

In 1902, Cheney Bros. built a new and up-to-date high school building. Verplanck told the Cheneys what he wanted for his school and he got it. The school was completed for occupancy in 1904. There were 16 classrooms, laboratories, and rooms for art and drawing. The assembly hall seated about 900.

Served Town For 42 Years

With the high school well established by 1905, Verplanck was made superintendent of the South Manchester Public School System. In 1932, when the schools of the town were consolidated, he was made first superintendent of schools in Manchester. He held this post until retiring in 1935 after 53 years in Connecticut schools, 42 of them in Manchester.

Teacher at 17

His first teaching job was at the age of 17 when he taught in the one room school in Franklin. He had received his elementary education in a school of similar type and had one year of freshman grade at Natchaug High School in Willimantic.

In the summer of 1878, Verplanck "hired out" to a neighboring farmer and worked the prevailing seven hours, that is, seven hours before dinner and seven hours after. The farmer left on an unexpected business trip and Verplanck was left in charge for the remainder of the summer. He had to plan and carry out the work. Looking back, Verplanck says he laid a successful foundation in two essential trades—school teaching and farming.

After a year in an elementary school in Lebanon, Verplanck opened a private "select" school in Lebanon, organized by parents who wanted their children to have something more of education than could be obtained in the elementary school.

A year later, he taught the upper grades of a two-room school in Hanover, a village in the Town of Sprague. Having now taught for six years, Verplanck clearly realized if he were to continue to teach, he needed a college education. He spent a year preparing for entrance to Yale at Norwich Free Academy and graduated from the New Haven college with a BA degree in 1888. Following a year of teaching in Colchester at Bacon Academy, and three years as principal of the high school in Thomaston, he came to Manchester.

Cites Highlights in Life

He considers the highlight of his life the naming of the Olcott Street School in his honor. Other memorable occasions include the school fire in 1913.

"For 17 years we had been conducting fire drills. In addition to the classrooms, we had a system to check lavatories. I'll never forget the relief when I arrived at the scene of the fire, which I had heard about over in the North End, and saw on my way back, and learned that all the children had been directed to safety. We were prepared."

Storyteller: Nellie Lull, Age 87 as told to Betty Walker 3/7/72

THE LITTLEST TEACHER IN TOWN

I was born here in Manchester on January 22, 1885, and we lived with my Grandparents Lull on Chestnut Street. When my grandmother passed on, we moved to Wadsworth and then we came over here to Huntington Street. This house was eleven years old when we bought it on the first day of November 1910.

I graduated from high school in 1904. There were nineteen in my class. I then went to New Britain Normal School and graduated in 1906. I taught one year in Deep River and then Mr. Verplanck gave me a job. I went to teach in that old building. There was an entrance off of School Street then, and I was down near the kindergarten. I never taught anything but first grade and the children thought they knew more than I did, of course. They were almost as tall as I was. I am only 4 feet, 9 inches and they would say they knew as much as Miss Lull. We had between 30 and 40 students. You couldn't teach them much. It took about all your time to get their wraps off and the rubbers off and things in

the morning. That is, when it was winter, you know. Then you had to get them all dressed to go home. We started teaching by phonetic. We read a lot of books. I'd put words on the boards and they'd sound them out. They could make those words out themselves.

When I started teaching, we had anywhere from thirty to forty in our classes. We taught everything. When we started up here we had forty seats in our rooms. They were large rooms and we had about forty children at one time. We had to have recess in the park because there wasn't room near the school.

Teaching methods changed, but then they would struggle back around again. We

did not have open classrooms. We had discipline—the children expected it. They had it at home and expected it at school.

We usually began with a prayer first. In the lower grades, it wasn't the Lord's Prayer, but a prayer. Then we would sing some songs, usually, and maybe we would have someone recite a poem. That was our opening, you know. Then we would start in with our days work-our reading lessons, our number lessons, etc. School usually started at nine o'clock, and then we were out at half past eleven. Then we

began again at one o'clock and stayed until half past three. It was a long day, but, you see, most of the fathers and some of the mothers worked in the mill, so the noon hour from 11:30 to 1:00 gave the children time to take lunches to the mill for their fathers. If their mothers were home, they would have the lunch all packed, so they could take a hot lunch, They began at seven o'clock in the morning and worked until six. It was a long day.

Storyteller: Thelma Woodbridge as told to Barbara Potterton, 9/7/89

A TEACHER'S TEACHER

Thelma said she was born in Oneco, Conn. in 1911. She and her family moved to Manchester when she was 2½ years old. Her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Levi Carr, came from Oneco and Rhode Island. Each parent was one of 10 children, so Thelma had many aunts and uncles. Although an only child, Thelma was brought up to share and not be selfish. She had a happy family life in their closely knit family.

Thelma started school at Lincoln School from Russell Street. Later, Mr. Carr bought a duplex on Foster St. Because of the economic situation, they lived in one side and rented the other side. The rent helped pay the mortgage. When Mr. Carr was working at Cheney Bros., he didn't own a car, but rode a bicycle to work-it took about 10 minutes.

Thelma continued at Lincoln School until the 6th grade. She remembers Nellie Lull, her first grade teacher, as a friend as well as a teacher. Miss Lull died a few months ago. Another



L to R: Nellie Lull, Rachel and Ethel Woodbridge.

teacher, Catherine Shea, later became principal at Washington School. Miss Brooks taught 6th grade, and Thelma said she remembered Miss Brooks fondly because she read to the class, especially at the end of the day on Fridays. Thelma said they always looked forward to Friday afternoons. Pupils went home for lunch, and lived within walking distance of the school. They played outdoors, but there was no supervised play.

Thelma went to Barnard, now Bennet, in Education Square, for 7th and 8th grade. It was still the South School district, and wasn't consolidated until 1932. The boys and girls were segregated—the boys on the

first floor, and the girls on the second floor. That was probably a modern thing. Miss Bennet was the principal and a strong educator-very forceful but very kind-and she made a point of knowing most of her pupils by name. She was also principal of Nathan Hale School, although there was a teaching principal there also, Hulda Butler. At Barnard. there were three different teachers for classes. Margaret Cadman Brown taught Civics. Another teacher was Elizabeth Tynan, who

eventually married Ed Bailey (Principal of Manchester High School). Elizabeth Clark, from West Hartford, taught English (it was called Language then) and was Thelma's home room teacher. For math, they had Elizabeth Krapowicz—she lived and boarded with Miss Bennet on Branford Street.

Outside activities included plays. In 1923, the town had the Centennial Parade and the girls from Barnard dressed in red and white striped skirts and blue blouses with white stars. Pupils went home for lunch at Barnard. There was no physical education at junior high, but the "rec" was there and they had swimming in high school along with physical education.

Thelma graduated from Barnard and went to high school across the road. They offered secretarial, commercial, and college courses. Thelma took the college course for four years. She had Algebra with Pete Wigren, English with Helen Newt, and Latin with Florence Hopkins.

Thelma said she had a nice family life and made many good friends in her neighborhood and in high school. Her class of 1929 was a very close-knit group. They were either the last class to graduate from South Manchester High, or the first class to graduate from Manchester High. After graduation, Thelma wanted to go to college,

but it was financially impossible. Although family the never seemed to be deprived, they were not in a position to pay for college expenses. She chose Willimantic the Normal School, She worked one summer at the spinning mill at Cheney Bros. Then, the next year, she worked in the chemistry lab at Cheney Bros. all year and the following summer. Willimantic was a two-year school, and Thelma said packed more into those two years than they

did when they had a three year course for a certificate, and later, a four year course for a Bachelor's degree. There were four Normal Schools in Connecticut-Willimantic, New Britain, Danbury and New Haven-and all became Connecticut State Colleges. Willimantic was nearest to Thelma's home. They had one classroom building, and one dorm for upperclassmen. Freshmen lived in houses near the campus. Upper classmen assumed duties in the dorm: Thelma supervised on the floor where she lived and helped in the dining room. They all enjoyed school and made good friends. It was a big contrast to high school. They came home every weekend-sometimes by bus and sometimes with friends.



Thelma Carr, a Teacher's Teacher

Waiting to Teach

Thelma graduated from Willimantic Normal School in 1932—the middle of the Depression—when jobs were hard to come by. Mr. Verplanck was Superintendent of schools in Manchester. She applied in Manchester for a job. She had chosen teaching because she always liked school—and she never had a desire not to go to school.

She had a temporary teaching certificate, but no job; so, she stayed home and helped her mother who had a boarder-a teacherto supplement the family income. Thelma did the ironing for her mother who took in washing. During the second year after graduation. Thelma substituted in Junior High School for Miss Bennet to "keep her hand in" and to get experience, but without pay, She started teaching in Manchester in 1934. Mr. Bentley, principal at Robertson and Hollister Street Schools, interviewed her at home and caught her ironing-he often reminded her of that. Mr. Verplanck, Superintendent, hired her-she was one of the last two teachers he hired in Manchester.

Teaching Times

Thelma taught third grade at Robertson for one year. She had 44 children in a self-contained classroom. It was a neighborhood school—all from that area were mostly Polish families. She often wonders what ever happened to those children. She knows one—Arthur Holmes—became a mortician. His family was well known in the North End. Some went on to work for the Cheneys and rode the "Goat" to work every day. Some were farmers, and some worked for Bon Ami.

Thelma started working for \$800 a year, and every year she had some increment even if it was only \$25 or \$50. Eventually, a salary schedule was set up with 13 steps until you reached the maximum. Thelma taught for 36 years in Manchester. She says she doesn't remember any discipline problems. She was a "strict disciplinarian," and the first three days of school were always a nervous period—butterflies every year—but settled down after three days and established a rapport and rules they were expected to abide by.

When Thelma began teaching, she walked to school from Foster Street. When a vacancy came up at Hollister Street School, Mr. Bentley asked Thelma if she would like to go there, and she was happy for the change. It was a neighborhood school with 8 grades—the children lived in the neighborhood and either brought lunch or walked home for lunch. There was no cafeteria.

Hana Jensen taught Home Economics

and Henry Miller taught Woodworking (manual arts). Thelma taught second grade and sometimes first grade. There was a school doctor—some were Dr. Knapp, Dr. Holmes, and Dr. Burr. The school nurse, Mary Hilditch Moriarty, examined pupils periodically to check hands, ears, neck and hair. The Dental Hygienist examined teeth once a year for 25¢ a visit. A fund was available through the Educational Club to pay for those who couldn't afford it.

Teachers were required to keep a register, and to keep lesson plans prepared for three days in advance in case it was necessary to have a substitute. Thelma didn't like to take a day off because it was harder to prepare for a substitute than to teach. She always enjoyed teaching. Teachers divided duties in the lunch room and on the playground. After Illing Junior High was built, the 7th and 8th graders went there, and Hollister became K-6th. About that time, the PTA was formed. Thelma found it helpful to know the parents of her pupils—it helped to understand the children.

Changes

There were many changes over the years—there were no visual aids. They had an Art Supervisor, Hazel Lutz. She was a wonderful person. She had lesson plans for all six grades. She expected teachers to teach from her lesson plans. Once a month, teachers met with her at Lincoln School where she had her Art room. She would always help you carry out any ideas you might want to use.

The doors to Thelma's room were always open, and she could see people coming and going, and she welcomed them to her room. Mr. Illing came many times, and was a wonderful person to work for. He always came in at the door and talked with the teachers and children. One story Thelma remembers about him is that he stopped by to see her after the classroom had been repainted. Her room had been painted blue. Mr. Illing stopped and asked her if she liked the paint. Thelma said, "It's lovelyit's my favorite color." Mr. Illing said, "I thought you would like it-I chose it." Thelma said it was more than anyone could expect from a superintendent.

Years Later

As the years go by, one often loses track of all the pupils that have passed through their class. Often they come up to me and say, "Oh, Mrs. Woodbridge, do you remember me?" I look at their face and say "Oh, your face is familiar, but I cannot remember your name." Some of them I can. It was such a joy to have them come up to you with pleasure in their voices. You remember the good, the poor, and you remember the superior., but the poor kids in the middle sort of get lost. It shouldn't be true, but I have heard several people say that. I had some awfully nice kids all those years.

TALES TOLD OUT OF SCHOOL

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald

MR. VERPLANCK-A GOOD INFLUENCE

Mr. Fred Ayers Verplanck, who was principal of the Ninth District schools and superintendent of schools for the Town of Manchester for so many years, did more than any other person to develop an honorable citizenry in the town. Fortunate indeed was the person who could know him intimately enough to realize his absolute honesty, his tolerance for other peoples faults and weaknesses, his love for good and hate of wrong. O. C. thinks he was favored with more opportunities to know and be influenced by Mr. Verplanck than were most of the kids in town.

There was a fine elderly lady who had known Verplanck when they were both growing up down in Franklin, Conn., and who could only tell things complimentary to him at that time. She told of one episode that might illustrate a trait of his character.

He had been made a constable and made one arrest. While taking the culprit to be tried, Verplanck was tripped and thrown flat on his face. Before he could get up, his man had escaped. Verplanck went right to the authorities and said that any man who could be so easily outwitted by one in his custody was not capable of filling the office, and turned in his badge. He was intelligent, well educated for his time, and physically powerful, but decided that law enforcement was not a career for which he was adaptable.

He went to Yale, graduated, taught school and finally came to Manchester where he spent the rest of his life in dedicated service to the town and especially to its future citizens.

THE MESSAGE

The old Ninth District School was a very long building. Mr. Hamilton Metcalf was the night watchman. He had no electric light, only a kerosene oil barn lantern that gave about as much light as a match. That would be an advantage in detecting a fire, and that was probably the only reason for his being there. One night, someone hammered on the front doors. When "Hammie" and his lantern got near it, there was hammering on the door next to Vine Street. And so it went for several hours.

The next forenoon, O. C. was told that Mr. Verplanck wanted to see him in his office. The conversation went like this. "O.C., last night some boys were bothering Mr. Metcalf. Were you one of them?" "Yes, Sir." "Well, who was with you?" No answer, just a shrug of the shoulders. "Aren't you going to tell me?" "No, Sir." "Well, I didn't think you would. But, if I said Bobby Veitch, Deac Rogers, Jimmie Aitkin, I'd be about right, wouldn't I?" He knew. "Yes, Sir." "Now O.C., Mr. Metcalf is an old man. Patrolling that big building and climbing all those stairs from basement to top floor must tucker the poor old fellow out every night, without being made to do extra by a lot of young lads full of pep and vinegar. He is giving his best to protect our property for us and earn an honest living. Now I know you fellows didn't stop to think of it that way, but now are you willing to promise me you won't do it again?" "Yes, Sir."

"I know you won't, and do you suppose you could explain it to the other fellows?" "I'll try." "Then I won't say anything to them. Thank you." That was Zip!

Mr. Verplanck was a busy man. There were many important things requiring his time and attention. He could have set at his desk and said "you may go." To them there was something MOST important at that moment. He arose and put an arm around and hand on the boy's shoulder. They walked to the office door together without a spoken word. But there was a communication transpiring most certainly mutual. As long as the boy was within hearing distance he did not detect that the man had turned back to his desk.

Mr. Verplanck was not one to threaten. He just explained things so you could understand them. He led one to the point where you could think it through and make your own right decisions.

He was not a preacher.

He was a teacher.

NO SNOWBALLS

When O.C. had progressed about half way up the grades, Mr. Verplanck gave out orders that there was to be no snowballing on the school property. O. C. got smacked with one and the thrower bolted to the front steps and was at the top by the time O.C. could get a ball packed hard enough to be effective. Once it was in flight and beyond recall it appeared to be headed straight to the window north of the doors, and "horrors-that-be," Mr. Verplanck was looking out that window. Fortunately, the hit was a little low. The door opened and O.C. was beckoned in. As he entered, a grasp on the back of the neck took him up the stairs. He tried to make himself as light as possible but must have touched some of the treads. In the office, O.C. was asked if he knew about the snowball ban.

"Yes, Sir." "Why did you do it?" "Stink Anderson hit me first." Yes, I saw that and will talk to him later. But why do you call him 'Stink'?" "Because he is." No sign of a smile altered that stern visage, but one thing he never could control, Mr. Verplanck's eyes changed from piercing to dancing. After an impressive lecture on respect for constituted authority and get-

ting a promise to abide by the rules, he excused the boy with a friendly hand on the shoulder.

ZIP

Mr. Verplanck was given the nickname "Zip" very soon after he came to Manchester.
O. C. never knew whence came the name, but is certain that the recipient liked it and sometimes used it himself. Zip often came up to the School Street dump with his rifle to shoot rats with us boys. He was a good shot, too.

ZIP'S WHIP

If a teacher was finally convinced that a case was beyond her control, the culprit was sent to Mr. Verplanck, the principal. Usually one or two very earnest talks by him got a wayward lad straightened O.K. That failing, there was one last resort not generally known and seldom resorted to. There was a buggy whip hanging in the fire room front of the heating boilers in the basement.

Mr. Verplanck was not one who could bring himself to willfully injure anyone, especially a youngster. But, in those days of knee pants, a few little switches on the calves made a very lasting impression. It hurt!

One day, one of O.C.'s friends, George "Dordle" Davidson was being led down to the basement. There were at least two ways for getting to the basement fast. There were two passages into the fireroom, one along the north side of the boilers, the other along the south, out of sight of each other. "Zip" with "Dordle" entered along the north alley and could not see anyone leaving by the south. "Dordle" didn't get licked because there wasn't any whip there!

It is not known if "Zip" ever learned or suspected what happened to his whip. But he would have know immediately on arrival had he opened the door to peer into the glowing fire box under the boiler.

ZIP'S RECEPTION

Mr. and Mrs. Verplanck invited the senior high school class to a reception at their home. That could be done at that time because there were only 18 members in the class—12 girls and six boys (1906).

That's a bad arrangement because a fellow has to see two girls home and unless he figures out the route right he's liable to have to let go first the one he would prefer to be alone with.

Back to the party. We had a very enjoyable evening playing games that had required considerable thought and time in their preparation. One in particular is remembered by O.C.

Each person was given a pencil and card, and shown into a room where there was a large table with two rows of numbered exhibits. Each exhibit illustrated some historical event. Each contestant was to write the number of his or her name for the event portrayed. There was some little prize for the person able to get the most correct answers.

O. C. didn't even come close to getting the prize but remembers it because he happened to be the only one who guessed that a chicken's wishbone lying on a piece of orange peel was Bonaparte crossing the Rhine.

Mrs. Verplanck didn't let us get away without a delicious collation. It was an evening long remembered and cherished.

Does the principal invite the senior class to his home now?

REMEMBERING SCHOOL

In the early years of this century the science (physics, chemistry and botany) teacher was Miss Wraight. Her lab and classroom was in the south side of the basement next to the boiler room. Other faculty members were specialists who also served the school grades in the building.

Miss Condon, art; Miss Kaufman, music; Miss Gray and later Miss Knight, sloyd or manual training; Miss Ritter, domestic science, sewing and cooking; Miss Jacobs, gymnasium and her pianist was a Miss Gray. Acceptable dress then was quite different from what it is today. When leading calisthenics, Miss Jacobs wore long black stockings, very full navy blue bloomers, and a long sleeve blue middy blouse high about the neck.

Well remembered is the physical examinations given by Miss Jacobs.

Eyes read a chart of letters on the wall.

Ears listened for the ticks of a small clock slowly moved away.

Lungs were checked by an apparatus like a metal tank with a moveable top. A hose from the bottom was fitted with a black mouth-piece. In turn, the line of kids were told to take a deep breath, put the nozzle in their mouth and blow all they could into the tank. As the top went up, it moved a pointer over a numbered scale which told the cubic capacity of the lung, then after the record was entered on a card, the top was pushed down, the mouth-piece wiped off with a towel and offered to the next in line.

Probably that cotton towel was dry at first but must have been at least moist when the whole class had passed. Sanitary? Well, no one ever heard of an epidemic following the tests. How can people today appreciate their many blessings without knowing for comparison how it was?

There was a little room off the gym for a big motor and blower fan to ventilate the building through wooden, tin-lined ducts or flues that stood out from the walls all over the building. This little room was the only dressing room for basketball players, home team and visitors. The only place to wash was at a sink in the cooking room off the opposite end of the gym.

The Sporting Life



The "Monitors" Baseball Team, circa mid-1890s, had within its lineup at least three figures that would impact Manchester's history. Standing, third from left, was Arthur E. Bowers, publisher of Manchester's first city directories and beyond him, wearing the "Y" jersey, was his brother, Herbert Bowers, the "fastest pitcher" of his day. Front row, far right, is Tom Ferguson, then a foreman and later to become owner of "The Herald."



Storyteller: Senator Arthur G. Bowers The Manchester Herald, Centennial Day, 1923

BEFORE BASEBALL

In the old days, before baseball, Senator Bowers played "Round Ball" or "One 'O Cat" or "Old Cat." He described it this way:

"The ball was of rubber or rubber wound with yarn and, including the plate, there were five bases—four arranged in a square in the direction of the field. A strike caught on the bound put the batter out as did a caught fly or a grounder nailed on the bound, but the real fun was in tagging the batter between bases. This was done by hitting him with the ball. It was possible to remain at bat for a long period and the fielders, termed "Shackers", often spent a large portion of the time chasing hit balls.

"The old cat game paved the way for real

baseball. There were two batters and two pitchers and pitching meant pitching even when baseball took form. The ball was actually pitched or tossed underhand, the thrower being compelled to keep the arm below hip level. The batters and pitchers stood in a line, the batters between and facing in opposite directions. The field extended in both directions and was surrounded by the usual crew of shackers. Two and four old cat was a development which allowed for base men."

Early, Early Baseball

Manchester awoke to an interest in baseball—which has never ceased—when the Hockanum nine was formed,

about 1867. The Charter Oaks of Hartford had, by this time, won a statewide reputation as skilled players and their success spurred Manchester to the formation of a nine. The Hudson Brothers, Philip and Will, ran the Oakland Paper Mill in those days and were acknowledged sports. They owned race horses and took a lively interest in all things pertaining to sports. The Hudson boys undertook to form the baseball nine, which was composed of north end young men employed in the Oakland paper mill and the cotton mill at Union Village. The Hockanums were a successful outfit from the start and were nattily attired in grey uniforms, blue stockings and fancy caps with blue visors. They wore leather belts with raised letters bearing the word "Hockanum" and the same insignia in larger letters across the chest.

The players were: Catcher, Joe Berry; pitcher, Jack Rummell; shortstop, C.O. Wolcott; first base, Will Hudson; second



Manchester Baseball Team, circa 1905.

base, Will Jacobs; third base, Leroy Belknap; left field, Ed Thayer; center fielder, Ad Thayer; and right field, Phil Hudson. The ball field was near the Bowers home and Bowers was the official scorer, using a knife and a lath to make the official tally. The bats, all handmade, were stored in the Bowers barn. The field was known as Horace Fuller's lot and lay between Starkweather and North Elm Streets.

When the Hockanums challenged the mighty Charter Oaks of Hartford, the Hartford nine was scornful but eventually staged the game at Bushnell Park. The Hockanums went home badly beaten, but demanded a rematch.

The Charter Oaks brought only seven players to the game but insisted that was sufficient to dispose of Manchester. The Hockanums, however, insisted that a full nine be used. After much debate, the Charter Oaks agreed that they would accept two rookies from Manchester to fill their team. Manchester supplied Bill Blythe, a farmer in overalls and straw hat, along with Ed Skiffington for their outfield. Hartford's overconfidence was a bad mistake.

The Charter Oaks were swamped 24 to 6. The Charter Oaks attributed their defeat to the fact that they had only seven men. Senator Bowers scored the game and credited one of Hartford's six runs to the Manchester substitute.

It was a big event when the Hockanums clashed with the South Manchester Old Glorys, sponsored and equipped by Cheney Brothers, and formed by James W. Cheney. They wore red, white and blue uniforms with a miniature flag embroidered on their blouse fronts. The first game was played at the south end and South Manchester won 35 to 20. The Hockanums won in the return game, by a score of 35 to 15.

In later games, tournaments were arranged between South Windsor, East Hartford, Glastonbury, Rockville and the north and south teams of Manchester. On the final day of the elimination tournament, the survivors were the Hockanums and the Old Glorys. The winner that "copped the trophy" added it to the collection on display in Moses Scott's store . . . a constant source of conversation for the populace of Oakland and Union Village.

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald

THE BALL FIELDS

At the front of the National Guard Armory on Main Street, one can note how much Main Street has been filled above the natural ground level. That same low land extended east of Main Street too. (Ed. Note: The site of the Armory was used as an athletic field in the early 1900s.)

It was quite deep and wide and a ravine where Leonard Street (American Legion Drive) now is located on the fill. Part of the properties on both sides of Leonard Street (American Legion Drive) had to be filled up to street level.

At the southeast corner of Main and Hollister Streets was the town team's baseball field with bleachers and enclosed with a high board fence.

That is one of only three fields that O.C. can be sure of having high board fences and bleachers. One was on Flower and Elro Sts. and the other on the east side of McKee St. south of Summer St. (The Dougherty lot).

There have been many open baseball fields in town but the oldest and best known is the original Mt. Nebo field. The oldest men young O.C. knew talked about playing there when they were young. (Ed. Note: The other well-known field was Hickey's Grove in the Oakland Street area north of the Catholic cemetery.)

After the Globe Hollow brook passed under South Main Street, it ran straight along the foot of a very steep hill. Between the crest of that hill and Hackmatack Street was level cow pasture large enough for a football field. What we now call "football" was formerly known to O.C. and his pals as "rugby" and the game using a spherical ball was "association football," now "soccer." The field was used by the chief team in town, known as the GNAC, somewhat secret but believed to be "Good News Athletic Club." Their home was on the second floor of a barn behind the house on the northeast corner of Maple and Cottage Streets.

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald

MORE BASEBALL

The earliest kids team to have uniforms that O.C. can remember was the "Red Clippers." They had gray caps, shirts, pants and red belts, stockings and monogram R.C. in red on the chest. Their home lot was "Mill Lot" west of Chestnut Street, south of Park Street and north of the railroad that circled the mills to reach the coal pocket south of Forest Street. Away games were at Talcottville, Burnside, Pope Park in Hartford and probably others.

The only members of the Red Clippers O.C. can remember were pitchers Cal (Bula) Bolen, George Greenway, Bill McGonigal. When not pitching they often played some other position. Catchers John (Dusty) May; first base Jim Horan; second base Knight (Hobe) Ferris (Ed. Note: The Old Codger, himself); third base Francis (Bub) Smythe; shortstop Jackie Newman; center field Tom (Cuckoo) Keating; left field Leo (Humpty) Cleary.

Manchester was really on the map with a professional baseball team once. A Mr. Farrar came to town and opened a harness shop in the rear part of the F.T. Blish Hardware Co. store. He organized a company to support a team and built the Flower Street Field about where Elro Street is now. They hired Breckenridge (first base) as playing-manager. He got together a team, some of whom played on big league teams.

Rockville and Manchester were great rivals in everything for many years until Manchester outdistanced her so far it was no longer any contest. A Mr. Dunn was manager and said to be the chief financial backer of his Rockville team.

At the Flower Street field, Manchester won in a most decisive way. The next issue of The Herald had two pictures. A man dressed like a fashion plate, shoulders back and big cigar tilted up, was DUNN. The other of a fellow just through the wringer battered and torn with stooping shoulders and frayed butt hanging from his lower lip titled DONE.

Storyteller: John A. Johnston from The Manchester Herald, 9/25/59

THE 20s-MT. NEBO

Moriarty Field is a much different baseball area from Mt. Nebo, for those whose memories stretch back to the 1920s. The uniforms are more colorful and better fitting than the baggy gray flannels worn by the Manchester town team of that period.

Two or three of the old-timers' gloves would be swallowed up in one of the Twilight Leaguers' mitts. Fences were nonexistent, hence no need for a warning track.

For a visiting player to hit a home run, he had to get it over the heads of, or between, outfielders Bill Schieldge, Tommy Sipples or Sammy Kotsch, left to right respectively. Sometimes that took a bit of doing as the game wore on. The few baseballs available became dirty and scuffed and lost something of the liveliness they had at the start.

The infield is truer. Nebo of old had only the minimum manicuring, from the beginning of the season to the end, to make it playable.

As good as they may have been, undoubtedly Jerry Fay at first; Sammy Massey, second; Billy Dwyer, shortstop; and "Breck" Wilson, third, would have performed even better on the Moriarty diamond. The first two, and Sipples posthumously, made it to the Manchester Sports Hall of Fame.

With only occasional exceptions, "Punk" Lamprecht, catcher, and Jack Burkhardt were the battery. Sometimes manager Herman Bronkie, another local Sports Hall of Famer and one-time St. Louis Browns major leaguer, used Sipples' strong arm on the mound. Fred Warnock became the outfield replacement.

Gone are many other things from those days. One is the deep-seated, often bitter rivalry with traditional opponents. These included Rockville, the American Thread Co. team of Willimantic, the Bristol New Departures, and the Meriden Insilcos.

Opinions of opponents from the large crowds that could be counted on when one of these teams visited Nebo on a Sunday or

holiday afternoon were raucous, even vicious. Two favorite targets were Bristol catcher, "Muddy" Watters, and pitcher-first baseman Eddie Goodrich.

The seasons were not without their Madison Avenue hype. Rockville or Willimantic, maybe both, brought in a "ringer." He was King Bader, a pitcher with the Providence Grays of the Eastern league.

Bader was infamous for using an emery ball delivery. A little doctoring of the ball on the abrasive would make it take weird twists, turns, and dips.

The Manchester club was not above importing an outside pitcher when the game's importance dictated. One who saw action on Nebo was southpaw Sam Hyman, the Hartford Franklin Avenue pharmacist. He also pitched in the Eastern League.

The pedestrian spectators made their way to the field down South Main Street, past Gould's Pond, and up Mt. Nebo Place, where ticket sellers waited. Both the pond and place disappeared with the construction of I-384.

For us kids, young in age but wise in the wiles of "crashing the gate," the route was across Charter Oak field, over Hop Brook, and up the hill. Then we cast furtive looks about to spot the ticket men and made a beeline to be absorbed by the crowd.

Storyteller: The Manchester Herald (date unknown)

SUNDAY BALL GAME

The Swastikas lost their first game of the season at Mt. Nebo Sunday afternoon. The Poli team of Hartford defeating them in a hard-hitting game by the score of 14 to 10.

Ed. Note: The Swastika, a religious symbol or ornament of ancient origin, shaped like four capital "Ls", was used by the Manchester team pictured below, much prior to the infamous anti-semitic symbol of Nazi Germany.

Storyteller: Earl Yost The Manchester Herald, 4/26/67; 6/23/73

THE "RINGERS" ARE HERE . . . PLAY BALL!

Old-time baseball fans in Manchester still like to recall the 'good old days' when the annual series between Manchester and Rockville town teams were cause for a general shutdown of business and community projects during the early 1920s.



With major league baseball outlawed in Boston on the Sabbath, numerous stars picked up some loose money throughout Connecticut, a number winding up wearing the uniforms of either the Rockville or Manchester teams.

There will never be the intense rivalry between the two neighboring communities. Conditions have changed drastically over the years.

The best teams from Manchester and Rockville could play today and 100 fans would be encouraging. Back in the 20s, it was common for crowds between 5,000 and 6,000 to turn out to watch the play.

Three members of Philadelphia Athletic Manager Connie Mack's famous \$100,000 Infield played here, first baseman Stuffy McInnis and shortstop Jack Barry performed with Manager Lou Breckenridge's Silk Towners. Second baseman Eddie Collins played with Rockville. The fifth infielder with the A's was Danny Murphy, from Norwich, who played with the locals at the same time.

Mathewson Pitched.

The greatest name pitcher to ever work a regular game during the series was Christy Mathewson of the New York Giants. Matty was brought in by Rockville in one of the biggest money games ever between the two clubs.

The right-hander was at his very best and he completely stifled the local batters, that was, all but leadoff batter Jimmy O'Rouke.

O'Rouke tripled to start the game but couldn't advance as Mathewson mowed down the next three batters and didn't permit a single hit the rest of the day.

It was a scoreless tie until the last half of the ninth inning when Mathewson came up to bat. With a runner on second he lashed a single to drive in the only marker.

Old timers like to recall the feats of Chubby Joe Casey, a catcher, with a rifle arm who later played with the Detroit Tigers. Casey's greatest game was to throw out no less than seven base runners who attempted to steal.

Assumed Names

When Barry and Collins played here, both were attending Holy Cross and both played under assumed names to protect their eligibility. By playing in "mill towns" on weekends, the pair was able to pick up some easy money to help meet their education costs.

No longer a ball park in Manchester, the Flower Street grounds were completely enclosed, and were capable of handling crowds up to 5,000. Bleachers and a covered grandstand were part of the complex which faded from the scene years ago into a growing residential neighborhood development.

Other Hall of Famers, besides Mathewson and Collins, who played here or against Manchester teams included George Sisler and Big Ed Walsh. Manchester's own Herman Bronkie, Hugh Duffy, Hank Gowdy, Owen Carrol, Johnny Cooney, Chief Meyers, Chet Nichols, King Bader, Jigger Statz, Doc Gautreau and Sam Hyman were others who displayed their wares.

Wild Rhubarb

During Breckenridge's career here, when he was brought in to organize and coach the town team, he became involved in a wild rhubarb game with Rockville Player-Manager Bill Lush, one-time St. Louis Cardinal star.

Manchester brought in Bill Holland, a strapping black pitcher who was the star with the Brooklyn Colored Giants, as insurance, in the event he was needed.

Midway through the Labor Day game in 1906, with Rockville leading 1-0, Holland was waved into play. Earlier, he had defeated both Manchester and Rockville with brilliant mound efforts.

Even before Holland unbuttoned his jacket, Rockville said it would not send a man up to plate. Lush was steaming mad and Breckenridge was enjoying it all.

Before the game had started, Lush, seeing Holland wearing a Manchester uniform, charged that his team would walk off if the import was used.

When Holland stayed on the mound, Manager Lush ordered the bats picked up and the team assembled around their leader. Play was halted. Rockville wanted its guarantee and Manchester refused to post it under the circumstances.

Fresh fruit, sticks and stones pelted down on the players of both sides from irate 154

fans.

After hot and heavy arguments lasting nearly an hour, Rockville agreed to play and went on to win the game.

This marked the start of the split-up and the end of the intense rivalry between the neighboring towns.

Used Assumed Name

Brought in from the New York Yankees to play centerfield on Sundays was Bert Daniels, who was known locally as Bert Whistle, and Charles Messenger of the Chicago White Sox played right field.

Another memorable game pitted Manchester against Willimantic. Willimantic loaded its lineup with professional ringers. The starting battery consisted of Johnny Cooney, who starred both as a pitcher and outfielder in the National League, and Hank Gowdy, the No. 1 catcher with the Boston Brayes.

The locals imported Jack Scott, also of the Brayes, to pitch.

A special train of seven coaches was hired to transport fans from one community to the other. More than 5,000 paid their way inside the gates.

Scott pitched a one-hitter that by Gowdy, won going away in an argument-infested game. Scott was paid \$50 for his services to show and \$100 if he won.

The year George Sisler of the St. Louis Browns batted over .400 and won the American League's most valuable player award, he came to Manchester one afternoon with the Hartford Poli's.

Mt. Nebo was the site for Sisler's appearance, and before the game he put on an exhibition of hitting to all fields. Later in the season he joined the Manchester Club for one game.

The most successful Manchester pitcher was Sam Hyman, a southpaw from Hartford, who reeled off 16 straight games and won a promotion to the Detroit Tigers.

Local Talent

Hometowners added much to the attack. Some of the home grown talent that held its own included little Sammy Massey, big fat Jerry Fay, Boggy Muldoon, Joe Madden, Art Johnson, Breck Wilson, Eddie Munson, Bill Dwyer, Herman Bronkie, Fred Warnock, Pop Edgar, Bill Schieldge, Tommy Sipples, and numerous others.

Perhaps the best two teams in later years were the North End Shamrocks in the late 20s and the Bluefields of the 30s.

There will never be a Twilight Baseball League the caliber of the circuit that operated successfully for many years at the West Side Oval, especially at the close of World War II.

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald, 1/21/71

INSIDE A HALL WITH THE "ROUND BALL"

Company G or "G" Team

Manchester was always a sports-loving town and turned out well to support the new "Co. G" team. Victories out-of-town increased local interest, so that when other teams were brought in for Co. G to beat, the crowds overflowed the limited audience space. The company's treasury grew as never before. There were visions of plenty of extras to the regulation chow in the next summer's week of camp at Niantic.

Then something began to look strange. Although the crowds were the same size and the expenses had not increased, the growth of the company treasury had slowed down to an alarming degree. Investigation disclosed that a large part of the proceeds from basketball were being diverted to someone's personal assets.

That was the end of Co. G's basketball history. The players organized as an independent team, dropping the "Co." and taking the name of the "G Team," to make a name for itself, for a number of years, around Connecticut. It was no longer necessary to use only Co. G. members, so several were dropped and replaced by better players mostly ex-high school though sometimes hired semi-pros from out-of-town.

The "divvy" between players was much better than the pay rate that was common then—\$10 and expenses a game. We guaranteed visiting teams only that much per man. Some different today, no doubt.

The old original "G" basketball team, that put Manchester on the basketball map of Connecticut, was more that a dozen years before The Herald had its first sports editor, Tom Stowe.

Then, the game consisted of two 40-minute halves with a ten-minute intermission. One was expected to play through it all, unless injured so he couldn't. Only then did the one substitute get a chance to play. For out-of-town games, the "G" team took only seven men, five on the team, one substitute and a referee. Visiting teams were only paid a guarantee for the same. Ed "Mull" McCarthy was the G team's regular referee. There were very few fouls called then. The crowds relished rough-house and packed the armory to see it. The visiting team furnished the referee.

College players were not allowed to play for money, but under assumed names they came, and their teams drew good attendance. The best was from Trinity (not admitted then) and was known as "The Figi Five." "G" really had to pour it on to beat them. But they packed the armory.

It was not unusual for some team to find itself a man short and would hire one for a game. We charged \$10 a game and expenses. Not bad in those days. "G" never hired a man. When needed, the best player available was added as a member of the team and henceforth got his equal share of the "divvy" of the profits.

The Armory-A Sports Center

The old armory on Wells Street was quite a sports center around the turn of the century. There was a pretty good hockey team on roller skates. The late "Bob" Treat was one fine player.

Bicycle races of one, five and even ten miles were popular. The contestants took



The Boys of the "G" team. Standing, back row, far right, who else but "Old Codger".

turns on a set of rollers driven by their rear wheels and belted to a pointer on a dial that registered the mileage. Each one was allowed to get up speed for a flying start and when the pointer was at zero on the dial, the stop-watch was started. After all had ridden, their times were compared to determine the winners for prizes.

Popular at one time were "toe-and heel" walking races. If a toe left the floor before the other heel made contact, the contestant was disqualified. Judges watched intently. Walking would seem very simple, but it required some skill gained by plenty of practice to do it right and get speed. One regular contestant always carried a small container, level full of lead shot, in each hand. If any shot spilled over, he knew he was wasting time with inefficient up and down motion instead of a straight glide ahead.

There might be two or three wrestling matches on an evening's program. There were two outstanding athletes in town and so evenly matched that they were often paired in different events—William "Bill" Madden and Frank "Red" Hollister. Their wrestling matches had the crowd on its toes. And equally so in boxing.

Joe Sullivan, who lived on Maple Street next east of Cottage Street's intersection, had a large shed in back of his house. He had once been sort of a fighter and held training classes in boxing in his shed. Some of his trainees were on the Armory programs. One pair of little fellows who always pleased the "paying public" were Joe "Toughie" Tammany and "Chappie" Pentland (later the florist).

After the new Armory was built on Main Street, the old one was used as an automobile salesroom for a while and for storage purposes. Finally the old wooden structure caught fire and burned to the ground.

Football

Entrance to the football field near Hackmatack Street (for adults) was a stile which prevented the exit of the cows. Here "Chick" Nelson stood selling tickets for men to wear in their hat bands. Women never attended football games. Another ticket seller circulated in the crowd along the sidelines to nail the adults that skipped the

gate. Knowing that the boys couldn't pay anyway, but would easily scale the fence any where, "Chick" passed them through the stile with a friendly little pat on the pants with the side of his foot.

Helmets and shoulder pads were unknown. A few fellows used semi-hard rubber nose guards, held on by an elastic band around the head and a part that was gripped between the teeth, which also served like a boxer's mouthpiece.

Players did have padded pants and a tightly laced vest that could not be grabbed like a jersey and was more or less slippery for a tackler. What was then called the "Deaf and Dumb Institute" in Hartford fielded a fair team, though very light. They came to play the GNAC several times and could be depended on to draw a good crowd. Big "Charlie" Sault was the home team's full-back. He usually made good yardage through the smaller team (called the "Dumbies"). But one day "Charlie" seemed to lack enthusiasm and was being held to small gains. The quarterback Leo (Red) Gorman gave "Charlie" the ball to go through the center. Leo got around the pileup, reaching his hand in between "Dumbies" and gave "Charlie's" hair a most awful yanking. Next line-up, "Charlie got the ball again to go through center. He did for a touch-down and left several "Dumbies" stretched out on the way.

