

The Courier

FEBRUARY 2013

VOL. 48, NO. 2

A quarterly publication of the Manchester Historical Society, Inc. / 175 Pine Street / Manchester, Connecticut 06040 / (860) 647-9983

Our Volunteers Are the Best!



The Manchester Historical Society recently held a luncheon to recognize current and future volunteers. About 70 people met in the big room at the History Center on Saturday, January 12 to dine, socialize, and be thanked for their dedication to the Society by President Mary Dunne. Tote bags and museum store discounts were gifts to volunteers.

The Society is now in the process of organizing the 2013 tours for Manchester's third graders. Anyone interested in helping with the school tours in May is invited to phone us at 860-647-9983. The kids are fun to be with and to watch as they learn firsthand more about our town's history and see historical objects and buildings from our collections.

New Year's Day Great Lawn Walk

About 35 people participated in our New Year's Day history tour of the Great Lawn, starting at the Cheney Homestead, and walking on the town-owned portion of snow-covered lawn. Society members Tom Ferguson and Susan Barlow led the walk and provided historic commentary. They will lead another Great Lawn walk on Heritage Day, June 8 2013, at 12 noon starting at the History Center's Loom Room





A Message from the Executive Director

by Mary M. Donohue

One of the most important contributions to the community that we make are the heritage tours that we offer to all third grade classes in Manchester. In partnership with the Manchester School Board, Cheney Hall and the Connecticut Fire Museum, students spend a full day touring the Old Manchester Museum, Cheney Homestead, Keeney Schoolhouse and the Loom Exhibit as well as Cheney Hall and the Fire Museum. What a fabulous adventure! With the help of a new grant from the SBM Charitable Foundation, we will be able to print educational materials for use in the classroom, before and after the tour day, to strengthen the connection to the classroom curriculum on local history, build student vocabulary, more closely align the tour day experience with lesson plans and enrich the students understanding of key concepts. I want to thank our Third Grade Tour Committee and the SBM Charitable Foundation for helping to introduce young students to the Manchester's part in the American history. Interested in helping out in May with the tours, just let me know!

Make sure you put our upcoming Spring lecture on your calendar. Retired State Senator Mary Ann Handley will present the history of the Irish in Manchester in March, I will present a program on the 1937 Cheney Auction in April and in May Jennifer Malone Healey will share her poem on walking home through the Cheney Mills. After every lecture, there will be time to share your experiences and meet your neighbors. See you there!

The Courier

A newsletter of the
Manchester Historical Society

Online at: www.manchesterhistory.org

E-mail: info@manchesterhistory.org

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ManchesterHistoricalSociety](http://www.facebook.com/ManchesterHistoricalSociety)

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Marsha Gunther Assumes Presidency

Late last month Mary Dunne decided to step down as Society President and from the Board, citing sudden new demands by her job and other personal commitments. Vice President Marsha Gunther has taken over the position of President.

“Although I can’t continue to serve as President for now, I look forward to remaining an active volunteer,” Dunne said. “I intend to continue volunteering as much time as I can to the organization. We are so fortunate to have Marsha, an experienced Board member, be able to jump right in for a smooth transition.”

A long-time member and a Board Director for over ten years, Marsha is ready to work with Board and staff to implement the Society’s recently completed strategic plan, which includes developing the History Center.

“A Roof Over Our Heads”

Executive director, Mary M. Donohue will present an illustrated lecture entitled “A Roof Over Our Heads: The Cheney Company Housing Auction of 1937” on Sunday April 14 at 1:00 p.m. The Cheney Brothers Silk Company built a mill town and a business that was successful for over 100 years. Many of the homes they built still provide a roof over the heads of Manchester families. But in the Great Depression of the 1930’s, they were forced to sell 245 residential properties in order to receive federal bankruptcy protection and loan assistance. After a three-day auction held on the lawns of the company-owned homes, dozens of families were affected. Remarkable documentation of this auction survives including an auction catalog, photos, newspaper articles and individual memories of this community milestone. Mary is an award-winning author, architectural historian and historic preservationist. She is a frequent contributor to “Connecticut Explored” magazine and in the spring issue her article on the Cheney auction will appear.

