



The Courier

MAY 2012

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Welcome Aboard!

by Robert Dunne

Last month, Mary M. Donohue took over as the Society's new Executive Director. Recently retired as a State Architectural Historian of 30 years, Donohue brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to help move the Society forward.

After an extensive search that resulted in applications from across the country, the Society hired Ms. Donohue, a West Hartford resident, to lead the organization, in particular to spearhead efforts to transfer the holdings of the Old Manchester Museum to the History Center; pursue fundraising opportunities; and increase membership, volunteers, and exposure for the Society.

According to Society Board Directors, Donohue's tenure as Architectural Historian with the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (recently merged with the Department of Economic and Community Development) makes her well suited to the Society's needs.

"We think she was a great choice for the position," said Society Board Director and Curator David Smith. "She brings a wealth of experience in finding financial support, her connections throughout the state, and passion for architectural heritage. She will help us move forward in developing the former Cheney Brothers Machine Shop building into a heritage center which will attract visitors from throughout the region."

"The Historical Society is a key player in the town's cultural economy," Donohue said, adding that developing the History Center will be one of her biggest priorities: "I am actively

working with the Society's board to increase community engagement and create a vibrant History Center that will provide space for a hands-on children's area, travelling exhibits, workshops, as well as programming that will draw new audiences.

"We need to look at all aspects of the visitor's experience and work to increase museum attendance."

During her time with the State, Ms. Donohue administered over 1,000 historic preservation grant projects with non-profit groups and local municipalities from across the state. She worked closely with dozens of non-profits in the areas of budgeting, public education, capacity-building, and fiscal issues. She has also authored several books and numerous articles related to a diverse range of preservation issues. Recently, she delivered a presentation to the Society based on

her co-authored new book, *A Life of the Land: Connecticut's Jewish Farmers*.

"The organization is in great hands with Mary," said Board Director Mary Dunne, who served as the Society's first executive director, from 2003 to 2007. "The Board has a lot of great plans, and it's exciting to have new leadership to implement them."

The part-time position is funded in part by a Greater Hartford Arts Council grant.

"I'm happy that my office is located in the center of the largest industrial historic district in the state," Donohue said about the History Center, "and I'm thrilled with the opportunity to help build a thriving organization."



Executive Director Mary M. Donohue, outside the History Center

Museum Store News

The Society is in the process of completely revamping the museum stores at the History Center and the Old Manchester Museum. The stores will concentrate on offering unique Manchester-related items. Beginning with Pride in Manchester Week on June 2, new items will be available along with the books, postcards, maps, clothing, etc. that we have offered in the past. We invite you to stop in at either store to see what we have.

MUSEUM STORE HOURS:

History Center Museum Store
Monday thru Friday, 10 AM-2 PM

Old Manchester Museum Store
Saturday 10 AM to 4 PM
Sunday 1 PM to 4 PM

The Courier

*A newsletter of the
Manchester Historical Society*

Online at: www.manchesterhistory.org
E-mail: info@manchesterhistory.org

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John Olds House is Gone!

by David Smith

An important piece of Manchester's history is now history. The John Olds house on Tolland Turnpike has been completely removed and the site leveled and covered with grass. There is no evidence of its existence. The owners of the house and grounds had no interest in preserving Manchester's equivalent of Mount Vernon.

As it was being dismantled, it was discovered that the house was built in two separate and distinct sections. The older part was at the back of the house and is estimated to have been built by the mid 1700's. The front and larger part of the house was probably built by the early 1800's.

The house was taken down piece by piece and is available for purchase. Steven Bielitz of The Glastonbury Restoration Co. salvaged much of the building and is offering it for sale to anyone interested in resurrecting the house. He can be contacted at 860-212-3750 or stevebielitz@yahoo.com.

It is hoped that someone will be interested enough to rebuild the house here in Manchester, but in reality the house could be erected anywhere in the country, thus completely removing forever this vestige of Manchester's heritage.



John Olds House on Tolland Turnpike, before, and during deomoliton.

PRESERVATION: Little Things Add Up

by Mary Dunne

Most of our readers living in Manchester have probably watched the gradual dismantling of the John Olds House over the past few months. This lamentable conclusion to a long-fought preservation battle slowly played out as the house was taken apart piece by piece until it was completely gone. The process is called dismantling, deconstruction, or most accurately, demolition. The one thing it isn't is preservation. It doesn't matter that the pieces of the house didn't end up in a landfill and might even be reassembled elsewhere. The home of the man known as the "Father of Manchester" will never exist again in this town.

It's not preservation. That house is gone forever.

When we think of losing important architectural or historic assets, the first thing that usually comes to mind is demolition, whether by wrecking ball or piece by piece, as was the case with the John Olds house. And often, even though we might proactively try to make people aware of the importance of our precious historic resources and fiercely advocate for preservation by speaking out against proposed demolition plans, we all too often feel we have no control over their loss.

Something often overlooked, however, is the loss of the features that define the historic character of a given building, not through complete demolition but through what many property owners consider routine "maintenance." In our zeal to save money and energy we are eager to believe the claims of manufacturers that "new is better," that replacement windows or vinyl components will save us time, money, and energy. But think about it: If you live in a house that is over 100 years old and has its original windows and clapboard siding—and many houses do—you essentially have products that have lasted over 100 years. Why replace them with ones that probably won't last 20 years, when proper maintenance will make them last another century? Why take a beautiful front porch with delicately turned spindles and lacework brackets and replace it with azek components and Trex decking? Is the perceived convenience of using these materials really worth the irreplaceable appeal and authenticity you trade for them?