Men didn't grow as big in those days and "Charlie" was almost considered a giant but would not be outstanding now. He was quite an athlete. A good baseball pitcher, experience at Greenwich Academy. Once at Mt. Nebo, a pitch got away and went very wild. "Charlie" gave a whoop and, large as he was, jumped into the air, did a back flip as agilely as a small man could.

Only members of the GNAC that O.C. can remember were "Charlie" Sault, "Billie" Sault, Leo (Red) Gorman, John (Bep) Shaw the barber, Tom Healy, Paul Ferris. Printed on the back of big "Charlie's" football vest was "Here's Your Mutton."

"Volleyed and Thundered"

On the northwest corner of Charter Oak and Spruce was the home of Frank Abbey, a machinist employed in Cheney's Machine Shop. His son, Albert, and some other boys organized an athletic club in their woodshed. About the only apparatus O.C. can remember the club having was a throwing "hammer" made of a sort of an iron roller mounted on the end of a broomstick.

Down in the meadow, about opposite Spruce Street, was a big rolled-up tin roof off some building. Standing on Charter Oak Street, the "club" members took turns whirling the "hammer" around and letting it fly down to hit the tin. If one missed, he had to go down to get it then and thereafter until someone else missed. What a satisfying crash it made when it hit! The thrower was supposed to say "Volleyed and Thundered." Could that amuse kids today?

Storyteller: Anna McGuire from The Manchester Herald, 11/16/66

THE PEDALLERS

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the materials and design of the bicycle had improved to such an extent that cycling had universal appeal. It became a popular mode of transportation for Manchester residents who used it for practical purposes as well as pleasure.

Factories such as the E.E. Hilliard Co., Bon Ami Soap Manufacturers and Cheney

Bros. erected long racks for the parking of employees bicycles during the work day. Everyone pedaled to work.

The enthusiast devoted Saturday afternoon to a pleasure trip, touring the country side alone or with friends, for incredible distances. Bicycle clubs were organized. Bicycle racing became a popular sport in Manchester.

The bicycle industry became "big business" in Manchester, as repair shops and agencies for the sale of bicycles and equipment were established to meet this new transportation medium.

North Enders recall, with

nostalgia, Mr. J.P. Ledyard and his bicycle shop of the early 1900s. It was located in the rear basement of the Balch and Brown block on Depot Square. The entrance to J.P.'s thriving repair and sales business fronted an alley undistinguished even by name.

J.P.'s was the center of community life. Here, North Enders met in the evening ostensibly for bicycle repairs, purchase of parts and accessories, and to negotiate for a new bike. In reality, the shop, like the old country store, provided the men with a meeting place to debate the burning political and governmental issues of the day for the habitués were civic-minded residents interested in Manchester's progress.

East side business and professional men speak with warm affection of "Bill" Green and his bicycle shop on Spruce Street. Mr. Green started his bicycle repair business in the early 1900s and for 40 years serviced bicycles, adding motorcycle and automobile repair to his line as these types of vehicles became popular. It was quite by accident that he entered this career.

He could not afford the expense of having his own bicycle repaired. Experimentation convinced him that his own skill could serve him. The second stage found him correcting damages to his friends' bicycles. The final stage was the opening of his own business.

During his long career, he worked on bicycles of all-wood construction: frames,

wheels and spokes.

He recalls vividly the throng of Cheney employees who depended on their trusty bicycles for transportation to work. These vehicles were so necessary to daily living that over-night service was a must. The bicyclist left his damaged cycle at the shop at the end of the day's work and picked it up next morning on his way to work.

South Enders claim ownership of Mr. Maurice J. Madden, who opened a bicycle repair shop in 1903 in the Cheney block at the corner of Main and Charter Oak Streets; and later, as Manchester residents became motorcyclists and automo-



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bilists, moved to the Johnson block on Main Street. Here, he founded Madden Bros., for the repair and sale of all three types of vehicles with emphasis on the Nash car agency.

He was, perhaps, Manchester's earliest and most successful bicycle racer. Yesterday's bicycle racing fans tell wonderful tales of his skill in distancing all competitors: local, state and national.

Mr. Madden and his friends frequently pedaled from Manchester to Worcester, Mass., participated in a road race in that city, and pedaled back to Manchester, all on the same day. Sometimes, as he rode through a small community on the outskirts of Manchester after dark, on his lightless bicycle, he was stopped by a constable. The constable, recognizing this noted racer, did not arrest him; instead he lent him a lantern to hang on his handle bar for the safe return to Manchester.

Mr. Madden's prowess was not a mere bit of luck. He practiced constantly on dirt lanes at Woodland Park, on rough rutted roads, and on his home trainer. He drew an enthusiastic crowd at Cheney Hall whenever he gave exhibitions on his trainer. This mechanism must have been the prototype of the modern bicycle reducing machine.

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald

THE BIKES

O.C.'s first bike was a solid-tired Victor. The handle bars ended in D handles like those on shovels. The front wheel was mounted in a spring fork. The only brake was a shoe, forced against the front tire by a lever on the handle bar. There were no coaster brakes then, so the pedals had to keep turning as long as the rear wheel turned.

The chain and sprockets were heavy and strong enough to drive a small concrete mixer. The whole machine was built so heavy and strong that nothing ever broke, but it was difficult to lift off the ground. In order to be able to push so much weight uphill, one needed to have the pushes follow one another rapidly. It was, therefore, geared down to about 62.

When lighter pneumatic-tired "wheels" came out, they were geared up to 72 at least and men preferred 84. Racers had theirs geared up to 96 or more. That required more leg power but gave more distance for each revolution of the pedals.

When going down hills, the 62 geared pedals would get to going around so fast that the rider couldn't keep up with them. To save his shins and calves from getting banged up, he soon learned to put his feet up on the steps provided on both sides of the front forks for that purpose.

When the pneumatic tires came out they were called "cushion tires" and used inner tubes. Then, we carried a repair kit strapped to the seat or frame. An example of how tools were made before this century started:

There was an adjustable monkey wrench in the tool bag on that old Victor solid-tire bike. O.C. has used it all these years and it is still in perfect condition. The jaws are still tight and parallel.

Bicycles became very popular, until it seemed most everyone had them. Roads and sidewalks were big hard surfaced.

20 Mile Road Race

Every year Manchester had a 20-mile road race. It was quite popular and drew many entrants and spectators from out-oftown.

The start and finish line was at Park Street. The course went down Main Street to Charter Oak, up Oak Grove to Porter, then to E. Center Street and Main Street and south to the finish. It was four miles around and five circuits completed the race.

Sometimes the riders with the biggest handicaps would appear at the center before the "scratch men" were given the gun to start. Prizes were given for the first few making the best time.

Walter Luettgens and a fellow named Alexander were always the scratch men and were so well-matched that they came in very close. It was a good 50/50 bet on them. They always took the first two time prizes, which were the best in the prize list.

There was a narrow wooden bridge at

Charter Oak and Autumn Streets that could only be used by slowing down a lot. Some riders took the chance of plowing through the brook where there was a place for horses and wagons to go so the horses could drink and the wheel fellows got soaked up to make the steel rims tight.

Most fellows made it without losing much speed, but a few were thrown by the loose stones in the brook and were eliminated by injury to themselves or damage to their mount.

Encouraged by his racing popularity in town, Luettgens started a bicycle sales and repair shop in the southeast corner of the House & Hale building basement and enjoyed good success for years.

Maurice Madden was also a good racer but was given a little handicap over those two scratch starters. He also had a bicycle sales and service store in the old Cheney block at Main and Charter Oak.

> Storyteller: Gladys S. Adams from The Manchester Herald

A GRAND DAY AT THE RACES

1889-1909: Twenty years of "oat races."
Manchester Driving and Agricultural
Assoc., founded June 1889, created
Woodland Park on thirty acres of land on
Woodland Street where a half-mile track,
two paths containing thirty-six stalls, a covered grandstand with a seating capacity of
five hundred and a judges stand were
installed. The whole thing was enclosed by
a board fence seven feet high. The park was
located near present Turnbull Street. Broad
Street didn't exist then.

Officers: Pres., W.W. Cowles; V.P., A.L. Taylor; Treas., C.W. Cowles; and Sec., C. D. Tucker who was station agent for the New York and New England Railroad.

Harness racing was a popular sport at that time in Manchester, and it belonged to the Eastern Connecticut Trotting Circuit which included Manchester, Rockville, Brooklyn, Norwich, Willimantic and Stafford.

There were two types of races: one,

called oat matinee, featured local horses with the owners driving their own sulkies. The winner was paid in oats, twenty bushels for first, fifteen for second, etc. The second type was a two-day event with entries from other towns competing with the Manchester horses. The results of these races were published in full in the Hartford Courant.

October 3, 1889: "Special purse will be given for double team race for town horses, best two in three. Admission to the park twenty-five cents. Ladies, teams and stockholders free. Children half price. Buses will leave from Depot Square and Cheney's store to accommodate any wishing to attend."

May 1890: "Trotters are out at Woodland Park. Allen Bros., Clarence and George, who operate the Cowles Hotel and Stables, were at Woodland Park with their four-in-hand hitched to a scraper and before noon the track was in good condition. Shortly after noon, local horses in sulkies could be seen going to the track."

January 1892: Manchester Driving and Agricultural Assoc. met at Patten & Brown's hall with twenty-five stockholders present. Officers elected: J.J. Strickland, A.L. Taylor, C.H. Strant and George Allen. Directors: R.N. Strong, G.F. Day, A. W. Hollister and F.S. Wood.

Hartford Courant July 1892: "Before Woodland Corp. was established three years ago there was not a horse in town that had a record and a pedigree and trotting stock was unheard of." "The number of horses in town has greatly increased and Manchester Hackney Stud has been started since the track was built. There is not a community in Connecticut with a territory equal to Manchester that can boast of so many fine-blooded horses."

There was a grand celebration on Fourth of July 1892 at Woodland Park including trotting races and foot races, a balloon launch, a parachute jump and shore dinner.

The big event of the season was the Horse Fair. Entry cards for Eastern Conn. Trotting Circuit had been sent to horsemen in August and on September 7 & 8 the circuit opened two days of competition at Woodland Park, all racing rules under the National Assoc.

The track was in tip-top condition and heats were run, bets were made, prizes given while the crowd in the grandstand shouted and cheered. The first day was topped off by a dance at Apel's Opera House.

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On the second day, there were sulky, foot and bicycle races, a baseball game, sometimes a greased pig was let loose. Prof. Northrup took to the air in his balloon. Manchester was the first of the Eastern Conn. Circuit to host the Horse Fair. The other member towns followed, one each week, for a total of six Horse Fairs.

For various reasons, the Manchester Driving and Agricultural Assoc. was reluctant to plan anything for the Fourth of July 1896, but. G.H. Allen and J.F Sheridan leased Woodland Park for the day and announced "classes will be 2.25 and 2.49 with a purse of two hundred dollars for each class and three minute class for one hundred bushels of oats." There were bicycle races and a football game between South Manchester and the Broadbrooks.

The Manchester Driving and Agricultural Assoc. was plagued by those in town who felt that a race track was not a good influence and the association went out of business. And the trolley had come to Manchester and with it the trolley resort at Laurel Park, which, being on the trolley line was more accessible.

Another blow was the death of Clarence W. Allen in June 1898, age forty-three. He was a leader and a horse lover. He came to Manchester at age fifteen to work for Col. P. W. Hudson and later he and his brother George ran Cowles Hotel and Stable. He was president of the Trotting Assoc., North Manchester's first fire chief and a lieutenant on the staff of Major Warren of the First Company, Governor's Horse Guard.

Aug. 1901: Horse racing at Woodland Park is to be revived. Two classes 230 open and three minutes for town horses. Prizes fifty bushels of oats each. A ball game is planned.

Dec. 1901: F.B. Horton purchased Woodland Park land from C.W. Cowles, a double tenement to be built. The end of an exciting era in Manchester's history. Storyteller: Doug Johnson, Sr. from The Manchester Herald, 3/20/84

THE SAND BANK OVAL

We had a huge sand bank in the South End in the 1920s and 1930s. It was an oval amphitheater of pure fine sand, running from today's Battista Road to Spruce Street and Philip Road to School Street.

We used it for jumping, building, slingshot and buck-rifle wars. As far as I know, no one was ever injured or buried alive there. Outside of a few bruised noggins and dirty feet.

Some local yokel would start rumors that "so-and-so got buried alive." These rumors were always false.

On Sundays, the motorcycle clubs in Hartford and East Hartford used to bring their heavy Harley and Indian bikes to the hill-climb (now Battista Road) slope which can still be seen. We used to get a charge out of the hapless riders when they hit the 60-foot crest and their bikes flipped over on them. As far as I know, again, no serious injuries were sustained.

Ah-those were the good old days!

Storyteller: Amby Burfoot

AN AFTERWARD AFTERWORD

Just as the Manchester Road Race has changed over the years, so has its significance in the life of this runner. Once, a nervous high-schooler, I ran Manchester as an adventure. It represented a new frontier in my life. Later, I raced to win, staking months of ardous training and even greater mental energies on getting to the finish tape first.

Now, its not the tape that matters, but merely getting to the finish line, which at Manchester has always been the starting line as well. I have run 23 consecutive Manchester's since my first in 1963. While harboring no illusions that I'll ever catch Charlie Robbins, who hasn't missed a Five Mile since 1951, I'll keep coming back.

Reared in the Kelley school of patience and overdistance training, I was lucky enough to win the high school division in 1963, a thrill I'll long remember. Several years later, however, I was beginning to wonder if I would ever win the big Manchester open division. In 1966 and 1967, in good condition and racing as hard as I knew how, I lost close battles to Ralph Buschmann and Art Dulong. Both years I stuck with my rivals up the Highland St. hill but couldn't match their long-striding speed down the Porter St. descent. It was then that I decided my stiff, shuffling stride was totally unsuited for the Manchester loop. I despaired of ever having a great success on Thanksgiving Day.

I proved wrong in my self-assessment, winning far more Manchesters than any man has a right to. I won on days when I should have lost, triumphed over athletes far more talented than I am, and somehow managed to duplicate the feat a year later, and another year, and another year. The Manchester Road Race eventually got under my skin. I raced it like a demon, a man possessed.

When I lost in 1978 to John Treacy, that was fine by me. How could I complain, a runner with an overgrown collection of laurels? It was easy to wax philosophical, to repeat the familiar refrain: "Winning isn't everything."

I meant it when I mouthed those tired words. What I didn't know then, in 1978, and wouldn't come to fully appreciate for a number of years, was that something even more important would come to replace winning. Something that I would remain able to accomplish every Thanksgiving: Finishing.

Ultimately, that something is what has enabled the Manchester Road Race to survive and flourish. It's the tradition of the Thanksgiving holiday. It's the history of the 49 years already run. It's the tens of thousands who line the course and the almost-as-many who fill it. It's the new acquaintances and the old friendships.

The parts are greater than the whole. That synergy is what brings me back to Manchester every Thanksgiving morning.

Some streaks are meant to be broken. Some aren't. A Manchester finishing streak is worth fighting to maintain. Storyteller: Susan Plese, reprinted from her book, "Loose Connections", published in 1984.

THE SHARKS AT GLOBE HOLLOW EAT PEANUT BUTTER

(Ed Note: Swimming is indeed a serious sport . . . that is unless you have kids that are guppies . . . or minnows . . . or sharks.)

I'm the mother of one guppy and one shark. If you don't understand that statement, you haven't registered your kid for swimming classes this year.

It was just recently that I got the old class order straight. That's when swimmers were called swimmers and beginners were called beginners. That was pretty simple.

But now they've come up with a brand new set of labels. And for the life of me I can't figure out which fish is what. And frankly, it makes for embarrassing conversation.

"What classes do you want?" the lifeguard asked cheerily last week.

"I'll have one polliwog and a flying fish," I mumbled under my breath. I was hoping no childless bystander would hear me and break into knee-slapping gales of laughter.

"What's that? Speak up," the lifeguard said.

I tried another tact. Euphemisms.

I told him I wanted the class where the kid has to swim across the pool using the proper breathing before he can pass. You know, the class that every kid in town spends three years of his life trying to get out of.

"Guppy," he said.

"I thought that was polliwog," I answered.

"Guppy," he said.

"Then guppy it will be," I said and smiled magnanimously.

But I was really confused. Does a guppy swim better than a polliwog? And what's the difference between a polliwog and a tadpole? A tadpole is one step below a polliwog but I thought that a polliwog and a tadpole were the same thing. Maybe one has a longer tail. As far as I can see, none of my kids have any tails at all.

And anyone knows that guppies are vicious characters, as fish go. I do not want to teach my kid to be a guppy. Guppies are the piranhas of the goldfish bowl. They are the cannibals of the freshwater set. They may look tame, but I wouldn't want to be in the same swimming pool with a pack of them.

There was no sense arguing with the lifeguard, though. My little kid was already signed up for guppy, and he'd be a guppy until he could get across the pool. Then he would turn into a minnow.

That's confusing, too. Guppies don't turn into anything but bigger guppies. Tadpoles turn into frogs, but there are no classes for frogs. Frogs, as far as I can see, have to learn to swim on their own. Frogs are deprived. Frog mothers probably hang around the house all day wearing ratty bathrobes and neglecting swim education.

But there was no more time for musing. I had another kid to sign up. "Now I need a flying fish," I whispered.

"Are you sure?" the lifeguard asked.

"What's the difference between a flying fish and a shark?" I asked.

What a dumb question. Everyone knows that sharks have big jaws and they eat unsuspecting swimmers in bikini bathing suits. Flying fish don't really fly, any more than flying squirrels fly. But flying fish do not eat unsuspecting swimmers. They probably eat guppies.

Oh, no, this was really getting worrisome. I started to tell the lifeguard that the guppy and the flying fish shouldn't be taking swimming classes in the same pool together, As it is, they have to share a room and they do enough damage to each other on dry land.

Fortunately, however, the lifeguard explained to me what the flying fish had to do, and I knew that my son was past that point in his swimming career. For the time being, all the little guppies were safe from my son, the former flying fish.

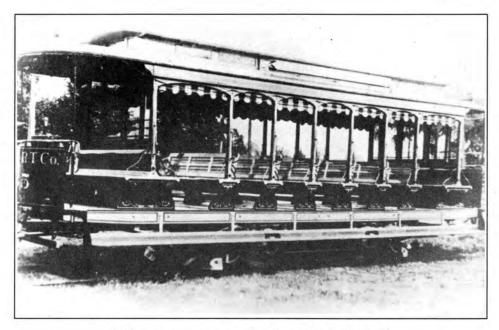
"He's ready for shark," the lifeguard said. My son grinned and showed his teeth and ferociously ripped a corner off the peanut butter and jelly sandwich he was

eating.

Funny, I didn't think sharks ate peanut butter. I'll have to tell my daughter about this. She was worried about taking lifesaving in the same pool with a bunch of sharks.

For the time being, my daughter is safe. The sharks at Globe Hollow eat peanut butter. Pass it on.

Good Times A-Happening



In the summertime, open trolley cars went to Laurel Park.



Storyteller: Emily Maidment June 18, 1966

LAUREL PARK

If you had been on Main or Center Street in Manchester during the first part of the century on Saturday mornings in June or on days after the schools closed for the season, you would have heard high pitched, merry shouting. It would have been from children on special trolley cars bound for a day's outing at Laurel Park.

It was customary for each of the church Sunday schools in Manchester, Hartford and Rockville to set aside a day for a picnic for their children at the park. The groups were never as boisterous on their return from a day spent eating, riding the merrygo-round, swinging, playing games, watching the animals in the zoo, wandering through the woods, climbing the tower, or spending time in row boats or the swan boat.

Laurel Park exists no longer except in the happy memory of some people. Its location is best described today as being across the road from Wickham Park on the way to Burnside and East Hartford.

Chapman and the Trolley

Maro S. Chapman of Manchester saw the need of a link between Manchester and Hartford. He originated, and was president of, the Hartford, Manchester and Rockville Tramway Co. According to the "Biographical Record of Hartford County", "With his own resources he built, equipped and turned over to stockholders in complete running order . . . regarded as being in every respect a model."

An undated newspaper clipping is available about the organization of the park and the first trip of the trolley from Hartford to Manchester, on a hot summer day, probably in 1893 or 1894.

Mr. Chapman saw the advantage of a park on the trolley route; so he planned and supervised the transformation of the woodland area into a park. He made the natural beauty of the place seem accessible, and added many features that appeal to the public.

All trolleys were built with "cow-catchers" at the front. In the winter, closed cars were used, but the cars for summer use were especially designed with rows of seats going crosswise and with the sides open. Timid individuals sought the center seats, but the adventurous liked the outside, or, for added thrill, they would stand on the running boards because in these places the breeze created by the speed of the trolley was exhilarating.

The fare had been set at five cents from Manchester to the Hockanum River, but it was changed to include the park stop. "The passengers could obtain entrance tickets to the park free from the trolley conductor. Anyone walking or going by bicycle paid an admission fee of five cents. Teams were admitted for ten cents with hitching privileges."

One stepped off the trolley onto a covered wooden platform with a railing and benches that extended over a pond.

Near by was a rustic arch that spelled out "Laurel Park." There was a footpath, as well as a dirt road.

The path led down a ravine "crossing and recrossing a brook by rustic bridges" until it reached "a spring hewn out of solid rock. Then the path joined the road, and one crossed a wide bridge over a lake, where there was a boat house and a half dozen boats for rent at 25¢ an hour." In time, a swan boat, propelled by pedals, was added to the park's attractions and, later, a launch. What seemed like a lake was actually a branch of the Hockanum River.

The road led into a large grove with pic-

nic tables and benches, swings, a merry-goround, penny slot machines, a refreshment stand, a zoo, a band stand and a dance pavilion.

The park was open every day until dark, from Memorial Day until fall. When lights were installed, there was dancing on Thursday and Saturday nights. The park had the reputation for having the finest outdoor dancing pavilion in New England.

Hatch's Military Band of Hartford gave a concert every Sunday afternoon.

There was a wooden tower "About three stories high" from which one could get a fine view of the Connecticut Valley. A reward for those who followed the path to the tower in the spring were the patches of wild strawberries and the sight of an abundance of laurel in bloom.

The zoo was a popular attraction, with monkeys, a bear, a raccoon, foxes, an eagle, parrots, a cockatoo, and other birds. In the winter, when the park was closed, the animals were sheltered under the trolley car barns, located on land that is now the parking lot behind the firehouse at the Center.

Charles O. Treat had the food concession, from the opening of the park until 1912. He made his own ice cream there, and became famous for its creamy consistency and the generous portions which he served. The cream he used was brought to the park by horse-drawn wagon from the Slatter farm in Vernon. Treat's daughter, Mrs. Arthur Keeney of Church Street, recalls happy days at the park, including tasting the ice cream from the dasher of the freezer. Among the group outings held there, she remembers in particular those of the "fresh air children" from Hartford, who were always given ham sandwiches, hard boiled eggs, chocolate milk, a banana, cup cakes and ice cream.

Another of Mrs. Keeney's vivid recollections is that Mr. Chapman acquired pink lotus from Egypt and they grew along the banks of the water, matching in color the pink flamingoes, which could be seen from the bridge.

The park was a popular destination for people who went by horse and buggy, as well as by trolley, and for bicyclists from all over the state and southern Massachusetts. Jim Duffy says that there were frequently two or three thousand people at the park on Sundays and on Thursday nights when there were fireworks. It was a problem to get the people into the town after the fireworks and involved using all available trolley cars.

In addition to the pleasure which the park provided, it gave employment to many. A few of these were R. M. Rood, the first park superintendent; Thomas Quish and Frank Happeny, the policeman; and a man named Savage who was called in at special times. August Senkbeil had some responsibility for the swan boat. Dick Tinker, Frank Anderson, Frank Falkner and Robert Treat were young helpers at the refreshment stand, as was a Mrs. Bockus.

Ownership of the trolley lines and park was sold to a Boston firm just before 1910 and, about two years after that, to the Consolidated Railway Co., which became the Connecticut Co.

The automobile made a great change in people's interests. They could travel farther, and the park lost its appeal. World War I occupied attention. The park equipment deteriorated and was not replaced. Finally, after nearly 25 years as a pleasure spot, Laurel Park closed.

Storyteller: Emily Maidment Sept. 28, 1966

WICKHAM PARK AND ITS DONORS.

Clarence Horace Wickham was born January 12, 1860 in Whitneyville, Conn. After the Civil War, his family came to Manchester and he attended schools in Manchester and in Hartford. He graduated from Hartford Public High School in 1879.

His father was an inventor of stamped envelope and wrapper machines. Clarence became a supervisor in charge of manufacturing stamped envelopes and wrappers for the U. S. government. He was one of the organizers of the Hartford, Manchester and Rockville Tramway Co. and became its secretary and treasurer in 1893. The company built and maintained trolley service between Hartford and Manchester and also

developed Laurel Park, an amusement area across the road from the Wickham estate. Clarence Wickham met Edith McGraft, his future wife, in Europe. She was the daughter of the mayor of Muskegon, Mich. "She attended Muskegon High School, the Conservatory of Music at Oberlin College, and the Ferris Business School. Her biography states that "she was the only woman in the class at the last school."

The Wickham Estate became Wickham Park when, in 1960, by bequest of Clarence H. and Edith M. Wickham, their 140-acre property "The Pines" was made a public park. It was their gift to the residents of Manchester and East Hartford.

The park has been developed and administered under trusteeship of the Hartford National Bank with three commissioners from each town serving as advisors.

Better than reading about the park, one should make a leisurely visit to see the extensive views, the landscaping, the separate but well-planned play and picnic areas, and the Oriental Garden and to sense the size of the park and its beauty. A log cabin at the top of the hill was built by the Wickhams in 1927 as a place for entertaining their friends informally.

Mr. and Mrs. Wickham traveled extensively and made three trips around the world. They liked the Orient and brought back garden objects for an oriental garden on the low part of their land.

The garden had a "moon bridge," curving paths and a stream. Nearby was a Japanese tea house and a replica of a torii, which is a sacred gateway to a Shinto shrine, and a pair of imported Chinese Fu dogs.

Much labor has gone into redeveloping the Oriental Garden into a place of beauty. Tall pines cast shadows on the water, the white, arched moon bridge is a focal point, and low evergreens outline the paths. The gates of the tea house stand open. The torri and Fu dogs remain.

Not far from the Oriental Garden is an Italian shrine containing a prie-dieu. It was built by the Wickhams for the Italian workmen they employed from time to time.

It was the Wickhams' wish that the estate they loved could be enjoyed by the people of the two communities bounding it. Due to their generosity and foresight, their wish has come true. The trustees and the commissioners have accepted the challenge of the gift and the area. The maintenance staff continue to care for and develop the park so that it is worthy of the name of the donors. It is enjoyed by an estimated 100,000 people each year.

The view from the lawn in front of the cabin is one reward for the trip. As one stands on the brow of the hill, that has an elevation of 265 feet above sea level, one can see homes on Box Mt. in Vernon, the new grain elevator, which is the tallest building in Manchester, as well as several landmarks in the southern and western part of the town. Far to the south are the hills of Glastonbury. The westward view takes in a broad sweep from the Meriden mountains on the south to the tall buildings of Hartford directly in the west, and to the tower on Talcott Mt. which was formerly called Heublein and, more recently. Times Tower. Nowhere else in Manchester can one see so far and wide. It is a beautiful serene landscape.

Storyteller: Marge McMenemy as told to Barbara Potterton-6/21/89

REMEMBER?

Marge was born on June 26, 1903, and remembers good times in North Manchester. The circus came to town at Steve Pearl's lot on Woodland Street. The boys helped water and care for the animals to get passes to the shows. In the winter, all the kids would slide down North Main Street to the power house. Sometimes they used a double ripper and sometimes they had a Flexible Flyerfor the boys-or a girls' sled that wasn't as fast. They tried sitting up or belly-bumpers. They skated at Keeney Springs-Marge had a pair of skates, that her grandfather made, with wooden runners. They also skated at Center Springs Park and at Boggy Stow, near Tolland Turnpike. They often shoveled snow off the pond so they could skate. The ponds used to be frozen at Thanksgiving and Christmas. They played "Fox and Geese" and "Snap the Whip".

In the summertime, a trolley carried picknickers to Laurel Park where they had a merry-go-round—complete with a brass ring—and many rides and entertainment centers. The Deacons of the church provided watermelon and lemonade for the picnics and they had free tickets for all the rides and games. They also had outings to Crystal Lake and to Forest Park in West Springfield.

Center Springs Park was a good place for winter sports—it was in a hollow, protected by trees, and they had a lodge with fireplaces and benches. They had a concession stand which sold hot dogs and other goodies. The lake no longer freezes for good skating—some say its because of the drainage from the roads where the highway men salt and sand during winter storms.

In the summertime, the bunch of 12 kids in the two families had lots of fun. They played in the woods in Highland Park, Buckland and Wapping. They went swimming at Spring Pond which was really just a mudhole. They played in back of the church (which is now the Christian Science Church) and built playhouses there. They hunted wild flowers along the old pipe-line. They gathered nuts near Foster Street in Wapping and brought home butternuts in their bloomers—all black, gummy and itchy. When Mrs. Burnham on Burnham Street caught them taking her walnuts, she made them give them back to her.

Storyteller: John A. Johnston from The Manchester Herald-1/7/69

AH! VAUDEVILLE

How often change evokes reminiscence. The recent announcement of the sale of the State Theater must have taken a few back to another time, when the little old lady of Main Street was in her heyday.

Oh, the old Park and Circle had their double features and serials and news reels and two-reel comedies. The State had all these and something else. Vaudeville.

It was the traditional two-a-day, five-act bill with a change of program at mid-week. The acts ran the gamut of any vaudeville house in those days—animals, tumblers, magicians, the straight man and his stupid-smart partner, jugglers. You name it. The State had it at one time or another.

The vaudevillians had an aura about them that is difficult to describe or even recapture at this late date. We were in awe of them. There was no screaming, tearing at their persons, or running in the aisles by teenagers (the name was still to be born) in adulation of their idols. Hesitantly approaching a performer for an autograph was the height of our daring.

What a thrill to pass one, hopefully to brush against one of our gods, as they made their way to or from their quarters in the old Sheridan Hotel. Where had they come



Storyteller: Photo of the 1914 Homeland Parade shows the German National float heading north on Main Street. Visible in the background are the Gorman house and Gorman Place on the left and a Gorman home which was later removed and replaced by the current Bank of Boston branch office and the Community Place gift shop and Post Office sub-station.

from? What would be their next stop? Maybe a split week in Passaic or Altoona?

Funny, but only one name stands out from the host of bills that played the State over the years. That was Charlie Tobias, a singleton. He was one of the top song writers of that period—When Your Hair Has Turned to Silver", "We Did It Before and We Can Do It Again," "The Old Lamplighter," "Get Out and Get Under the Moon'—and others.

Later, he was to write the scores for Olson and Johnson's "Helizapoppin" and Earl Carrol shows. But remember, we knew him not only when, but before.

New Year's Eve was the night lovers of the State looked forward to, at least if a dollar was the most they could afford for celebration. On that occasion, the vaudeville bill went to ten, yes, Ten Big Acts of Vaudeville. All this and movies too, for a dollar.

Jack Sanson, manager of the State for many years, combed the booking agencies of New York City—or at least the publicity releases said so—for the very best acts obtainable. He could be assured the house would be packed right up to the top row of the gallery—balcony to Johnny-come-latelies.

A roar would go up as the orchestra came into the pit from backstage. Then it would become almost deafening as Sammy Kaplan raised his baton, and into the overture. The drummer's name escapes me, but he was our boy. Another generation had its Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich, but that handsome Italian boy was ours. His tricks with his traps were sheer ecstasy for us.

In my wanderings, I was to run into a team that had played the State. Old memories were revived. In their mellower years, he was a school custodian, and she the editor of a weekly newspaper. Theirs had been a husband and wife acrobatic act. He was built like a hogshead but with the grace and agility of a Nijinsky. Even when I knew her she was a wisp of a lady.

And let's not overlook Fred Werner and later Collins Driggs. They didn't have the multi-consoled mighty Wurlitzer of Radio City to work with. But who cared? As the head of either one appeared over the pit railing, applause rocked the State. One would have thought Aeolus himself had returned from the mythological past. And even the Aeolian harp itself, I am sure, could not have produced sweeter music to our young ears.

Old-timers, as Ed Murrow was wont to say, "You were there." Kids, you really missed something.



Storyteller: 1923 photo of the Centennial Parade, showing the Cheney Bros. "Tied & Dyed Silk" float. Visible in the background (L to R) are the Post Office at 985 Main (Cheney Block), Murphy Brothers (with the "Good Eats" sign), and S.L. Barabee's Dry Goods store.

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Storyteller: Florence R. Johnson from The Manchester Herald-12/13/83

MOVIE: 10¢; ICE CREAM: 5¢

While driving down Oak Street several weeks ago, I noticed the dismantling of the "old" Circle Theatre.

This brought to mind the many. Saturday afternoons my friends and I went there to the movies. It was all of 45 years ago, and we walked both ways from Keeney Street.

My brother and I were given 15¢; 10¢ for the movie and five cents for candy and/or ice cream. We usually chose ice cream from Guinipero's Soda Shop, where they were very generous with their scoops of ice cream. We made it last almost all the way home and bought a bag of candy at McClelland's (now Fairway) to eat during the movie.

For our 10¢, we saw two movies, a serial, previews of coming attractions, news reels, and at least one short subject.

They were truly wonderful afternoons.

Storyteller: Ed Newman as told to Jim Tierney-9/20/88

DANCING WAS MY FAVORITE THING

The dances I went to were up to the Rainbow, up in Bolton. That's where they got the restaurant up there now, you know. It's exactly the same as when we danced in it. And then, we went up to the Ballroom, we called it, up in Willimantic. I think it was the Tabourine or the Ball Tabourine, or something like that. We went up there to Saturday night dances. In the summertime we either went to Coventry Lake or then they had two dance halls on Crystal Lake. And one of these dance halls was very nice and kept very proper. You had to have a suit coat and tie before they let you in. But at the other you could dance in your shirt sleeves, so that was a little rougher crowd. We used to go up there once in awhile-Springfield. And then there was Riverside. That was run by McAnelly. Of course, McAnelly's band was well-known at that time. When he would have an orchestra come in to perform in those places, he



At the south side of "the Bank Building" at 1009 Main, just above Maple Street, this picture shows a Circle Theater poster for "The Woman in the Web" plus a still-familiar name, Robert J. Smith, who, it appears, was an agent for just about anything.

would send McAnelly down to Crystal Lake. And so we always had good music with the big bands.

I was very fortunate to get to these dances. I had a friend and his father was a foreman in Cheney Bros. And he had an aunt that passed away and left him some money when he was twenty-one. The first thing he did was buy a Chevrolet Cabriolet. We thought we were something. And then, when he got married, I just teamed up with some of the other fellows in the neighborhood and went with them to the dances.

The girls, for the most part, or the boys too, if they didn't have a ride, would stand in front of the Post Office and hitch a ride—thumb a ride—up to the dance. And then, of course, they had the problem of getting back home again. But they made it and there wasn't any impropriety. The boys used to fight at the dances—some of them, they got into fights. But I never heard of any improprieties, or nobody getting fresh with girls or anything like that. They got a ride back and they were treated like ladies.

Storyteller: Mrs. Wilmer Keeney as told to June Tompkins-11/1/73

KEENEY DANCE HALL

The cost of a night out today for a couple would probably run between \$25 and \$50 including the whole bit—dinner, dancing, drinks, if one indulges, and tips. If you lived in New York City, you might well include taxi fare.

But such a night could hardly rival the neighborhood Saturday night dance where couples enjoyed round and square dancing, where older women came just to sit and watch the dancers, where children came with their parents and waited impatiently for intermission when they got that eagerly awaited bottle of "soda-pop", where romances started, and homemade refreshments were sold. The price of admission was a mere fifty cents per person. The refreshments were extra.

Although it was more of a neighborhood attraction, people came from as far away as

Springfield, Massachusetts, and surrounding towns.

There is nothing to remind anyone of these "good old days", because the popular dance hall on Keeney Street of the 1930s, 40s and 50s was demolished last summer to make way for modern homes that, because of their high location in Manchester, are within range of the Hartford skyline on a clear day.

Known both as the Keeney Dance Hall and City View Dance Hall, it was built in 1926 by the late Wilmer Keeney of 490 Keeney Street. His wife said he built it because he liked young people and he thought it a good idea to provide a place where they could come and dance and have a good time.

Until the middle 1950s, the dance hall was the hub for weekly dances and social events. Friday nights were set aside for whist and card parties. Saturday nights were for dancing. There were two bands. Leo Weir's band played for round dancing, and Hatch's band for square dancing.

Occasionally, the hall was rented for wedding receptions or anniversary celebrations

Mrs. Keeney, at one time, made little round apple pies which were sold at the dances. "They went like hot cakes," she said. Later on, she sold them with pieces of cheese added. It was said they tasted like Frisbie pies.

Mrs. Keeney said she used to be a "fillin" for men who wanted to dance, but had no partner. Mrs. Keeney was "all over the dance hall," she said. She sold tickets, she tended the kitchen, and she handled the refreshments. She said she was always treated with respect.

Oddly enough, Mr. Keeney did not know how to dance at the time he built the dance hall. But by the time he and his wife celebrated their 50th anniversary, at the dance hall, he had learned to dance. And they danced together on that special occasion.

In Mrs. Keeney's recollection are "dozens of romances" that she remembers as having had their beginnings at the dance hall. "Sometimes I didn't know whether I was running a dance hall or a matrimonial bureau," she reminisces.

The Saturday night crowds began to wane in the fifties. Television, then in its early days, was exciting and offered a greater attraction for people to stay at home. Eastern style square dancing was also on the wane. So the hall was closed for about five years.

About six years ago, the hall was leased to the Foxgrove Country Club, which almost made a go of it as a clubhouse. But with the failure of the golf course, and the sale of the land to a building developer, the music, the square dance calls, the 50-cent Saturday night entertainment became a memory.

Mrs. Keeney looks out the window of her living room to where the dance hall stood next door and fondly recalls the hall that had quartered oak floor laid log cabin-style which was always kept polished and waxed.

"People used to say it was the easiest floor they ever danced on," she says.

> Storyteller: John Hyde as told to Betty Walker-11/6/74

SWIMMING HOLES

My uncle, William Hunniford, owned land through which Summit St. traverses. The first circus I ever attended was shown on that tract of land. That was west of the new high school and south of Middle Turnpike. It was all a big field. For many years, William Hunniford raised cows—pastured his cows through which Bigelow Brook ran at that time—and still runs. There was a swimming pool there for the boys—where the laundry was at the foot of the Summit Street hill—the brook was dammed up and there was a small swimming pool for boys—no suits in those days.

All the boys around the Center went swimming there; then, when it became built up, they moved to Durkins' Pond—that was further east along Bigelow Brook, also on land occupied by the high school. After that was built up, there was no more swimming in that area. The land on which the high school is built was part of the Timothy Cheney farm. My uncle owned land west of

that to Main Street. It was all open meadow used for farming.

It's all built up now with streets all through it. It's still quite hilly! In fact, Summit Street was built up over the brook—the hill was steeper at that time, but in order to get across the brook ,they built a bridge there and built it up somewhat. The brook was very cold water. I think it comes from a spring way up—way east through the Green.

Storyteller: Cynthia Cheney Childs from The Manchester Herald

A MEMORABLE MEMORIAL

"Even as a youngster, I thought that the most impressive occasion at Cheney Hall during the whole year was Memorial Day.

"Starting forty-eight hours before Memorial Day, tables were set up in the ballroom and tubs of water were put between tables.

"We children were allowed to help with this in preparation for the piles of flowers that people would bring in during the next two days.

"Farmers on farm carts from the Silver Lane district west of town brought wild flowers that grew along the brook. Children on bicycles came in with baskets of lupines that grow on the way to Marlborough. I usually hunted for the so fragrant arbutus among the pine needles on Hackmatack Hill. Below in the swampy meadow, I found lady slippers and Johnny-jump-ups.

"Old Cousin Polly, driving her electric brougham at ten miles an hour, taffeta curtains rippling at the windows, always brought masses of cultivated garden flowers. She was a wizard at growing flowers that were not yet in bloom anywhere else in town.

"The night before Memorial Day, a group of women from every part of our village appeared at the Hall. They worked until very late, making wreaths for the graves of the war dead. The children kept them fresh on great blocks of ice which volunteers had brought from the reservoir icehouse ahead of time. Husky farmers, with their wagons and stout horses, were the men who did this heavy work.

"Early next morning the wreath-making continued. Any flowers they could not use in wreaths, the girls and women made into lovely sprays, until not a blossom was left. All of us children felt a sense of pleased achievement that is hard to define now, after the work was finished. And it was very hard work.

"The parade to the cemetery later in the morning started from Cheney Hall. Earlier my uncles and a handful of other townsmen were busy putting the tops down on their touring cars. They were the Packards, Pierce Arrows, and other cars of that period. When all was shipshape and to their satisfaction, they drove to the homes of the dozen or so Civil War Veterans to chauffeur them in great style on this important day.

"Every May there would be one or maybe two old men missing; and so the parade—this final part of it—grew shorter as the years went by.

"Back at Cheney Hall, where the parade always started, several wreaths and bouquets were put in each car. The Spanish War men, being younger, all marched. But the Civil War veterans were each treated like a great general or a U. S. President. Only one rode in each car, aloof and dignified, in the back seat. I remember thinking how very old they looked, but, also, how proud. And that somehow, without pretending, I also felt proud as I watched them drive slowly up Hartford Road."