Festive Gala a Big Success—Thanks to Our Donors!

Thank you to all who donated to the annual Gala. To our members and friends, please patronize our local sponsors and donors, and mention that you're a member of The Historical Society! (If anyone was left off this list, please let us know. We apologize for any omissions.)

AAA
 Agway
 Anonymous
 Arthur Murray Dance Studio
 A Villa Louisa
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 Big Y Foods
 The Bike Shop
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 La Via del Gusto
 Pat Legeyt
 Clair Leighton
 Jeannette Lesperance



Photo by Christiane O'Brien

Guests at the Historical Society Gala, held at the History Center on Friday, December 7, 2012.

Pati Lewis
 Little Theater of Manchester
 Lutz Children's Museum
 Manchester Barber Shop
 Manchester Fire, Rescue, EMS
 Department
 Manchester Garden Club
 Manchester Ice & Fuel
 Manchester Historical Society
 Manchester Pizza & Grill
 Manchester Wine & Liquors
 Mansion Inn B&B
 Marco Polo Ristorante & Banquet
 Facility
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 Corp.
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 Moe's Southwest Grill
 Mystic Seaport, The Museum of
 America and the Sea
 New Britain Museum of American
 Art
 Elizabeth Norman
 Christiane O'Brien
 Panera Bread
 Perennial Planters Garden Club
 Price Chopper
 Onyx Spirits Co., LLC

Outback Steakhouse
 Parkade Cinema
 Parkade Health Shoppe
 Pond House
 The Red Onion Restaurant
 Rocco's
 Bettylou's Gardening
 Dale Schuetz
 ShopRite
 Silk City Antiques
 Silver Dahlia
 Ted's Montana Grill
 Texas Road House
 TGI Friday's
 Lynn Sottile
 Time Machine
 Tio Juan's Margarita's Mexican
 Restaurant
 Tullycross Tavern & Microbrewery
 Sandy Varney
 Vernon Collision Center
 Paula and Anthony Viscogliosi
 Hans Weiss
 West End Choppers
 Westside Mobil Mart
 W.J. Irish Insurance Agency
 Wood 'N Tap
 Mary Wynn

December Museums Open House

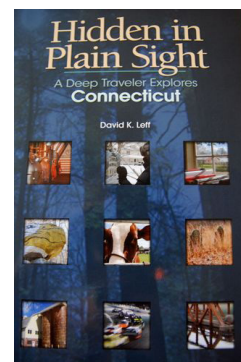
The annual Open House in early December at our museums was another big success. The efforts of many of our volunteers helped to make it so. Special recognition is given to the Manchester Garden Club for their efforts in decorating the Cheney Homestead for the holidays, as they have done for many years. Visitors remarked on how attractive the decorations were and the warm feeling they evoked at the old house. The trolley that carried visitors from museum to museum was really appreciated and made it much easier to visit all the sites.



Decorated tree at the Cheney Homestead Open House.

Annual Dinner to be Held on April 26th

Essayist and poet David K. Leff will speak on how to find “wonders hidden in plain sight...old milestones, drive-in theaters, Quonset huts, old growth forests, cider mills, Nike missile sites, diners, roadside springs, ghost towns, and other quirky wonders. “Splendor awaits just beyond your doorstep!” David will tell how to explore commonplace marvels near at hand, as described between the pages of his book “Hidden in Plain Sight,” available for sale and signing at the dinner. Author of essays, columns, and stories for The Hartford Courant, Appalachia and other publications, David is a former Deputy Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. He is a member of the Collinsville Historic District Commission and was chairman for over twenty years; a veteran volunteer firefighter and; a Boy Scout merit badge counselor. The author of three nonfiction books and two volumes of poetry, David has given book talks and lectured on literary and environmental topics throughout Connecticut and beyond. Details of the dinner will be mailed to our members and posted on the website.



Read About This and Other Events On Our Website
www.manchesterhistory.org



Genealogy Group News

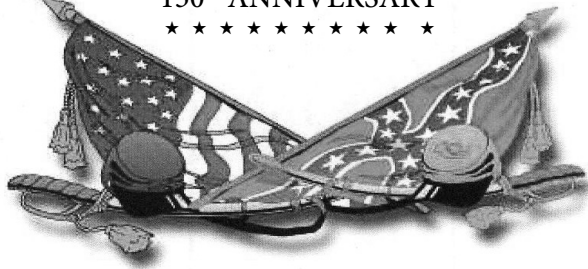
The Genealogy Group is a small group of Historical Society members who have a common interest in doing genealogy research on our own families. All members are welcome to join us. We meet on the second Tuesday of every month at the History Center at 175 Pine Street in Manchester unless otherwise specified.

Our March 12 meeting will be a talk on self-publishing your family history. Our speaker will be Cathy Grames of Grames Printing, Inc., in Manchester. She is experienced in producing self-published family history books and will have examples of her work to show us.

For our April 9 meeting, Dianne Bordeaux Lenti, a retired professional genealogist, will talk to us about listing our source information. An important thing to do, but something that gets neglected by a lot of us.

Our meetings are spent discussing how to go about researching our own family trees. Of course, if there is someone who would like to do research on other Manchester families and properties for the Historical Society they are welcome to join us too. Our curator, Dave Smith, has a list of families and properties that he would like to have researched. Come join us and learn how to go about it.

★ ★ ★ ★ *The* ★ ★ ★ ★
CIVIL WAR
150th ANNIVERSARY
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Civil War Notes

by Ron Schack

MANCHESTER'S BATTLES AND CASUALTIES

February through April 1863

FEBRUARY, 1863: TRANS-MISSISSIPPI CAMPAIGN

The Union vessel *Queen of the West* ran aground on the Red River in Louisiana while engaging the enemy. The crew had to abandon ship due to a possible boiler explosion. They were rescued by the *USS DeSoto*, a Union gunboat in the area.

Albert Button was born in Colchester, Connecticut about 1842. He enlisted in the Navy in 1864, and served on several Union ships, including the *USS DeSoto*. After the war, he lived in Manchester and Bolton before moving to Hebron. Albert was a mechanic by trade. He married Lucretia Wilson on January 1, 1890. He died on January 13, 1895, and is interred in Manchester's East Cemetery.

John F. Horsley of Manchester, Connecticut, joined the 10th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry Regiment on September 30, 1861. He received a disability discharge on February 22, 1863. John died on December 25, 1919, and is interred in Fairhaven Memorial Park, Santa Ana, California.

MARCH, 1863: THE DRAFT

Congress passed the new Enrollment Act, also known as the Conscription Act, which called for the enlistment for three years, of all able-bodied men between the ages of 20 and 45. In Manchester, 27 men were drafted, although it is not certain how many of those men actually served. A drafted man could escape service by furnishing a substitute, or paying \$300 to the government. At an 1863 town meeting in Manchester, it was voted to pay needy substitutes an amount not to exceed \$300. At this meeting, the town's attitude towards the draft referred to "those who have been so unfortunate as to have been drafted".

APRIL, 1863: SIEGE OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA

On April 19, a Union infantry force landed on Hill's Point at the confluence of the forks of the Nansmond River in Suffolk, Virginia. This amphibious force assaulted Fort Huger, capturing its garrison, and reopening the river to Union shipping. On April 24, Brig. Gen. Michael Corcoran's Union division mounted a reconnaissance against Maj. Gen. George F. Pickett's extreme right flank. The Federals approached with caution and were easily repulsed.