Storytellers: various members of the Cheney family as told to Nancy Pappas reporter for The Manchester Herald 11/28/95

A CHENEY THANKSGIVING: FEATURE STAR—THE BLACK SPIDER

Thanksgiving was a special time for children in the Cheney clan. When more than 100 members of the Cheney family gathered for a family reunion in September, many reminisced about the fun—and sometimes the terror—of being a young Cheney.

"Thanksgiving was by no means a solemn day with the Cheneys," said George W. Cheney III, who came to the reunion from his home in Kennebunkport, Maine. "You always hear a lot about the scary games they played. Even in my generation, we played 'Black Spider.'"

It was "one of those sick children's games," said Jane Cheney Spock of New York City.

"It was one of the most delightful parts of growing up as a Cheney," said George W. Cheney Jr., who now lives in W. Hartford.

Whatever the opinion expressed, most people who grew up in the Cheney clan remember playing Black Spider. Frank Cheney Jr., assumed to be the inventor of the game, played the part of the black spider.

He arranged the children on the stairs of his home at 20 Hartford Road. Before the Thanksgiving meal could be served, "Uncle Frank" would pretend to taste each of the children. None was ever deemed suitable for use as a holiday entree.

Later, the game became more elaborate—something that was fairly typical with Cheney games, said family members.

The children gathered together in one darkened room, usually at the Frank Cheney home. Someone—usually a girl—was appointed to represent the Mother Hen. "She would say, 'Be good or the Boogie Man will get you.' Then she'd leave the room," said Spock.

At the foot of the stairs, a cloakroom door would open. Out would come a monster—either Frank Cheney or Katherine Goodwin Parker Cheney (wife of George Wells Cheney)—in outlandish garb. The basic costume was usually a huge fur coat.

A feather boa might be attached for a tail, and a muff might be pulled over the head. There would often be gloves on the monster's feet and there were invariably galoshes over the hands.

"These made a terrible racket when the monster slapped them together," said George Cheney III.

The "spider" would come through the room and take children away, one or two at a time. "You were picked up, screaming, and carried off in the dark." said Spock. "It was terrifying."

Hannah Cheney Williams remembered

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the good part of the game. There was always another room in the mansion, fixed up beautifully, where there were new toys and lovely things to eat, said Williams. That's where each captive child was taken.

The sweet reward only came after a healthy dose of terror. "It wasn't considered a success unless at least one person had collapsed in hysterics," said Mary Cheney.

Many recollections about Cheney childhoods revolved around the sheer size of the clan. "You never lacked for cousins to play with," said Williams. "In my group there were about 38 of us, all nearly the same age. Doing anything was like having your very own school or day camp group."

The family members living near the mills numbered 150 in a census taken in 1904. In the early 1920s, there were still about 130 family members living within walking distance of one another. This meant we could have great times, and do things entirely with cousins," Williams said.

The family was fond of theatrical presentations and Thanksgiving evening was a traditional time for such presentations. The skits written, directed and acted entirely by family members, dealt with news events of the day. Sometimes they were done with caustic humor; sometimes they were relatively serious.

In the most populous years, the skits were presented in the Cheney homestead, because the dinners—sometimes for nearly 200 people—were put on in Cheney Hall.

"Things were done on a grand scale then," said Maribel Cheney Humpstone. "It would be rather difficult now to even imagine the grandeur that we knew."

If Thanksgiving Day was grand, the rest of the four-day weekend was usually given over to rough-and-tumble fun. The holiday usually signaled the beginning of the sledding season. Williams recalled hours of sledding down the slopes of the lawn between the mansions and Hartford Road.

"It was great fun," said Williams and one of the few times she could recall getting to know any of what she called "the township boys."

"There weren't many times to get to know children who weren't cousins," she said.

Much of the time, the Cheney cousins

roamed freely around the neighborhood.

"We really weren't supervised by either parents or servants," said Spock.

"A few rules prevailed," said Williams.
"You were to let people know where you
were going, and you were to give one hour's
notice if you didn't intend to show up for a
meal. For the rest, you were on your own."

Storyteller: Doug Johnson, Sr. from The Manchester Herald

PROP WASH

One Friday in January of 1937, near "Our High School World," this ad was run: "Fly Over Manchester—Adults \$3, Children \$2—at Globe Hollow Reservoir. Pilot—Hank Wetherell. (Hank later became an Aviation Commissioner of Connecticut.)

Sunday was a cold day in late January. We had one foot of ice on Globe Hollow Reservoir, with a three-inch crust of snow. John, Fred and I hiked up South Main to the Reservoir.

There, resting on the ice by the country club, was a large 1935, red, radial-engined "Stearman Bi-plane," known for a short take off and landing area requirement.

Hank strapped us in the spacious front cockpit and away we went. Out over Highland Park, East Center, the Center Church, Cheney Mills, Glastonbury and back to the "Ressie." Overall total speed was about 70 miles per hour. We spoke of our adventure for many a day.

The next day, Fred missed school due to prop wash from our open cockpit. Both of his eyes were closed.

THOSE GREAT WINTERS.

My Grandmother, Emma Gull, described the Blizzard of 1888 in detail to me many times. She worked at Cheney Mills during the '88 big one. Cheney's at that time used oxen-drawn factory sleds to move workers and silk between the many mill buildings. They were huge wagon bodies, mounted on four double-runner wooden sleds, with steel skates. They waxed the skates during the snow months.

The blizzard was in March 1888. My grandmother got a ride on the sled right to her door on Maple Street. They closed the mills at noon because of the huge snow-drifts.

I remember winters in town in the '20s and '30s. The Seastrand brothers jobbed out to the town for sidewalk snow removal. Fred and Evard each had a V-shaped horsedrawn snow sled and plowed our sidewalks from the Terminus to Center Street. We used to throw snowballs at them when we came home from the East Side Rec on School Street. Fred and Evard were also Manchester's well-known seafood suppliers.

The town did a good job on our streets, too. We owned three large Mack chaindriven trucks. Each had a large oak wood V-shaped plow attached to the under chassis. They had open cabs on them. My father said he brought more than one driver into his saloon on Oak Street to warm him up with a bowl of pea soup or perhaps something a little bit stronger.

Everything in the "20s and "30s winters was done in a much slower and happier pace. No stress.

Much has been written about Center Springs Pond. Because of a youthful ankle injury, I had to skate with the slow pokes in the center of the pond. Ed Bensche and I were perhaps the slowest skaters there. Not so with our old school chum, George Krause, who now runs Krause Florist on Hartford Road. George was our fastest speed skater on his 15-inch speed blades. He used to zip around the perimeter of the pond three times to our one.

Ray Dwyer, the woodcarver, was our best figure skater of the day. I believe he won prizes at the carnivals.

Our most colorful figure skater was Les Cheney. Les dressed in cap and tweed knickers like a country gentleman of the day. He did figure eights and loops with grace and finesse. He used to pick out a pretty figure skater and wrap his skater's scarf around her and spin her like a top! The girls could pirouette as well as any "Sonja Henie" of our day. Sonja Henie was trained and they were not.

You will find there is nothing new in the

world. My mother and father saw an iceskating follies in the Wintergarden, New York City in 1918!

ANYONE FOR SLIDING?

Ask any South Enders where they went sliding in the winters of the 1930s and they'll reply, "Maple Street Hill," "Eldridge Street Hill," and "Cheney Hill on Hartford Road."

Winter nights, when there were very few cars in town, Police Chief Sam Gordon allowed us to slide on Maple and Eldridge streets' hills. One of our pals on Maple Hill poured pails of water over the crest, which then froze and gave us a flying start. More than one Flexible or Monkey Ward sled cracked open on impact.

Ed, with his heavier Flexible Flyer, was our champ. He always coasted to Eddie Johnson's house about 200 yards away.

We saved Cheney Hill, or as you say today, the Great Lawn, for weekends. We coasted with a flying run and measured out our run. It was free sledding—we laid on our guts and started by hand pushes. Whoever coasted to the sandstone bridge on Hartford Road was the evening's big deal.

All of this fun on a sled that cost us \$5 earned on our Herald paper routes.

'JULOTTA' TOOK WEEKS.

Because we were Swedish Americans, my family started Christmas production on November 30.

My job was to hacksaw the dried herring, or "lutfisk", into chunks, then soak it in lye and water to place on the back porch.

We got out the meat grinder and ground sausage for the Korv sausage. We pulled the casing on the grinder and cranked it out by the yard.

Brown beans or Breenaberner were easy—we just baked them. My mother and grandmother baked Spritz (butter cookies), Kronz (coffee cake), and skorpa (toasted biscuits). Pickled herring was easy to prepare.

My father started a bowl of Glug—wine, whiskey, and spices, way ahead of time. The Swedes have their Christmas on Christmas Eve. If you found an almond in your rice porridge, next year, according to legend, you were all set to be married!

At midnight we went to bed, but we had to leave food for Jultomte (Santa Claus) and his elves, if we wanted a good New Year.

On December 13, we had already celebrated the Lucia Fest at Emanuel Church. A girl in white robes and lighted candles in her crown, plus her court of little people, gave light to our Christmas season. St. Lucia brought food and light to Sweden during a severe famine centuries ago.

Julotta (Christmas morn.) our family was up at 4 a.m.!! After eating all that food, getting up that early was quite a feat. Very few of us had cars in the early '30s. Manchester's Main Street looked like an enchanted Colonial Village after a snowstorm at Christmas. St. James and Church Streets were abundant with pine and fir trees decorated with new snow.

At Emanuel Church, we were greeted at the door with "God Yul," Good Yule. It is now 5:30 a.m.!! The whole "Julotta," or Christmas service is done in Swedish. Pastor Cornell read the sermon in Swedish, also the lecturers, choir, and our congregation sang the Christmas carols in Swedish. No matter what our gifts were, we had a great Christmas.

One Christmas, Santa gave my sons hockey skates. You guessed it—Christmas morning they were skating on our new inlaid linoleum in the front room. After counting to 100, I said to myself, "Well, boys will be boys."

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald, 2/2/73

CHRISTMAS TREES

When O.C. was a boy, there were not many Christmas trees used compared to present times. None were exposed for sale. No one had Christmas tree plantations. Now they are not at all rare in Connecticut.

No trees were brought in from up north. The few families who desired a tree in their home got permission to cut one from some one's woods. Probably some were stolen but O, C. never heard of anyone being hailed into court for it.

Churches, schools, stores, clubs and many other organizations sent their members to get their trees or had them delivered by farmers on order.

The Hilliard family owned woods on both sides of West Middle Turnpike from about where Broad Street is to Love Lane and they always gave permission to take trees when requested. Over that part of West Middle Turnpike, the road through the woods was not improved and since no one lived there, the snow was not plowed.

O. C. can remember going there for a tree with horse and sleigh numerous years. Hemlocks were preferred and very beautiful. Some were young white pines but they usually lacked lateral branches.

Storyteller: Helen J. Estes from The Manchester Herald, 12/14/66

CHRISTMAS KALEIDOSCOPE

December 25, 1832 Timothy Pitkin will have 2000 cords of wood for sale at auction in Manchester, January 3 on premises near the house of Elisha Andrews.

December 25, 1896. Mathias Spiess walked from Charter Oak Street to Depot Square, Christmas Eve and did not see a single lighted Christmas Tree.

December 25, 1902. Good skating on Union Pond, Globe Hollow, Case's and Carrier's.

December 25, 1917. Miss Dorothy Cheney serving in France with the "Franco-American Committee for the Children of the Frontier" reported later two charming incidents: The French office workers looking for a small doll to serve as Christ Child in a Crèche discovered an American kewpie doll "ah, voila, un gentil petit Jesu."

After a child-presented tableau of the Nativity, the children came to the front and sang "The Star Spangled Banner" in French.

Bad Things A-Happening

Fire, Wind, Water and ... Murder Most Foul





Storyteller: The Manchester Herald, 1907

THE FLOOD THAT CHANGED THE VALLEY—OCTOBER 1869

The October flood of 1869, which prevailed throughout a large part of New England, was exceptionally destructive in this locality. On Tuesday morning, the day after the town elections of October 4, there was not a waterwheel in motion in the town of Manchester. The roadways and bridges also the streams were devastated. Between the RR station in No. Manchester and Talcottville there was not a dam or bridge that remained. The Hudson mills, where bank note paper was made, were badly damaged. It was on what is now called "the Hartford Road", running from So. Manchester westward, that the principal destruction occurred. The paper industry, which had been founded by Chas. Bunce at the beginning of the century, was practically wiped out of existence. The old Cheney mills suffered severe loss. West of the Cheney works, the paper mill owned by Henry E. Rogers was more or less demolished. By the time the flood reached the mills owned by Lewis Bunce & Sons, its course was irresistible. The dam east of the mills was swept away by the torrent, the vast storage of water at that point adding to the work of destruction. The Lewis Bunce mills were the finest in the valley. They were equipped with the most modern machinery for the manufacture of paper.

These mills were crushed, as easily as an eggshell, by the volume of water. Further down were the mills of Walter Edwin Bunce. There, the valley spread out, widening the territory for the flood. The mills were inundated, but escaped destruction. The fine meadow lands in the vicinity were denuded. Situated on the main road.

between Manchester Center and East Hartford, was the mill founded by Charles Bunce, Jr. but owned at the time of the flood by Keeney & Fitzgerald. It was under water for hours but sustained no permanent loss.

There were hairbreadth escapes but no loss of life on the Hartford Road. Welles Forbes, who is now living in Manchester, was on the bridge near the Walter & Edwin Bunce mills when it was carried away. He was landed in the branches of a tree on the Olcott meadows half a mile from the bridge and was obliged to stay there through the night. William F. Hurd of this city, brother of Major Hurd of the Governor's Horse Guard, assisted in saving the books in the office of Lewis Bunce & Sons, wading through the flood almost to his armpits. The disaster was one of the severest that the town of Manchester has experienced.

The Lewis Bunce mills were not rebuilt. In fact, the flood was the death warrant for the paper industry that had been founded by Charles Bunce, who was the pioneer in paper making in Manchester. The whole territory along the Hartford Road that was familiar to him has been changed. The old scenery had been replaced and the valley has passed into new hands for the most part, being owned by the Cheney Bros. of So. Manchester. Like all property which they own, they have made it over giving it an air of eternal beauty undreamed of 50 years ago.

Storyteller: Helen Estes from The Manchester Herald, 3/22/67

THE BLIZZARD OF '88: MARCH 3-11

From the Courant:

"The blizzard of Monday caught many people away from home. The Manchester station was crowded all day with weary passengers waiting for the train that did not come. The noon express reached Vernon on time, but there it remained. The local freight, which had been switching in the yard all morning, finally came to a stand-still on the south track of the main line. The train crew swelled the crowd in the depot and passed the night there with a dozen others.

"The South Manchester railroad tied up Monday noon, and two hours later the last belated team had disappeared from the streets. The Cowles Hotel was crowded. The Mather Electric company's employees were only partially successful in reaching their boarding places. Seven girls and thirty-five men passed the night in the factory; they made beds in the hay used in packing electric lamps.

"The silk mills closed early and most of the employees found shelter at home or among their friends who lived near the mills. About twenty girls spent the night at the mills and were provided with food from the families of the Messrs. Cheney. The schools closed as soon as the storm became severe and all of the children were safely disposed of. At Oakland, the teacher and twelve pupils passed the night at the schoolhouse.

"Business was suspended Tuesday, save at the meat markets grocery stores, which were thronged with customers. Every house holder made his way to the nearest store and laid in supplies for a long siege.

"Wednesday morning, the situation was unchanged. The novelty of the storm had worn off and everybody was longing for pleasant weather. By noon their wishes were granted and the work of digging began.

"The South Manchester Railroad put a force of 125 men at work shoveling, and by night the line had been cleared. The smoke of approaching engines on the New England line was eagerly watched from the depot, and when Conductor Bacon's train, headed by two 'mogul' freight engines appeared through the drifts west of the depot, it was hailed with cheers. He kept on toward Vernon, reached that station at 11:30 p.m. and tied up for the night.

"Work on the streets began Tuesday afternoon and all day Wednesday heavy sleds were dragged over the principal thoroughfares. Many of the side streets are still impassable.



Train service came to a halt during the Blizzard of '88. Depot Square is at right of photo.

"Trains have been running from Hartford to Vernon and back at intervals during the day. The Courant reached here Thursday morning for the first time since Monday and the newsboys sold out in a hurry. No mail has been received since Monday morning.

Storyteller: C. Elmore Watkins from The Manchester Herald

THAT BLIZZARD OF '88 STILL HOLDS FIRST PLACE

Every time we have had a snowstorm in New England anything like real blizzard proportions, some old-timer has been on hand to snort "nothing like '88." No champion for '88 having appeared to my knowledge, I venture to enter the ring.

In the first place, records will show that the snow was deeper, the wind fiercer, the storm lasted longer, and the cold was more intense on the north side of our house on S. Main Street. The drifts covered the entire first floor windows. The tunnel from our house to the barn was, in some places, six feet deep. The most modern snow removal equipment, if baffled by the recent storm, would have been almost useless in '88.

By afternoon of the second day, there was no transportation of any kind. The two teachers in the fourth district school (South School) across the street were stranded. My mother sent a man from the barn to see what the conditions were over there. She couldn't believe her eyes when, a little later, through the blinding snow, she saw him returning with one of the teachers piggyback. Dignity aside, she had to let him bring over the other teacher in the same manner. The two teachers stayed with us for three days, as I remember it, during which we children became well acquainted with them.

We found out that they weren't ogres at all, but lots of fun.

We had plenty of food. We bought our flour by the barrel and four Jersey cows supplied lots of milk and cream such as, gentle reader, you never dreamt of. There were fresh eggs daily, but how I hated to take care of the hens! Besides, we raised a pig every year which was slaughtered in the fall and his delectable parts laid out on the long shelves in our cold pantry including feet and ears and headcheese or was it brains. The hams were smoked for days in a smoke house made of two piano shipping boxes. (Ed. Note: After all, Watkins Brothers sold pianos!)

For three days, as Whittier describes his family in "Snowbound"— "We sat the clean winged hearth about, content to let the North Wind roar in baffled rage at pane and door."

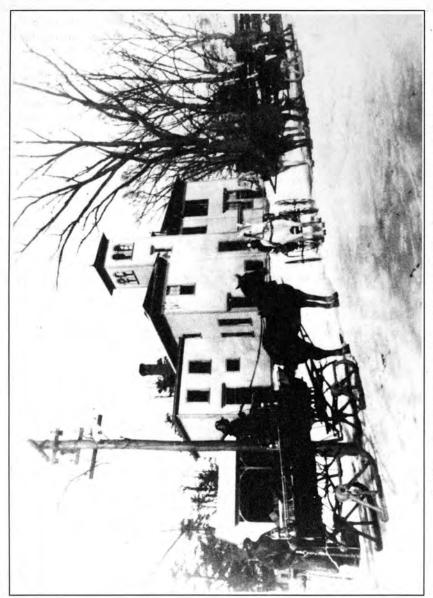
"We sped the time with stories old

Wrought puzzles out and riddles told."

When we woke up the third day, we saw that the storm was over and leading a procession of men on horseback single file was our good and distinguished neighbor, Dwight Bidwell, principal of the high school and gentleman farmer. I suppose they had to change lead horses frequently as the snow was up to the horses' bellys but no one looked the leader or had the commanding voice of Dwight Bidwell. He and his sister, Libby, lived alone in a house just south of ours, the site now covered by the reservoir Globe Hollow. We children often visited them to buy the home-made butter churned by Sister Libby.

Back to the blizzard. The single path made by the men on horseback was widened by yokes of oxen so that foot travelers could get into town. Then old Sol took over. The blizzard of '88 occurred in March, too late to do any permanent damage, nor was Lovely Spring affected or delayed by Winter's last big bluster. Smilingly she melted the vast accumulation of snow almost as quickly as it had come.

The little brooks laughed merrily as they carried their unaccustomed load of icy water to ponds and reservoirs for our summer delight.



The Cheney Fire House, corner of Pine Street and Hartford Road, circa early 1900s.

Storyteller: Helen Estes from The Manchester Herald, 10/12/66

DEC. 29, 1888

Bucket Brigade Fails— No. Manchester Buildings Destroyed

Jan. 3, 1889

The Scott Building on Depot Square was destroyed, with the loss of the North Manchester Post Office, the quarters of the weekly Manchester Herald, the first Southern New England Telephone Co. exchange in town, a drug store, and the law office of Judge Olin Wood. But volunteer fire-fighters did save the Cowles Hotel next door by putting carpets, blankets, and sheets along the east side of the hotel and keeping that layer wet from buckets of water passed by a bucket brigade.

Clarence Allen, chief of the District Fire Department in the North End, was the first fire chief in Manchester. He purchased buckets, distributed them and set up fire alarm bells.

In South Manchester, there was no such organization. Destruction by fire of the Weldon Block in 1897 accelerated a response. April 21, 1897, a fire district was voted 56 to 46. The boundaries: center of Middle Turnpike, west along Charter Oak and north through Cooper Street and in a line with Bigelow Brook. A week later, south boundary became Spring and Hackmatack Streets.

Five Companies were set up

Fire Co. #1 (West Side #1), Hose Co. #2 (Center Co.), Hose Co. #3 (Orford Co.), Hose Co. #4 (School Street Co.) and #5 Co. (Charter Oak Co., later combined with Hose Co. #4)

November 29, 1898

The burning of the W.H. Cheney Block at Charter Oak and Main Street changed the entire location of the business district. The fire destroyed W. H. Cheney & Sons Drygoods, shoes and men's clothing, W.B. Cheney Drug Store, a grocery and meat market, a jewelry store, a barber shop, a social club, Judge Bowers office and the

South Manchester Publishing Co. and South Manchester News.

The result? Most firms moved north onto Main Street into a new Cheney building erected just south of House & Hale Building.

April 13, 1909

The Oak Hall building containing Hale Dry Goods and House Clothiers burned to the ground.

October 23, 1913

The huge wooden structure that housed the Ninth District School was burned to ashes without any loss of life... a triumph of planning, discipline and a firmly administered children's fire drill.

(Ed. Note: The fire resulted in double sessions elsewhere, immediate plans for new schools and a reopening of the Cooper Hill School much later becoming the museum and headquarters of our Historical Society.)

Saturday, March 22, 1915

Case Mill Fire was confined to one brick section. The fire department used pond water and proved the quality of their equipment by using a new pump that kept up its water force for over eight hours.

November 17, 1922

The Herald Printing Plant on Hilliard Street was gutted by fire. Eighth Utilities District President Swanson (1966) summarized the fireman's credo in these words: "The principles of dedication to the cause they serve—the protection of life and home—is a Christian dedication and one that is deserving of our respect, our admiration and our gratitude."

Storyteller: Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald

O. C. remembers when there was no organization or equipment for fighting fires in Manchester except some hoses owned and kept at mills for their own use. Then too, water mains were only in a very small area of town so the hose was of no use in most places.

There were no telephones to spread the alarm. Someone would run to the nearest mill boiler room and ask the fireman to blow the steam whistle a long, steady toot. Sometimes he would hang a weight on the whistle lanyard. Or, if a church sexton would be found by day or roused by night, the bell in the steeple would be rung rapidly to let folks know there was (or had been) a fire.

First, folks ran in the general direction of the alarm by sound. Getting nearer, one could plot his course more precisely by observing the flight of others more familiar with the neighborhood.

When a few telephones were installed in town, Cheney Bros. had a loud two-tone whistle installed at their "Old Mill" boiler room south of Hartford Road beside Hop Brook. That became the official (and only used) fire alarm for the south end of town.

Bucket Brigade

The first people who arrived at a fire started carrying out the contents it was possible to get before smoke or fire stopped their entrance. Water carried in buckets was thrown on neighboring buildings to try to prevent the fire from spreading. Before the volunteer fire department was organized and provided with some equipment, a fire with a good start was almost sure to completely consume a building.

At first, even the firemen had no pumps and water pressures were very low in the mains until Cheney Bros. installed pumps at the Old Mill boiler room. These could force up the pressure and were cut in when fires occurred.

The Hose Companies

The South Manchester Volunteer Fire Department was organized as five companies. Each was given a small building, not large enough for a modern one-car garage. In it was one two-wheeled hose reel full of hose with a tool box containing hydrant wrench, a couple of spanner wrenches for coupling hose lengths together and to hydrant and nozzle, one long nozzle and rope with toggles so it could be rigged for the entire company to share the pulling in parades. That was the only time enough showed up to require the use of the rope.

The tongue was designed to be pulled and steered by two men. Others could help by pushing on the rear.

The hose carts were designed to be pulled by men afoot, but it was much easier and faster for a man or two to sit on the bottom of a horse-drawn wagon to pull one. So, the hose houses were located where the likelihood of getting a horse was greatest.

Company No. 1 house was located at a livery stable on the south side of Walnut Street just west of Pine Street, probably Forbes Livery Stable.

No. 2 was at Aaron Johnson's grocery store on the north side of Chestnut Street between Church and Linden Streets. He had several horses and wagons for grocery delivery kept at a barn in the rear.

No. 3 was on the north side of Oak Street, facing on the driveway to Ferris Bros. barn where they kept several horses and wagons. That was about the middle of the block between Main Street and "Purnell's Row."

No. 4 was on the north side of School Street. There was a bare beaten path wide enough to drive a team on from Eldridge to School Street. It was next to Stenberg's livery stable on Eldridge Street and next to the fire house on School Street a little bit west of Vine Street.

No. 5 was on the north side of Charter Oak Street at George Day's livery stable a short distance west of Spruce Street. This one was consolidated with No. 4 when the new firehouse was built nearer Main St. to house modern equipment.

> Storyteller: The Manchester Herald, 10/22/38

THE WORST FIRE

Twenty-five years ago tomorrow, Oct. 23, Manchester had the greatest fire in its history. The 32-room school house, three stories high, was found ablaze soon after 2 o'clock on a Thursday afternoon.

There were nearly 1,100 children in the school at the time and although all walked out answering what they supposed was a fire drill, the news that the school was burning resulted in people leaving homes, their work in the mills and rushing to the corner or Main and School Streets in search of their children.

It was a much excited crowd that gathered. The fire started under a stairway that led from the second floor of the building to the gymnasium and cooking school on the third floor. Paper in a wastebasket was found burning in a small room that had been built under the stairs.

Spread Quickly

It was only a few minutes after the fire was discovered and the alarm turned in that the flames were shooting from windows in the second floor of the building and gained such headway that there was not a chance of saving the building.

In less than an hour, the entire structure was in ruins. Not only was the large school building destroyed, but business places on the north side of School Street, a threestory building used at the time as a boarding house, the old wooden structure of Hose Company No. 4, a tenement house further east on School Street, a two-family house at Vine and School Streets and the library and dwelling on Wells Street were also destroyed.

Nearly all of the books in the South Manchester library were saved and many are now in the Mary Cheney Library on Main Street.

Learned a Lesson

The great joy for all of us was not a child was lost or even injured. The fire taught Manchester a lesson. The need of better fire fighting equipment for the town was demonstrated and, but for the arrival of a tractor-drawn pumper from Hartford, many more buildings would have been destroyed.

It also showed that the town needed to give more consideration to the kind of school that they would build. In the Ninth District, at that time was the High school building and an eight-room school at the Center the first part of the Lincoln School.

By the following Monday after the fire, sessions were resumed for all of the pupils, some being assigned to morning sessions in the high school and some to the Lincoln school, while the small school building known as the Cheney school that was located on School Place in the west section of the town was opened. Sessions were also held in the afternoon in the schools and the residents of the Ninth District started to build schools.

New Schools Built

As a result of that fire, there were erected on the site of the former school and the library the group of schools known as the Franklin and Barnard schools and the East Side Recreation building and later the Trade School on School Street. On the west side was erected the Washington School and soon after followed the addition to the Lincoln School. The Nathan Hale School and the West Side Recreation, used for both school and recreation, were built later, all in the Ninth District.

The library, quartered for several years in the Eldridge home after the fire is now in the Mary Cheney library. In the building of the schools since that time, the Hollister street, the Manchester Green, Highland Park, Buckland and the repairs and alterations made to the Keeney Street and Bunce Schools, careful consideration was given to fire prevention. The South School was built before the fire and was brick.

Storyteller: The Hartford Times February 29, 1896

DAGGER IN HEART OF LOUISE TREBBE

Awful Murder in South Manchester Prisoner in Hartford Jail

DETAILS OF THE TRAGEDY: LOUISE REFUSED TO RECIPROCATE THE LOVE OF CASPAR. HIS APPEALS REFUSED, HE BECOMES DESPERATE AND KILLS THE WOMAN. MURDERER TELLS THE FULL STORY OF THE AFFAIR AND SAYS HE IS SORRY.

Miss Louise Trebbe was stabbed in the heart at 6:10 this morning, by Caspar Hadlen, at her home on Center Street, South Manchester. She died a few minutes later.

The tragedy has aroused the indignation of the people of the pretty little village, and when a Times reporter visited the place this afternoon, it was the sole topic of conversation among the people. The circumstances point strongly to premeditation on the part of Hadlen, and the relatives of the victim believe that the crime was premeditated. The murder was committed in the kitchen of the home of the Trebbes.

In Love With Louise

The victim, Miss Louise Trebbe, and her widowed sister, Mrs. Thomas Ward, lived in the house. It is an old-fashioned farm house, and attached to it is a farm of thirteen acres. The father of the two sisters, Frederick Trebbe, died about a year ago, and left the farm to his daughter Louise. Hadlen, who came to this country from Germany about ten years ago, worked on the farm for the two sisters and lived in the house with them. He generally conducted the business of the farm. He went to work for them first nearly a year ago. He had not been in their employ for very long when he began to show affectionate attentions to Louise. She resented his attentions and when he proposed marriage to her, she flatly refused him, telling him at the same time that if he did not desist she would discharge him from her employ. He did not pester her with his protestations of love for some weeks. He resumed them, however, much to her disgust. She noticed also that on several occasions, when he returned from Hartford, with the proceeds from the sale of vegetables, that he was under the influence of liquor. This fact alarmed her and she and her sister consulted together and decided that it would be unsafe for them, two lone women, to live under the same roof with a man who was possessed to drink to excess.

The Sisters Discharge Hadlen

They decided to discharge Hadlen. One day last fall, they told him to leave the premises and consider himself no longer in their employ. He refused to leave, and it was only under the threat of having him arrested that he was prevented from continuing to work on the farm. He slept at night in the barn. After a few days they decided

to take him back, but only on his promising to discontinue his attentions to Miss Trebbe and to abstain from the excessive use of intoxicants. His reinstatement seemed to please him very much, and he showed his gratitude by even closer attention to the business of the farm. The sisters were delighted with the change in his manner, and they showed that they had absolute confidence in his fidelity. He was a very efficient farm hand indeed a superior one, and under his care the farm prospered.

But Hadlen soon forgot his promises. His attentions became so obtrusive that Louise felt unhappy. The sisters had reason to think that Hadlen had a revengeful nature. They would have discharged him a second time, but they feared that he would set fire to the barn or maim the cattle. Louise frequently said to her sister that she had no fear on her own account. She did not believe that Hadlen would do her bodily harm. Her persistent refusal to marry him made Hadlen morose and sullen. Still the two women kept him in their employ.

Hadlen Makes a Threat

About six weeks or two months ago, Hadlen was talking to one of the neighbors about Louise, saying how much he loved her, complaining of her cold and unappreciative attitude toward him. The neighbors told him that he should give his attentions to some other girl, seeing that Louise was persistent in her rejection of his offers of marriage. They appealed to his manhood to make a sensible view of the situation. The appeal did not succeed. He seemed to derive no comfort from the common sense suggestions of the neighbors, and continued to talk in a sickly sentimental way of love. He finally said in a hoarse voice: "If she does not marry me, she will marry no one else," his face taking on an expression of intense ferocity at the same time.

On Sunday last, Louise told her brotherin-law, Mr. Merkle, to buy her a load of hay. Hadlen seemed to think it was an infringement on his rights to transact all the business connected with the farm. He showed his disgruntled feelings during the day by being cranky and sullen. On Monday, he seemed to be happier, and to have forgotten his grievance. He did the chores about the house in a cheerful frame of mind, and asked Mrs. Ward if she needed water from the well, or if he could be of assistance to her in any way in her domestic work. When Louise returned from Cheney's silk mill, where she is employed, Mrs. Ward told her of the alteration in Hadlen's manner from the day previous and strongly commended his conduct during the day.

How the deed was done

This morning Louise and her sister, Mrs. Ward, were in the house together, Mrs. Ward was cooking breakfast, while Louise was preparing to go to the silk factory, where she has worked since last December. Louise asked her sister to drive her to the factory, as the weather was stormy. Mrs. Ward said she would. Hadlen, who was passing in and out of the house doing the chores, heard the conversation between the two sisters, and without being addressed by either of them said, "I will drive you to the mill." "No, you won't," replied Louise. "But I will," persisted Hadlen. "We will see about that," retorted Louise without paying much attention to Hadlen. "Oh, what does it matter who drives you to the mill?" remarked Mrs. Ward in a tone to restore harmony in the house.

Hadlen passed into his bedroom and returned to the kitchen a moment afterwards. In passing Louise, he placed his hand on her hips with the intention of embracing her. Her back was turned to him and she quickly turned around, saying, "Now, I have had enough of this. Pack up your things and get out of the house." "I won't stop, and there is no law to make me," replied Hadlen. "We will see if there is not a law to stop you," answered Louise.

Hadlen left the house but returned in a moment. In passing Louise again, he placed his hand on her back. This made her very indignant. He then embraced her and she struggled to free herself. Mrs. Ward stepped toward her sister and Hadlen, and said to the latter, "Let my sister go."

Hadlen, who is a man of powerful physique, took hold of Mrs. Ward with one hand and threw her across the floor. Mrs. Ward struck against a chair with considerable force, and the skin of her right arm was abrased, making a painful wound. Finally, Louise succeeded in releasing herself from the embrace of Hadlen, who then went into his room. He returned to the kitchen with a sharp pointed knife, and walking toward Louise, cried "Take that!"

He plunged the blade of the knife into the upper part of her heart. Mrs. Ward, seeing the movement of Hadlen, ran towards her sister, who fell into her arms. Louise pressed her heart saying, "My God, he has a knife." "Oh no he hasn't" replied Mrs. Ward. "He has, and I am stabbed" Louise said in a faint voice. Louise suddenly became weak in her sister's arms and Mrs. Ward placed her gently on the floor. Hadlen stood at the door watching with a scowl the tragic scene. He held the knife in his hand. Mrs. Ward saw the blade covered with the heart's blood of her dving sister. Hadlen walked towards the barn, and Mrs. Ward went for assistance.

Before she left the yard, she locked the doors to prevent Hadlen from returning to finish his bloody work, if he had any such intentions. Mrs. Ward did not think at the time that her sister was fatally stabbed. As Mrs. Ward was leaving the yard, Hadlen turned to look after her. Mrs. Ward went to the house of her neighbor, Patrick Connelly, to whom she related the circumstances of the terrible affair. Mr. Connelly went with Mrs. Ward to her house. When they opened the door, they found Louise lying on the floor breathing her last. Mrs. Ward spoke to her sister saying that she would be all right and that the wound was not serious. Louise moaned slightly, but did not give any sign that she had heard her. Mrs. Ward and Mr. Connelly carried the dying woman into the parlor where they placed her on the sofa. She died a moment afterwards. Dr. Bradley was sent for. But when he arrived, life was extinct. Dr. Parker, the medical examiner, afterwards saw the body and took the statements of Mrs. Ward.

A Hunt for Hadlen

A search was made for Hadlen, but was found that he had fled. A searching party was organized to find him. The party consisted of Deputy Sheriff Hall, Patrick Connelly, and his two sons, John and Daniel Connelly, Peter Jefferson, and his two sons, Alexander and Peter, James

Dougherty and Frank Warner. The party was searching for the fugitive for about two hours when they found him in a hay stack belonging to Mr. Olcott, who is well known for the interest he takes in raising varieties of grass. The farm of Mr. Olcott adjoins that of the murdered woman and the hay stack was near a small piece of woodland which forms part of the Trebbe farm, Mr. Warner, Mr. Olcott's hired man, took some hav from the hay stack Friday and had a distinct recollection of how he left the stack. He noticed a difference in the appearance and that the top of it seemed to be bulged up. He went over to the stack and found the murderer hiding in it. Hadlen was in a crouching posture. He was dressed in overalls and wore rubber boots. He had neither coat nor hat.

Before Justice Bowers

Hadlen was taken before Justice Bowers. He admitted his guilt. He was bound over to the next term of the Superior Court without bond.

Storyteller: Unknown from The Manchester Herald, 1/23/1911

TRAGEDY ON ICE

Funerals of Drowned Couple

The popularity of Miss Letitia Tedford and Fred Behmfield, the young couple who were drowned at Wethersfield cove Thursday night while skating, was manifested by the large number that attended both funerals Sunday afternoon, and by the beautiful and many floral tributes. The funeral of Miss Tedford was held from her late home on Wetherell Street at 2 o'clock, prayers being said at the house, and from St. Mary's Episcopal Church, where the Rev. Manning B. Bennet conducted the regular Episcopal funeral service at 2:30. Interment was in the East cemetery.

Funeral Services for Mr. Behmfield were held from his late home on Summer Street at 2 o'clock, and from the German Lutheran church on Cooper Street at 2:30. The Rev. Mr. Beckman, pastor of that church and brother-in-law of the unfortunate young

man conducted the service. A special car from Hartford arrived at 1:30 containing fellow employees of Mr. Behmfield at the Hartford Rubber Works. Floral pieces in profusion were sent to the home of each of the victims. It is estimated that there were 5,000 people in the cemetery. The Behmfield funeral party met the Tedford funeral party at the corner of Park and Church Streets. Both processions entered the cemetery by the west drive, the party escorting the body of Miss Tedford leading. A pearl gray hearse contained her casket while a black hearse was used in conveying Mr. Behmfield. Miss Tedford's grave was in the extreme south part of the cemetery on a knoll and that of Mr. Behmfield's about twenty yards further to the north.

Storyteller: Doug Johnson, Sr. from The Manchester Herald, 9/22/88

THE WIND BLEW-THE STEEPLE FLEW

1938 was a big year for many of us. We were seniors at Manchester High. That fall brought us the Manchester High School basketball championships. Our team won the Connecticut and New England high school basketball victories, played off at Brown University in Providence, RI.

The fall also brought us the infamous Hurricane of 1938.

In the 1930s, the US Weather Bureau didn't have the sophisticated weather computers and satellite photos we are blessed with today.

On September 21, 1938, the bureau only predicted a "tropical disturbance."

The low pressure system funneled its way straight through Long Island and, of course, into Connecticut and New England.

On the 21st they warned us at Manchester High School to head straight home at 2:30 p.m.

I hurried through my Manchester Herald route. I left my last customer, the Mary Cheney Library at Center Park, at 3:30 p.m. I didn't have to pedal my bike the wind and rain pushed me right down Main Street to my front door at Cottage and Maple Streets.

The ground in Manchester had been soaked by rain from recent storms. By 4 p.m., giant elms, maple and oak trees were swaying and twisting violently. They gradually started to crash to the ground. Good-bye electricity and telephones! My father's house on Cottage Street was a three-decker. I shot right up to the third floor, where we had a ring-side seat. My mother and I were getting a little "shook." We mopped and swabbed where the rain was forcing its way through the window and door casings.

What really frightened us was that we had been watching the St. James Church Steeple, in plain sight from the third floor. Finally, the swaying stopped and we could see and also hear the bell, belfry and all crash to the front steps.

About 5 p.m., the eye of the storm passed through town. The eye was the calm center. Many young ladies were mortified when the winds resumed again. The gales blew their skirts over their heads! Ladies in slacks were not heard of in 1938.

After the storm, for two weeks, Manchester at sunset looked like a Currier and Ives print. Each home in town had oil lamps and candles for light.

Chain saws hadn't been invented. For weeks, two-man bucksaws and one-man power axes were the tools of the day.

Storyteller: Various sources interviewed by The Manchester Herald, 9/21/88

THE '38 HURRICANE

Memories of the chaos and destruction left in the wake of the 1938 hurricane are still vivid in the minds of Manchester residents.

John A. Johnston, 76, of 67 Princeton Street will never forget seeing the steeple of St. James Church sway and then fall, tearing out the south wall of the building at 896 Main Street.

"I was in the office of Jay Rubinow on the second floor of a building at the corner of Main and Purnell Place when I saw it go. About the same time, I saw a car parked in front of Quinn's drug store crushed by a slab of stone which fell off the cornice of the building."

W. Clifford Mason, of 119 Pearl Street, was working at the auto agency on Bissell Street where the Elks Lodge is now.

"I was listening to the radio while I worked on a car and heard a report that a hurricane had struck," Mason, who later served as Manchester's fire chief, recalled.

Mason had time to get things inside the garage before the hurricane winds slammed into Manchester. A large tree fell on the garage roof, breaking a skylight. Mason feared the whole roof would be torn off.

"The high power lines going to the ice house on Bissell Street came down and wrapped around the gas pumps, causing tremendous sparks," said Mason, 81.

Mrs. Irene (Matchett) Brown, 62, was a seventh-grader at the Barnard School (now Bennet Junior High), who was leaving school at the usual time—3:30 p.m.