George Brookman of Manchester, Connecticut, was severely wounded in this encounter and died on April 30, 1863. George joined Company H, 16th



We Will Miss...

ANNE BEECHLER was a mainstay of our organization for many years. She served on the Board, and was our Treasurer for 5 years. Anne served as guidance counselor at Manchester High School and many of our members came to know Anne when they were in high school. She later became an investment counselor at the Savings Bank of Manchester. In addition her volunteer activities included, Meals on Wheels, the Manchester Scholarship Foundation and the Community Child Guidance Clinic. Anne will be missed by all who knew her.

QUENTIN MANGUN was an active person who enjoyed life. He served in World War II in the Navy and worked for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft for over 30 years. He loved to travel and made 30 trips around the world and across the United States. Quentin was a member of the Society for many years and was a close friend of member and volunteer Linda Gates.

CARL MATSON was a member of our Century Club, having attained the age of 100 four years ago. He was born in Manchester and moved to Bolton about 15 years ago. Carl worked at Aetna Insurance for many years.

Connecticut Volunteer Infantry Regiment on August 7, 1862, and saw action at Antietam, Maryland. He is interred in Manchester's East Cemetery.

Sources include: Manchester Historical Society Civil War enlistment data; *History of Manchester, Connecticut* by Mathias Spiess, Town of Manchester vital statistic records.

Thanks to Our Volunteers!

The success of our Manchester Historical Society is entirely dependent upon the dedicated service of our many volunteers. They act as docents, plan and staff events, conduct school tours, serve on committees, maintain our properties, run the museum stores and help us out in many other ways. Please accept our thanks for all you did for us during the year 2012.

Mike Agostinelli
Elsie Bagley
Cynthia Barlow
Malcolm Barlow
Susan Barlow
Adam Bawwab
Barbara Bawwab
Sue Beach
David Beal
George Beauregard
Anne Beechler
Chris Bergin
Leona Bilodeau
Mandy Birkhoter
Dawn Black
Emily Bloom
Rita Borden
Megan Briggs
Meg Burgess
Elaine Charendoff
Mike Chirico
Olivia Chirico
Vincent Chirico
Mary Beth Comp
John Cooney
Mary Jane Cooper
Martha Davidson
Peg DeForge
Marles Deveau
Doti Dienst
Adele Dietz
Jamie Donahue
Maggi Donovan
John Dormer
Harriet and Larry Duff
Mary and Robert Dunne
Ann-Linda Dustin-Bray
Marilyn Eastwood
Doug Edwards
Kay Faulds
Tom Ferguson
Vivian Ferguson
John Fletcher
Frances Forde
Bernice Frattaroli
Mary Frink
Brian Gammon
Linda Gates

Dennis Gleeson
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Cathy Grames
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Liam Griffin
Marsha Gunther
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Carli Hollard
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John Hovey
Gordon Howard
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Amelia Mariotti
Marjorie Martin
Pat Matrick
Faith and Tim McCann
Jan McCollum
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Nancy Mitchell
Joan and Geoffrey Naab
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James O'Sullivan
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Cecelia Parla
Chris Parla
Jamie Parla
John Parla
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Sarah Parla
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Jessica Planck
Ed Pontbriant
Carole and Tom Quish
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Charlotte Rhodes
Ed Richardson
Genevieve Robb
Sarah Robbins
Maureen Robenhymer
Althea Ruderman
Maura Ryan
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James Vesekis
Paula Viscogliosi
Connie Walker
Kathryn Wilson
Mary Wynn
Jane and Rudy Zadnik
Manchester Garden Club
Jesse Pirtel and his
Troop 25 Boy Scout crew

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

Manchester Historical Society, Manchester, Connecticut

invites its VALUED VOLUNTEERS

to SURRENDER this COUPON for 20% OFF a ONE-TIME ENTIRE PURCHASE through 12/31/2013 at its

Museum Stores

Manchester History Center, 175 Pine Street

Old Manchester Museum, 126 Cedar Street

in appreciation for their time, efforts, and countless contributions to the preservation of local history

www.manchesterhistory.org (860) 647-9983

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All lectures are held at the History Center at 175 Pine Street at 1:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Parking is available in our lot along the Forest Street side of the building and in the small lot on Pine Street where handicap parking is available. Admission for events at the History Center and for walking tours is \$3 for nonmembers, \$1 for Society members and free for children under age 16. Check online at www.manchesterhistory.org for the latest information on upcoming events.

CHENEY HOMESTEAD

Open year-round on the second Sunday of each month from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Admission and tour by donation

February 12, Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.

GENEALOGY GROUP MEETING

February 23, Saturday, 1:00 p.m., FREE

CHENEY RAILROAD HISTORY WALK AND COMMENTARY

Hikers will have an easy, but bumpy, walk along the former railroad, built in 1869 to connect the Cheney silk mills to the main rail line in the North End. At 2.5 miles, it was the shortest private freight-and-passenger railroad in the United States. We will hike along the one-mile portion owned by the Manchester Land Conservation Trust and, depending on the weather, on to Center Springs Park, which will take about 1-3/4 hours round trip. Participants will hear about the history of the railroad and see maps and old pictures. Phone hike leader Susan Barlow (860-643-9776) if questions. No restrooms along the route. Meet at the north end of Main Street in Manchester, on the north (right) side of Farr's Sporting Goods, 2 Main Street. Park at the nearby shopping plaza or Eighth Utilities District office building (please do not park in Farr's parking lot). A special favor will be given to children who attend the hike, sponsored by the Connecticut Forest & Park Association's family hike program, but open to all, including singles. Extreme weather cancels. No dogs, please.

March 10, Sunday, 1:00 p.m.

IRISH IN MANCHESTER

Lecture by retired Senator and history professor Mary Ann Handley of Manchester, with emphasis on the old North End.

March 12, Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.

GENEALOGY GROUP MEETING (See related article on page 4.)

March 17, Sunday, 1:00 p.m.

WORKING IN THE TEXTILE MILLS OF EASTERN CONNECTICUT, 1890-1940

An illustrated lecture by historian, industrial archeologist, and author Bruce Clouette, an expert in industrial and railroad history and archaeology.

April 9, Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.

GENEALOGY GROUP MEETING

April 14, Sunday, 1:00 p.m.

A ROOF OVER OUR HEADS: THE CHENEY COMPANY HOUSING AUCTION OF 1937

Illustrated lecture by Historical Society executive director, Mary M. Donohue. (See related article on page 2.)

April 26, Friday, 5:30 p.m.

ANNUAL DINNER AT MANCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB

Essayist and poet David K. Leff will speak on how to find "wonders hidden in plain sight. Details of the dinner will be mailed to our members and posted on the website. (See related article on page 4.)

May 14, Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.

GENEALOGY GROUP MEETING

MANCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please print and fill out this form, and mail it with your check to:

The Manchester Historical Society, 175 Pine St., Manchester, CT 06040

Name: (Mr.) (Mrs.) (Miss) _____ Date _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone () _____ Email _____

Type of Membership:	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Individual	\$45
	<input type="checkbox"/> Student (under age 18)	\$5	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate	\$250	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Family	\$75
	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Individual	\$250	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Couple	\$400		

I would like to make an additional contribution for

<input type="checkbox"/> Manchester Historical Society Building Fund	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Woodbridge Farmstead Fund	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Manchester Historical Society Endowment Fund	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Woodbridge Endowment Fund	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheney Homestead Endowment	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Keeney Schoolhouse Endowment Fund	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted	\$ _____		

I have enclosed a matching gift form

Make checks payable to: Manchester Historical Society

Membership Dues and Donations to the Society are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.