"They had no idea the hurricane was coming," she recalls. "I began walking up Main Street to Bissell Street where we lived. A big gust of wind blew me into the middle of the street and blew my umbrella inside out, but I got home all in one piece."

Elizabeth Phillips, 68, also known as Mrs. Walter Phillips, of 117 Cooper Hill Street, was working at the old Royal Typewriter Co. in Hartford. Employees were let out at 3 p.m., about an hour before the full fury of the storm hit Hartford.

"I was riding with four others and we had to move tree limbs out of the road in order to get as far as Adams Street, near the Adams mill. I had to walk from there to my home on Center Street. It was almost 7:30 p.m. when I finally got home, soaked, tired and scared."

"My parents had been worried about me. Trees and wires were down all along the street and it was at least three days before I could return to work." she said.

Chester M. Ferris, 72 of 32 Gerard Street, had to spend two nights at the gas station where he was working, at the corner of ashington and Jefferson Streets.

I heard a big storm was coming. When it hit, I saw part of the roof of an apartment house blow off and land down the street. The power went off so we couldn't pump gas and we had no radio.

"I had to come to work on the trolley, so I had to borrow a friend's car to make the trip to Manchester, going by way of the Windsor Locks bridge. My mother didn't know what had happened to me all that time. Our home, at the corner of Park and Chestnut Streets, wasn't damaged but trees were down everywhere."

Richard E. Niese, 72 of 219 Vernon Street was one of the last people to make it across the Bulkeley Bridge. He was working in Hartford, and was let out of work early to

get home ahead of the storm.

His wife, Alma, 71, had come from their home in Rockville to spend the day at her parents' home on Hilliard Street. She tells this story:

"We had gone at noon to see the flooding where the Adams Mill dam had gone out. I remember the stillness. The leaves didn't stir. It was eerie. We got back to the house and had lunch and then it began to blow. We had to stay overnight because of the fallen trees and wires. We were without power but we could cook because we had an oil and gas stove."

Workers at the Cheney Bros. mill waited out the storm before going home. Herbert A. Bengtson of 253 Gardner Street was a scheduling clerk in the Velvet Mill.

"From my second floor office, I watched the wind blow down a row of pine trees along the old railroad tracks. After the hurricane passed, I tried to drive to my house in the southeast section of town. All the streets were blocked and I could only get within a mile of the house, so I left my car and walked the rest of the way home."

Ludwig Hansen, 78, of 92 Waranoke Road, another Cheney employee, saw big trees swaying near where his car was parked next to the Yarn Dye House.

"I ran out and moved it shortly before those trees came down, crushing four cars. After the wind let up, I was able to go home to our house at 51 Pearl Street, which was without power. My daughter, Judith, was only four months old then and my son, David, was three-and-a-half years old.

"The power company said it was our responsibility to connect the feed line between the pole and the house, but we couldn't get an electrician because the lines were down everywhere. We were into our third day without power when my wife (Gladys) persuaded an emergency crew working in the area to hook up our line for the sake of the baby."

> Storyteller: Earle Clifford as told to Jim Tierney, 6/30/88

THE HURRICANE OF '38

You know, the hurricane ruined a lot of good places in town. I happened to be in Boston at the time. I had gone up on a buying trip. I was out in Needham at the time and I stepped out of my car and was slapped up against a fence as I got out of the car and I said when I got into the golf sportswear, "What's going on here?" Well, I had to stay in Boston overnight and the next day we came down, and instead of coming all the way through, we got as far as Oxford Heights and we had to cut down and went down the back road and ended up that night in Norwich because we couldn't get across. The bridges were all out. We staved in the Wauregan Hotel in Norwich and one side of the wall was out, we thought, because there were no lights and we heard the National Guard outside changing guard all the time. The next morning we go out to get a cup of coffee and we found out the whole wall was out in the room we were sleeping in. We were supposed to be inoculated, but we didn't. We got out of Norwich and came home.

Everybody pitched in. You couldn't go down some streets because of all the trees, you know. People who never swung an ax or used a saw or drove a truck helped out. And that's why they got ahead. That's the way this town was. If the other fellow was in trouble, everybody helped him. It wasn't saying, let the government do it. That's why we've been such a good town all these years.

Storyteller: Nellie Lull as told to Betty Walker, 3/7/72

DEATH AT THE SHORE

We bought a cottage at Quonochontaug Beach in Rhode Island. My father and my sister, who was 21 months older than I, happened to be down there during the 1938 hurricane. They were drowned both of them. They had gotten into their car and the car was washed back when one of those huge waves came over. The car was washed back into the pond in back and they were drowned. Mother was home with me. I was teaching school—Lincoln School, so she and I lived here until she passed away in 1960. I was left alone, and I've been alone ever since.

Storyteller: John A. Johnston from The Manchester Herald

WELLS STREET ARMORY DESTROYED

One of the South End's more spectacular fires destroyed a landmark in the early hours of Sunday, March 22, 1959. It was the 80-year-old Wells Street Armory, owned by the Spencer Rubber Products Co. and used for storage.

The contents included crude rubber, chemicals, talcum powder and unused machinery. Town Fire Chief W. Clifford Mason said the rubber made it difficult to control and extinguish the blaze.

Albert H. Ogren owned the house east of the building. His son Albert J., awakened by a roar, tried to phone the fire department but found the line dead. Mrs. Michael Mesovich Jr. of 52 Wells Street telephoned the first alarm at 2:38 a.m. A box alarm from Main and Charter Oak Streets soon followed.

The town siren awakened Mrs. Stefania Obuchowski of 70 Wells Street and she saw her back yard lit up. She grabbed a coat and valuable papers and spent the rest of the night with neighbors.

More than 100 men, trucks and equip-

ment from the town and the Eighth District departments and 10 neighboring towns fought the fire, which was under control after two hours. Local and Glastonbury firefighters remained on the spot throughout the rest of the weekend to wet down hot spots.

At the height of the blaze, 13 hoses were hooked up to six hydrants and tank trucks. Tank trucks from Coventry, North Coventry, Hebron and Willimantic patrolled a three-block area. Firefighters from these towns soaked rooftops threatened by sparks. South Windsor, East Hartford and Bolton men and equipment covered the town on standby basis.

The Wells Street Armory was not always a military institution. From its beginning, in the 1880s, until its demise, it was a center for opera, vaudeville, drama ("Uncle Tom's Cabin" was an annual fixture), dances, conventions, wedding receptions and anniversaries, basketball, boxing, wrestling and roller skating.

The Company G and Polish-American basketball teams were two of the outstanding quintets of their eras to play there.

The original investors were local business and professional men. Among them were F. Ernest Watkins, Dr. William R. Tinker and Charles Treat.

It acquired the name Wells Street Armory when the owners rented it to the state for military purposes. Spanish-American War Soldiers left from it, and Company G used it for a drill shed before departing for action in World War I.

The Red Men's Athletic Club purchased the structure in 1939. For a period it bore the name Manchester Sports Arena. Otherwise, between 1924 and 1955, when Spencer Rubber Products Co. became owner, it housed several automobile agencies. (Ed. Note: That which follows is an obituary to cover the death of a dearly loved friend of Old Manchester and its people. In my assembly of this book, my single most valuable source of information was the Herald. The Herald's daily commitment to Manchester's history and its "daily doings" was most evident. After hundreds of hours reading the pages of the Herald, I can only say, "Good-bye old friend, we will always miss you." The Herald died at the age of 109.)

Storyteller: The Manchester Herald June 28, 1991

Manchester Herald

HERALD CEASES PUBLICATION TODAY

HERALD'S RICH HISTORY RETOLD

Elwood Starr Ela, in partnership with Thomas Pratt of Rockville, founded the Manchester Saturday Evening Herald in 1881. While October 1st is regarded as The Herald's birthday, its first edition was published on December 17, 1881, and was distributed free.

The Ela-Pratt partnership lasted until 1885 when Mr. Ela became the sole owner of the weekly four-page paper. It later expanded to eight pages, and the Half-Weekly Herald was achieved in 1895 by splitting the paper and publishing it on Tuesday and Friday for Wednesday and Saturday distribution.

In 1888, Ela bought a four-page Cotterel Press and located his paper in the North End's Rose Building, somewhere north of the railroad tracks on old North Main Street, before it was relocated during North End Redevelopment in 1965.

Burned Out

Fire destroyed the Rose Building on Jan. 4, 1889, and Mr. Ela set up temporary quarters at Apel's Opera House at Oakland and North Main Streets; that building still stands. Ela's former partner, Pratt, printed the paper for him in Rockville.

The Herald moved back into the rebuilt Rose Building but moved out again in 1891 into a two-story building on Hilliard Street that became the paper's home for the next 37 years.

Fire struck again, this time on Nov. 18, 1922, and the Hilliard Street home of The Herald was gutted.

Not a single edition was missed.

The Hartford Courant printed it for a week and the now defunct South Manchester News for the next two weeks, was being set up in the Herald's news office on Oak Street. Three weeks later, it was back in its rebuilt Hilliard Street plant.

K of C Home Bought

In 1928, the home of the Knights of Columbus on Bissell Street became available and it was purchased by The Herald.

Improvements were made in the plant over the years, but when it became evident that The Herald was outgrowing its home, an addition was erected in 1967 north and east of the plant, and it contained a modern newsroom, pressroom and circulation department. The paper at that time converted from letter press to offset press publication, but continued hot metal production.

Then in 1972, another new building was erected north of the pressroom, and fronting on Brainard Place. At that time, the paper completed conversion to full offset production by the photo-composition method and automation.

Ela, in 1889, hired a 19-year-old immigrant from Northern Ireland named Thomas Ferguson, who had been a mill hand in nearby Talcottville and that town's corespondent for the paper. He reported to work the first day wearing his Sunday best clothes and soon found himself washing ink off the rollers. The next day he officially became the "printer's devil," and began a career that took him to the top—owner and publisher of The Herald.

He worked in the job shop, became foreman of that shop, then make-up man, reporter, city editor, and publisher.

The Herald went daily in 1914, and Mr. Ferguson started a column he called, "The Observer's Column."

When Ela died in 1924 and Ferguson became managing editor, his son, Ronald, succeeded him as city editor. Ronald Ferguson's journalistic career took him to New York City and Providence RI, before returning to Manchester; he had been a contributor to the paper during high school and college days.

Gains Control

Thomas Ferguson gained controlling interest in the paper in 1928 when he purchased stock owned by E. Hugh Crosby, one-time advertising manager and treasurer. Complete financial control passed to Thomas Ferguson in 1945 when he acquired stock owned by C. Denison Talcott, president of the company and son-in-law of the founder, Ela.

The paper continued to grow under the watchful eye of the Fergusons, and they contracted for a new Goss press that was installed in 1951.

But neither got to see their paper printed on that press. Death came two weeks apart for the father-son team. On August 29, 1951, Thomas Ferguson died; Ronald on September 12, 1951. The new press was in final stages of installation, and rolled later that fall.

Paper Sold

Almost a half century of Ferguson family ownership came to an end November 8, 1971, when the Ferguson brothers sold The Herald to Hagadone Newspapers, Inc., a division of Scripps League Newspapers, Inc.

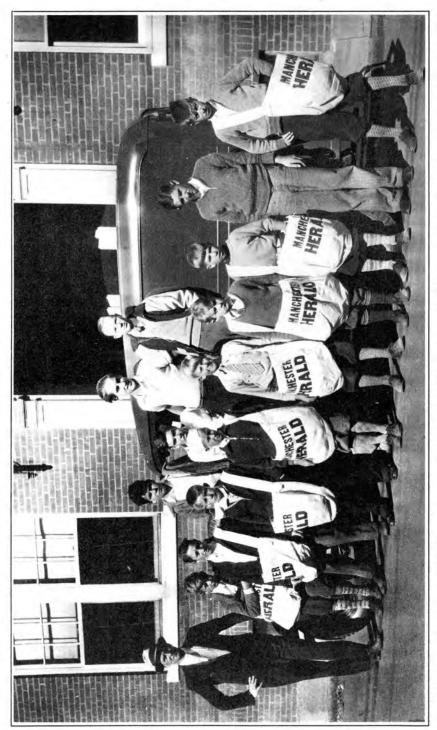
With the sale came a change in the corporate title, from The Herald Printing Co., to Manchester Publishing Co.

As a result of a corporate reorganization, Scripps League Newspapers, Inc. took control of Manchester Publishing Co. from Hagadone in late 1978.

During Scripps League's ownership, the Herald was further modernized with the introduction of a computerized editorial system. The Herald was voted New England's Newspaper of the Year by the New England Newspaper Association in 1990.



In the early 1920s, this doughty group of twenty-seven people made the Manchester Herald an institution. Seated front, second and third from left, are Tom Ferguson and Elwood S. Ela.



The "Paperboys," circa mid–1930s. Want money? No allowance? Work for it! Deliver The Herald. Someday, you'll be proud you were a paperboy.

Just Remember

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XI XI

Storyteller: The Manchester Herald December 22, 1901

DID SHE LIVE THE LONGEST?

December 22, 1901 Charlotte Henry, aged colored resident of Hillstown district passed away at the age of 104. There is no known record of her birth, but according to her own story, she was born in or near New Britain in 1805. It was then a part of Berlin, the latter having been set off from Farmington late in the eighteenth century. The Henry woman, it is thought, resided in the north section of town near Farmington. Her father's name was Wicks and he was employed by the Cowles family. She wellremembered General Cowles leaving for the front when the War of 1812 broke out. She was then, she said, seven years old. It is sixty years since she came to Manchester. Her first husband was Alpheus Quicy.

(Ed. Note: Quicy was the artisan who built many stone bridges and stone houses in town..) He died many years ago and his widow married again. Her second husband was William R. Henry. She acquired a couple of houses by dint of hard work and saving but ,on the advice of her second husband, she converted this into money and it soon vanished. As a result, she became a town dependent and she and her crippled son, Otis, have been receiving town aid for a number of years.

During the latter years of her life, she lived with her son in a shanty in the woods off Hillstown Road. Besides her son, she is survived by a daughter, Mrs. William Jackson of Albany, NY

Storyteller: Rev. Dr. George W. Reynolds April 25, 1910

ONE OF A KIND . . . THE GRASS MAN

Grass expert's funeral held in Manchester

The funeral of Luther James Bradford Olcott was held at his home on Olcott Street yesterday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Rev. Dr. George W. Reynolds, pastor of the Center Congregational Church, a church which Mr. Olcott's forefathers were leading

factors in, officiated. Rev. Dr. Revnolds and Mr. Olcott were close friends. The pastor spoke in part as follows: Most men live their life quietly, do their work as their fathers and grandfathers did, accomplish certain results and go hence receiving at death the usual appreciative commendations of their fellowmen. Once in a great while a man appears who startles his generation by blazing a new trail through life, a man who does not do his work after the traditions of his



James B. Olcott - "The Grass Man"

fathers, but in his own way, in a new and most refreshing way for his way demands new thoughts, new methods, and new tools and new men. The old way is easier because the brain of man is not challenged to enter new fields of thought, the muscles are not summoned to lift new burdens or call into play their indolent and flabby associates, old tools can be used, inventive skill need to be called into action, no manufacturing plants built to give employment to the unemployed and man himself can remain on the same dull plane of conformity.

When one of these rare men does appear, he disturbs our thoughts and shakes our prejudices and does violence to many of our pet schemes but when he goes hence, the world takes notice that a new chapter has been written, that a new door has been flung wide open and that new possibilities in earth, heaven and man have been revealed. Luther James Bradford Olcott belonged to this class of rare men. He had a good start in life. He showed superior wisdom in the selection of his ancestors. There mingled in his veins the best blood of New England. He was conscious of this inheritance, he honored it and wrought under its inspiration a work worthy of his sires. While in his teens he was overwhelmed by the gold fever which was raging in this land and found himself in California when only 18 years of age. With pick in hand and torch in cap he entered upon the mining chapter of his life, but it was short and valuable in that it taught him that it was not his work. He tried other lines of work only to learn his unfitness for them, when in response to a young man's desire to travel he started on a voyage around the world. During these years of travel and prospecting, he learned that it was not something under the earth, nor something above the earth that he was after but something on the earth-grassonly this and nothing more. As soon as he made this discovery he yielded himself body, mind and soul to this work of his life. Wherever he went he could see nothing but grass. The most precious treasure he could find in his trip around the world was grass, the theme above all others in conversation was grass.

Mr. Olcott's greatness appears in that he

chose to identify himself with something as small and ordinary as grass and made the grass famous. He took that strip of ground yonder, he planted it with grasses gathered from all over this globe; for twenty years he had been working with those grasses through storm and sunshine and he had made that strip of land the most famous strip of grass land in this country. A man cannot make a strip of land famous because of his labors with grass unless he is great himself. The message of his toil was, let there be grass and nothing but grass upon this strip of land and there was grass such as we have never before seen. Grass as thick as a sponge as soft as velvet, grass as beautiful as a carpet for the palace of a king. A man who could impress you and the generation in which he lived with the grass he produced must of necessity impress you with his own personality and he did.

The moment we gave attention to this man we learned that he was an unusual man, a unique man, a rare man. He impressed us with his thoughts, he thought differently than we do. We sometimes think a man must be wrong who thinks outside of our channels of thought. He dug new channels of his own and threw rich nuggets of thought upon the bank for our inspection. He thought differently than we do, and if any one does not use our set phrases we sometimes think his is to be pitied, but this man did not need any of our pity. He acted differently than we do simply because he could not be satisfied with other men's thoughts; he must think for himself.

As he could not think other men's thoughts so he could not express himself in the language of others. He was not satisfied with the tools he found here which had been handed down from former generations, he must have different tools even if he must make them himself, which he did.

He not only succeeded in producing an unusual grass, he also succeeded at the same time in producing an unusual man. He produced a man more wonderful than the wonderful grass. He produced an original man, an original thinker, and original talker, actor and worker. He produced Mr. Olcott, and there is no other man like him, he will not soon be forgotten by those who knew him, because he cannot be forgotten.

He will stand out in your memory like a bas relief. He has given himself to this generation, he has not hid, concealed or attempted to deceive concerning himself. His one labor had been to produce grass, and his one effort had been to produce himself. He had produced real grass, and he had produced a real man.

Storyteller: Unidentified news article Historical Society Archives

KNOWLEDGE OF GRASS INCREASED BY OLCOTT

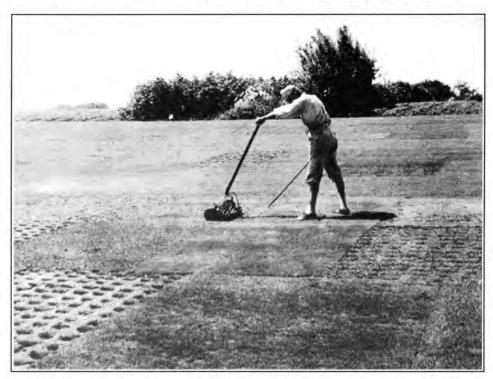
His turf gardens were world famous certainly at one time no less than 1500 distinct varieties.

. . . not extensive, being contained in a tract of about one acre, nearly opposite the Olcott Homestead.

The grasses came from almost every cor-

ner of the world. He developed his varieties from turf—not from seeds. He toured continental Europe collecting a turf here and a turf there. He campaigned to spread the education on grasses.

As an illustration of his philosophy: "Last year a single sward, of one of these Cinderella grasses (waiting for the farm princes of Connecticut to put its slippers on for travel) was cut in inch pieces and planted in a rich sandy garden. In less than twelve months, it had increased a hundred fold in surface, made a show of two tons of hay per acre, yielded ten sheaves of seed hay per acre, three feet high, with more than eight quarts of merchantable seed. Seeds and sods of this grass have been distributed to forty-two experiment stations. It was found in an old and neglected pasture, and is probably a survivant of the times when men and women knew what makes solid turf better than we do." This showed what was right beneath the noses of those who did not know the value of the variety of grass and sent money afar for rare seeds.



One of Manchester's authentic geniuses, hard at work in his world-renowned turf garden.

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald, 12/18/70

THE GRASS MAN

O. C. remembers Walter Olcott very well. He was probably the best authority on grass in his time. He had quite a large area of land divided into square plots of different kinds of grass. He obtained grasses from foreign lands and, by cross breeding and selection, developed special kinds for special uses. One, it was claimed, would thrive best in paths subjected to heavy pedestrian traffic. Walter's consultation and advice were in demand far and wide. He was called in on Prospect Park in Brooklyn and Central Park in New York among many others.

The Hartford Park Department was having trouble in Bushnell Park and called for Walter. He was down on all fours pulling up grass and examini,ng the roots with a magnifying glass when a policeman touched him on the shoulder and said, "Can't you see that sign, 'Keep off the Grass'?" Walter replied, "Yes, I see the sign, but where's the grass?"

In warm weather, Walter always dressed in a light linen suit with knickers and invariably had a sprig of white pine in his lapel.

Ed. Note: O.C. remembered him as Walter instead of Luther, but his facts are accurate beyond that.



A broader view of the expansive Olcott grass farm. The dim figure in the foreground is J.B. Olcott.

Storyteller: Malcolm Barlow from The Manchester Herald, 9/5/68

JOHN E. ROGERS—ACTIVIST, RESEARCHER, TEACHER

"The answer is person to person contact and understanding."

John E. Rogers, of 1163 East Middle Turnpike, was born in the North End of Hartford and grew up there. He claims one of his few advantages as a black boy in Hartford was his black father. He was a Danish subject and had traveled widely. His philosophy on black men clashed sharply with that of his wife, who was from New Jersey, and often with their son.

Rogers said he now knows the thanks he owes his father for his healthy respect for black men.

Another advantage was the kindness of the people he knew in Hartford.

"People were not too poor that they weren't concerned for their neighbors, whites, blacks and Jews. With a sickness, the whole neighborhood was concerned," he said.

"I remember a Negro woman came home from working in a West Hartford mansion all day and she cooked up soup for a sick white friend.

"It was a rich experience." He finished school and studied electronics.

"They thought I was some kind of phenomenon," he recalled. "But no one would hire me."

He finally took an "acceptable" position for a young black man then and was the personal man to the president of the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Co.

James E. Kearney, the company president then, was one of the finest men of any color Rogers has met, he said.

"Kearney was a fine man. I never saw him lose his temper. He was graceful to even the smallest man.

"It was good to experience the good and clean white man. The ghetto people today haven't seen one white man of quality."

After 10 years as a personal man, the future in the insurance field looked dim for Rogers and in 1935 he quit to work in the U.S. Post Office in Hartford.

"Until recently, the insurance companies had very little to offer the Negros. It's not an easy thing to do your best and see a lesser man move by you.

"If the black man has studied and has no moral stigma, but he's just a black man, he has to have a lot of faith and stamina to survive."

Rogers was the first black hired by the postal service in Hartford. He was a part-time clerk in 1928. He held more firsts until nine years ago when he was made superintendent of the Bishop's Corner Post Office.

He was not the first black to move to Manchester, but in 1938 he took his family to their present home and became one of a handful of black families here.

More than twenty years ago, Rogers became historian of the black Prince Hall Lodge of Masons. The black Masons hold the only charter from the English Masons.

The early handwritten records of the black Masons fascinated Rogers and he began more research into the Negro's share of New England history.

He has spent much of his free time at Yale and Boston Universities pouring over their books on black men and has been in steady touch with historians at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Howard is the most prestigious of American black schools.

He has also gone over the diaries of black Masons and the family histories of black men in a white Connecticut.

Now Rogers is leaving the postal service to devote full-time to his studies and to teaching black history.

He will go from school system to school system holding sessions with students, teachers and parent-teacher groups. His aim will be to change school curricula to conform to historical facts.

Rogers will begin a library of materials at the University of Hartford to help school systems set up courses in Negro history and culture.

Rogers thoroughly enjoys explaining what men with black skin have done throughout recorded history. He often begins a story by saying, "I'll bet you didn't know that . . ." And he often finishes by asking, "Now where do you find that in

America's history books?"

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Some of the facts he brings out are:

- Egyptians had dark to black skin
- Black men of the Upper Nile were the best men of medicine for centuries
- Moses was black
- Jesus was at least dark
- Emperor Constantine was converted by a black pope

Among the honors Rogers has received over the years are:

The 33rd degree of the Masons—the highest honor they give.

He was Grand Master of the Prince Hall Masons

The St. Benedict Award of the Catholic Interracial Council of Hartford

Member and Deacon of the Board of Religious Education of the Bolton Congregational Church

Member of the Connecticut Council on

Human Rights

The Charter Oak Medal from the Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce for public service

A spot in "Who's Who in Civic America."

"There's no such thing as white or black history," Rogers said. "It's all together. I often come across a bit of history of an area white family and I tell them. I'm interested in people."

Storyteller: Susan Plese from The Manchester Herald, 8/14/82

FAREWELL TO AN ODD, GRAND BUILDING

For nearly 70 years, the building stood on a corner smack in the center of Manchester. It was a landmark, but according to many old-timers, it was also the hub of town activity as each one of its many businesses served as gathering places for town politicians, news reporters, and everyday citizens.

But it is largely the old-timers who mourn its passing, newcomers to town viewed the odd-shaped Odd Fellows Building on the corner of Main and Center Streets as an eyesore, and shed no tears at its demise.

Today, the building is mostly gone, a victim of the wrecker's ball.

The old building did not give in easily, however. Last week when the one-ton solid steel slammed into the roof, the ball bounced. The demolition crew called head-quarters for the heavy-duty three-ton ball.

"Here, they're tearing down the best bomb shelter they have in Manchester," said Sedrick Straughan, a member of the Odd Fellows, who remembers Main Street in 1901, just two years before construction began on the structure.

The year 1901 was also the year of the fire which destroyed the Odd Fellow's first meeting house in old House & Hale Building, Straughan remembers, and a decision was made to construct a new, fire-proof building.

"William Hale, the judge of probate, and Charles Hathaway, (both members of Odd Fellows) got it going," Straughan says.

But the building, officially known as the meeting place for the fraternal organization until it was sold seven years ago, was truly a town project.

"It was built by the Odd Fellows Building Association," Straughan says. "They sold stock at \$25 a share—anybody could buy it—and quite a few town people bought shares. That's how it got started."

The structure was built to follow the contour of the ground on the corner, and no parking spaces were even considered. "Everyone went on horses and trolley cars in those days," Straughan says, noting that a trolley terminal of sorts was located right at the building's entrance.

One of the first tenants of the building was the phone company, just a fledgling business in the days when only doctors and important people had telephones, Straughan says.

And he also remembers the Knofla Brothers, a soda shop on the south side of the building. "It was well attended," he says. "Their business was milkshakes for 15 ¢ and you had ice cream in it for that."

Other early tenants were Tryon's Grocery store, a complete market with butchers and meats. They delivered all over town.

Then there was Packard Pharmacy and

Ogden Studio, a photo studio that also sold gifts and greeting cards. A fellow by the name of Sam Nelson ran a shoe store.

And all through the years, the building retained its reputation as the town's heart. Trolley cars lined up there between 7 and 8 every morning, waiting for Aetna and Travelers Insurance Company employees to board, after they had caught up on morning gossip at the soda shop or barber shop.

"People went into the barber shop to get a haircut, but also to get the news of the day," Straughan says. The barber shop was owned by two brothers, Pete and Whitie Curran, and all the shop's regulars had their own shaving mugs set up on a shelf ready for each visit.

And the shop, with its wide open windows acted as a kind of fishbowl looking out onto downtown Manchester. The men would sit there, chew the fat and peer down Main Street in both directions, watching life pass by.

In the 1920s, the Knofla Brothers soda shop was replaced by Pritchard and Walsh soda shop, a gathering place for younger people. Nickel ice cream cones were the order of the day.

"And in the basement, there was a room called the Red Sox Dugout." Straughan says. "They had a pool room and a bowling alley with two lanes. All the high school kids hung out there. They went there before their dates and came back for a milkshake later."

A succession of tenants followed. The Connecticut Business College was there for a time, as was the Center Travel Agency. "Buses used to stop there on their way to Boston Providence," says Jon Harrison, a member of the Historical Society who tried to save the building.

There were doctors and dentists, an auto agency, and McKinney Brothers Inc., Real Estate.

There was a man who made cigars, and at one time the custodian of the building lived upstairs and rented rooms.

In 1948, the Center Restaurant moved from an adjacent building into the Odd Fellows. It was operated by James Morianos and John Kambas, and sold in 1968 by Kambas when he retired.

"It was just a regular restaurant," Kambas now 80, says. "It was very good, but there was no parking and that killed the business."

"Inside was booths and counters, and I put glass in front and it was very modern and nice and up-to-date. It had fancy wall-paper in the dining room," he says.

"I had a good business, but in the end I was too old," he says. "People used to say they missed the restaurant and why don't you start another place?" But I'd say, "What do you want me to do, die in a restaurant?"



The "Odd Fellows Building", the "heart" of the town—a meeting place for making deals.

The restaurant, too, was a meeting place. A Manchester Herald editor remembers it as "the number one gathering place for years, and many Manchester deals (for the better) were made when George Waddell and Dick Martin were town managers. Just about everyone went there and we got more news there in an hour or two than any beat in town."

"My prices were reasonable." Kambas says. "I didn't make any money, but I made a lot of friends."

And all this time, the Odd Fellows, some 700 to 800 strong were meeting in the large upstairs hall. "And the hall had a nice dance floor," Straughan says. "There were social activities, bingo games, fairs."

The old building was also the stop off point for the Center Gang, a group of 25 or 30 young men who used to congregate there at night.

But they weren't the streetwise troublemakers, according to Straughan. "They were all real nice guys," he says. "It was a focal point."

Then, approximately 10 years ago, the building's fortunes started to turn. It was no longer the prosperous business place and meeting house it had been since the early part of the century.

The problem?

Most people said it was the lack of parking and the inability of the building's new owner, Stuart Carlson, to attract income-producing tenants. The Collector's Corner, which had been in operation for 14 years was one of the final tenants, as was Carry Nation's Cafe, the Book Corner secondhand book store and the Sport land Billiards on the second floor.

The building was also home to dozens of Laotians who found the location gave them convenient access to downtown.

But the building gradually fell into disrepair. There was barely enough money coming in to pay taxes; there was nothing left for repairs and maintenance. One day last winter, a mattress and scattered belongings of a squatter were found in an empty upstairs room. And the crash of the wrecker's ball became imminent as the state took possession and demolition contracts were awarded. Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald, 5/17/74

THE WONDERFUL MADDENS

O. C. has often felt that the Town of Manchester has been negligent and derelict in not recognizing and showing its appreciation of one of its old families, a family that for at least three generations contributed to the town's character.

At least some park or parklet should be named "Madden". Even more appropriate would be a ski slope, golf course or athletic field.

One has always been known as the "Four Acres." Why not insert the name officially as "The Madden Four Acres" (or Field)? The family lived near it and the sons often used the field when developing their superior athletic prowess.

O.C. was not fortunate enough to have known the elder gentleman and lady who propagated that admirable family, but their characters were manifest in the children they gave our town.

William ("Bill") was undoubtedly the greatest all-around athlete ever in Manchester. In college he won his letters in all sports he entered: Track, football, basketball at least, and surely in others if he went out for them.

He was such an idol for the young fry in town that his ever-evident manly character had an ennobling influence on many. He generously gave of his time and experience to coach and officiate for SMHS athletes.

Bill was serving his Town of Manchester on the police force, when he was shot down by a gang of thieves he had apprehended.

Bill Madden worked his way up through the ranks and line to become captain of Company "G". He was very popular and very well liked by everyone. But his office required that it was necessary to correct, reprimand, and discipline and refrain from fraternizing with his old friends.

He could not be happy under those conditions so he resigned. Bill was that kind of fellow. We need more Bill Maddens.

Maurice, Bill's brother, gained quite a reputation in these parts as a bicycle racer. He operated a business for years, selling and repairing bikes. He enjoyed the friendship and respect of everyone who knew him.

Many wheels taken in trade when a sale was made were fixed up (even painted sometimes) and given to some little fellows who otherwise would have gone without.

The next brother in age was Frank. He was not as competitive in spirit as Bill and Maurice, but could hold his own with the best of us in boyhood games. O. C. well remembers one of Frank's acts that demonstrated the sense of brotherhood that permeated the Madden family.

Several boys were throwing stones toward a brook. Just as Frank let one go, another kid stood up and got it on the head. A small scalp cut will bleed, of course, but there was not much damage. Most other boys would not have given it much sympathetic thought, but not Frank. He went all the way home with his friend, to the opposite side of town. There he stayed, until the mother had the little cut fixed up and assured him everything would be O.K. That evening, he walked across town again to be sure. And again the next day, and the next.

O.C. believes the accident hurt Frank more that the one he hit.

Last, but by no means least, is Miss Alice Madden, Bill's daughter, about whose dedicated and faithful service to Manchester's young people we have heard and read about so much. It is O. C.'s loss that he did not know Miss Alice who upheld the good family's honor.

O. C. believes the Manchester should memorialize, in some way, that family which was so important to so many Manchesterites years ago.



Madden Bros. bike shop, Charter Oak & S.Main

Storyteller: John H. McHugh from The Manchester Herald, 5/3/88

(Ed. Note: A story from the heart, from a Manchester Storyteller known to the Main Street Morning Coffee Club.)

FRIENDSHIP

He was Dick and I was Johnnie

To the editor:

Dick Cobb and I went to Bunce School starting off in first grade. We became close friends.

Dick and I fought each other, as boys usually do, wrestled each other, called each other names. The next day we played baseball, Hill-E-Over, and a game of caddie. We forgot the previous day's disagreement.

We had turns, like the rest of the kids, ringing the school bell signaling recess or lunch time. Indoor plumbing had just started at Bunce School. Olcott Street was gravel.

Our teacher, Mrs. Martin Lord, brought in cans of soup which were heated on an electric hot plate in the cellar beside the furnace. We could buy a bowl of soup for about three or four cents. We kids took turns stirring the soup while studying our lessons. Our reward was a free bowl of soup. One November day after school, Dick and I took our shoes off and paddled in the (Hop Brook) Tar Brook. When we decided to put on our shoes and go home, Dick couldn't get his shoes back on. We started walking home, Dick with his shoes in his hand, until we stopped at a neighbor's and borrowed a shoehorn so Dick could get his shoes on. When we arrived at my house (site of Spencer Street Friendly's), my grand mother gave me a wallop and a tongue lashing while Dick ran fast down Hillstown Road.

When we were in Barnard School (now Bennet Junior High) we brought our lunch. In good weather we ate our lunch in the Quadrangle. Bad weather we would eat in the tunnel or the room provided. Some days during the lunch hour we would go upstairs in East Side Rec and swing on the ropes or play basketball until the custodian kicked us out.

Our lunch period was one hour long. We would take walks up Main Street going in and out of stores until we reached Woolworth's, where Dick would buy 5 or 10 cents worth of candy that we could eat on the way back to school. Sometimes we would only get as far as Magnell Drug Store for a vanilla ice cream soda. We only had a few cents between us.

Dick and I played in Miss Shea's orchestra, Dick on the Drums and I on the violin. I don't think Dick ever took lessons but he was good.

Dick and I tried to be cowboys, riding the young bulls till we were thrown. This would take place when my folks were not home.

In Manchester High, Dick was in many sports, including baseball, football, basketball and track. He excelled in all. If he came home on the Silver Lane bus, he would stop in and give me the results. If his dad picked him up, I'd find out the next day on the school bus.

Near the end of the school year, in June, we would eat our lunch on the run going up Mt. Nebo to Globe Hollow. If it was full, we would take a dip and run back in time for afternoon classes. One time I got off the bus, and got a pint of heavy cream as my folks had a dairy farm. Dick continued home and changed his clothes and picked strawberries. Those were the biggest feed of strawberries we both ever had. We also had a watermelon fight when they ripened, and apple fights.

After High School, Dick went on to college then into the service. I married and bought a home across from his parents on Hillstown Road. Dick's dad was a farmer. When he cultivated his strawberries, he would come right across Hillstown Road and do mine. I said, "Mr. Cobb, you don't have to cultivate mine." His answer, "I have to turn around somewhere, Johnnie."

After the service, Dick returned to Hillstown Road with his bride, Bunny. Dick and Bunny bought the house next to me. There, history started to repeat. Their children and my children played, fought, danced, and loved each other. All the years living side by side, we never had an argument over children.

When the winter snows came, Dick

always plowed my driveway so I could get to work. The only thing he would take for plowing was a thank you. I could borrow his tractor or truck any time. When my son needed medical attention, Dick drove him to the M.M.H. emergency ward and stayed with him until he was released.

Many times Dick went into the hospital these past years. I visited some. Now I say to myself, not enough times.

Dick plowed and cultivated his garden for years but he could never get rid of the path that ran between our houses. As soon as he left, a new one would appear.

At Dick's mother's birthday, she's 101 years old now, I asked her if she remembered the argument Dick and I had as to which one of us had the dirtiest face. She laughed, and said yes. She settled it. We both had dirty faces.

In all the years we spent going to school, being friends and neighbors, Dick never realized I was white and I never realized he was black. He was just Dick and I was just Johnnie, friends for 64 years.

Until we meet again Dick, save me a seat on that School Bus in the sky. Johnnie

(Ed. Note: Richard "Dick" Cobb, 69, former Manchester High School athletic director, died April 20, 1988.)



Storyteller: Mrs. George Borst, age 92 as told to Betty Walker 1/29/95

THE NURSE'S STORY

I was born in Rockville ninety-two years ago tomorrow. I was born on January 30, 1883. My parents were Caroline and Carl Stein. My father was a designer in one of the textile mills in Rockville.

I was graduated from Rockville High School. I'm a trained nurse, trained at Presbyterian Hospital in New York.

Nursing was hard work. We girls would get down on our hands and knees and scrub floors. What do you think the nurses would do today if they had to do that? We had to do it because we had to learn what sanitary conditions were. That hospital burned down years ago.

I came back to Rockville when I graduated and stayed a few months. I went to Hartford and got in with some of the doctors there and I got to be one of the first medical nurses that was in Hartford. They didn't used to have these receptionists and secretaries and all that stuff. I was just a plain worker. I joined up with Dr. John Balcher. At that time, they had just started St. Francis Hospital. I worked for him for about seven years. I lived right with them as one of the family. His sister kept house for him.

I came to Manchester in 1906. We were living next to St. Bridget's Church in the old Boyington homestead. My husband was working for the Carlyle Johnson company which was right next door. We came out from Hartford with them. Mr. Scott Simons was the head of that. He bought it. It used to be the Goetz Bakery. They later moved to New Haven. The bakery was there when we moved there. You could go there at five in the morning and get your hot bread right out of the oven which you can't do today.

I did private nursing without any pay. If any woman on Main Street was having a baby, they would call me about a half hour ahead and I'd rush over to help. I loved it. You have no idea how many boys and girls come up to me now and say, "Mrs. Borst, when I was born you were my mother's nurse." I'd say, "Where did you live?" and

they'd say, "Down on Main Street." I worked with all the different doctors. They'd call when they were short of help.

I went to the Second Congregational Church. I was married in 1906, when I was 23, and my son was born in 1908, right here in Manchester. I've belonged to that church all those years.

The King's Daughters

The King's Daughters is a Christian club that has its office on Riverside Drive in New York City. It's an international order which has no connection with a church. A Mrs. Margaret Atone and a Mrs. Dickinson got their heads together and thought it would be a nice idea. They were great workers in a large Methodist church in New York City. They formed this little church and called it The King's Daughters. There were ten women in the original group and they've been going ever since. We maintain a lot of residences for girls or for anyone that wants to go for a rest. There's one up on the Hudson River. We own it. There are 15 or 16 rooms and all the different clubs have taken a room which we take care of. There are now only twelve of us in the group. There were forty at one time, but so many have died.

Here, in Manchester, old Dr. Whiton was a member of our group. He left his money to build a library. It was through our King's Daughters that we got the library over north. He was a very fine medical doctor. They lived in the second white house on Woodbridge off Main. When he died and she died, they left money to build the library. We had the use of the upstairs as our club church-just the King's room-no Daughters. We bought all the furniture. We don't meet there any more because we can't climb the stairs. We meet now in my home. We did all sorts of things in hard timespay doctor bills, helped families when they were out of work-all types of charitable work. There is another group at Center church, the Loyal Circle of the King's Daughters. We were called the Everready Circle.

I taught Sunday School for forty years. I was one of the originators of the World Day of Prayer in Manchester, at least fifty years ago. I started the Cradle Roll at the Second

Congregational Church. If we had a new baby born in the church, I'd wait a week and then I'd go to the hospital and visit. If there was anything she needed, I would get it for her. The King's Daughters would stand behind me and pay for it. Most of those babies are grown up now and have children of their own. I sang in the choir for over forty years.

Depression time wasn't bad for me. My husband worked for the Hartford Fire Insurance and he wasn't out of work a day. We weren't as bad off as families with children. The King's Daughters did hundreds of dollars worth of good. Everybody in town knows the King's Daughters. At the high school if there was a boy who didn't have shoes, they'd call Mrs. Borst. We would lend a hand wherever we could. We're not having a depression now. No one is doing without anything. I call a depression when they have to go to the bank and get their savings to buy things they need for living. In those days, I stood in line to get meat, butter,

sugar and things of that kind. We didn't have criminals—nobody ever robbed or took anything from anybody. You could leave your doors unlocked.

World War Days

The hard days were the first World War days. Food was very scarce. Meat was very scarce. They came to the door with the meat wagon and you went out and got a slice. A nurse and I would be called to go and help families with food. Nobody went hungry; everyone took care of their neighbors.

During the flu epidemic, I went from house to house. Sometimes I'd find three or four people in bed, several children in bed. The doctors we had then were Dr. Stone and Dr. Sharp.

I did nursing during World War I. I was at the Cheney Hospital on Hartford Road when my husband was there. He was one of the first patients who went into that house. The Red Cross helped out there. At the hospital, later, we used to meet and make ban-



This circa 1918 photo of a Red Cross vehicle certainly includes King's Daughter, Mrs. Borst.

dages, etc. for the Red Cross. We made nightshirts and diapers. The Red Cross would bring the material and we would meet and make them. During the war we wore uniforms—nursing or Red Cross uniforms. We would meet at Center Church and pack up the finished things to send off. We wore our uniforms so we'd be recognized on the street. They were dark blue with white cuffs and caps which were white that had a big red cross on them. That was government. They would supply the uniforms or we could buy them. We worked at the Armory or at the church.

I helped on the canvasses when the hospital was to be built. I worked with Mrs. Horace Learned. Those Cheney women worked. How they worked-everyone of them, especially during the war. I remember one afternoon they wanted one thousand shirts for the working women. They were from a piece of material three feet wide. We didn't hem them because they could do that themselves, but we put a hem on the top and put a drawstring in them. Those were the skirts for the Russian women. We sewed for Turkey for many other places-all Red Cross work. I don't know how they ever would have gotten along without the Red Cross. The government bought all the material we used and give it out to all the different towns.

Storyteller: The Manchester Herald, 1923

TOWN'S FIRST DOCTOR CAME HERE IN 1793

Manchester, in years gone, by was not as well protected against sickness as it is today. Old records show that about 1793, Dr. George Griswold came to this town and opened an office. He was Manchester's first physician. He remained here for many years and was succeeded by Dr. William Cooley who also was a resident here for years. Dr. Cooley came to town about 1815.

Dr. William Scott engaged in the profession in Manchester in 1847, continuing until his death about 1885.

Dr. Calvin W. Jacques settled here in

1849 and rounded out nearly fifty years in the profession. Dr. J. L. Bradley, who was in the practice here in 1851, was described as a "botanist."

Dr. Oliver B. Taylor settled at the Green in 1857. He was for many years school visitor. A half century in the service was his record.

Dr. F. H. Whiton, who died a few years ago, opened his office here in 1875, which year Dr. R.F. Mills came.

Dr. R. M. Griswold began practice 1881.

About this time Dr. William R. Tinker opened his office, so that he had been continuously in the profession here for more than forty years. Dr. Tinker was for many years the medical examiner.

Dr. Thomas H. Weldon began his professional life about 1884 and another year will witness his fortieth year as a physician here.

Following is a list of other doctors who have been here and the year of their coming:

Benjamin F. Barrows, 1888; R.B. Watkins, 1889; F.B. Adams, 1890; John S. Dooley, 1892; E.D. Kimball, J. DeVore, 1893; M.S. Bradley, W.S. Gillman, Plumb Brown, J.C. Taylor, 1896; Stephen Dunn, 1896; D.C.Y. Moore, Calvin Weidner, Maurice W. Maloney, 1898; J. C. Tanner, 1901; N.A. Burr, 1902; T.G. Sloan, 1905; Harry W. Sharpe, 1906.



Dr. Franklin B. Adams and wife Jennie

H.L. Tillotson, 1907; J.L. North Holmes, 1912; Gertrude C. Johnson, 1913; Richard W. Rice, 1913; C.C. Burlingame, 1916; John Hutchinson, 1916; H.A. Deane, 1917; James F. Gorman, 1917; Edward B. Allen, 1918; George A. F. Lundberg, 1921; Arthur B. Moran, 1921; Robert P. Knapp, 1922.

The dental profession has been represented in Manchester for many years. Dr. G. G. Griswold was a practitioner of dental surgery. Dr. Gilbert M. Griswold adopted this profession and was one of the pioneers. Dr. Myron M. Maine is the dean of the dental profession, being about forty years in continuous practice here. Dr. F. A. Sweet is the senior dentist at the north end.

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald

THE DAYS OF THE DOCTORS

"Doc" Weldon

The drug stores all had glass bowls like goldfish bowls on their showcases. They contained bloodsuckers labeled leeches. They were used to reduce the discoloration of black eyes caused by flying fists and other bruises. Doctors prescribed them.

O.C. remembers a little girl in the neighborhood for whom Dr. Weldon prescribed the use of leeches over quite a period of time. Can't recall having heard what her ailment was.

A double on the east corner of Oak was occupied by Loneys and Orrs. The little girl, Lottie, got an old-fashioned shoe button up her nostril and had to get Dr. Weldon to remove it.

The grapevine spread the news that Mrs. McCann was to have an operation. The whole neighborhood was concerned. There was no hospital in town and surgical operations were rare. When Dr. Weldon and an assistant arrived, every window that afforded a view of the house had its quota of peering eyes. Folks from houses without a view just happened to be calling on those houses who had. When such things were happening kids weren't wanted underfoot, so a line of us sat with our feet in the gutter

across the street.

After the doctor left, Johnnie Quish ventured over and returned with the news that Grandma was O.K. and the operation for an infected toe was successful. He also brought an empty chloroform can which we passed around for all hands to smell. The neighbors breathed relief.

Next to the American Hotel was the Weldon building. Dr. Thomas Weldon had an office in the southeast corner with entrance door at the sidewalk. The north half of the first floor was his drug store. Bill Bostwick was the pharmacist. The doctor lived on the second floor. A driveway along the north side of the building led from Main Street to the barn where the doctor's horse and carriage were kept. He had the reputation for being very successful with pneumonia cases. He prescribed a constant supply of live steam to breath and frequent shots of Scotch which just suited some patients. Sometimes it was suspected that the good doctor sample tested his prescriptions. Could be.

O. C. was sliding down the hatchway to the cellar on a long plank A long wood sliver entered a place where he often sat and broke off below the surface. Unable to get hold of it himself, Dad took the kid up to Doc Weldon. An incision was made twice as long as the splinter but when it was seen that the Dr. had already cut about twice as deep as necessary and was still going, the blood-covered object was pointed out to him. Without any sutures, the healed wound always looked like a dark purple blood-sucker and was so announced by strangers when it emerged from a swim at the pond.

Once, when the periodic small pox hit town, O.C.'s Dad took him to Dr. Weldon's for vaccination. There was a line of people clear out to the sidewalk waiting their turn. Doc said, "I won't be able to get to you today, just watch me do a couple. There now, here's the stuff. Take the boy home and do it yourself." He did. The size of the swelled arm and the following big scar left no doubt about its "taking".

Doctors Moore & Burr

When Dr. D.C.Y. Moore came to town, he had the small house on the northeast corner of Bissell Street. He was from Winsted and a stranger to Manchester.

Of course, he had to start from scratch without a single patient. To give the appearance and initiate a reputation, he left his office several times a day with the little black bag and walked at a brisk rate out to the fringes of the thickly settled parts, then returned by a different route, also in a terrible hurry to get back to an empty office. As people came to know him, his practice grew until he was probably the most respected, trusted, and beloved family physician the town has ever had.

At first, the young doctor had to walk to make his rounds. As he began to prosper, he had a nice horse and carriage. Eventually he could afford a driver and hired George Smith who was still on the job when the doctor brought his first automobile. "Smitty" then became a chauffeur and later started an auto garage business of his own where the Elks Home now is.

Dr. Burr had a red brick home and office set far back from Main Street between Bissell and Brainard Place where it is now. That's where Johnson building now stands.



The Treat Building, seen here in more recent times, was the home and office of Dr. Burr. Shown here, it faces east, with its's back to Main Street.

Doctors Tinker and Gillam

Dr. W.R. Tinker lived and had his office at Main and Park Streets. There was a large lawn four or five feet higher than Main Street sidewalk but on the level of Park Street at the west end because of the rise in Park Street.

Mrs. Tinker had been a Sault. Two of her nephews lived with them.

Dr. Gilliam's place was on the northwest corner of Main and Locust Streets. He held the office of post surgeon. Recruits were sent to him for their physical examinations before enlistment. O. C. and several others went there and then were sworn in for a three-year term of service.

Some time later, we were informed that Dr. Gillam's commission had been terminated so it would be necessary to go to a doctor in Rockville. After that, the group were again sworn in for a three-year enlistment without any credit for the several months served.

Birthin' Babies—Dr. Higgins & Dr. Moore

We have received an unsigned letter from one who recalls our attention to conditions that were customs in Manchester around the turn of the century.

Be it known that we had no hospital in town then and often the doctor's first knowledge of an approaching birth was his sudden call to attend it.

The letter writer's mother was one of those women on whom the doctors relied in each neighborhood. They were not midwives nor registered as nurses. They asked for no pay. They were just faithful sisters to any woman who needed help. They put the affairs of another and her family ahead of their own during their emergency.

If ever there were angels on earth, those women should be counted among them.

Here is the letter: "I would like to pay tribute to the late Dr. Joseph Higgins, who came to Manchester in the year of 1909 or 1910. My mother was one of his first patients.

"He came carrying a walking cane. Later, as he got more patients, he asked my mother if my brother (age 15) could drive a buggy for him.

"It was quite a struggle making house

calls in all kinds of rain and snowstorms. Driving out into the country on mud roads to reach the sick. My brother then would have to take the buggy to the livery stable and walk home. My mother always had something waiting for him to see he had something hot to drink.

"Finally, my brother got double pneumonia and almost died.

"Then the doctor brought one of the first automobiles to Manchester. It was white and green; quite an attraction. How proud I was to get a ride in that car.

"The doctor's practice grew fast. Now, so many babies were being born in our neighborhood. Babies were born in their homes then, and at times, when the doctor arrived, there was nothing ready. So the doctor would say, 'Go get your Mother.' Mother would change her big long apron and away she would go, playing nurse. And I am sure in other neighborhoods, somebody's mother also had to play nurse.

Dr. Higgins' practice grew very large and he became one of Manchester's outstanding doctors. To some he was a doctor; to others a friend; but to us he was a big brother. Dr. Higgins died in 1926. Later his brother, a Dr. Edwin Higgins, came to Manchester and was just as beloved at his brother, Joseph Higgins.

It was O.C.'s good fortune to be very well acquainted with one of those unheralded heroines. An account of her many experiences would fill a book with tragedy, comedy and down-to-earth living humanity.

Dr. D.C.Y. Moore summoned her to a case where a man 80 years old had a wife of 18 years of age. After a baby was born, the doctor said there was another to follow. Although the mother said "no," the doctor could not agree, and so there was "twins." When the doctor announced there was still another, the mother said positively, "No more."

She could not help it but there was a triplet born. She had, however, made up her mind and hence forth made no claim to number three. She cared well for "her twins," but the old man always had to do all the caring for "his triplet." To the best of our knowledge, many years later the triplets developed into fine young people.

Storyteller: Florence "Flossie" Cowles Waldron, at the age of 91 years, as told to Harry Cowles in 1983

DOCTOR VAIL

Dr. Vail was a neighborhood doctor, and the most humane person that ever walked the earth. He would sometimes make a visit to the home and leave medicine enough to cure the patient because he always said he'd cure them, and he'd charge ten cents, perhaps, at times, twenty-five cents. We didn't have telephones in those days and, of course, he traveled by horse and buggy. It was up to me to go to Dr. Vail's house and tell him that somebody was sick at the house and needed his attention. He would come and I would ride back with him.

The doctor pulled teeth too. Brother Bob needed a tooth pulled and Dr. Vail went to feel around his mouth to see which tooth it was. Bob bit down on his finger and made it bleed. The doctor gave Bob a slap side of the face and said, "You go home. You don't need a tooth pulled."

Young Doctor Joe Higgins and the "One-Sided Child"

My brother's daughter, Arlene, got scarlet fever when she was five years old. and never really got well again. Arlene got pneumonia, then an abscess on her lung, which had to be operated on. The operation was terrible and that incision never healed. She lived to be fourteen but the side that had been operated on never grew, so she was a one-sided child.

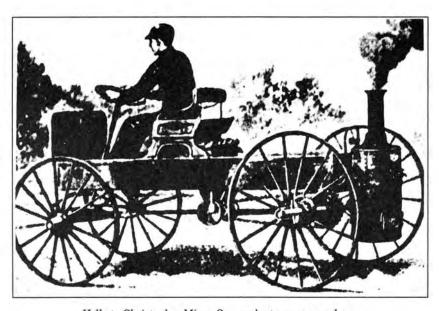
When Arlene came down with pneumonia Dr. Joe Higgins had just started practicing in Manchester and wasn't very busy at that time. His own father was bed sick and lived in Rhode Island. He would go to Rhode Island, spend the day with his father, get the train home at night and walk from North Main Street in Manchester over to Parker Street and sit and hold Arlene and rock her until she could sleep. And for all the weeks and months he spent he never charged more than a nickel.

Arlene died in May, 1916.

Good-Bye Buggies, Hello Cars



Good-bye to horse-power . . .



Hello to Christopher Minor Spencer's steam-powered car.



Storyteller: Richard Tambling from The Journal Inquirer, 8/8/89

SPENCER GOT UP FULL HEAD OF STEAM

In Manchester, during the Civil War, Christopher Spencer built and operated what seems to have been the first successful automobile in Connecticut.

That steam auto of 1862 was an ordinary four-wheeled buggy to which Spencer added a steam boiler and a two-cylinder engine. The boiler burned coal and the boiler tubes were made out of rejected Spencer rifle barrels.

It was built to carry the inventor to and from his job, but he tested its speed and reported that on a race track, it could keep up with top trotting horses. Its speed was limited, though, by the poor roads of the time and its use was limited by a poor attitude toward progress.

Manchester officials ordered Spencer to keep the vehicle off the roads because it made too much noise and frightened horses, who would go nowhere near it.

Spencer built several of the vehicles in the 1860s. One source gave him credit for having the first automobile accident—when he sheared the wheel off a milk wagon in Boston.

From the 1880s into the 20th century, Spencer continued to work with steam autos, which attracted spectators when he took them on the streets. He made several in Windsor and when his son, Roger, drove one to New York in 1901, the Hartford Times reported that he averaged 13 mph despite roads that weren't in the best of shape.

In 1989, Spencer's last surviving child, Percival, then 92, recalled that about 1904, his father made about 10 steam cars that burned kerosene to be used for deliveries by a New York City dairy. The inventor gave Percival a castoff steam engine and a boiler from a prototype of the cars and the boy put together a vehicle of his own.

"By God, I got it running," Percival recalled. He attended Windsor school and, with schoolmates helping, he kept the auto powered by burning shingles in it. He couldn't afford kerosene.

"You had to stoke pretty fast," he said.

Storyteller: Thomas R. Lewis, Jr. Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 10/76

HELLO, "GOAT"

During the May 1866 session of the Connecticut General Assembly, a charter was granted to Charles, John, Ward, Rush and Frank Cheney as incorporators of the South Manchester Railroad. The tracks were to be constructed "from some suitable point near the post office, in the village of South Manchester, to the station of the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill Railroad (HP&F) at North Manchester, in the town of Manchester."

The construction of the railroad was completed in June 1869 by the Jarvis Railroad Construction Company of Providence, Rhode Island at a cost of \$29,777 per mile. As it was being built, the grading and laying of rails was a major focus of attention for townspeople, especially the excavation for the Park Street cut, and the construction of a wooden bridge which carried Park Street over the tracks. The bridge was viewed as a miracle of construction by people in the neighborhood. The excavation work was done by hand and the dirt was carried and used as fill for the roadbed across Bigelow Brook. When completed, the main line measured 2.25 miles and siding

measured .96 miles, distances which, at the time, qualified the line as the shortest independently-owned railroad in the United States.

Late in 1869, the SMRR was leased by Cheney Bros. to the Hartford, Providence, and Fishkill Railroad, however, ten years later, the Cheneys terminated the lease because they were dissatisfied with the service they were receiving. At the time, the HP&F, then part of the New York and New England Railroad, was losing \$2,000 a year on the rail line between North Manchester and South Manchester.

The Cheneys reduced the passenger fare from fifteen to ten cents, and the special car rate from fifteen to six dollars, and also materially reduced the freight rates. The result was a rapid increase in business, and, by the end of 1879, the road showed a profit of \$4,000.

By 1881, the Cheneys had rebuilt the entire main line, replacing the original light rails of Belgian iron with steel rail and adding a considerable amount of siding. This was not uncommon, as much of the earlier railroad construction in Connecticut had been slipshod. A two-stall locomotive shed, constructed in 1869, was replaced by a three-stall round house and another two-stall locomotive shed, both fed by the same turntable. A car barn and a small station at Cheneyville also were built.

Most of the coal hauled by the railroad was taken to the Cheney mill complex. After unloading from SMRR trains at a coal tipple at the mills, the fuel was carried to the Rogers and Case Paper Mills, the Bunce Paper Mills and other factories in South Manchester. Normally, a ton of coal was consumed in the production of a ton of paper; the role of the railroad as a coal carrier, therefore, was a vital one. Besides the coal that the railroad delivered, SMRR locomotives themselves consumed between 300 and 400 tons of coal a year from 1869 through 1933.

Cheney's "Goats" served for 64 years as a means of transportation, pulling thousands of persons between North and South Manchester. In 1900 alone, 95,099 tickets were sold for seats on coaches of the SMRR, most of them purchased by the 2,675 people that were employed in the Cheney Silk Mills. Twenty-three years later, 136,709 tickets were sold for the trains and by this time, 4,400 people were working at Cheney mills. In some years, the "Goat" covered more than 16,000 miles even though it never left its 2.25 mile main line within the town of Manchester. Until the decline of its use in the early 1930s, the railroad consistently showed an annual net profit between \$4,000 and \$7,000. In December 1882, there were nine north-bound and nine southbound passenger runs daily. In 1911, seven passenger trains went daily in each direction; but within two years, the number had decreased to four in each direction. By the early 1930s, ridership had decreased to about 200 people per day.

Storyteller: Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald, 5/24/74

CLANG, CLANG, CLANG WENT THE TROLLEY

When the Hartford, Manchester and Rockville Tramway (H.M. & R.T. Co.) was built, the tracks on Main Street, south of the center, were only separated from the west sidewalk by a cobblestone gutter. The south terminus was at Hartford Road.

North of the center, the tracks were at the east side of the road and ended at Woodbridge Street without crossing the railroad tracks. From the center, the tracks for Hartford followed the north side of Center Street to Olcott Street then crossed over to the south side and remained there until it connected with the line from Hartford at Burnside.

Later, the tracks on Main Street and Center Street were moved to the middle of the roadways when they were paved.

Before the trolley line was built, there was no road through the woods from Adams Street to Love Lane. When the line was built, under the direction of Maro S. Chapman, it made this cutoff instead of following the old route down Olcott Street then the whole length of Love Lane to its junction with Middle Tpke.

The improvement was so evident that a

new road was built along the north side of the tracks and was known as Chapman Road. It is now a part of Center Street.

When first used, the soft deep sand prevented horses pulling heavy loads, so they used the old route until the new one was heavily gravelled and compacted a few years later.

The Rockville line took off at the fork of Center and Middle Turnpike and proceeded via Hilliard, Buckland, through North Manchester (Depot Square), to Oakland, Talcotville, Dobsonville and finally to Rockville. Transfer tickets were given for making connections between the lines north and south of the railroad at Depot Sq.

Fares within the town were five cents and from there on the Hartford Co. charged another five.

Each car had a two-man crew. The motormen stood on the front and with a small hand lever for reversing power or turning it on or off.

Another hand crank, revolving horizontally, controlled the power and so the speed. Another crank wound up a chain that forced cast-iron brake shoes against the wheel rims. It was locked or released by a pawl and ratchet controlled with the motorman's toes at the floor.

He also had a T-shaped lever standing up from the floor which could be pushed by his knee to cause the cow-catcher to drop onto the tracks to scoop up any animal or drunken man without injury. There was also a warning gong under the floor that was rung by stamping his foot.

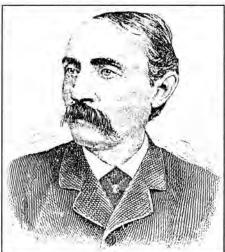
At the end of the line, the conductor used a rope to pull the trolley pole and wheel down off the overhead wire and swing it around to head the car the other way. Since the car was steered by the tracks, it was necessary at every switch for the motorman to dismount with an iron bar

and pry the switch frog over, which sometimes caused some trouble and time loss if there was much snow and ice.

The conductor collected fares when approaching the fare zone boundary and rang each one up on a register by pulling a leather thong along the sides of the car ceil-

ing. The register was hung at the front of the car so all riders could see it working. Perhaps the company used that method of controlling the fare collector's honesty.

For entering a new fare zone, the conductor recorded the meter reading and then turned it back to zero. Burnside Ave. comes quite near the New Haven Road's tracks at Bidwell's Corners. A connecting track was laid across this gap and the steam railroad was electrified from there to



Maro S. Chapman

Rockville by way of Vernon Junction.

Apparently this express interurban service didn't pay because it was disconnected after a short trial.

Storyteller: The Chapman Family, Descendants of Robert Chapman, publ. 1854 and M.K. Adams, 8/3/95

GOOD-BYE BUGGIES, HELLO TROLLEY CARS

It is only fitting that any title that reflects upon Maro S. Chapman bears both buggies and trolleys in its caption.

Chapman, born in East Haddam in 1839, started out in the Manchester Green area as a counterman in the general store at the Green. It is interesting to note that the official Chapman genealogy tells us that the name Chapman is of Saxon origin and means "market man", "monger" or "mer218

chant." Maro was the eighth generation from Robert Chapman, who entered these shores in 1635 as an eighteen-year-old soldier with Lt. Col. Gardiner sent over with nineteen other men from England by Sir Richard Saltonstall to take possession of large tracts of land and make settlements near the mouth of the Connecticut River. Maro Chapman's illustrious forebear. Robert, settled at Say-Brook and ultimately became commissioner of the court and represented the town on forty-three occasions from 1654 through 1680 in the Legislature. (An interesting bit of possibly worthless information: Say-Brook was named after Lord Say who held the original commission and Lord Brook who held the King's seal.)

Maro Chapman served at Manchester Green for three years before the Civil War, then enlisted in Company "C" of the 12th Connecticut Regiment. Upon his return, he engaged in the envelope business with Plimpton Manufacturing Company of Hartford, became Superintendent of the United States Envelope Works, Vice President of Plimpton and President of the Hartford Manila Company.

Chapman, being married to a Woodbridge, Lucy Woodbridge Chapman, and living at Manchester Green, drove his horse and buggy to and from Hartford virtually every day in the 1870s and 1880s. Being a smart business man, he recognized what the railroad had done for Manchester North and he knew that a trolley system could be a dynamic force for growth in Manchester. He also visualized a logical partner for the tramway—an amusement park on the river south of his daily buggy ride.

With some help from friends named Horace Wickham and R.O. Cheney and some serious lobbying of the legislature, Maro Chapman ultimately fulfilled his dream. In 1885, the first trips on the Hartford, Manchester and Rockville Tramway began and very soon the rest of Chapman's dreams were fulfilled. Laurel Park on the dammed-up Hockanum River at the East Hartford line became one of Connecticut's greatest tourist attractions because it was accessible by trolley links to other cities from all directions.

Storyteller: Harry H. Cowles

THE MODEL T . . . IT REALLY RAN

My father bought our first car about 1910 or 1912. It was an Autocar and it wouldn't run. I don't know how much he paid for it, but whatever it was, it was money wasted. It never ran while he owned it. They must have had to tow it to our place from Hartford. Dad finally gave up on it and sold it for very little to a man in Manchester by the name of Gammon.

Mr. Gammon must have been a better mechanic than dad had been able to find, as he repaired the car so that it ran very well!

For several years, dad contented himself driving a horse. Then, in 1919 he bought the first car that really ran. It was a four-door touring car, a Model T Ford and cost three-hundred, sixty-nine dollars and sixty-one cents. It was brand new. This car had no battery or self-starter, but had to be cranked to start. At that time, the self-starter was very new and few cars were equipped with one.

The side lights and tail light burned kerosene and were lighted with a match. It was sometimes a job to light up if the wind was blowing, but once lighted, the wind never blew the light out. They were as dependable as a kerosene-burning lantern. The headlights were electric and were powered by the magneto that also powered the ignition.

It had a planetary type transmission. All gears were always in mesh and low speed and reverse were achieved by a foot-operated braking device. The oil cloth top could be let down to make an open car or if left up, in case of rain or snow, oil cloth curtains could be buttoned on to provide some protection against being splashed with muddy water by the wheels of another car. They also gave some protection from the wind on a winter's day. The curtains had a transparent window of a plastic-like material so you could see. It had no heater, but a few years later one was devised to use heat from the exhaust manifold which helped some.

There were a few cars of other makes at the time. I remember the Maxwell, the Marmon, the Hupmobile, and the PopeHartford but nine cars out of ten on the road were Fords. All of them black. There was no other color at that time.

We had no laws to memorize, or written tests to pass, to obtain a driver's license. I just had to go out with the officer who conducted the examinations and convince him that I probably wouldn't kill anybody the first week, anyway.

Although Dad had bought the car, he never attempted to learn to drive it. He depended on me to chauffer him wherever he wanted to go. Neither did he ever limit, or regulate in any way, my use of the car so I shortly came to regard the car as mine. After Flossie and Bill came home to the farm to live, Flossie started to learn to drive, but I think Bill was afraid to have her learn for fear that she might be hurt in an accident. To my mind, that fear is as invalid as to not allow a child to learn to swim for fear that he might drown. At any rate, Flossie never completed learning.

We had no anti-freeze for the radiator other than alcohol and no pump was used to make the water circulate. Ford relied just on the fact that cold water is heavier than hot water and as the water cooled in the radiator, it moved down to the bottom and was replaced at the top by hot water from the motor.

I remember hearing some car owners complain that some garage man had put salt water in his radiator for an anti-freeze and it had caused a lot of rust. Years later, when Bill Waldron had a car, he tried to save money by filling the radiator with kerosene. It worked and probably didn't injure the motor, but it was dangerous. Kerosene has a high and uncertain boiling point and the vapor from it especially when boiling, is explosive. I didn't dare try it, although Bill used it safely all winter. The next year, he too used alcohol.

Gasoline was gasoline, period. There was no high-test or low-test. No tetraethyl lead was added. It was all just white gasoline. It cost about ten or fifteen cents a gallon and oil, in single quarts, was about twenty cents. The gas station owner bought his oil in forty or fifty gallon drums and pumps it out as he sold it. The gas pump was on the sidewalk, at the curb, and you just parked your car in the street in front of

the pump when you wanted to buy gas. I have even parked in the street while I repaired the car.

Wilbur T. (as in Model T) Little

Whenever something went wrong with the car, I had to try to find the trouble myself. I seldom had money enough to afford to bring it to a garage to be repaired. About that time, Wilbur T. Little bought a farm on Spencer Street right at the end of Hillstown Road, about a half-mile from our farm. Web had been an auto mechanic before he started farming, and I used to go to him for advice in repairing the car.

He was very patient with my interrupting whatever he was doing with my questions. More patient, I think, than his wife was. I remember one time I had trouble repairing something on the car, and in the early evening when I thought Web would be milking his cows, I walked up to tell him what my difficulty was, and to ask him how to go about it. I didn't interfere with his work. In a half hour or less, I thought he had fully explained how to correct the trouble and I went home again to work on the car.

As time went on, I learned more and more about repairing the car until I could recognize every part, nut, bolt, and screw in it and the proper function of each. Soon, my brothers and many of my neighbors were coming to me with their car troubles.

Good Samaritans—Glastonbury

One time, I was coming home from New Haven alone, on a Sunday morning. If it had been Monday morning, I could understand it. But it was Sunday and I was alone. Esther must have been ill or away; I don't remember. I had not had the car very long and I had never worked on it.

I was on Main Street in Glastonbury, just coming down a little hill from where the Smith sisters used to have their home. I'll tell you later how the Smith sisters became famous. Suddenly, a little way down the incline, with no warning, one of my rear wheels came off and rolled past me down the hill. Of course, the car stopped and I got out and went to bring back the wheel.

Two young fellows, near my own age,

had been sitting on a grassy bank in front of their house at the time. When I got back to the car, they were waiting for me. If I liked, they would get their team of horses and pull the car into their yard, off from the street and out of the way. Then I could decide what to do.

After the car was in their yard, they told me that they had quite a few tools and if I

liked, they would help me and we could take the rear end out and try to repair it ourselves. That sounded good to me. It was quite a challenge to find out how things came apart, but we succeeded and got the pieces of the broken axle out.

Sometime during the process, their mother called them in to dinner, and invited me to join them. They were all very kind. After dinner, we went back to our repair job. We needed a new axle and one of the fellows said he knew where he could get it in spite of it being Sunday. Fortunately, I had enough money on me

and gave him what he thought would be enough. In a little while he came back with the new axle.

The shades of night were falling fast when we finally got the car all assembled. We, fortunately, had put the assembly on the correct side so the car didn't go backwards when it should go forward, as was perfectly possible to do. My Good Samaritans refused to accept any pay for their services, which was very fortunate for me, as I had little to offer. But they did suggest that we and their sister all go down to the drug store at South Glastonburuy and eat ice cream at my expense. I did have enough money to cover that cost. I went to see them again perhaps a couple of times. I don't even remember their names now.

One Sunday, Esther Sandell and I went for a ride over the Mohawk Trail in the Ford. I think her sister Helen was with us and perhaps another person, but if so, I have forgotten who. We started a little later in the day than we should have and stopped at many places to look at the view. It was in the fall of the year and the trees were in their last stages of color. Many leaves were falling and in a few

falling and in a few places there were enough of them to be somewhat slippery. It was dark before I was halfway over the trail somewhere and between Lenox and Lee, I had a flat tire, and then remembered I had no car jack with me. I had forgotten to put it back the last time I had used it. The tire wasn't altogether flat, so I kept going, looking for a service station where I could borrow a jack. I not only had no car jack, I only had a few cents in money left.

I had gone only perhaps a mile on that nearly flat tire when I came across a service station still open. I

station still open. I told the attendant my story and he looked at the car and told me a still sadder one. A second tire was flat also. But he helped me out. He repaired both tubes, put in patches where needed in the tires, gave me a bill and told me to send him a check when I got home. I did send him a check, for double the amount of his bill.

It was in the little hours of the morning when we got home.

I had that Ford for many years and when it became worn and dilapidated, Flossie and I painted and reupholstered it so that it looked like new again. I don't remember what eventually became of it. I suppose I got a different car that I liked better and junked the Ford.



... and a flat time was had by all.

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald, 5/10/74

NO SHOCKS, NO SPRINGS, FIVE FLATS . . . A FINE TIME WAS HAD

Today's automobiles are quite different from the first ones O.C. remembers. Called "horseless carriages," they were just that except there were no shafts or thrills for hitching up a horse. The high wheels had solid rubber tires and a lever was used for steering instead of a hand wheel. Some were driven by little steam engines. Even after the design of cars was like the modern ones, there were Stanley Steamers and White Steamers. They were great hill climbers and quiet compared with the first gasoline buggies.

Walter Cheney had a little red "roadster" without any top. Quite sporty. He gave O.C. a ride home from Hartford one night. When O.C. told of that ride the next day, all the other kids were attacked by the greeneyed monster. That was a hair-raising exploit. We may have made top speed of almost 20 miles an hour. The wealthiest men's cars had to be hand-cranked to start. The first "selfstarters" came out on the 1911 Cadillacs but most cars were still cranked by hand.

The springs in the old cars were not too good and there were no shock absorbers. Driving north over Tracy's Hill on South Main Street, O.C. took the thank-you maam too fast. A man in the back seat went up with his head against a bow of the top so hard it about knocked him out.

Tires were a real problem. It was quite a job to get those "clencher" tires off and on again, to stick a patch on the inner tube and then pump it up with a hand and foot pump. You didn't take the wheels off then so you couldn't carry a tire ready-mounted.

One hot day, five of us with all the baggage we could load in and tie on started out for a camp in Groton. We sure were overloaded. Before we reached Willimantic, we had had a puncture and blow-out. We bought two new tubes there, but had three more flats to fix before we got to Groton. We made two stops to cool smoking brakes as the Guliver Fire Department served the Lilliputians. That was a great trip and a fine time was had by all hands.



Storyteller: Jim Knight. This 1916 photo shows Burton L. Knight next to his new black Model T Ford touring car. The cost? \$376.85

Storyteller: Carl E. Johnson, 26 Spruce St. from his diary

CARL'S CAR-PHOBIA-1923

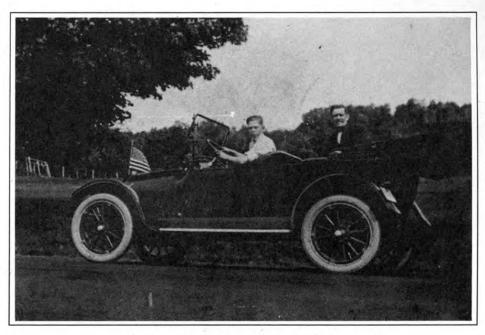
- 2/20/23 Earned \$1,448.69 in 1922.
- 2/24/23 Tax pd. \$16.53—\$11.49 less than in 1921.
- 3/10/23 Went to Hartford this a.m. and looked over the Maxwell, Jewett and Nash cars. Drove the Nash. Almost went through showroom window. Talked it over at home. Decided not to get a new car.
- 3/13/23 Five years ago since I left school... which was a foolish move.
- 3/20/23 Five years ago today since I started to work.
- 3/29/23 Today I am 21 years of age.
- 4/07/23 Dad is interested in a new car.
- 4/12/23 Worked all night on car. Dad and I took generator off and put in new wires. Put it back and it worked fine. Kind of hate to part with the Overland now that I know all about it.
- 4/15/23 Tried out new Studebaker Light 578 this p.m. Rides fine, pretty stiff though.
- 4/21/23 Saturday. Pa and I looked at Chevrolet and Jewett cars.

- 4/22/23 Sunday. Tried Studebaker Light Six. Not very snappy. Looked over Buick cars, too. Overland ran fine today, as it does every time we think about trading it in.
- 4/25/23 Looked over the Buick Six. Offered us \$175 for the Overland.
- 5/23/23 Had argument with Dad at dining table about new car.
- 6/09/23 Car would not go this morning.

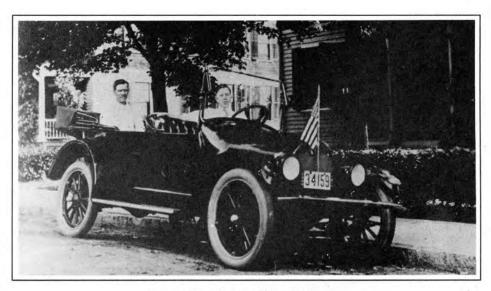
 Thinking about new car, but not willing to give the Overland away.
- 8/19/23 Left on trip today. Had 6 blowouts on the way to Boston.
- 8/26/23 Sunday. Left for home at 8:30/ Reached there at 12:45. No trouble on the way.
- 10/12/23 Talked to Dad about new car. Told me to get one of my own.
- 12/04/23 Dad wanted me to order a Ford 4door sedan.
- 12/13/23 Dad very interested in Jewett Six.
- 12/15/23 Looked over Maxwell sedan and Jewett sedan.
- 12/24/23 Smith came up and we gave him \$50 deposit for Jewett Six and ordered it. A wonderful night out.
- 1/06/24 I went down and got the Jewett car and took it home. All very surprised.



"Yes, I'm happy." Out with Oscar, Emma and Anna for a Sunday drive.



Two hands on the wheel . . . my Dad's just a little worried.



The Jewett and me . . . we're friends now

Storyteller: Doug Johnson, Sr. from The Manchester Herald, 7/23/85

MAIN ST. TO DEPOT SQUARE-35¢

The trolley was replaced by bus and taxi in town in 1938. I became a cab driver in 1948. When my kids were in their infant years, I used to back up my bus driving pay by driving for Manchester City Cab. The building is still there—the gray building opposite Beller's Music on Purnell Place.

Mac Thrall was our boss. Nick Pencheff ran the other cab service in the rear of

Weldon Drug Store.

We drove 12 hours from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. and were paid 60 cents an hour plus tips. You could ride from Main Street, South End to Depot Square North End for 35 cents! Today, the same ride costs you \$2.60—just for the first mile.

All of our fares were dispatched by phone—no radios in those days.

One of our rookie policemen drew a lot of laughs. Police Chief Schendel asked the rookies what the cabs should carry besides our usual equipment. The rookie piped up, "A lot of nickels for the phone." This

response drew laughs for days.

A well-known Manchester businessman used to go on periodic benders. I used to haul him all over town, and once or twice to Boston and New York. The fare was \$50 for round-trips to Boston and New York then.

I used to have to stop at the Garden Restaurant or the Hotel Sheridan bar to get two strong men to help me get him into his house. His wife used to hit the ceiling. We wouldn't see him for months.

We had about three "live ones" in Manchester then. All heavy drinkers and heavy spenders. Ask any cab driver, he'll tell you. The "live ones" are the best tippers. They very seldom "Stiff" you.

I still meet some of my old satisfied customers—usually in church. Their cabbie

days are over.

Storyteller: Doug Johnson, Sr. from The Manchester Herald, 8/11/87

50 YEARS OF CARS

I recently read about Malcom Barlow's trip through the United States and the antique car rally. Their antique Hupmobile brought my memory back to Mr. Barlow's dad. He had a gas and tire station across from Center Park in the '20s and '30s. He sold me my first tires and gasoline in 1938. In those days, we pumped gas by a hand pump with a clock-type dial. Imagine that for self-serve today!

If I had all my cars, from 1938 to the present, in mint shape, I'd be an antique

vehicle millionaire. I kid you not.

I took my driving test in Manchester from Mr. Ash from the Connecticut Motor Vehicles Department. I borrowed a 1930 Whippet for my test in 1938. Ash had me drive from the old police department at Center Park down Main to the terminus and back to the Myrtle Street hill.

Guess what? There were no traffic lights in 1938!

On Myrtle hill, I had to stop, with clutch, hand brake and foot brake. And I had to start without stalling. I was sweating by then. (Automatic shifts were more or less a dream in '38.)

Ash had me hang a left on Linden Street. I had to make a complete 180-degree turn—without using driveways—in two shots. Try it! Back to the Manchester PD and a verbal test. For \$2, I was a brandnew motorist.

I can't give you a blow-by-blow description of all 21 of my old cars. My first was a 1927 Chevy I bought from Linder Carlson of Norman Street for \$35. Jim Mahoney gave me driving lessons in it. The '27 Chevy had 27-inch wheels in front. It felt like you were driving downhill perpetually.

Next, Harry Dresser at Gengras Motors sold me the teen-agers' dream—a Model A Ford. When the kids of that era went parking, we were shy, period. The Model A had a gas feed shut-off under the dash. We'd hit the valve, and lo and behold, five minutes later the Ford stopped. Your young lady was amazed. Then innocent "sparking." Pop

the gas valve and you were on your way.

A quick rundown of the other 19 cars:

I bought a 1933 Ford from Nielsen's for \$135. Speedy V-8 engine. 1935 Chevy, Solimene & Flagg Motors, Manchester. It was my first "hard-top."

When I worked at the aircraft office, I drove a 1936 Buick Roadmaster. A spare tire in each front fender well. This is the type of Buick that General Patton rode around Europe during World War II. Good limo, but a real gas-guzzler during gas rationing and tire conservation.

My next car was a 1937 Dodge that I bought from a

friend on Birch Street. The '37 Dodge was the dog of dogs and the lemon of lemons, but I got 25 miles per gallon! I even ran turpentine in it.

Matt and Maurice Moriarty sold me a darn good 1939 Chevy for \$200, one of my best buys from Matt and Maurice.

Then to wind it up. I drove a '35 Chevy truck, a '50 Olds, a '57 Nash Americar. Finally, I drove a brand-new '55 Plymouth from Moriarty's, my one and only new car. Then a '55 Ford wagon, a '56 Chevy, a '56 Plymouth, and a '62 Rambler. State



Ernie Johnson on a warm day with his "uke".

Theater shoemaker shop had to make a clutch return spring of leather for this lemon. This dog had leather for a spring.

My son Bill at Johnson Signs helped me restore a 1967 Dodge Dart. I call it the Swedish car. Paul Erikson sold it to Jennie Jones, then intern pastor at Emanuel Lutheran Church. Dave Tortenson overhauled the Dart and sold it to Johnson a few years ago.

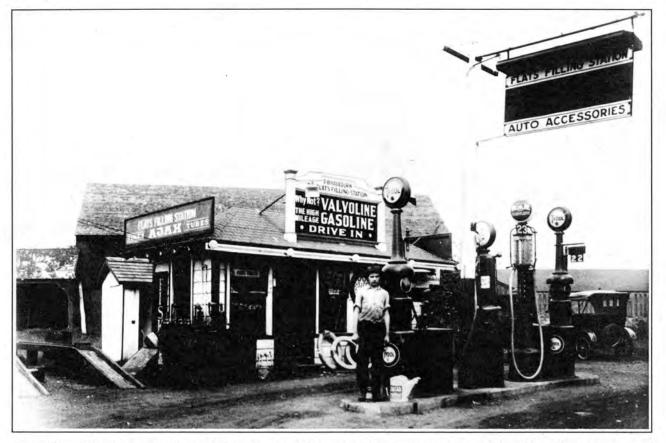
A more recent buy, a 1977 AMC Hornet, is the best, I think, after 50 years of driving. Can I close with—President Reagan is

100 percent right. 55 mph is fast enough for all of us. 40 to 50 mph was plenty fast enough for us.

Drivers, where are you going to that is so important?

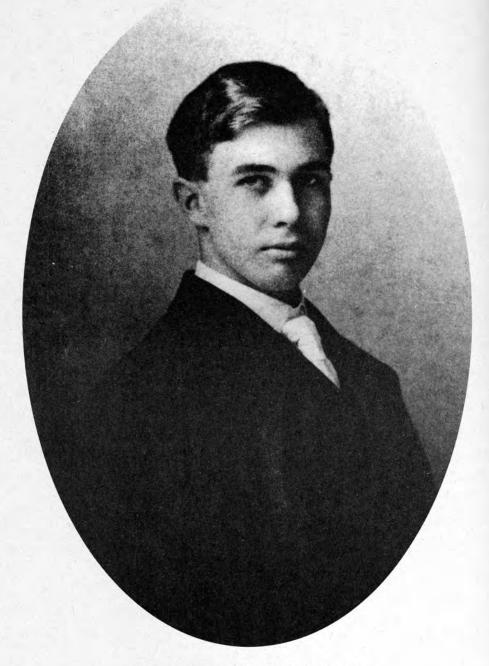


Remember when . . . a side rack on the running board.



Storyteller: 1920 Photo of Hagedorn's "Flats Filling Station", on Tolland Turnpike, just east of Parker Street. Notice the drums of motor oil, hand pumps for gasoline, signs advertising flats fixed, Valvoline, Tydol, Ajax, Fisk tires and auto accessories for sale. And, in left rear of photo, is it a tobacco barn, a shed or a backhouse?

More Stories



Knight Harrison Ferris, a.k.a. "The Old Codger"



THE CODGER'S STORIES

Storyteller: The Old Codger's "Codgitations" from The Manchester Herald

REX. THE RAT DOG

Reading about the brutal Roman emperors staging wild animal fights to entertain people awakens some of O. C.'s memories.

The cellar under the Grant and Rutledge food store, at Main and Maple, was infested with large gray and brown rats. Several large wire traps were always kept set and baited there. The rats were not injured by the traps, but simply prevented from escaping. When there were several in captivity, a messenger was sent to O. C. to bring up his faithful fox terrier pup.

The news spread like wildfire by way of the grapevine. "Rex is going to kill rats." When the spectators were assembled they were by no means all juveniles. There was a set of sequence to be followed.

At first, only Rex was excited and impatient to get on with the job. But his eager efforts to get at them soon had the rats in a frenzy so that they did their best to escape when the door was opened. They never made it far before the pup grabbed them by the neck and put out their fire with one fierce shaking.

The act all hands hoped for was when several rats took off at one time in different directions. Then Rex was really busy and in his greatest glory. He would anchor the first escapee with a quick snap at the neck, go for another to administer the same knockout, and so on, until all were immobile. Then he back-tracked over all of them, giving each a thorough bashing just to be sure.

When all had been accounted for, Rex would lie down, panting and accept the praise and petting of the crowd. Everyone said he was the best rat dog they had ever

He was a good squirrel dog, too. Of course, he couldn't catch them but when they treed up he would bark to call his master with the rifle. He was very intelligent and could be taught easily. When a shot squirrel hit the ground, he was right there to be sure it didn't get away, but he refrained from mauling it as he would a rat.

When a boy and a pup grow up together, they both learn how to understand the other very well. A whisper that would be inaudible to human ears can bring a trained dog to come and crouch along side the kid. A hand resting lightly on his back renders him as immovable as a statue, but a slight push, like pulling a trigger, sends him off like a rocket in pursuit of the game they are watching.

The only thing regrettable about such a companionship is that dogs are so short lived and there must come a time when the boy will suffer a broken heart.

LITTLE O.C., "ENGINEER"

When the South Manchester Railroad was running, passenger service the last trip of the day to North Manchester was early in the evening to meet a train on the highland division of the N.Y., H.H. & H.R.R.

There were very few, if any, passengers on that trip. O. C. could go down to the passenger depot opposite Cheney Hall on Elm Street and Mr. Geer would sell him a ticket (round-trip maybe) for ten cents. Mr. William Hyde, the conductor, would take the ticket and go to the locomotive and speak to Fred Boughton the engineer.

When about time to leave, the crew would climb aboard the cab and let O. C. climb up, too. Jerry Lovett (or Leggett) was the fireman and he let O. C. use his seat

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and pull the rope to ring the bell when a white board appeared beside the track. The bell had to be rung when the train was about to start crossing at Forest Street, Middle Turnpike, Woodland and Hilliard Streets.

The biggest man in Manchester wasn't any larger than O. C. felt then. If O. C. had a dime he didn't mind going a mile to get to the depot. Never knew any other kid to get that favor.

GROWN-UP O. C., TEACHER

When O. C.'s three sons were of high school age, they collected spare parts from the many cars left there. When it seemed the cellar could hold no more, the assembling would start. Several Model T Fords were turned out. Bodies, trunks, hoods, fenders were never salvaged. But the skeletons that were put together would run around in the open lots. They might have touched off a panic if allowed to appear on the streets.

The assembling and testing to prove the job was done was apparently the sole objective. Then the "crate" might be traded off for a pair of roller skates if that happened to be what they wanted at the moment.

Lessons learned from the School Street dump have served the boys very well over the subsequent years.

O. C., SCIENTIST

We caught a copperhead and put him in an empty glass aquarium. We caught small frogs and toads and put them in for him. He paid no attention even when they hopped and crawled all over him. We put our hands and all different colored objects near the glass, but he never noticed them.

But when a poker heated in the stove approached the glass enough to radiate some heat through it, the snake struck dead on the spot. It was not due to the color of the red hot rod. After it had cooled back to a black color, it and another cold rod were alternately pressed against the glass. The cold one never got any response. The warm one seldom failed to induce a strike.

WHAT SONG CAN MEAN ...

Strangely enough, a song breaks the ice. A silly song, it's true, but it works, and that's all that's needed, so we like to use it.

Funny thing about it is, that whenever that song bursts out, it recalls to mind a certain man in Manchester whom we often admired for his many worthy qualities as well as his fine voice. We must have learned it by hearing him sing it. It is:

There was a man in our town,
And he was wondrous wise.
He jumped into a bramble bush,
He jumped into a bramble bush
And scratched out both his eyes,
And scratched out both his eyes.
And when he saw his eyes were out,
With all his might and main,
He jumped into another bush
He jumped into another bush,
And scratched them in again,
and scratched them in again.

Perhaps we heard it when the Tufts College Glee Club came to sing for us at Cheney Hall. Or it may have been sung by the Manchester Male Chorus which was active around the beginning of this century and a little later. The singers among them that readily come to mind were Elmore Watkins, Sam Gordon, Fred Bendell, Ed Taylor, Ben Parker, Noah Ingalls.

Besides the fine entertainment, we owe them much for that silly little song which has been so durable all these years.

ABOUT BLACKSMITHS AND KIND WORDS

Blacksmith shops were very interesting places for us "young fry". There was much to learn besides some language not so desirable. How deftly the smith could hold up the horse's foot while fitting and nailing the shoe! And the choice names he could call a horse that bore down on him heavily!

When anyone wanted to have a horse shod, they had a choice of nearly a dozen blacksmith shops in Manchester. Not so with oxen.

O. C. can remember only one shop that was equipped to handle oxen. That was known as "Murray's" although a man with a different name was operating it just before it was abolished. It was located on the south side of Highland Street about a hundred or more yards east of Gardner Street and opposite a saloon which has since been converted into a dwelling.

There was a heavy frame made of 6×6 timbers in which an ox was trussed up for shoeing. Of course, an ox hoof is cloven and requires a shoe in two pieces instead of one as a horse has.

Most horses were docile enough, but occasionally one would get rambunctious. Then a helper used a short stick with a rope loop through one end. The loop was put around the recalcitrant's upper lip and twisted until he learned that the pain in his lip was directly related to his unruly actions. Horses are very intelligent and soon learn what is best for them, and try to avoid punishment. That's the theory some people use training animals.

O. C. believes there is a better way. It probably takes more time and patience to impress their limited intellect that pleasing their master brings rewards. Just a kind word and a pat seem to be appreciated.

A year-old mare came to O. C. to have if he could "break" her. He didn't try to. He trained her. She had run free without a strap or rope ever touching her. At first, she was frightened. Then she became trusting. And then apparently eager to please her best friend. She never felt a whip or was panicked by harsh shouting.

The parting was hard for O. C. when he was leaving her with other people who he fervently hoped would be kind to her.

WALKING

Methods and volume of transportation have changed so much during just one man's lifetime that it must be difficult or even impossible for the young people today to visualize how it was before and about the beginning of the twentieth century.

Everybody did a lot of walking and did it as a natural function of living like breathing and eating. A "hike" that is considered a feat to be bragged about now, was just a common occurrence then.

There were no automobiles. The majority of fellows didn't have horses. But everyone could take his gal for a walk in the evening, and that was O.K.. Many groups and families took an after-dinner walk on Sundays.

One of O.C.'s uncles wanted to attend a funeral in Hebron on the Burned Hill Road. and asked the boy if he would like to go along for the walk. Sure. It was 14 miles from home to Burned Hill Road.

During the funeral O.C. was out exploring the fields and a cranberry bog. After the services, we walked back to Manchester. The uncle had an additional six-mile roundtrip between our homes.

It was fun then. How many of us could or would do it today?

SWINGING ON BIRCHES.

There was a side hill covered with gray birches just the right age and size for good "swinging," It was three miles from home, but that wasn't any reason why some boys would forego an afternoon's fun.

There's a trick to "swinging" birches and it requires a little practice to have everything end up right. A boy selects a tree that experience has taught him will act the way he expects it to. He climbs up until it starts to bend over. He must judge when he has reached just the one place that will bend enough and not too fast. Then by swinging his body out so that all his weight hangs by his hands he can ride down slowly until his feet touch the ground. When released, the tree will straighten up O.K.

If the tree is too young or small, it will not permit climbing high enough for a ride. If it is too large or old, only the top will bend and leave the would-be rider hanging in mid-air.

A tree of the right size and age will return straight. Older ones do not swing back so well. If a birch is bent low by a heavy load of snow or ice that hangs on for a long time, it may become set and never straighten.

BOOTSTRAPPING IN THE DEPRESSION DAYS

Those people in Manchester who think we are being beset by depression conditions could not have lived here through the years of the early thirties. The town was in real trouble then. It was more apparent because such a large part of the citizenry was dependent directly and indirectly on employment at Cheney Bros., which was the fundamental cause and reason for the town's development here.

When it became necessary to drastically curtail production of goods for which the market had evaporated, and to hastily liquidate obsolete assets to avoid overwhelming deficits, there was no alternative but to reduce the payroll. Many employees with long tenure felt secure in their positions with fair and steady incomes only to be suddenly disemployed with no available openings to turn to.

Eventually, the federal government was able to relieve much distress with such works as the W.P.A. and C.C.C. from which enough wages could be earned to keep the wolf away from many doors. At times the government sent supplies of food, canned vegetables, flour and other staples and even some meat. Those in need went to the welfare department at the municipal building to be certified and get an order slip. When the receipt of a consignment of food stuffs was announced, those holding slips queued at Kittle's market and received some meat. They didn't know what kind of meat or what cut until they unwrapped it at home. Naturally, there were some who complained because they didn't get filet mignon, but most were appreciative of anything that would help to feed the kids.

Some cloth was also sent here and was given out to women who were able and equipped to make clothing for their own families and for others. There was also some ready-made clothing but it was mostly for children.

Many organizations undertook projects to help those in greatest need. The Red Cross and Salvation Army were wonderful. Before the federal government could get its ponderous good works functioning, immediate steps had to be taken to relieve the crises for those most unfortunate. It is such times that disclose the better side of our people. Many cases were known of families sharing what they had with others that had not. Of course, many more cases were never known and intentionally so.

In a remarkably short time, a group of the town's leading citizens realized that most people preferred to earn their way instead of relying on the charity of others. The organized the Manchester Emergency Employment Association, Inc. and soon had a large group of men at work developing Robertson Park at the north end of town. The townspeople formed groups to carry out money raising projects to support the association and meet its payroll. All management and administration services were donated. Work was planned to utilize hand labor and avoid hiring power equipment though a little was donated.

A good public park, play ground and athletic field was built. Since then the southern part of it has been obliterated by the North End redevelopment and new North Main Street highway.

OLD-TIME BATH TIME

It can't be possible for those who are children now to imagine how some of us lived back in the nineteenth century.

When the weather was warm enough, we took a towel and cake of soap and headed for a brook or pond for our weekly Saturday bath. If observably dirty, it might be more often.

In cold weather, it was quite different. There was no sanitary plumbing in the house. It would freeze up. The only heat was from stoves and that only in rooms used most in the day time.

Bedrooms were about the same temperature as outdoors. If the snow was blowing in, we did shut the window. Otherwise, mother agreed it was good for us to have at least one window open a little.

The kitchen range had a tank on one end which was kept full of warm water to be taken out with a tin dipper. When bath time came round, a wooden laundry wash tub was placed near the wood-fired kitchen range. Water was dipped from tank to tub.

The door was locked, the curtains drawn and the scrubbing up (or down) began.

Folks didn't grumble or start riots about such things then. They knew how to be happy then. A lost art now that we have everything.

MAKE-DO

There was always some way to do the things that had to be done. There were no heat controls on the Chinese laundry man's iron. If it got too hot on the stove, a quick plunge against the surface of the water in a pail made it right. The loud hiss also sent little O. C. out the open door as if someone was shooting at him, his older sister has told him.

The laundry man judged the correct heat by holding his iron near his cheek the same as the tinsmiths did with the soldering coppers withdrawn from a charcoal fire pot.

There were no steam irons. If a shirt or collar needed more moisture to iron, well water was sprayed on from the operator's mouth. He always had a cup at hand to replenish the supply.

TRUE LOVE

Recently, there was a picture of the old West Side Boarding House. It stood on the west side of Cooper Street, north of Bank Street, and faced the "Four Acre Lot." Who knows why the name "Four Acres?"

We think the boarding house, run only for silk mill employees, was managed by a Mr. and Mrs. Judd.

The silk mills required more girl employees than there were willing in Manchester. Even the morning and evening trains to the mills from North Manchester and return on the South Manchester Railroad didn't bring enough. It seems that that kind of employment didn't appeal to the local girls.

So Cheney Brothers sent a recruiter up to Canada. He brought back a bevy of French-Canadian girls who were housed at the West Side Boarding House, which was cleared of all others, for their exclusive use.

The local girls didn't like the competition, but the fellows thought it was just fine. And thereby hangs a tale.

A scion of one of the prominent families in town seemed to become somewhat enamoured with one of the Canadian cuties, which did not have unqualified approval. In an attempt to change the course things seemed to be taking, it was arranged for him to be sent away to the West Coast for a long visit.

However, before long, reports began to filter back that the lad had acquired or been acquired by another adorable out there. The lad's older brother went out to bring his brother home. After a longer time than would seem necessary, the two brothers returned to Manchester, but not until the son, who caused the worries, was married and his older brother had married her older sister. That's that.

GOETZ'S OUTSIDE MAN

On the west side of Main Street, at the foot of the hill below St. Bridget's Church, was a house with a large veranda close to the sidewalk. The Frank Goetz family lived here and conducted a bakery in the rear.

John McCarthy, who lived on Pine Hill Street, drove their sales wagon. John was a very friendly man. His hand bell could be heard in the distance so customers were ready when he arrived in front of their homes. No time was lost.

While there were a lot of "And what's my good boy want today?" or "Yes, my good woman," he was not one to waste any time in idle talk and gossip. He covered a large territory in spite of the fact that he had to go back several times to replenish his load.

He had his favorite horse, "Come on, my good Nellie." Everyone was "my good" to "Johnnie the Baker". One of Nellie's hind legs was about twice as large as the other, especially in the lower half. It was said that she had "scratches," but we never knew if that was accident or disease.

Johnnie and Nellie could be seen on the roads late into the night with an oil lantern inside the closed wagon. The trip out to meet Johnnie the Baker was one errand that was never avoided because it usually resulted in "And here's an extra one for my good little man."

THE CRACKER BIN

The big baking company produced all kinds of cookies, cakes, crackers, etc. that were packed in large tin boxes with glass windows in front. They were lined up on store shelves for display. The store man weighed out the quantity each customer desired.

Foods were not put up in standard size packages then. The retailers bought almost everything in bulk and parceled it out as wanted. Not as sanitary as modern methods, but more savings of resources and perhaps less air pollution. Who ever thought of such a thing then?

On the second floor, a row of girls sat at a bench sorting and packing the product. Any cracker or cookie that was broken, bent or off color was tossed into a chute which led down to a bin on the floor below.

Townspeople went there with large bags like the largest now used at supermarkets. A man using a big wooden scoop would fill the bag to overflowing for 10 cents.

You got no choice, but took whatever kind was being produced that day. It might be lunch crackers or oyster crackers, lady fingers or animal crackers, but we always hoped it would be fig newtons.

Any that were not consumed by humans were fed to chickens. Nothing wasted.

HILLSTOWN STORIES

Storyteller: Harry H. Cowles, age 85, a long-time resident of Hillstown Rd., from his book "My Random Memories," published for his family in 1982



Ed. Note: This photo was taken in 1981 or 1982, about the time Harry Cowles published his family book, "My Random Memories." Harry Cowles had that rare ability to put into text the recollections and remembrances of his youth in a totally straight, factual fashion with a twist of humor that you will recognize as you read some of his "memories."

I. DOING THINGS

Going For a Ride

Going for a ride then was a far cry from going somewhere in a heated, closed car today. Then, it was in an open two-board wagon, fully exposed to the north wind, rain, snow, or whatever, protected by only a lap robe and riding behind old Dobbin who moved along the road at perhaps four or five miles an hour.

Going to the Bathhouse

Dan Miller was about the same age as myself and we became close friends. In the winter months on Saturday evenings, we would often take a towel and a change of underwear with us and walk out to Pleasant Street in Manchester where Cheney Brothers maintained a public bath house. There, we would take a hot shower finishing off with a cold shower, for were we not tough, rugged men who could laugh at such a minor discomfort as cold water?

Then we would continue our walk to the Park Theatre, nearly across from where the Mary Cheney Library is now, where we would watch a silent movie through about a two-hour show. I remember episodes in the series of "The Perils of Pauline" starring Pearl White. When silent movies are all you ever have known, they are as fully enjoyable as the talking ones that came later.

After the show, we would walk down to Murphy's Candy Kitchen for a soda or hot chocolate and then walk home. Dan always walked past his home and down Hillstown Road with me, as far as Dixon's Brook, about half way between Dan's home and mine.

Building a Tobacco Barn

Early in 1900, there was a big boom in growing broadleaf tobacco in the Conn-ecticut valley and I used to see daily, many loads of lumber going past the farm from the Manchester Lumber Company to build tobacco sheds in Hillstown, Addison and Glastonbury.

About 1912 or 1913, my father decided to grow tobacco too. We had about two acres of pine and oak timber on the farm that could be used in building a shed. During the winter, my brothers and father cut down the logs and hauled them to a near-by saw mill to be cut into the lumber needed for the



The Cowles Homestead, circa 1905, 209 Hillstown Road

The barns and ice house can barely be seen behind the house, located on the east side of Hillstown Road. The closed wagons seen on the right and left sides of the photo, were used by the Cowles family to peddle meat in Manchester

frame and boards for the siding.

That spring, Louie and some of his carpenter friends built our first tobacco shed. It must have been about nineteen thirteen or fourteen. Louie and his friend, Dean, had the frame up and were ready to raise the rafters, but were one man short. Mr. Dean would "ride the ridge"—that is, while sitting on a roof board, bring the top end of a rafter from each side of the roof together and nail them together there, two feet on center. Louie, on the north side, would sit on the plate and pass a rafter up to Mr. Dean, but they needed a man to pass one up from the south side at the same time so Mr. Dean

could nail them together. My brothers, Charlie and Bob, were both there looking on. and Bob volunteered to be the third man. He climbed up the ladder, sat on the plate. and looked down to take hold of a rafter. When he saw that he was up in the air about sixteen feet, with nothing to hold on to, he was scared to

death that he would fall. All he did was hold onto the plate and yell for Charlie to come and get him down. Charlie was laughing at him. To him, it was a good joke, but after a minute or two, he went up the ladder and helped Bob get down.

After Bob was back on the ground again, Charlie said that he would go up and pass the rafters. He went up, but once up there, he was every bit as afraid of falling as Bob had been. He too couldn't do the job. Louie was a little dubious about letting me try. I must have been about fifteen years old, but I was not afraid of falling. Perhaps it was the undue confidence of early youth, but as he could not go ahead with the job without a man (or boy) in each of three places, he let me go up.

The rafters were a little heavy for me but I could handle them, although not as easily or quickly as an older man could. I wasn't afraid of the height, so I did the job even though I couldn't work as fast as the other two. I was proud of the job I did. I was the baby of the family but I could do a job that my older brothers couldn't.

Kill the Cut Worm!

But to go back to the tobacco business that we were in then. One of the pests that we had to contend with was the cut-worm, that would eat completely through the stem of a plant—thus killing it—in a single night.

The method of control we had at that time was putting out poison bait near the newly set plant. It was an even bet if the worm would eat the poison or the plant. If he ate the plant, the next night he would probably eat the poison, so the control

worked pretty well. We also would walk along each row with a basket of plants and a pail of water, replacing any dead or injured plants.

For poison bait, we used bran that was ordinarily sold as an ingredient in making a home feed for farm animals. We put part of a bag of bran into a barrel, and added

enough Paris Green (arsenate of copper) to make it highly poisonous. Then we dampened it with water, to which some molasses had been added, and either broadcast it by hand before the plants were set, or put a small amount near each plant. I think it was in early June in 1916 when someone mixed some poison bait inside a closed shed and forgot to fasten the door closed. Our pet horse, May, who was seldom confined, got in through the open door and ate some of the poisoned bait. The first anyone knew of it, the horse was violently sick and died before anything could be done for her.



The tobacco shed, many years later.

Cutting Ice

My father had an ice-house that he filled each winter. I remember that Uncle Melvin Hodge used to come from his home in Hopewell, Glastonbury, to help. My father bought the right to cut ice on the pond owned by a Mr. Buckland, in Hillstown, about a mile from our place. Sometimes I used to go to the pond to watch them at

work. They had a "marker", that they used to mark uniform-sized cakes, that merely scratched lines on the surface.

The marker was followed by a horsedrawn plow, which might better have been called a saw—that's practically what it was. With a horse pulling it, led or driven by a man who kept the horse walking on the scratched mark. The man guiding the plow would make a cut several inches deep on the scratched line. If the ice was thick enough, he would plow both ways, but had to be sure that the plowed ice still had thickness enough to safely bear the weight of the horse.

Then the hand saw was brought into operation. This was a saw somewhat similar to the one-man saw for felling trees, but with much larger teeth. With this, one or

two men would saw out cakes of ice which were then moved, with pike poles, to where two men could grab the cake with "tongs" and pull it up onto the ice where a flatbed wagon was waiting to be loaded. Then the cake of ice was slid up a ramp onto the wagon.

When the wagonload of ice was delivered to the ice-house, it was backed up to the doorway which was about three feet wide and about ten or twelve feet high. The ice-house had no floor other than the ground on which it had been built, and which was now covered by several inches of sawdust.

This floor was covered with cakes of ice kept an inch or more apart, to prevent their freezing together. The space between the cakes was filled with sawdust. The entire layer of ice was also covered on top with an inch or so of saw dust. A second layer of ice was put over the first one, until, like a huge layer cake, well-frosted between layers, the ice-house was filled. At the doorway, pieces of board were placed one on top of another as the ice house was filled, to prevent the sawdust from leaking out. When the ice was used, the sawdust was washed off well so that the refrigerator plug wouldn't get plugged.

II. SOME HILLSTOWN PEOPLE

Isobel and Lacy

When I was a small child, one of our neighboring families was a Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hall, and Henry's brother, Justin. They were a Negro family and their home was almost directly across the street from our place. When I was a little tot, I used to say that I had two mammas—Mamma Hall

and Mamma Cowles.

I was quite young when Justin died, and I can't remember how old he was at the time other than the fact that he was no longer a young man.

Henry and Maria Hall were a nice old couple as I remember them. I must have been something of a tribulation to them at times because I was liable to go over there any time of the day, sometimes before I was dressed in the morning. And I wanted to talk to Mr. Hall around his farm, asking all kinds of questions about his crops and why he grew them, and why he didn't grow something else instead. He

always answered patiently, but as I remember now, at times rather vaguely. I'll bet he wished many times that I would just go home.

He didn't live a great number of years after his brother died. perhaps five or six, but probably only two or three. It seems to me that he died about nineteen seven or



Isobel and Lacy Cobb

eight, and I think it was about that time that their niece Isobel Mason was married to Lacy Cobb. I remember that after Henry died, Isobel and Lacy moved in to take care of Maria. That was par for the course for them. Lacy and Isobel were always taking care of somebody.

If anyone in the neighborhood had trouble—was unable to take care of themselves, or if someone had died—that is where you would find Lacy doing things outside and Isobel putting the house in order, or doing the washing or ironing. No one needed to tell her what was needed to be done. She often helped my sister Flossie with canning or doing other things around the house.

Isobel and Lacy had one child, a son Richard, who was about the same age as Flossie's oldest son, Billy. The two boys became playmates and have remained friends all their lives.

Because Billy always called me "Uncle Harry," Dick Cobb also called me Uncle Harry. It used to amuse Isobel to hear him calling me "Uncle" Through the years it has become the accepted thing for us both, and he still addresses me as "Uncle Harry." Certainly Dick has always been a nephew of whom I could be justly proud. He was an outstanding athlete during his school and college years and is now directing athletics in the Manchester school system.

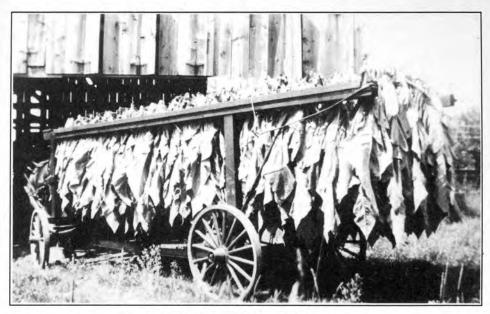
Old Joe Manuel

Joe Manuel was one of the human derelicts that Lacy and Isobel took in when he became too old to take care of himself. He was an ex-slave, freed in his young manhood by Abraham Lincoln. The army of the south had used him to help bury their dead. He seldom talked about what he had been required to do during the war years, but I remember his once telling about one battle ground where he could have walked a long ways, stepping from body to body.

I have no idea how he happened to come here after being freed. I don't believe that he ever learned any trade. He just supported himself as best he could, working for farmers in the vicinity and I never knew him to overindulge in alcohol—if he drank at all.



The Cobb farmhouse on Hillstown Road, site of the present-day Botticello farm stand.



Entering Lacy's barn with a load of tobacco to hang.



"What am I smoking? Tobacco, of course."



"Hang it all, and dry it right."

In the summer months when the soil was fairly warm and dry, if he felt too tired to keep working, he would lie down right where he happened to be, between the rows of crops—his hoe or fork beside him—and go to sleep. When he woke up, he would dust himself off and go back to work.

I remember Isobel telling about one time, while living with the Cobb family, Old Joe told Isobel that he was going to Burnside for some reason. Burnside was about three miles away, and the most direct route was over a dirt road that required crossing a brook on a plank. The previous night had been wet and there were puddles everywhere, so Isobel told Joe to be sure he wore rubbers and keep his feet dry or else he could easily come down with a cold.

Joe walked to Burnside and, on the way back while crossing the brook, had the misfortune to slip and fall in, getting wet all over—except his feet. Somehow his legs from the knees down didn't get into the water. When he got home and Isobel saw him, she said "Whatever happened to you? You're all wet."

"No," Isobel," he replied. "You told me to keep my feet dry and I did. You didn't say anything about the rest of me."

I think old Joe must have been close to or over ninety when he could no longer take care of himself, and Lacy and Isobel took him in and furnished room and board for him, covering the cost themselves. Lacy tried more than once to get the town of Manchester to contribute to his support, without any success. At last, one day Lacy went again to talk to George Waddell, town manager at that time. But this time Lacy asked for nothing from the town. Instead, he told Mr. Waddell, "I just want to tell you that I wouldn't hurt the old man for the world, but early Monday morning, I'm going to bring Mr. Manuel up here to the town hall with a blanket around his shoulders and lunch in a bag and he is going to be your responsibility for a while instead of mine. That's where you're going to find him when you come to your office."

That, at last, got some action and I believe that Lacy was allowed something toward Joe's board. Later, he was put into the town farm where he died at something over one hundred years old.

God Loves Crooked-Legged Bob

Henry Hall lived across the street and a little south of our place. Across the street, and a little north, lived Robert Lee and his sister, Lizzie. He was irreverently known in the neighborhood as "Crooked-Legged Bob" when I was a small boy. Due to an accident when a small child, both of his legs had grown crooked at the knees, making it difficult for him to walk. He was knock-kneed in one leg and bow-legged in the other, but was still able to care for his small farm and make a living for himself and his sister. He used to grow tobacco for a cash crop long before my father started growing it.

I remember father telling about one year when Mr. Lee had grown perhaps two acres of tobacco, and the crop was about ready to harvest, when a thunder storm came up one afternoon and with it, a deluge of hail. Even a little hail is a disaster to a tobacco crop. A few holes in the leaves lowers the value of the crop a lot, and the amount of hail that he had seen rattling around in his door yard would make any crop completely worthless. Poor Bob couldn't get up the courage to go and look at the ruin of his crop. Instead, he walked across the street to our place, hoping, I guess, to find someone to commiserate with him. My father tried to cheer him up and, after a while, induced Bob to go and look at the crop and see how bad it really was. They couldn't find a hole in a leaf! It was unbelievable! The edge of the hail storm was evidently right at his barn, and while hail fell profusely in his yard and in our yard, none fell on the other side of the barn.

Tramps, Bums, Hobos, Peddlers

I don't believe that there can be found today the human flotsam-tramps, hobos and bums-that I remember in my childhood. It is so easy today to get a welfare grant, that nearly everyone has a place of abode, and welfare has become a way of life in some cases and accepted as normal living. It wasn't so easy some seventy-five or one hundred years ago. Then, the town selectmen would help a poor family to survive some particular hardship that they had-such as a fire or sickness. To receive charity carried with it a stigma of shame that was unacceptable to nearly everyone.

Taking Care of Neighbors

Mrs. John B. Spencer (Florence Jenks Spencer, whose name was given to Spencer Street) owned a large, valuable tract of land on the corner of Hillstown Road and Spencer Street. I rented the tillable land a few years on a share-crop basis. Her husband had died several years previously and her only child, a son, Bradford, had moved to New York state.

Mrs. Spencer lived alone. I used to stop in to see her sometimes, to talk about crops, or just to see that she was alright. I think it was in the spring of the year 1928 when I stopped in one to see her one morning, and she came to the door in slippers and a house coat. She said that she had felt ill for at least two days, but had not yet called the doctor. I sent her back to the sofa, where she had been when I rang the bell, while I sent home to get my sister Flossie. When I got home, I told Flossie the story, and that I thought that Mrs. Spencer should not be left alone while she was sick. Of course, Flossie agreed with me, and together we drove back to pick up Mrs. Spencer and bring her home with us.

Flossie installed her in our spare chamber and called her doctor, Dr. D.C.Y. Moore. We also sent a telegram to her son, Bradford, who came immediately from New York. We also wrote to her sister, Mrs. Cooke, in Boston.

The doctor diagnosed her disease as erysipelas and said that he wanted her to have a nurse do twenty-four hour duty. You don't find nurses doing more than eight hours anymore, but at that time, a second bed would be put into the patient's room and the nurse would live right there, taking her meals with the family and staying up half the night with the patient—if necessary. She was supposed to have two hours off in the afternoon.

I called up the Nurses Registry in Hartford and they referred me to a Miss Owens on East Hartford Boulevard. I called her up and made arrangements to pick her up at her home and bring her to our farm.

Mrs. Spencer's sisters, Mrs. Dame and Mrs. Cooke, came to visit her and suggested that she might be better in a hospital, but Dr. Moore negated the idea. He said that he wanted her right where she was, and that is where she stayed for perhaps five weeks. When she was able to dispense with her nurse, she returned home.

Miss Owens was then about twenty-two. One Sunday, when her patient was almost well, I invited her to go to the movies with me and was turned down. She said that she never went to the movies on a Sunday, but a short time before she had told me about a show she had seen one Sunday. I was still raw and smarting from the episode of Esther Sandell (another turndown), and made up my mind that I would not give Miss Owens, or anyone else, the chance to refuse a second time. So, when her nursing services were no longer needed, I paid her off and brought her home without extending any further invitations.

It's Love and Plenty of Turnips . . .

I did not see or hear from Miss Owens again until one summer's day in 1932, when Miss Owens came walking down Hillstown Road to pay us a visit. She told me that their dog had recently died and thought that, as I had a dog on the farm, I might be able to tell her where she could find one. Naturally, at the end of her visit, when she had to leave, I offered to drive her home. During that trip, I invited her to go for a ride the following Sunday. This time, she accepted.

Although we were both about as poor as we could be, we were married in Christ Church Cathedral on Easter Monday, April 17, 1933. I remember Dan Miller commented that at least we would have plenty of turnips to eat.

Grandpa Cowles and the Pitkin Bottle

My father's father, George Riley Cowles, must have been fairly well educated. He died more than ten years before I was born, so I never knew him. My brother George was almost eight years old when Grandpa died, and George could remember him. He said Grandpa was a small man with a long white beard. I don't know where, or how he acquired his expertise in manufacturing woolens, but he was considered an expert; nor do I know how he became skilled in the care and medical treatment of sick horses, but in this too, he was an expert. In those days, a man obtained his knowledge of

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almost any profession by studying as many books on the subject as he could find, or find time fore, and by watching a practicing expert as he plied his trade or profession.

Grandpa had a long-necked bottle, made by the Pitkin Glass Company, that he used to give medicine to sick horses. After Grandpa's death, my father brought Grandpa's medicine dispenser bottle home to our farm, where he used it to give medicine to his own horses. Dad used to leave it on one of the girts in the stable. There it stayed until Flossie and Bill Waldron came home from New Haven to live. Flossie saw the bottle still sitting there where it had sat during our childhood. She was afraid that it might be broken, and put it on one of the shelves in the house cellar where it would be safer. Later, she put it in her china closet, where it now sits in its splendor, in perfect condition.

Elisha Rathburn

Some sixty years ago, we had an elderly man who had failed to accumulate a competence for his old age making his home with us. He was a reliable man of good habits, who could well be accepted into our home. In his younger days, he had kept a livery stable in Winsted, and was used to taking care of horses so that is what my father had him do. His name was Elisha Rathburn.

My father had four or five horses at the time so there was quite a lot to do keeping the stable clean, feeding the horses three times a day, bedding them down at night and so on. When he was not busy around the barn, he would work out in the fields at whatever needed doing. He couldn't sleep well at night and would often lie awake for hours just waiting for the first gray streaks of dawn to show in the window of his room. More than once I have heard him mutter to himself, "Will it ever be morning?" He and I shared one of the rooms and sometimes his tossing and turning would awaken me. But in two minutes, I was asleep again. I remember thinking what fun it would be if I could only lie there so warm and comfortable and stay awake to enjoy it. Now, I often stay awake but it's not the fun I thought it would be. I guess it wasn't for Elisha either.

One night, he woke up and, striking a

match, looked at his watch. "Good", he said to himself. "I can go feed the horses." When he came back from the barn, my father heard him and called out from the bedroom, "What's the matter 'Lish, you sick?"

Elisha said "No, I just fed the horses."

Dad said, "At midnight?"

Elisha had read his watch wrong. Instead of two minutes after four, it was twenty minutes after twelve.

One day, he went to Carl Seaman's ice house on Bidwell Street to get a load of ice for the meat refrigerator. An acquaintance came to tell us that Elisha was at the ice house, in the wagon, and he was sitting on the seat, dead. Father bought a lot for him at West Cemetery and buried him there.

He had not had an easy life. He was hunchback from an injury when he was a baby, which was probably why he never married. He had no one other than us to care for him in his old age. He occasionally had had chest pains, that he sometimes would tell my mother about, before he had the one that was fatal.

He was a nice old man!

Knots and Trees and Stars and Plants

My father was always interested in tying knots and taught me to tie many for various purposes. One, important at that time for a farmer to know, was how to tie a rope around an animal's neck so that it could not become a noose and choke the animal. Another knot was used to tie the end of a heavy rope to the end of a light rope without the danger of the knot slipping. Others were the seaman's chair, the bowline, the timber hitch, clove hitch, sheep shank, etc. When Nancy and Harry were small, I used to sometimes amuse them by doing tricks with a piece of string.

My father also taught me to know the various trees of the forest and to recognize them, even at some distance, to know the species of oak, pine, hickory, maple or other trees that grew locally, and the use to which the wood of each tree was especially adapted. Chestnut made a good fence post as it didn't rot as quickly as oak or maple when partly buried in the ground. Red cedar was even better in this respect. White birch could burn well in the kitchen stove as soon as it was cut down, without being

dried out first. Ash or white oak was stronger than red oak for such things as a set of eveners or a wagon tongue. When well-seasoned, maple is even harder than oak.

He showed me a few of the constellations in the night sky and how to find the North Star from the two pointer stars of the Big Dipper.

He taught me to know many of the edible plants that grow wild in the swamps and open fields such as dandelions, yellow dock, scavish, milkweed, cowslip, watercress, lamb's quarters, nettles and several others, the names of which I can't recall to mind. Some of these are as tasty as spinach. I am especially fond of dandelions and in years gone by, my sister Flossie always dug and froze quite a few pint containers of them while they were still young and delectable. I think she did it mostly because I enjoyed them so much, although she too liked them.

Early Morning With Mother

My brother George was married to Gertrude Louise White on Christmas Day, 1899, a week after his twenty-first birthday. He was working for my father at the time, peddling meat, and was fortunate enough to find a rent in which to start housekeeping, about one hundred yards away on the opposite side of Hillstown Road.

The day's work started earlier in those days. My mother usually had breakfast on the stove shortly after five o'clock in the morning and it was served before six. It was usually fried meat, lamb or pork chops, ham and eggs or steak, with hash browned potatoes a vegetable, and, of course, coffee. At noon or night, we had tea with the meal.

George had his breakfast with his brothers so his wife Gertie didn't need to get up quite so early. By spring, her mornings were somewhat nauseated from "morning sickness."

After mother had done the breakfast dishes, she would make fresh coffee and get some breakfast ready for Gertie. When she had it ready, she would hang a towel out the window. When Gertie saw the towel she would come over and she and mother would have coffee together. Her daughter Frances was born on October 14, 1900.

Two Dogs to Remember

Just before Christmas, 1943, my wife Betty wanted to start raising dogs. She decided on Cocker Spaniel for a breed and bought her first bitch, a parti-colored puppy she named Susie.

Susie was a very good natured dog who was easily trained. Betty taught her not to go off the property or out into the road, and she never did. She was the only dog I ever saw that would chew gum and not swallow it. One of us would first chew the gum to make a wad before giving it to her. When she tired of chewing it, she would put it down in the corner of the room, perhaps to pick it up again later to chew some more.

Betty also bought a red Cocker Spaniel, a male, that she named Buddy. Buddy was a bum. He wanted to roam the neighborhood and tip over garbage cans. After a couple of years, Betty gave him to a tinsmith, named Morrison, who was putting in a new furnace for us. Buddy and Morrison had hair the same shade of red, and the dog adopted the man. Never left him all day while Morrison worked in the basement. I don't know if the color of hair had anything to do with it, but that's the way it was.

GROWING UP IN THE 20S AND 30S

Storyteller: Edward D. Atkinson, age 71 from The Manchester Herald, 7/28/88

Ed. Note: When you read this, you'll note Ed Atkinson's rare ability to capture nostalgic moments on paper. Ed, we miss you.

One of my earliest recollections of Manchester is, as a 6-year-old, watching the town's Centennial parade in 1923. I was fascinated by the huge "silk worm" crawling up Main Street under which there were twenty Cheney workers.

The parade also featured numerous floats with varying themes and I particularly enjoyed the "Toonerville Trolley" (which was in a comic strip in the newspapers in those days), sponsored by the dressing mill of Cheney Bros. where my father worked. Cheney's, known all over the world for its silk products, was the major employer in Manchester before Pratt & Whitney.

My early childhood days were spent in the center area of Manchester, living in my parent's two-family house on Orchard Street, two blocks west of the Center. I attended Lincoln School and I remember the stern, but kindly teachers, particularly Miss Goodrich, Miss Gorman and Miss Orcutt. As was the case in all Manchester schools, we had a dental hygienist who checked and cleaned our teeth. And how could I forget the dreaded "shick" test for diphtheria?

Those were the days of the "open air" school on Main Street (located at the present site of the South United Methodist Church parsonage), attended by children with tuberculosis. About a week before school closed for the summer, we went on a picnic to Coventry Lake.

There were family walks on Sunday afternoons, usually along East Center Street to Manchester Green, as this was the section of town known for its beautiful and expensive homes . . . another favorite walk was to East Cemetery, stopping to read the inscriptions on tombstones of relatives and friends . . . walking along paths in Center Springs Park picking wild strawberries, lady slippers, Indian pipe, and Jack-in-the-Pulpit—wading in the brook and catching pollywogs and bringing them home in glass jars—coming home from the park with shoes having a disagreeable odor from kicking skunk cabbage.

Relaxing Times at Home

I remember my parents sitting on the veranda or porch and having friendly conversations with neighbors and passers-by... playing hide-and-seek and dock-on-rock with neighborhood kids on Orchard Street... Saturday evening baths in a large tub next to the Glenwood coal stove in the kitchen (before we had the pleasure of a bathtub and a coal furnace)... watching the stove and chestnut coal sliding down the chute from the Seaman & Hayes coal truck and into the coal bin in the cellar... my father sifting coal ashes and picking out the unburned pieces... delivery of a load of

cinders by horse and cart for our driveway . . . sitting on a stool in the cellar for a haircut by my father (with occasional yelps from me when the hand clipper pulled some hair).

There was home delivery of milk in bottles and in the winter the cream was frozen one or two inches above the top of the bottle . . . the town horse-drawn, V-shaped wooden plow that cleared sidewalks in front of homes . . . during the fall season accompanying my father to farms in the area to purchase Green Mountain potatoes (with Irish parents, the potato was our family's favorite staple) . . .the old wooden ice box requiring ice every two or three days (I disliked emptying water from the container at the bottom, but enjoyed hopping on L.T. Wood's ice wagon and sucking on pieces of ice).

Our first radio was a Majestic and we enjoyed such programs as Amos and Andy (7:00 to 7:15 p.m. Monday to Friday, right after Lowell Thomas's signoff, "So long, until tomorrow"); Fibber McGee and Molly, Vic and Sade, the Farm Hour from Chicago, Eddie Cantor (the Chase & Sanborn Hour with announcer Jimmy Wallington), Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Ed Wynn (the Fire chief), Red Skelton, Ben Bernie, Manhattan Merry-Go-Round, the Hit Parade, Gabriel Heater, H.V. Kaltenborn, Edward R. Murrow's "Person to Person", "This is Your Life" with Ralph Edwards, and Don Ameche in First Nighter; on Sunday afternoons the radio was tuned in to my father's favorite program, Father Coughlin and his dissertations on social justice.

Playing at the Trolley Barn.

We played in the old trolley-car barn located on the present parking area in back of the Town Hall on Center Street (we pretended to be motormen turning the handle mechanism regulating the speed of the trolley car and tramping on the button to make a clanging noise)...riding with the empty 40-quart milk cans in John Conlon's rig with several other kids to a farm in Coventry (where we had fun jumping in the hay) and then returning with the full cans to his dairy...

On hot summer days, we walked to Globe Hollow, a good two miles from home. Timmy Holloran, local undertaker, would many times drive a few kids to this favorite swimming place . . . playing jackknife on the front lawn with neighborhood kids and talking about our favorite major league baseball teams and players—my favorite was the Gas House Gang of the St. Louis Cardinals, and Pepper Martin.

Crowded Evenings Downtown

The downtown stores stayed open until 9 p.m. on Thursday and Saturday nights. Main Street was usually crowded with people stopping to talk with friends and neighbors. The Salvation Army conducted services at the corner of Main and Birch streets, in front of what was then Woolworth's 5 and 10-cent store . . . begging, but being refused a two-wheel bicycle because my parents said it was too dangerous with so many cars on the road . . . watching semi-pro soccer games at Charter Oak Park between Manchester and Portuguese and Italian teams from the Hartford area (several members of the Manchester team were immigrants from Ireland).

The dandelion blossoms and elderberries we picked along Sullivan Avenue in South Windsor were made into wine (the dandelion wine diluted in warm water was frequently used as a cold remedy)... constructing a homemade miniature golf course in our backyard; using bricks, boards, pipes, tile and my imagination... visits to the old library located at the present site of the Manchester State Bank and reading the then-popular Tarzan books by Edgar Rice Burroughs and tales of the West by Zane Grey.

Skating at Center Springs Park

And there was skating at Center Springs Pond as a 5-year-old on clamp-on skates. How wonderful it was to get shoe skates when I was 7 . . . I remember the winter ice carnival featuring figure skaters Norval Baptie and Gladys Lamb from New York City; Leo Labell, the barrel jumper from Meriden and local skaters Woody and John Wallett and the unforgettable Les Cheney doing his scarf dance on ice . . . and the slam-bang hockey contests between Manchester and teams from the surrounding area. Manchester's stalwarts included such hard-playing stickers as the members

of the May family (Dusty, father, and sons Jackie and George), the Guthrie brothers, the Chambers (Ham and Bob), the Smiths (Earl and Win), the Kelleys (Art and Vin), the Plitts (father Emil and son Norm), and the Samuelson brothers (Dave and Bob).

A Human Fly and the Parades

We watched with bated breath as the "Human Fly" climbed to the top of Manchester's tallest building, the Hotel Sheridan, located on Main Street, opposite the present Mary Cheney Library . . . watching parades on Memorial Day and Armistice Day led by Manchester's finest police (with about 12 or 15 patrolmen under Sam Gordon), and followed by the Salvation Army band (always the most popular), the Flute bands, and the Scottish Bagpipe (Kilties) . . . I remember buying medicines and prescription drugs at Packard's Pharmacy located in the old Odd Fellows Building at the Center . . . remember the "dummy" cop in the middle of the intersection at the Center and the policeman operating the stop and go signal.

On the Fourth of July we rose early to shoot off fireworks—salutes (4-5- and 6-inchers) under tin cans, ladyfingers, blank pistols, devils scraped on the sidewalk, and torpedoes placed on the trolley tracks... joining the crowd at the annual Fourth of July public fireworks display at the old Golf lots, sometimes being caught in a sudden thundershower.

Rides to Go Roller Skating

It was a thrill riding in the "rumble seat" of a Chevrolet or Ford to go roller skating at Lake Compounce, Rau's at Crystal Lake or the Casino at Coventry Lake . . . sitting among corn stalks in my father's garden puffing on handmade cigarettes made of corn silk . . . watching the road construction gang removing the trolley tracks and repaving Center Street and how as youngsters we enjoyed chewing on pieces of tar (supposedly made the teeth whiter).

In the winter time, I remember coasting in my Flexible Flyer down Garden Street, which was blocked off by the police for sliding...listening to records on the Victrola or phonograph with songs sung by John McCormick, Caruso, Harry Lauder, and Rudy Vallee; also recordings of tragic events such as the crash of the dirigible Shenandoah, and the mine entombment and death of Floyd Collins . . . on Sunday afternoons, listening to the band music and testimonies of members of the Salvation Army in their service on the hill southeast of the flagpole in the Center Park.

You could buy fresh fruits and vegetables from Henry Weir's truck; meat and fish from Gibson's meat wagon and bread and pastry from a Rockville bakery truck . . . riding on the trolleys locally in Manchester at 10 cents fare and to Hartford for 20 cents (or we could buy three tokens for 25 cents).

Plane Crash in the Early 30s

We recall the excitement in town sometime in the early 30s when an open cock-pit, single-seater plane crashed in the backyard of a home on Hawthorne Street near West Middle Turnpike, the pilot parachuting safely at another location in Manchester . . . accompanying my father to Hartford in 1931 and watching the giant scoreboard at The Hartford Times as results of a World Series game between Connie Mack's Philadelphia Athletics and the St. Louis Cardinals were recorded mechanically on a diamond-shaped board.

The town was excited when our own "Shuffling Joe McCluskey" finished second in the 3,000 meter steeplechase race at the 1932 Olympics . . . attending Twilight League baseball games at the West Side "Four Acres" on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights between semi-pro teams representing the West Sides, Bluefields, German Americans, Polish-Americans, and rooting for stand-out players like Tommy Sipples, Woody Wallett, Lefty St. John, Gyp Gustafson, Hooks Brennan, Billy Newbauer, Jack Stratton, Ty Holland, Chuckie Smith and May brothers, Jackie and George . . . attending semi-pro fights at the Red Men's Arena located at the present site of Lynch Motors on West Center Street.

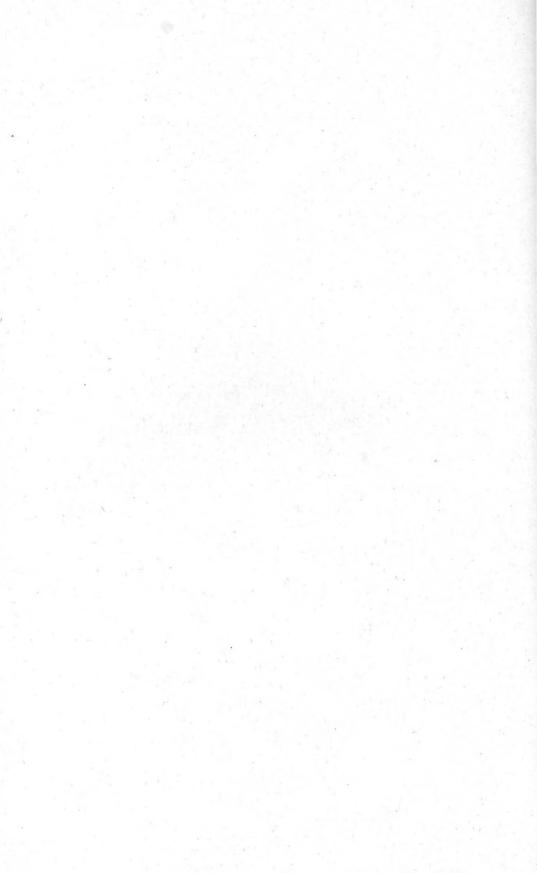
Dancing and Our Graduation

There was square dancing (Eastern style) at the Vernon Grange Hall to "Birdiein-the-Cage" and other routines . . . attending classes in ballroom dancing at Soby's on Farmington Avenue in Hartford (now occupied by Udlof's clothing store). . . on a beautiful day in June 1935, walking down Main Street from the old high school (now the Bennet Apartments) to graduation exercises at the old State Theater (present location of the Full Gospel Church) . . . remembering the day after the 1938 hurricane seeing people all over town chopping and sawing uprooted trees.

These are some of my memories of growing up in Manchester in the 20s and 30s. It was an interesting and enjoyable period in my life, but with war clouds beginning to appear, little did we realize that in less than two years after the end of the 30s, our lives and way of living would be greatly changed upon the country's entry into World War II.



The War Journals





Storyteller: White Griswold 10th Aug., 1776

ORFORD PARISH—1776

A Letter Home

"Fort George, 10th August 1776. Although at a great distance from you yet I have an opportunity which I gladly embrace to let you know something of the circumstances since I came from home, but where and how to begin I am at a loss for the time is short in which I have to write. I have been into Canada as far as the 3 Rivers ninety miles above Quebeck which is 278 miles from this place and on the march we underwent an unknown ordeal, both by fatigue and want of provisions also by the small pox so that we have undergone almost everything but death. But thanks be to God I and my son are in comfortable circumstances at present. Our business for some days past has been making coffins. I counted the graves Saturday night the 10th of August and there were 130 graves and sundry have two bodies in them, and 'tis not more than 30 days since the first was buried there. Although death is so frequent 'tis minded among the greater part of the soldiers no more than among a herd of cattle which makes it the most doleful to behold."



Ed. Note: The next year, according to the Chapter sketches of the DAR, White Griswold was taken prisoner at the battle of Brandywine and died in captivity.

Storyteller: Mrs. Elwood S. Ela from The Manchester Herald, 2/5/41

1864—RETURN FROM THE CIVIL WAR

The recent soldiers' homecomings have brought me back to the memory of another homecoming from a war that seems very distant now. It was a very special event. and the details of it are very vivid to me, since my father was one of the returning soldiers. Our townspeople publicly welcomed the men they had sent to the Civil War, and as they marched through our street, clad in their faded uniforms and carrying torches, they were enthusiastically greeted. Almost all the houses on East Center Street were decorated in some way. Fortunately, our own parlor windows on the front of the house, reaching to the floor, could be illuminated with row after row of small candles. Not content with this, we continued the process upstairs until all of our front windows were lighted. This required a great deal of work, but we were delighted with the results. As father marched with the Boys in Blue, grandfather was to set off rockets and Roman candles when the marchers reached our house. My poor grandfather, how he did dread his part of the program. He was sure the rockets and candles would hit someone or explode before he was ready for them. Father hastened to reassure him, tactfully telling him that he was a man of excellent judgment and would know exactly what to do when the time came. Grandfather continued to look dubious, but when the dreaded evening arrived, his patriotism overcame his apprehension, and we had a spectacular display of fireworks.

As the Boys in Blue approached our house, mother and I, hand in hand, were on the piazza. Grandmother should have been seated in her customary chair but on the contrary, she was running up and down stairs watching candles and fearing they'd set the house on fire.

Grandfather Performs

She missed the parade, but our Eliza "set" in her place, explaining that she had to be on the porch to look after my grandfather, who she felt sure, would set himself on fire. When the parade reached our house, cheers rent the air, one for grandfather, who expressed his thanks with a rocket which behaved properly and was a great success. Bravo, dear grandfather! The next cheer was for my grandmother. Eliza, failing to respond in her behalf, assumed one of her most severe expressions, explaining afterward, that she should think all of those men who had been walking for four years would be glad to "set down" for a while in their rocking chairs." My pretty mother, however, responded to her cheer with a graceful bow. After our exciting evening was over, and our brave boys had disappeared down the street, grandfather, much elated at the success of the fireworks episode, consumed his usual large piece of pie, which was his bedtime custom, and which he evidently believed induced a good night's sleep.

Storyteller: Thomas S. Weaver

THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR AND LT. WARD CHENEY

1900

Lieutenant Ward Cheney, of the Fourth Infantry, U.S.A., died at Imus, in the Philippines, January 7, 1900 of wounds received in a skirmish with the Filipinos, and while he was leading a charge, eight men being with him. He lived but a few hours after he was struck by the fatal bullet. Ward Cheney was as well known in Connecticut as any young man, was the son of Colonel Frank W. Cheney of South Manchester, and was born May 26, 1875. He was the grandson of the Rev. Dr. Horace Bushnell, the distinguished Hartford

divine. He graduated at the Hartford Public High School, class of '92 and was graduated at Yale in '96. He then went abroad for a year, travelling extensively and taking courses of study at Berlin and Heidelberg. Returning home, he joined the editorial staff of the Hartford "Courant" with the intention of devoting himself to the newspaper profession. When the war with Spain broke out in 1898, he enlisted as a private in Company G. First Regiment Connecticut Volunteers. He soon received a commission as second lieutenant and was ordered to Chicago at a recruiting station. While on duty there he was taken seriously ill with typhoid fever, returned home and on his recovery was assigned to duty in the Philippines. He had been promoted during his service in those islands to be First Lieutenant, and expected to be transferred to Cuba.

Ward Cheney was the type of a high minded, whole hearted young New Englander, serious, energetic and thoughtful. His education had singularly equipped him for a man of letters, and his genius was in that direction, but at his country's call he responded and abandoning the profession he had chosen, he elected to serve his country and to devote his life to its best interests. This he did, and although that life of service was short, who shall say that the influence of it upon his university and his country was not far wider and better than he himself had ever dreamed.

Storyteller: Helen Estes from The Manchester Herald, 2/8/67

WARD CHENEY'S FUNERAL

A very sad and deeply felt event on February 14 in 1900 was the funeral of handsome and popular Ward Cheney, a first lieutenant in the Fourth Infantry of the U.S.A., who dies of wounds received in a skirmish in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. The funeral was held in Cheney Hall and organizations were warned not to go in a body because "the building will be hopelessly crowded and

many persons will be compelled to stand around outside in the cold and the mud."

Storyteller: The Manchester Herald, 1918

THREE LOCAL MEN WIN HONORS IN WORLD WAR I

Win Coveted Decorations for Heroism in World WarUpheld Local Traditions With Valiant Service.

In the World War Manchester men often distinguished themselves by their valiant services rendered to their country. The courage and daring of the Manchester men who served overseas will be an inspiration to the youths of this town. Three received distinguished service medals.

A posthumous award was made to Private Joseph Dillworth, Company A. Thirty-ninth Infantry, Fourth Division, "for extraordinary heroism in action near Monfaucon, France, September 26, 1918. After his squad leader had become a casualty, he assumed command and led his men against a machine gun nest, materially assisting in the capture of two guns and prisoners. He was killed in the performance of duty."

Sergeants Herbert Ratenburg and James R. Roberts were signally honored also

Sergeant Ratenburg of the sanitary detachment, 101st Machine Gun Battalion received his award "for extraordinary heroism in action north of Chateau Thierry, France, July 22, 1918. Although wounded in three places by machine gun bullets, he followed the attack and continued his duty. thereby inspiring his comrades." Sergeant Roberts, Company K, Thirty-ninth Infantry, Fourth Division, a regimental fellow of Dillworth, received his award in the same action, "for extraordinary heroism in action near Montfaucon, France, September 26 to 28, 1918. Sergeant Roberts displayed marked courage and self-sacrifice, when, after being wounded in the arm, he refused to leave the battlefield and continued to perform his duties as platoon sergeant until

he was wounded in the knees two days later and had to be carried from the field.

Storyteller: Robert E. Carney from The Manchester Herald, 1/11/38

Ed. Note: No words were edited from this piec. The most chaotic, disorganized, wonderfully spontaneous parade in Manchester's history is given the full treatment here. This was probably the historically greatest night and day of rejoicing where the most austere and revered city fathers went "bonkers". See for yourself.

THE WAR IS OVER!

NOVEMBER 11, 1918

Turn on the lights, Ring the Bells, Tie down the whistles!

At 2:53 o'clock on Monday morning November 11, 1918, 20 years ago today, came the call to Manchester "The Armistice has been signed." The writer received that call, but there having been such a notice received on the Thursday preceding, which proved untrue, further information was asked. "What does the report say?" was the question.

"All Allies who are prisoners are at once to be released." That was all.

This message came over the telephone pay station in the restaurant at that time conducted by James H. Johnston in the Weldon building. Michael Fitzgerald, a policeman on duty near the restaurant, had the key to the restaurant and opened the door so the call could be received.

The crowd that had waited for two nights for this information had just gone home, but there was in the vicinity at the time, in addition to the writer, Captain of Police William R. Campbell, Officers John Crockett and Michael Fitzgerald, John E. Dwyer and James Murphy, the two latter at that time living on North Main Street.

There was no radio to tell the story in those days and the information came over the wires of the Associated Press. Just below the restaurant conducted by Mr. Johnston was the office of the War Bureau of Manchester, which was then located in the north store of the Ferris building which at that time occupied the present site of the Watkins building.

All street lights were turned off at 11 o'clock each night in those days to save coal and power, and there was but one of the three globes on the white way system in the town that was burned until midnight.

The first thing done when the news came was to turn on all three globes of the white way system. Captain Campbell taking this upon himself to dispatch an officer to the switch in the rear of the Cheney building to turn on the lights in the lower part of Main Street, and to the old Park Theater building, to turn on the lights on the upper part of Main Street.

The keys to the War Office had been left with the writer, and while Jack Dwyer driving an automobile with Officer John Crockett as a passenger sped north to turn on the white way system in that part of the town they also brought to William G. Glenney, who was the officer on duty at the north end that night, the information of the signing of armistice and he was assigned to the North Congregational Church, to ring the bell as soon as the whistle of the South Manchester fire department was tied down. Through the north end rode Dwyer and Crockett to the Case mill on Mills Street and to the Bon Ami factory on Hilliard Street with instructions to wait for the sounding of the whistle at the south end before blowing their whistles or sounding the bells.

While this was being done there was activity in the office of the war bureau. A number of telephone numbers had been left with the writer to call in case word of the armistice was received. Pulling two telephones into action at once, he asked central operator to ring numbers Six and Sixty. The numbers had hardly been rung in the homes of the subscribers to these two numbers when, over the wire to the writer, came the answering "Hello."

It seemed to come from both telephones at once. "Is this Mr. Verplanck?" was asked, Mr. Verplanck's number being six, when through the other receiver came the reply, "No, this is Father McGurk," only to be followed at once with a reply from the other phone, "yes, this is Verplanck." The caller, pulling both receivers together then, the two men got the same reply, "This is Carney, the armistice has been signed, get down to the war bureau." Call after call was turned in. There was a certain number told to contact members of the Salvation Army band. Others had to contact members of the Home Guard supposed to do traffic duty. Frank Cheney, Jr. was the person who was to decide upon the need of lights, and William C. Cheney was to convey the official notice to sound the fire alarm, this to be done by L.N. Heebner.

Soon after the telephone calls were sent in those persons called started to arrive at the war bureau. Rev. William J. McGurk was the first of those called to arrive, followed soon after by F.A. Verplanck. Other officers of the bureau arrived in short order, and at 3:15 a.m. Frank Cheney Jr., arrived.

"Do we want to blow the whistle?" he asked. There was a general reply of "Yes."

A telephone which had been kept open, awaiting his arrival was handed to him. On the other end of that telephone was L.N. Heebner, waiting in the boiler room on Forest Street to tie down the whistle.

Mr. Cheney took the telephone and said, "Lewie, turn on the lights all over town and then tie down the whistle." There was a short pause, lights flashed all over town lighting up the streets, and then came the sound of the whistle. As the whistle sounded at the South End the whistles at the north end, and at Case's mill in Highland Park also sounded and the bell in St. James's church was rung. Father McGurk was pulling the rope in this church. Officer William G. Glenney was pulling the bell rope in the North Congregational church and George Miller was sounding the bell in the Center Congregational church. Who rang the bell in the South Methodist Church I do not remember. It was no time when lights appeared in windows all over town and there was a mad rush for the war bureau. They came on foot, bicycle, automobile; youngsters were pushed through the streets in baby carriages while others, half awake, were sitting in their go carts.

mob in the vicinity of Oak, St. James and Main Streets. Someone called for a parade. The Salvation Army marching ahead, was followed by members of the war bureau. A large United States flag with brass eyeholes in it was brought out from somewhere, and the members of the war bureau tied strings, or ropes, through the eyeholes in the flag, tied the other end of the rope around their waists, and with their arms free started to march and make noise with all kinds of devices.

The men in front of the flag, or those carrying it on the side, I do not recall, but the two in the rear, with ropes tied around their waists and through the flag were, on the right, Frank Cheney, Jr., and on the left was Rev. William J. McGurk. Mr. Cheney had his own noise making instruments. They were the tops from two garbage cans which he had gone into the J.W. Hale store and taken. Father McGurk, also provided with a noise making device, was beating together the tops of two wash boilers.

Others fell in line, and the parade started north. Reaching Middle Turnpike the parade came to a stop in order to give those in the rear a chance to catch up.

It was then 4 o'clock. The marchers stood in their places beating what ever kind of noise maker they had until it was noticed that the sun was breaking over the Bolton hills.

The leader of the Salvation Army band saw its appearance, and started his band playing the "Star Spangled Banner" as all broke into song "O say, can you see by the dawn's early light." Every man doffed his hat, while the song was sung. The march was continued to Depot Square and back to Center Springs Park, where the Kaiser was hung in effigy. On the scene in the park appeared a number of young men. They were carrying a banner which read: "Kaiser Bill went up the hill to take a look at France. Kaiser Bill came down the hill with bullets in his pants." In that number of young men were "Biff" Bray, who could play a few notes on a coronet, and William Anderson had a slide trombone, on which he could play a few notes.

The others were carrying combs covered with paper and several times they played a few bars of "Over There." There was another street parade at 8 o'clock in which that "Center band" was given a place in the line of march. This went from the South End to the North End, and back to the Center. A parade of automobiles started at one o'clock in the afternoon. The automobiles were all decorated and after leaving the south end they went to Depot Square, to Buckland on to Wapping, back through Oakland to Manchester Green and Highland Park to the Center.

Everybody seemed to be doing crazy things all during the day and not realizing that they were doing them. F.A. Verplanck at 3:30 in the morning declared school in the Ninth District would be closed for the day, and Frank Cheney telephoned not to bother to get up extra steam in the boilers in Cheney Bros. mills as there was to be no work that day.

All the saloons closed in Manchester making Manchester's celebration a safe and sane one.

The day's program came to a close with a big bonfire on the old golf lot grounds north of East Center street and the "Center Band" with more sign cards with various inscriptions paraded through Main Street into such places as were opened and it was called a day.

WORLD WAR II

Storyteller: Dorothy Sanson Hall from The Manchester Herald, 10/14/83

BEING HOME DURING WORLD WAR II

Growing up in Manchester during World War II was as special as it was frightening. There were bond drives, often in Center Park, with my father as emcee. Sometimes a local combo would provide music and various talented Manchesterites would entertain. There were scrap drives and drives for tin cans. I believe that one needed only to bring a tin can or piece of scrap to be admitted to the State or Circle Theater on a given night.

My father, Jack Sanson, Manager of the State Theatre in the 40s, was always involved in some kind of drive—Jimmy Fund, March of Dimes, Navy Relief. He loved the hoopla and really threw himself into it—literally. One year while inspecting a "wishing well" that was being constructed for a March of Dimes campaign, he stood up underneath it and badly cut the top of his head, which was not too well covered by hair. The next year, while peering into a giant size "milk bottle," he was struck on the same hairless spot by the "bottle cap." My mother and I began to dread the month of January and the March of Dimes drive.

Storyteller: Joe Packard, of 69 Durant Street, as furnished to the Manchester Historical Society, May 1995

NEW GUINEA-1943

"We Three"

We're three buddies from the States Thrown together by the fates, We're one for all and all for one Oh, ain't our army life such fun.

We sleep on cots, live in a tent We never have to pay the rent, This is the truth, we wouldn't lie For everything must be G.I.

We do our washing in a crick
We go on sick call when we're sick,
And often times as not, at mess
We say, "Oh boy, it's meat," I guess.

We've rode on trucks and trains and ships Ye Gods, we've made a thousand trips, We've marched and kicked and crawled and slid You'd hardly believe the things we did.

We've sloshed through rain and mud and slime We're three together all the time, We live with snakes and flies and gnats Who seem as big as alley cats. Our social life is null and void Ole Rhonda says, "Hell is the woid," This really describes our army life White rebel yells, "I want my wife."

And Jungle Joe just says, "Oh, nuts"
"I'd rather be home than live in huts,
Yep, soldiers three are we, it's true
Till home again we are with you.

Storyteller: Sgt. Philip T. Meek
of 106 Hartford Road, Manchester
Recipient of the
American Defense Service Medal,
Asiatic Pacific Campaign Ribbon,
Philippine Liberation w. Bronze Service Star
as told to Milton K. Adams



THE WORLD IS SMALL—LIKE A G.I. SOFTBALL

Sixteen sounds very young to me now, but now, over fifty years later I am proud that I enlisted at that age in 1939 in the 169th Infantry Regiment. It had been the old First Connecticut Militia in early days and had a proud history but I didn't know that when I enlisted. In February 1941, we were called into early service by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and by late February we were at Camp Blanding, Florida for a

year's "training." I was a young corporal in the anti-tank company but I knew my job.

At that time, if you had told me that I would serve in the South Pacific in the New Georgia and Russell Island campaigns, I would have said, "Where is that?" I served in New Guinea in 1944 and 1945 and then in the Philippine Islands campaign in 1945 and I saw some hard action, but I'm here to tell you that I have two strong memories that remain to this day.

The first is the friendships, daily living and existing with men you are proud to rely on. Many of these dear friends are gone. Some died young over there. Many have died since, but putting the feelings about friends, true friends, into words is impossible. For our reunion this summer in Manchester, there are only fourteen left.

The other memory is probably most unusual but it is "being remembered by a Philippine family—for a softball."

It's a very simple story not really a war story because it was after the campaign was over, in more quiet time before we were to invade Japan. The men of my unit played softball in a small Philippine town. One native citizen loved to watch us. He began to speak to me a little. I liked him. He liked me. He invited me to meet his family. They were wonderful people. It was great for a young G.I. sergeant to be part of a family for a little while when I was so far from home.

I had forgotten much of that warm feeling until 1966 when a letter was forwarded to me addressed only as: Mr. Philip T. Meek/Buckland Connecticut/U.S.A. It was dated August 31, 1966 at Alcala, Cagayan, P.I. The letter follows:

Dear Mr. Meek.

I don't know you and you don't know me. We have never met. This letter is written purely out of curiosity.

While exploring our attic the other day, I came across an indoor baseball—duly autographed. It bears the date June 11, 1945 in Baliwag, Bulacon and bears the dedication: "To Pop and household, a family I will never forget," and is signed Philip Thomas Meek.

I showed the ball to my wife and she told me that you gave the ball as a remembrance to her father in Baliwag, Bulacon. She indulged in reminiscences and she narrated how your short stay in Baliwag made their life happier, specifically her father. She says that you were a good friend of her father and that you used to visit them in their home in Baliwag.

If this does not strike a chord of recollection on you part, my wife's name is Poz Villarica and her pop (may he rest in peace! He died in 1957) is Ernesto Villarica. My wife tells me that you were one of the nicest American soldiers they met and that her father was especially fond of you.

For the sake of my father-in-law who was one of the most wonderful guys I knew, I cannot help jotting you these few lines to let you know that my wife still recollects with warmth and nostalgia your short Baliwag sojourn.

If it may interest you, Poz and I are blessed with nine (9) children, the oldest is 16 yrs. and our youngest barely two years old. We have 5 boys and 4 girls. The youngest is a boy and looks like his grandpa Ernesto.

My girl in high school is a member of the indoor baseball team. She wants to play with this ball I found in the attic, but her ma won't let her. Reason: the autograph would be effaced with use!

I hope this letter reaches you in the best of health as well as every member of your family. My wife, Poz, sends her warmest greetings and thanks for making her pop happy during your short stay in Baliwag.

Very sincerely, Judge Mendoza

P.S. I'm not much of a judge—just the municipal judge in this my hometown: Alacala, Cagayan.

I guess that if you asked me what was the greatest thing I got from the war-time service was, I would say "friends." Storyteller: Anthony J. Thibeau excerpted from his army history published for his family

Ed. Note: Tony received a Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart among his citations.



THE ARDENNES, BELGIUM DECEMBER 1944—JANUARY 1945

15 December 1944

The last bath I had was on 31 October, at Camp Shanks in New York, and there just wasn't time or place for a bath, shave and haircut. We had a few rumors that the Company was going to be relieved and sent back to a rest area. This, however, never did materialize.

At this point, our chow was strictly down to three "D" bars. We all thought it was odd that our rations were being cut so drastically and we couldn't get an answer from our squad leader or lieutenant as to why it was.

16 December 1944

Things had been exceptionally quiet for the last few days, as we hadn't been on any patrols. A drizzle had been falling all day long, making the snow very wet, and along toward dusk a heavy fog set in. The following morning, 16 December 1944, at precisely 0530 hours, an artillery and mortar barrage started coming in on us. It was still dark at that hour, but things were pretty well lighted up from the shells' explosions. Shrapnel was hitting all around, some of it singing through the air as it sailed past our position. The ground was actually shaking from the explosions—and so was I!

The first thought that entered my mind was that this was just a small-scale German attack. My buddy and I checked all of our ammunition and grenades and kept an eye out to see if anything was coming our way. The shells kept landing around and in the trees, sending shrapnel down like rain. Thank God we had put a top on our foxhole.

As dawn broke, we could see all the damage the shells were doing to our positions and to the trees. On our left flank a shell made a direct hit on a foxhole and we had two less men. The top didn't help very much. I saw the remains a little later on and it was an awful mess. This barrage kept up 'till almost noon, and then it stopped short. It was then that we could hear machine gun and rifle fire on our left and right flanks. We figured that the sides of us must have been hit by an attack. All we could do was to sweat it out and wait for orders. Either our lieutenant didn't know what was going on, or he wouldn't tell us.

The firing continued all day, and at times it was spasmodic. The night was a long and noisy one, and all the while the firing was going in deeper to our rear. Little did we know that this was the beginning of the "Battle of the Bulge."

The German Plan

It appeared simple: to strike a thinly held line of a green, untried division with an overpowering force. Behind the 99th was the highway to Eupen and Liége; paratroops would drop there in strength. Panzers (tanks) would follow SS troops, hook up with paratroopers, and strike for Liége before the Americans could shift their forces. Once the Germans had control of Liége, they were to speed on through Brussels and on to Antwerp and capture it; then on to Paris, since these were our main supply lines.

Foreign Fire

We got more artillery in our sector at about dawn, along with the continued machine gun firing on our flanks. The sound of a German machine gun firing is quite different from ours. It has a high pitch and a faster rate of firing compared to our low pitch "sluggish-firing" machine guns.

Wait

We spent the next day just sweating it out. The third day found us all weary, nervous and hungry. Just sitting there and listening to what we knew was a large attack on our flanks had us plenty worried.

Orders

Along toward mid-afternoon, just before dusk, our lieutenant came around and told us to take all the ammunition and grenades we could possibly carry and to leave everything else where it was.

March On, Dig In

We started on a march that was long and miserable. At the head of the column was the Battalion Commander, a lieutenant colonel by rank. I still remember him very well. We marched in an open column in the dark through snow and mud for about three hours, until we came halfway up a mountainside. Absolute silence had to be kept while marching. We halted on the mountainside and word was given to dig in for the night. My buddy and I started to dig ourselves a two-man slit trench, just deep enough to get below the surface of the earth to get some protection. Digging in was some job, through the snow, then the frozen ground. The spot we dug through was shale instead of dirt! Boy, what a struggle! No sleep was had by either of us that night.

Move Out

When morning came—drizzle and fog. We started out again in our column through the woods of forest and across the open fields, and back into some woods. We were halfway across an open field when a loud swishing whine passed over me—then the terrific explosion. It was an artillery shell and its shrapnel hit a few lads. One was killed outright. Another caught a piece of shrapnel in the hip. The others were just slight wounds. The Medics helped the lad

that was badly hurt, as much as they could. Morphine helped him for a while. We couldn't take him with us, so he was left behind. Upon reaching the end of the forest, we came to an open plain. A different approach was now in order since we wouldn't have any cover at all. So we formed two open columns which were to be 200 yards apart from each other.

"They're Jerries!"

I was almost at the head of our column. Except for our scouts, I guess I was about first. Anyway, our scouts were out quite a distance in front of us and got so far ahead that we lost sight of them. We came up a slight slope from the stream and in the distance through the fog we could distinguish the outlines of what was a village. Being up forward, I was near this particular lieutenant colonel I spoke about, and according to him, this village was Krinkelt, Belgium (it was actually Murringen, Belgium). It was also supposed to be clear of Germans!! How we "knew" that I never found out. When we got about a hundred vards from the first house and the beginning of a street or lane we could make out the figures of soldiers moving about in the street. At first, they looked like Americans, but we halted and got set anyway-just in case! Someone yelled over from our other column-which was also approaching this village-"they're Jerries!"

It seemed as though everyone started shooting at once. It was all done by instinct and before I realized it, I was putting in a new clip of bullets (a clip holds eight bullets). I was certain of my target-and results. We moved in fast and low and tried to outflank the village by going to the left while the other column went to the right. We didn't get very far, however, for we got in back of a hedgerow and started crawling on our bellies when we were pinned down by a machine gun. God, but the bullets were coming too close to me, so I kept on crawling away to my left and so did the lad next to me. He had a Browning Automatic Rifle called a BAR. We came to a small embankment by a roadway and both spotted a lone German coming up the road. By instinct this lad fired his BAR at the same time I fired my M-1. The German's helmet flew off his head and part of his head went too. The BAR must have fired high because my aim was lower.

Making our way to another hedgerow, we found a hole big enough to crawl through. But to do so I threw away my pack. On the other side of this hedgerow was a garden-or what was left of one-and the rest of my squad was in there. All the while the German machine guns were firing and having results. It was really awful to see the boys get hit and hear them scream and moan—and not to be able to help them. From inside this garden, a hole was cut through the other hedgerow and the lieutenant was the first to run through and across an alleyway to a barn. He was lucky and only got hit in his right leg above the ankle. Next went the squad leader and then the BAR man and two others.

Spared

The machine guns were still firing away and I could hear the Germans calling out names as though they were checking up on each other. There were two lads to my right lying on their bellies, and one of them turned his head to the right and looked back. Just as he did, he saw a German aiming at him with a rifle from a second-story window of the house right near us. He moved quickly just as the shot was fired. The bullet struck him just on the end of the nose, knocking him flat. The other lad saw what happened, fired away and got his man.

A few of our lads in back of us then proceeded to go in and clear the house. They took no prisoners. The lieutenant was calling for more men to cross the alleyway to where he was. One went through OK, then the lieutenant called my name! I froze when I heard it. He yelled again but I couldn't move. The lad beside me got up and ran. But he never made it across. The Germans had moved their machine gun and fired just as this lad ran through. The burst of bullets caught him through the stomach. He screamed, moaned, then passed away. The poor guy-he took my place. My prayers were coming faster now, and I thanked God' for sparing me.

Move Back, Count Heads

Word came from the rear to withdraw and that was good news! It was plain we were beaten and outnumbered, and to keep on trying to break through was a waste of lives and ammunition.

I continued to run in a low, crouched position toward the rear, and some other lads were covering us. The bullets were zipping overhead and this fog was helping us to get away—all of us scared as hell!

After we had moved back far enough the firing stopped, so we reassembled and took count. We were about fifty men short from our Company. The other Companies were hard hit, too.

Cut Off

We now realized more forcefully that we were cut off from our own lines and had to get back there. We were a "supposed" rear guard action to retard the Germans from coming through us at a full blast. Myself, I couldn't understand the strategy. We were tramping along, hanging on to each other so we wouldn't get separated since it was very dark and foggy. All we needed was artillery to fall on us—and it did! A few boys were hurt, and like the rest of those boys hurt, they had to be left behind. There were no supplies or Medics.

We came out of the woods once again and onto a road that was littered with burned-out tanks. A couple of heavy German "Tiger" tanks had a scrap with some of our Sherman tanks. We couldn't tell who had won or when. Down this road a way, we came upon a small village, Wirtzfeld, but there was no trouble this time. On through this village we kept on tramping along, getting more and more tired and weary. I actually think you can walk along and doze at the same time.

Thirty Miles, Three Days, No Food

The sweetest music we had heard in a long time was the startling challenge of an American voice. We had made contact at last, and we were in our lines again! The approximate distance traveled by foot was about thirty miles—a total of three days and two nights, and no food for three days. The town we arrived at was Elsenborn, Belgium! We were pushed back into Belgium by this attack—it was a loss indeed.

Up and At 'Em-Move Out

With about three hours' sleep we were all awakened and told to get ready to move out. All we thought was that we were going back to a rest area to reassemble with new replacements. We had no idea that the situation was so critical. The rain had stopped and the fog was gone. We were all lined up and given more ammunition and three packages of "K" rations. Then another march was started. The road we took led out of Elsenborn and after a few miles we were out in the wilderness again. The sound of planes came to our ears and before we knew it, we were being dived on by two American P-47 Fighter ships. They turned around and came back over us-only this time they were strafing us. We sure scattered fast and furious into the woods and bushes along the roadside. We couldn't figure out why our own planes should strafe us. Our anti-aircraft fired a few rounds in their direction and the planes went away.

It was found out later that these were captured planes and had German pilots in them. The Air Force, however, took measures to prevent anything like that happening again by painting the wing tips a different color every so many days. We had to be on our guard against American-speaking Germans in G.I. uniforms, especially paratroopers. They even had dog tags, drove our jeeps through our lines and used every trick they could possibly think of to cause confusion. We were to ask any strange G.I. we suspected of being a spy questions like "Who won the World Series?" or some other common slang expression used only in the U.S. A lot of these Germans were caught and shot right on the spot.

On Reserve-Reorganize

We were told that we were to be in the reserve portion for a few days. This suited me just fine. At last, a chance to rest, we thought!

Our 99th Infantry Division was in front of us, with the 393rd and 395th Regts. on line, and they were having a rough time with enemy patrols and small-scale attacks thrown at them to create confusion.

The next few days were spent in getting the Battalion organized and waiting for replacements. Our meals were still from cans and packages. However, I had no complaints since it all tasted good. To keep ourselves busy during the day, we worked over our shelters.

Christmas Day-1944

When morning came we found a beautiful clear day, the sun on the snow making it a very pretty sight. However, the pretty scenery wasn't so pretty a short distance away. During the barrage that we had had at night, a shell made a direct hit on a partially open foxhole. The two boys who were in there (Sgt. Mullen and Sgt. Swain) were a mess. Even with a complete roof on their shelter, they couldn't have escaped. I was called to help a Medic load the remains on a litter and carry them to a waiting ambulance which was in as close as it dared to come. Gosh, but that litter was heavy, and the deep snow didn't make it easier.

Clear Skies-The Planes Are Out

Our clear, calm day was again interrupted by a Buzz Bomb passing overhead. It was very low, and its rocket motor was sputtering. I don't remember now exactly whether it crashed a short distance away or not. As I was trudging along with the Medic, I was watching our Air Force Piper Cub airplane which was with us as an artillery spotter. It seemed as though it was just floating along. The German artillery hardly ever fired at this type of plane since that would give away its location. (The spotter in the Piper Cub would radio back the approximate location and our artillery would open up in that direction.) This plane was small and very hard to hit since it could drop or turn very sharply and fly at low altitudes.

The Cub kept floating along, and then suddenly from out of the sun to my rear came a German ME 109 fighter ship with its gun blazing away and diving toward the Cub. The roar of the engine and guns followed like a flash. The Cub wasn't hit and just dropped to a level of about twenty-five feet off the ground. He continued to "hedgehop" toward the rear and safety. Flying weather was again at hand. Before the ME-109 could turn around, the anti-aircraft guns chased him away. The Medic and I deposited our litter in the ambulance and I

took off on a run for my shelter. In a few minutes' time the ME 109 returned to strafe us. He wasn't alone this time; he had another ME 109 with him! I dove into a shelter and stayed there while they strafed back and forth. They moved so fast and low that our anti-aircraft fire couldn't get near them.

As if they were a Godsend, along came two P-51 Mustangs (U.S. planes), and they started after the 109s. It took only a few seconds of diving, twisting and guns blazing before each P-51 had his target lined up and sent the 109s twisting and smoking down to earth. One pilot managed to bail out but it didn't do him any good. As he was floating down to earth, our machine guns opened up on him, and we could see the tracers just about to cut him in two. His swaying stopped.

Our troops were really mad and anything went. We were giving the Germans a taste of their own medicine. This occurred a few days after the "Malmédy Massacre" in which the Germans lined up a hundred or more U.S. boys in an open field and just shot them with machine guns in cold blood. The snow-covered field in Malmédy, Belgium, was red with blood.

Christmas Turkey

Things had quieted down now and word came to us about noontime that there would be a hot turkey meal for us in a short while. The same routine was to be followed—a few men going to eat at one time. The kitchen had brought up the food in their Thermos jugs and were set up in a small wooded section to our rear. A hot turkey meal sure sounded good.

It came my turn for chow, and I went hungrily after hearing reports from the boys who had already eaten. I got just about a hundred feet from that nice turkey meal when I heard that familiar whistling sound through the air. I dove in the snow. A small barrage . . . back to our foxholes. There went my turkey!

New Year's 1945

The days following Christmas were quiet. I did get a few letters from my dear wife whom I missed terribly.

Happy New Year-Seven Hour Barrage

We managed to get a few hours sleep, and the morning of the first of January was a hellish one, too. Promptly at 0530 a terrible blast shook us up from a sound sleep and I suddenly realized it was a close hit. When things quieted down I saw where the shell had landed. It wasn't more than twenty feet away. More shells, and more shells. Machine guns started to chatter off to our left flank and we were curious as to what was happening. This barrage lasted a solid seven hours, and I never realized that there were so many shells in one area. The snow all around us was full of holes and blackened by burned powder and dirt. We were all keeping alert for trouble. It was thought that an attack was taking place.

The Germans had a very effective artillery piece which was an 88-millimeter bore (about three inches). The shell with its projectile was about thirty-eight inches long. The barrel of the piece was close to thirty feet long, giving it an extremely long range and high velocity characteristic. Also it was very accurate. The shells traveled so fast that they didn't have the familiar warning sound like a mortar shell or other artillery. It just came in on you like a "swish" and exploded. These were very bad news for us. They were commonly called "88s."

A lot of 88s had fallen this morning, and now that things had quieted down, we had to keep an eye out for activity. Even in a reserve position like we were, we had to be cautious in the event that patrols sneaked

through the front lines.

Prep Talk 2 January 1945

About 2230 that same night our new squad leader, Harold Schaefer, made his way to our shelter and gave us some news. He told us to get prepared for an attack we were going to make at 0530 the next morning. The attack was going to be a large-scale affair with lots of artillery fire to cover our advance. The work "attack" actually had my heart beating double time. Anyway, it seemed that way because I was scared and I don't mind admitting it. Any person who went into an attack and said he wasn't scared should be called either a liar or a "psycho" case.

3 January 1945

The awful hour of 0530 came around too quickly and we discovered that there was a blizzard in progress. My squad was assembling and moving out to the forward line. At this hour, it was still very dark despite the snow, and our visibility wasn't very good. We got our last few instructions. which were briefly that we had to follow a barrage of artillery that would land in front of us and move forward until it landed a few in the wooded section into which we were going, then stop. We were to go into the woods, clear out the few Germans that were there and set up a new line of defense about 200 yards in. After this took place, new troops would take our place and we would go back into reserve. It sounded very easy.

0655 Advance Line

... burrowed in the snow. Lt. Jackson: "at exactly 0830 the artillery would open. The artillery would keep the Germans pinned down and we would just walk in and blast them apart."

It didn't work. At exactly 0830, the first shell came in from behind and smashed into the snow close to us.

Take No Prisoners

Somehow or other I always seemed to be up in the front point of a column, and I was there again today. The artillery stopped their shells and we entered the woods. We were on our own now! We found some foxholes with Germans in them, and our M-1s hit their marks because we were told not to take any prisoners. You have no feelings at a time like this. We threw hand grenades into some holes but they were already empty. I think a lot of these Germans would have been only too glad to surrender.

I had fallen back a little for a breather and the lieutenant and some other lads went on ahead. There was a lot of shooting and yelling and when I got there the lieutenant had some Germans herded together in a small group. He didn't have the guts to wipe them out. He took them prisoners. There was a small clearing in which the lieutenant had his prisoners, and some other boys brought in some prisoners too. Anyway, we now had eleven German sol-

diers and one German officer to take care of. The soldiers were very much older in age as compared to others we had met. They all had their hands on their heads with their helmets off.

The shouting had ceased and it looked like we were with a victory. That's what we thought! Then the unexpected happened! The German artillery and mortars started to come in on us. Shells were landing in back of us and to our sides. We were all hugging the snow-covered ground as best we could, and praying for the shells to stop. Some lads had been hit by shrapnel and they were screaming and moaning. I couldn't see where they were.

Hit!

I got up from my position and went forward about twenty-five feet to where my squad leader was. I was just squatting down when that shrill whistle of a mortar shell was heard. It must have been very close to me because when it exploded it knocked me over. That is, the concussion did. I started to straighten up and was in sitting position when a second shell hit a tree right near me. Naturally it was a "tree burst" and the shrapnel came down like rain. The concussion was a feeling of being compressed into a small package. At the same split second I felt something, like someone hitting me with a full swing of a baseball bat across my right leg on the thigh. Then, that spot started burning and paining me something terrific. I looked down in a daze and saw a jagged hole with blood on my trousers. My nose was bleeding a little too, and I slowly regained my senses to realize I had been hit.

Casualties

I couldn't move for a time (which seemed like hours but was only for a few seconds, I guess). I looked over to my left and saw a buddy with a gash across his face from shrapnel. Another had his right thumb almost completely off. There was another who was bleeding like a stuck pig. A piece of shrapnel had hit him through the kidney area. The screams and cries were terrible. I don't know if I yelled or not—if I did, it was purely involuntary.

There wasn't anything that could be

done for us, since the Medics were not able to catch up to us after they stopped to help some lads. We put on some of their bandages for the boys to stop the flow of blood and give them their sulfa tablets. I was so busy praying and trying to keep my senses that I didn't realize the shelling had stopped. I put my belt around my leg to stop the flow of blood and took my sulfa tablets which were in my first aid packet. The snow all around us was red with blood. My leg was hurting me a great deal but I managed to hobble along.

Alone

The lieutenant came around to see how badly we were hurt and check on the other boys. He then gave the wounded men an order to go back to our lines by the way we had come. Everything was still quiet and I started to go to the rear. All I wanted to do now was to get out of that section of woods and back to our lines. I came to the edge of the woods and looked out across "no man's land" to where our lines started. They seemed miles away, and I had to tramp all the way through the snow too. I still had my M-1 with me and I took off my bayonet to make it easier to maneuver.

I went along out of the woods about fifteen feet when suddenly a machine gun opened up on me. His aim was bad and the bullets kicked up the snow in front of me. I dove into the snow and tried to decide what to do. I couldn't go forward very well for I'd be like a clay pigeon target, so I tried to locate where the gun was. There was another burst of machine gun and the bullets passed over me. Their passing by was a familiar snapping, or more a cracking, sound as they split the air. I got an approximate idea of where the gun could be and took aim in that direction. I fired four shots and then got up and ran like mad and prayed, back into the woods. I dove down again when I hit the woods, just in time, as the machine gun fired again but its bullets spattered the trees overhead.

I was now back in the woods and had to get back to my Company. It was my only chance. My leg was just about killing me now. I was making my way in among the trees when I came upon a German tank. It was in a cleared section in what looked like

a wood road. I must have been off my course a little. Well, anyway, standing next to the tank were six or seven German soldiers. I was confused at first because they were wearing U.S. army truck drivers' short coats. They were more surprised than I was. It would have been suicide for me to start firing first since I didn't have a submachine gun, so I dove through some bushes and hugged the ground. I tore a grenade loose and had it ready to throw. I said to myself, "If they come after me, I'll get some of them too." But they didn't come after me. I think I had them confused. They must have thought I was a first scout of another column coming through.

I crawled back through some of the trees, and with the help of God, I made contact with one of our lads—I was lucky I wasn't shot by one of our own men! I asked where the lieutenant was because I had to tell him we were cut off from behind. A retreat through this section was out of the question. I found him and he proceeded to give me hell for not going back to our lines. Then I told him what had happened. It was then that he, too, realized that the number of Germans in this area was very much underestimated.

Top Speed

The lieutenant got all the men together and we started back at top speed, taking the prisoners with us. A buddy of mine was helping me along and I was having a tough time. Some of our boys were covering us from the rear by firing to their rear as they ran. I felt sorry for the boys we left lying back there. The lieutenant called for artillery fire and they responded by landing a few shells right where we had been. We were moving so fast, I didn't think I would make it. But, thanks to this lad, I did make it. He dragged me almost all the way!

When we made contact with our lines, I collapsed and went to pieces. I guess it was the shock that had just caught up with me. I had never expected to get back and I thanked God with all my heart. The Medics gave me a shot of morphine and it helped a lot. It calmed me down and dulled the pain. A few other lads and myself were put on litters, loaded onto a jeep and brought back to the Battalion Aid Station. It was a most

wonderful feeling to know that I was going farther and farther away from the front lines. It was a feeling that actually cannot be appreciated by anyone who hasn't had a similar experience at one time or another.

Hospitals

My wound . . . looked at it . . . dressed it. Next hospital—cut off my clothing. Clean, warm buildings. Food. Real steak, potatoes, vegetables . . . coffee! Hot water, wash cloth, towel, razor, shaving cream. Full growth of beard since October . . . removal a project in itself.

Next day: cleaned up, rested somewhat. V-mail to my wife to beat the War Dept. telegram.

No. The telegram came first . . . a shock to my wife and family.

It's over.

Storyteller: Richard Bruce Watkins, Capt. USMC Ret. Recipient of 2 Silver Stars, Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation for Peleliu

THE SOUTH PACIFIC from "Brothers in Battle"

Ed. Note: "Hero is a much over-worked word in newspapers and media. It has lost much of its true meaning nowadays, but I have encountered and read cover-to-cover the shattering experiences of one of Manchester's true heroes, Richard Bruce Watkins, Capt. USMC Ret. His book, "Brothers in Battle", written for his family, has not received much attention because it's a personal work, with no advertising, no press agent-only word-of-mouth from those, like myself, who have read it. I recommend it to those who believe there are still men who believe in honor and duty and supporting to the death, their "Brothers in Battle." Bruce has reluctantly agreed that I can excerpt some moments from his book.

The Hand of Bucky Buckner

About midnight I heard a call for help about five yards to my left front. Even with good fire discipline, it was difficult to move at night without getting shot by our own men. I yelled ahead and repeated the password several times while crawling forward. When I got there, I discovered that it was PFC Bucky Buckner, and he had taken a fatal wound in the abdomen from a mortar fragment. By the light of almost constant flares. I could see there was little hope. His stomach area was in ruins. I called for a corpsman and one of those brave Navy men assigned to us crawled up to help. He, too, knew it was useless, but since Bucky was conscious and in considerable pain, he got out a morphine syrette and gave him a shot. To me, he signaled that the best we could do was to make Bucky comfortable, as there was no way to get him out. He left me with more syrettes and crawled off to help the others.

Left alone, Bucky and I talked as I lay beside him in the foxhole, wincing as every new mortar barrage came in. He was very



young, about twenty, but he had a wife and baby, and naturally, they were uppermost in his mind. As his pain got worse, I gave him more morphine. For perhaps two hours, he drifted in and out of consciousness.

I left him once to go back to the hole I shared with Monty and PFC Robillard to be sure that everything was as organized as it

could be since we had no working radio. It was obvious we could do nothing until daylight.

Back with Bucky, I tried to catch his fading words and give him what comfort I could. He wanted his wife to know how much he loved her. Finally, he was still. I just hoped that my hand on his was a little comfort toward the last. He was gone by 3:00 a.m., and I crawled back to Monty.

Kamikaze Run

There then occurred one of those isolated little incidents that live in a combat infantryman's memory. Just to my left was PFC Darden. On the other side of him was Sgt. John Kincaid. As we started up the slope, a Jap officer dashed out of a cave 50 feet in front of us. With his sabre raised, and coming downhill at a 45 degree angle, he headed for the startled PFC Darden, who raised his M-1 rifle and began to fire steadily at the Japanese. John and I thought he had the situation well in hand and neither of us fired. The Jap, however, still kept coming, although we could see Darden's bullets strike him. He finally made one final lunge, just reaching the unbelieving Marine's boot with the tip of his sabre as the clip ejected from the M-1 signaling the last of eight rounds.

The Artillery

About this time, I heard shouts and looking up saw a very large object coming through the air. It looked like a 50-gallon oil drum falling end-over-end. It moved relatively slowly and the men scattered in all directions. When it landed with a deafening explosion, it opened a 20-foot crater. This proved to be a giant mortar. The Japs had been waiting for us to come within range, which appeared to be about 1,000 yards.

K Company of the Third Battalion was on our left with Lt. Bull Sellers in charge. He and I both got our radios to artillery. In our excitement, we held down the send switch and they could not answer. Eventually we let up and the voice of the artillery officer came over the radio saying, "If y'all will keep your damn finger off that butterfly and one of you give me the coordinates, we'll fix that sucker for y'all." Somehow, by hasty agreement, I gave the

necessary figures as a second round had been fired and we could plainly see it rising slowly toward us.

I had hardly spoken when the thump of a 105 mm howitzer was heard and a smoke round went whistling overhead. It was slightly short of the target and I gave them "Up 50 yards, fire for effect." Within seconds every gun in the battery fired and the Japs never got off a third round. Needless to say, we loved our buddies in artillery.

The Corpsmen

Part of the Marines' Code was to never let your buddy down. Wounded must be rescued. In this role, the Navy Corpsmen were fantastic. I never saw a Corpsman refuse to go to a Marine's aid, no matter how exposed the position, even if the wound was assumed to be fatal. No Marine could write about the war without praising the Navy Corpsmen. These men, who had joined the Navy expecting at least warm chow and a good bed, got stuck with dirt, mud, blood, and Marines. They became, however, one of us, much admired for their unceasing courage in coming to our aid. Their casualty rate was just as great as ours.

One such incident occurred on this ridge. One of E Company's men had reached an exposed position behind a rock about 75feet in advance of the Company and somewhat downhill. Kneeling behind a rock, he was firing his BAR when he got hit, fell back, and lay still. Suddenly, his leg moved and his knee flexed up and down. A corpsman dashed out immediately and he, too, was hit just as he reached the downed Marine. Seeing this, two more Marines dashed out and began to drag the two wounded men in. Another two dashed out to help. Sadly, by the time all were back within our lines, there were two dead, two wounded, and only one unscathed. Such was the loyalty of one Marine for another.

The Ammo Dump

We began hesitantly to move down the back side of Wana Ridge where we had been stalled for the last ten days. About thirty feet above the valley, E Company strung out along a ledge and I sent a small patrol down to the valley floor to investigate. I watched the patrol of four, led by

PFC Castro, moving along below us. They discovered a cave and spotting some Japs within they opened up on them. The last I saw of them they were standing upright shooting into the cave and then the world turned upside down. Apparently their bullets had struck a large ammunition dump and a fifty-foot section of the ledge rose up as if in slow motion. Rocks, trees, men, and equipment rose a good hundred feet in the air. I could see bodies turning cartwheels and rocks as big as pianos. As before noted, I never heard the sound. We had been taught that materials thrown by explosion moved relatively slowly and to look up and dodge them as they came down. Those of us not immediately in the center of the explosion were doing just that. I thought the last rock had landed and brought my eyes to horizontal only to be struck on the top of the helmet with a grapefruit-sized rock. It drove me to my knees and put a crease in my helmet, but I got up unhurt.

We had about six killed and another ten wounded. We struggled to get the Company reorganized and take care of the casualties. About an hour later, we moved across the valley to the next hill unopposed. About halfway up the hill an intense pain hit right behind my right ear. It felt like someone had driven an ice pick into my skull. It actually made me stagger and a couple of Marines helped me to the top. A corpsman joined me and offered some codeine. I accepted, but knew I was losing it fast. It was almost dusk by now, so I told Sgt. Ray, who was beside me, to tell Robbie to take over; then I lay down and was soon out. I awoke at dawn with all my faculties intact and took over again. Ray told me they had debated evacuating me but held off for morning. Apparently my head was harder than that rock.

Hold the Hill

About mid-afternoon, First Platoon was relieved by the Second Platoon, F Company, who were to hold this ridge while we attacked the next. We were shown our objective, a hill about 200-feet high, also devoid of vegetation. I was told that First Platoon had the job and they left the strategy up to me. Consulting with Monty, I decided to take the First and Second squads

straight up the front while Monty took the Third up the left flank, thus hoping to give the Japs a more spread-out target.

How many times Marines have been told to "take that hill" I do not know. But this is a classic and necessary maneuver at some time in any infantry battle. The high ground dominates the battle scene and must be taken. That hill looked tough, and if I had been frightened before, I was thoroughly frightened now. I could only imagine the hail of fire we would receive climbing that hill. However, I also knew that I had only to lead and every man in the First Platoon would be right behind me.

So up the hill we scrambled. As my head came over a rocky outcrop, I found myself staring two Japs and a Nambu machine gun square in the face. I dropped back, pulled a grenade pin, counted 1001-1002 and lobbed it over the edge. It seemed to take forever to travel through the air, and I watched as it struck probably the only remaining sapling within ten yards and then angled back to my right. I could only hug the ground, cursing my stupidity and praying no Marines would be hit. Fortunately, they weren't. Fearing a repeat, I scrambled over the outcrop vowing to kill the Japs with my hands if necessary, only to find they were both dead beside their gun.

Feeling stupid, I scrambled my way to the top where the two squads filled in on both sides. We began firing on the higher end of the ridge which jutted up like a small tower some 12-feet above the main ridge. Monty's squad linked up with us and we counted heads. We had lost four men coming up. Among them was Cpl. Joe Cook, one of the finest scouts in the Division, a veteran of both Guadalcanal and Cape Glouster. We were to miss him terribly.

Sgt. Kincaid advanced with me to the up-jutting end. As I gingerly crawled to the top, he joined me. Little did we know the kind of night we were to have together. The platoon was well strung out along the ridge. I gave the word to dig in and set up the machine guns and mortars to cover both the main front and the high position where John and I were doing our best to pile rocks around us. The top of this peak was perhaps five-feet in diameter and was already

drawing sniper fire. The slope down from us and away from the platoon was steep, but not too steep for a determined charge. If it succeeded, the Japs could roll up our flank and fire down on the whole platoon. I decided to stay and asked John what he wanted to do. In his taciturn way, he allowed he was going to stay if I did. I'm sure he also thought correctly that I would need help. We were to save each other's lives many times that night.

As darkness fell, it was relatively quiet for a while. I remember shouting across the valley between us to Lt. Decker. "Deck" was a good friend, a died-in-the-wool Texan, who could tell the tallest stories you ever heard. His answer was cheery and allowed as how the Japs were gonna catch hell tonight. An hour later, he was dead. A Jap grenade had exploded under his armpit.

The action began when we heard the Japs milling about below us. They seemed to be working themselves up to fever pitch, yelling and screaming and possibly drinking for courage. I had our mortar section send up flares periodically. Suddenly they came at John and me with a rush. John had a Thompson sub-machine gun and I had Bucky's M-1. We both had 45s and had been stockpiling grenades. Time after time they came up that slope, and time after time we sent them back with clip after clip of ammo and grenade after grenade. I know we lost track of time as we had only a few minutes breathing spell between rushes. I called our mortars down close so one time that a round went off within five feet of us. Flares were constant as we tried to see what we were shooting at.

In all these attempts, we had managed to stop them no closer than ten feet from us. Finally, at about 3:00 a.m., they made a climactic effort. The leading officer, sabre overhead, reached the top. John had him dead-to-rights when the new clip he had just inserted in his Tommy gun fell out. I can still see it falling slowly to the rocks as the Jap took a hefty swing with his sabre. John threw up the Tommy and the sabre glanced off the stock, striking the barrel of my M-1. The Jap came around with a second swing as the clip flew out of my M-1, indicating the last round.

For some reason, John's 45 was still in

its holster on the rock rim. He threw it in the Jap's face. I can still hear him say, "You won't get me, you son of a bitch!" It put the Jap off balance and gave me the necessary second to bring up my .45 and start pumping those heavy slugs into him and those behind him. As the attack subsided, I was still squeezing the trigger of an empty gun, all seven rounds fired. John had recovered his Tommy by this time and was pouring it on.

Fearing the next attack would be fiercer, I called down to Monty to cover the peak with a machine gun in case John and I went down. It would have been disaster to let them hold it. However, this was their last effort as they began to resort to mortar fire. A shell bursting on the edge of our redoubt drove coral into John's eye. As he could not see, I lowered him down to Monty. Hap Farrell came up to take his place just before dawn. After that, I kept the Tommy gun and it was with me through most of Okinawa. The fore stock had been replaced with a second pistol grip and it was a very good weapon.

As dawn broke, it was treacherously calm. We tried to see the effect of our night's work. It was later estimated that we had accounted for approximately 40 Japs in front of our position. There were bodies piled at the foot of the slope in awkward positions as they had fallen, but it was impossible to count them.

Long Way Home

It was a beautiful sight as we pulled into San Diego Harbor. Before us was the most wonderful country in the world. There were no bands or crowds to greet us. a single Red Cross station wagon with coffee and doughnuts waited at the front of the gangway.

We were bused to the San Diego Marine Barracks and papers for 30 day leave were promptly processed. I had only combat fatigues and had to buy a uniform at the PX there. I telephoned June with the news that I had landed, but was unable to get a flight and would have a three-day train ride to where we would meet in a hotel in New York.

That was a very long three days and two nights, but late the third day following instructions, I reached the hotel and we enjoyed the reunion of a lifetime. The next day, we traveled to Connecticut for another reunion with my parents, where even my old dog Rusty greeted me with joy. We were just in time for Thanksgiving, the greatest of my life.

I had much to be thankful for. My life had been spared. I had a wonderful wife and the world seemed fabulous I made a promise to God never to complain again. In later years when troubles came, as they always do, complaints were stifled by memories of those two long years in the Pacific. I will also carry with me forever the memory of my brothers, the Marines of Company E, who, whatever they may have been as civilians, unflinchingly gave their "last measure of devotion."

Storyteller: Doug Johnson, Sr, from The Manchester Herald, 2/2/85

VIETNAM

In War, Waiting At Home Is Not A Game Either

I had never heard the words Agent Orange or Vietnam stress in 1963 when my oldest son, Doug, asked me to sign his enlistment papers in the U.S. Marine Corps. He was not quite 18.

I was scared, to put it bluntly. Night after night we saw the grisly figures on TV. Hundreds and hundreds of our boys weren't

ever coming home again.

But in those days, there wasn't much I or other parents could do. Doug was 18, old enough to make up his own mind. And he would have been drafted the next year anyway.

Marine Sgt. Pete Benson recruited both Doug and his brother Bill. The boys knew Pete from happier days. When they were in the 5th and 6th grades at Nathan Hale School, Pete instructed them both in boxing at the East Side Rec.

His lessons must have paid off. Doug was division lightweight boxing champ at Camp Lejeune, NC.

Doug was a lance corporal when

President Kennedy was assassinated. He was married in one of the Cheney Hill Mansions. For his honeymoon, he was tapped for Vietnam duty. Some honeymoon!

When he arrived alone in Saigon (many Marines were transferred alone then), Cardinal Spellman, the American Cardinal, was there cheering up the troops. Our famous gag man, Bob Hope and his troupe were there too.

I remember the letters home from Doug during that time. From the time he left Manchester to go over there, he wrote regularly, about twice a week. During World War II, they called them victory letters. They were about the size of a postcard, and the letter and envelope were all in one piece.

I was living on Maple Street then and I was driving a bus for the Connecticut Co. I'd usually get home about 7 or 8 o'clock. If there was a letter waiting for me from Doug, I'd sit right down and read it.

He'd never write anything about the combat site. He tried to make them cheerful if he could, so I usually felt relief, knowing he was all right.

He was a radio van operator. I thought that meant he was "safely" inside an armored vehicle. Actually, I found out long after the war that he carried the radio strapped to his back. He was a ready target, a sitting duck!

He didn't spare us all the details. Once he wrote that it was either the monsoons and muck or terrific heat. I remember he said that the average temperature in the jungle was 100 degrees.

Doug made sergeant and was decorated with South Vietnam, Vietnam, U.S. Presidential and Unit 3rd Marine Division honors. He took his R & R in Okinawa. Finally, he wrote, "The kid is coming home."

We thought we'd be able to stop worrying when whiz, bang, Doug's younger brother Bill informed us he'd enlisted in the Marines. And some people wonder why parents have curled up toes and pure white hair!

From 1966 to 1968, Bill's tour of duty was almost identical, except for a short tour in Vieques Island, Puerto Rico. He had great times in San Juan, Puerto Rico and Sydney, Australia on his R & R. Bill was in the engineering battalion. I thought that meant that he was building bridges or houses or something. I found out much later that actually, he was operating a mine sweeper!

Those "gifts" left by the Viet Cong could have killed my son. Like a lot of sons who were in Vietnam, he didn't let me in on just

how dangerous his work was.

Bill was on Khe Sahn. The mortar barrage by the Viet Cong went on for months. Every time you sat down, Walter Cronkite our Dan Rather in those days, would give the blow by blow description of the war. I remember trying to see Bill among the combatants. I never did. Of course, even if I did, I probably wouldn't have recognized him, with all that Mr. T stuff they had on.

My youngest son, Roy, enlisted too, but thank God, his duty was all good old U.S.A. I believe in three strikes and someone is

out.

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I don't think we had any pacifists or demonstrators in Manchester. New Haven had a few.

In 1971, President Nixon was at the Statler Hilton Hotel in Hartford. A group of demonstrators were picketing there. I remember when Nate Agostinelli ripped the Viet Cong (enemy) flag out of their hands and destroyed it. Good show! President Nixon met Nate and smiled and happily shook his hand. Nate did the right thing.

Most parents felt like me at the time. If those characters at Kent State in Ohio didn't like Vietnam, the least they could do was shut up. Run to Sweden or Canada

with the rest of the malcontents.

I was lucky. My boys came home. Doug went on to the East Hartford Police Department for four years, and then to MCC. He is now a lay minister and in the carpet and rug business in Texas.

Bill runs a sign company and graduated from Pare Art College in New Haven.

Roy is a truck driver. His family lives on Birch Street.

We feel for the families of the MIAs in Vietnam. It could have been ours. We were glad last year when our country erected the huge Marine Corps monument and marble memorial in Washington.

Bill donated a sign to the Vietnam memorial Committee, and the memorial plaque will be ready next year. I'm glad Manchester took the time and compassion to remember their own.

Storyteller: Corporal Gary Philip Dietz January 1, 1968

Ed. Note: Cpl. Dietz, born in Manchester, wrote this poem to his wife on Jan. 1, 1968. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Dietz, formerly of Silver Lane Homes, forwarded it to the Herald. His poem was inspired by the sight of his buddy's death. One week after he wrote this poem, Cpl. Dietz, age 21, died in a helicopter crash at Phu Bai on a so-called "routine mission."

Take a man and put him alone
Put him twelve-thousand miles from home.
Empty his heart of all but blood
Make him live in all this mud.
This is the life I have to live
And why to the devil my soul I give.

You 'peace boys' rant from your easy chairs
Not knowing what it's like over there
You have a ball without near trying
While your boys are over there dying
You burn your draft cards, march at dawn
Plant your signs on the White House lawn
All you want is to ban the bomb
There's no real war, you say, in Vietnam.

Use your drugs and have your fun And then refuse to lift a gun There is nothing else for you to do And I'm supposed to die for you? I'll hate you till the day I die You made me hear my buddy cry I saw his arm a bloddy shred

I heard them say "This one's dead."
It's quite a price he had to pay
Not to live another day
He had the guts to fight and die
He paid the price, but what'd he buy?
He bought your life by losing his
But who gives a damn what a soldier gives?
His wife does. Maybe his sons
But they're about the only ones.

Cpl. Gary P. Dietz U.S. Marine Corps January 1, 1968 Storyteller: Timothy J. McCann 1st Air Cavalry Division Purple Heart, Bronze Star Medal and Commendation Award Recipient

Ed. Note: Tim's letters home to his parents were edited only for brevity, not for content. They tell Tim's story of the 100 days that changed his life forever.



VIETNAM DECEMBER 19, 1969–MARCH 28, 1970

100 days, One Bullet, 25 Yrs. of Pain

19 December 1969

I've been assigned to my permanent unit which is in the First Cavalry Division. We are air mobile. We have 433 helicopters for our use.

26 December 1969

Right now we're at fire base "Lee!" Everything I had in my possession was taken away from me. I have a ring and a watch. The fire base camp is about 30 miles from Cambodia and 120 miles north of Saigon.

Early January 1970

We finally made it out to the jungle. Walk through brush so thick you can't see more than a foot all around you . . . cross streams and walk through mud up to your knees and sometimes higher. We are up in the mountains . . . all we do is climb up and down hills and with about 80 lbs. on your back it's no easy chore. After walking through a mud pond the other day, I picked 3 leeches off my legs. Ants crawl all over you and bugs everywhere. It really is a great life.

12 January 1970

All we do all day is hump through the mountains looking for the enemy. My pack weighs 95 pounds and when you carry it on your back all day you're pretty beat by the end of the day.

It seems the leadership lacks one important factor and that is plain old common sense.

16 January 1970

Our unit went 61 days without enemy contact but that changed yesterday! Thanks to our fearless leaders, one man was killed. All because they were in a hurry. That is just one more thing it doesn't pay to do. You make too much noise and the enemy just sits and waits for you.

Last night we took 27 casualties. The enemy must have watched us set up and just as soon as it got dark, bang the crap really hit the fan.

18 January 1970

It has been real scary out in the jungle lately. We have had 4 men killed and 35 injured all in one week. I've seen more mangled, twisted, bloody bodies in the last week than I can do with. The smell of death is a real foul odor and something I can do without!

9 February 1970

Things have been pretty quiet lately and I hope it stays that way 'till I get home! The Army has figured out over the years they have been here, in a year you only have four hours of actual fighting or firing your weapon. That isn't bad, but it only takes a few seconds to get killed.

Letter Received Home March 3, 1970

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They took our air mattresses away from us cause they make too much noise when you turn about them at night. So now, we sleep on the good old hard ground. War sure is hell!!

3 March 1970

Everybody knows God over here and are pretty close to him.

12 March 1970

You say everybody says the time has gone by fast. Well it seems like an awful long time for me. You really can get lonely over here. It seems like a lifetime before you will be going home. Keep sending the Kool-Aid cause it comes in real handy. As you know, the water, most of it is pretty bad. The Kool-Aid makes it taste real good.

21 March 1970

Well, I'll be twenty-three tomorrow. Don't bother to send money cause I have no way to spend it. Well I'll say good-bye now so I can mail this one now. Love, Tim

Western Union Telegram

MR. AND MRS. THOMAS D. MCCANN, MANCHESTER CONN. MAR 30 1970 THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS ASKED ME TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS TIMOTHY J. MCCANN WAS WOUNDED IN ACTION IN VIETNAM ON 28 MARCH 1970 BY SMALL ARMS FIRE WHILE ON A COMBAT OPERATION WHEN A HOS-TILE FORCE WAS ENCOUNTERED. HE RECEIVED WOUNDS TO HIS BUT-TOCKS WITH PENETRATION OF THE PELVIS, LACERATION OF THE URE-THRA, SCIATIC NERVE INJURY, AND POSSIBLE INJURY OF THE RECTUM. A COLOS-TOMY HAS BEEN PERFORMED. ON 29 MARCH 1970 HE WAS PLACED ON THE SERIOUSLY ILL LIST AND IN THE JUDGMENT OF THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN HIS CONDITION IS OF SUCH SEVERITY THAT THERE IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN, BUT NO IMMI-NENT DANGER TO LIFE. PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT THE BEST MEDICAL FACILITIES AND DOCTORS HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE AND THAT EVERY MEASURE IS BEING TAKEN TO

AID HIM. HE IS HOSPITALIZED IN VIETNAM. ADDRESS MAIL TO HIM AT THE HOSPITAL MAIL SECTION, APO SAN FRANCISCO 96347. YOU WILL BE PROVIDED PROGRESS REPORTS AND KEPT INFORMED OF ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN HIS CONDITION. KENNETH G. WICKMAN, MAJOR GENERAL U.S.A. C 088 115 THE ADJUTANT GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, WASH, DC.

Location: Vietnam Patient Ward 887 April 2, 1970

Well, the Army must have notified you by now of me getting wounded. If not, well now you know! I got shot during a firefight on Easter near Cambodia. I've been in bed for a week and everything seems to be coming along O.K. I just thank God I'm still alive. Pretty soon I'll be going to Japan for recuperation and then most likely back to the world!

I don't feel too much like writing cause of all the drugs so good-bye. Love, Tim P.S. Use my same address 'till I get a new one and don't send any more packages 'till I tell you to!

Location: Japan, Early April 1970 Hi,

Well, I'm beginning to feel a little better now, well good enough to try and write a letter anyways! I'm in Japan and have been since April 3rd. The funniest thing happened here. When they brought me here and put me in bed at the hospital, I looked over two beds and guess who was there? Bob Sposito. It seemed so funny cause I was just thinking about him and there he was. He is getting along good too! We might fly

home together?

Well, I still haven't gotten out of bed yet.
Well, I can't move too good with my foot the way it is. I still have a great deal of pain from the damaged nerves, but that's what God is for and also pain killers!! I might have to wear a brace on my leg for awhile, maybe even permanent. Well, I'll think about that later?

I know both Dad and you have been cut open from operations and had all kinds of tubes in you, and knows what the pain is like after everything, so no need to say anything about that.

I have been getting so much mail and from people I hardly know and in some cases from people I don't know at all. They are so nice to send me cards and everything and it makes you feel better!

I should start walking or try walking this week and be on my way home by week after next. You know the Army, so it could be sooner or later, I don't know.

I should get a hospital close to home, but I know not where. If my handwriting looks different, it's because I'm on my back and have this special device over me and it's awkward writing.

I've got two huge packages here at the hospital and the only stuff I can keep is the juice. Well, at least what the other guys can't eat the nurses and medics will be able to!! I'll have them send you a thank you note. Ha Ha!

As far as I can recall, it was Easter about 1 p.m. in the afternoon when I got wounded. What a weird feeling it was when I got shot. I might as well explain so you'll know what the story is.

As you must have noticed, the trend has been moving the war maybe to Cambodia, Laos or someplace like that. Well that seems to be where all the enemy are on the borders of these places so off we go to try and get them and kill them!

Well, for the week before I got wounded we were working within a quarter mile from Cambodia & Laos so it is just crawling with them everywhere. We got ambushed the day before and two guys got killed. So we knew we were in store for something? The next day was quiet, too quiet! About noontime we stopped for lunch and then it all began! We sent out a patrol to check out the area and they walked into an enemy base camp. They were ready and really had us trapped! They have both halves of the company separated and pinned down! We finally got together after about an hour of continuous fighting! I know 7 guys, 3 I know real well got killed and God, I don't know how many got wounded? Well anyways, when I got hit our squad was going out to look for two dead guys we couldn't account for. We went out a little ways and the enemy opened up again on us! We thought we got them all, but I guess not!

Well anyways, we were pinned down again! We started crawling back to the somewhat safety of our perimeter we had set up. Well, I got all the way back and into the perimeter before I got hit in the left cheek of my ass, it went sideways through me and out the other cheek! The only thing bad was the internal damage, but still, I was lucky it didn't hit any bones or it really would have done some damage!!

Have you ever hit your crazy bone in your elbow and get that tingly sensation? Well that's what from my waist down felt like then my left side went numb! This was about 1 o'clock and we still fought till about 2 o'clock and it was 5 o'clock before we could get a helicopter in to evacuate us wounded. What's worse, it started pouring and we had to climb a 500 foot hill to get to a spot so the helicopters could land. That was the biggest and longest and hardest thing I ever want to do. If I could have done anything I wanted to do then, it would have been to die!! But I guess it was my faith in God, or just my determination to live that kept me going and I finally made it to the hospital.

The next week was fast, cause I was on so much medication. I don't remember much of anything! Just when they all of a sudden think if they give you another shot you'll become a dope addict and suddenly they stop and here comes the pain!! At least now I can say I understand what it is to be in pain! I feel pretty much better now, but the pain is still there. I've somewhat learned to accept it and pray and cry a lot.. But I'll make it and one thing that counts the most, I'm still alive and I can't thank God enough for that fact!!

I got my Purple Heart and I even got a Commendation for Bravery from the Army Department. They gave me a certificate and all the goodies. One thing I can say about my unit, the 1st Cavalry Division, they didn't forget about me! As soon as I got there they had a Chaplain there and every day, twice a day, they would come through and see if I needed anything like cigarettes, magazine or anything. Some General came and saw me and shook my hand and thanked me for fighting. It is really amazing how nice your are treated after you get wounded and how much they appreciate you after. You're nothing before, but after it

happens, they can't seem to do enough for you, when it's too late. Why don't they try a little harder to make things easier for you when you need it most, and maybe these things would never happen?

I think this is the longest letter I've ever written. Well at least it tired me out! It has taken me two and a half hours to write it, but I had to let you know how things are with me.

I'm going to try and write Marilyn and Jr. tomorrow. She writes such beautiful letters and I feel so much better after I read one from her. She knows just what to write and how to write it!

Well, I'm all tired out now, so I'll end it here. All my love, Tim "See you soon" Peace d · Earl Yost · The Manchester Herald · Gladys S. Adams · Mrs. Agnes Fu r" · Earl G. Seaman · Edward Noren · Edward Newman · Herbert Bengts on · John Hyde · John A. Johnston · Elmore Hohenthal · Reginald Baker on · Harold Turkington · Nellie Lull · Thelma Woodbridge · Arthur G. Bow · Doug Johnson Sr. · Helen J. Estes · C. Elmore Watkins · The Hartford ce Cowles Waldron · Richard Tambling · Thomas R. Lewis Jr. · Jim Knight othy Sanson Hall · Joe Packard · Philip T. Meek · Anthony J. Thibeau · F Williams · Elinore Howard · Mrs. Elwood S. Ela · Emily Maidment · J Hibbard Geissler · Ilustrated Review of Northeastern Connecticut · Manche dys S. Adams · Mrs. Agnes Fuller Hayes · Vera Keevers-Smith · Grace E. Wh d Newman • Herbert Bengtson • Earl Clifford • John Lenti • Harry H. Cowl thal • Reginald Baker • Susan Vaughn • Mrs. Marion Richmond Eddy • A dbridge · Arthur G. Bowers · Susan Plese · Marge McMenemy · Florence e Watkins · The Hartford Times · Rev. Dr. George W. Reynolds · Malcolm s R. Lewis Jr. • Jim Knight • Carl E. Johnson • Edward D. Atkinson • Whit ek · Anthony J. Thibeau · Richard Bruce Watkins · Gary Philip Dietz · l S. Ela · Emily Maidment · John S. Cheney · E. Howland · The Hartfo v of Northeastern Connecticut · Manchester Town Directory · Richard S. C Hayes · Vera Keevers-Smith · Grace E. White Wright · Anna McGuire · (on · Earl Clifford · John Lenti · Harry H. Cowles · Jim Duffy · Leona · Susan Vaughn · Mrs. Marion Richmond Eddy · Arthur H. Illing · William vers • Susan Plese • Marge McMenemy • Florence R. Johnson • Mrs. W artford Times · Rev. Dr. George W. Reynolds · Malcolm Barlow · John H. M · Carl E. Johnson · Edward D. Atkinson · White Griswold · Thomas S. We nard Bruce Watkins • Gary Philip Dietz • Timothy J. McCann • Deodatus Wo n S. Cheney · E. Howland · The Hartford Courant · Mrs. Frank Atwood · Directory · Richard S. Childs · Violet Shearer Reid · Earl Yost · The Ma IcGuire · George Marlow · The "Old Codger" · Earl G. Seaman · Edward No · Leona Keevers Lavery · Herbert Swanson · John Hyde · John A. Johns William Con Mus Contando Albistan , Handld Toutington , Nellie Inl

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