It's the small changes we and our neighbors make over the years that slowly erase so much of the historic character and charm that is revealed through these details. Before long instead of a neighborhood of houses with the original elements that give the community character and texture, we will live in a shiny vinyl neighborhood—and eventually, a fading, warping and cracking neighborhood!

You may not live in a home of "significant" historic or architectural importance like the John Olds House was, but the original features of your home are what make it unique; they are what your children will remember. If we sometimes lose the battle to save important historic resources, let's not overlook the opportunity to do our part to hold onto a little piece of the past.

News from the Executive Director

by Mary M. Donohue



I feel extremely honored to be the new executive director of the Manchester Historical Society. History and architecture are essential to a community's quality of

life. The Manchester Historical Society is the steward of a very special and diverse group of landmark properties that reflect the long history of the Town of Manchester ranging from the Colonial-era Cheney Homestead, the Keeney Schoolhouse, the Greek Revival-style Woodbridge Farm and barns, the Old Manchester Museum, and the twentieth-century Cheney Brothers Machine Shop (now the History Center). Each of these properties presents unique challenges and opportunities. Over the next year, we will work to increase our membership, build visitation and increase our visibility in the community. Planning has begun to develop exciting new exhibits and programming in the History Center, the gem at the heart of the 175 acre Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark district. Our Society is an important part of the "creative economy" and we have a big story to tell. Please stop by my office at the History Center to say "hi" and share your ideas with me.

SAVE THE DATE:

Woodbridge

Estate/Tag Sale

Friday and Saturday

May 25 and 26

SEE CALENDAR

OF EVENTS ON PG. 7

FOR MORE DETAILS

170 Years Ago...

EAST WINDSOR CESSION

In 1842, part of East Windsor was annexed to Manchester at the request of the residents of that area. The area includes what is now Deming Street, Hale Road and a large part of the Buckland Mall complex. This is why the northern border of the town is not a straight line.

125 Years Ago...

MANCHESTER SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army was established in Manchester in 1887. The first Corps Officer was Captain Alice Estes, who served for about one year, beginning in May 1887. The first meetings were held at Brainard Place in the home of Rudolph Wirtalla. The Salvation Army's first permanent home was on Spruce Street where Nathan Hale School now stands. In recognition of the anniversary, the Salvation Army will hold an Open House on Saturday, May 19th at the Citadel at 661 Main Street.



Genealogy Group News

The Historical Society Genealogy Group, made up of Society members who have a common interest in genealogy research, meets on the second Tuesday of the month at the History Center (175 Pine St., Manchester) unless specified otherwise on the Society's website: manchesterhistory.org. Look for the link to the Genealogy Group's web page in the menu on the left hand side under the "Special Features" heading.

The group's April meeting was held at the Old Manchester Museum with society curator David Smith. Dave gave a talk on the genealogical research materials that are available in the Manchester Historical Society archives.

Future Meetings:

May 8, at the History Center on Pine Street

June 12, at the Old Manchester Museum on Cedar Street

July 10, at the History Center

August 14, at the History Center

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



Civil War Notes

- In **April 1862** seventeen Union ships under the command of David Farragut moved up the Mississippi River and took the City of New Orleans, the South's greatest seaport. This began the long effort by the Union for control of the Mississippi. Manchester men participated in and died in subsequent battles along the river.
- On **June 1**, Gen. Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia.
- In **August 1862**, the Second Battle of Bull Run resulted in a Union defeat. 55,000 Confederates under Stonewall Jackson forced 75,000 Union troops to retreat to Washington, D.C.

MANCHESTER'S BATTLES AND CASUALTIES

May – July 1862

- **The 1st Heavy Artillery Regiment** was involved in the siege of Yorktown, Virginia from April 12 to May 4, 1862, and the Battle of Hanover Court House on May 27, 1862. The Regiment was at Harrison's Landing, Virginia until August, 1862.
- **Patrick O'Connor** enlisted as a private on 23 May 1861, and joined the **4th Connecticut Infantry Regiment**. He was promoted to full corporal on 10 December, 1861. On January 2, 1862 the Regiment changed its designation to the **1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery Regiment**. Patrick died at Yorktown while with Company K of the 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery Regiment on 16 June 1862.
- **Ezekiel L. Post** enlisted as a private on 13 March 1862, and joined Company L, **1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery Regiment** the same day. Ezekiel died at Harrison's Landing, on 20 July 1862.
- **The 9th Connecticut Infantry Regiment** held operations against Forts St. Philip and Jackson in Louisiana, and reconnaissance to Warrington in May 1862. Operations against Vicksburg, Mississippi occurred in June 1862.
- **Thomas Connor** enlisted as a private on 18 October, 1861. He joined Company G, **9th Connecticut Infantry Regiment** on 30 October 1861. Thomas died on 24 June 1862.
- **Corodon M. Beebe** was born on August 29, 1842 in Manchester, Connecticut. He enlisted in the Union Army and was assigned to Company H, **65th Infantry, New York Volunteers**. He was severely wounded in the battle of Malvern Hill, Virginia. This was the sixth and last of the Seven Day's Battles

See CASUALTIES page 6

We Will Miss...



FLORENCE JOHNSON Florence was a lifelong resident of Manchester and a Charter and Honorary Member of the Historical Society. She was deeply involved in the activities of the Society and served in many capacities. Florence served on the Executive Council (forerunner of the current Board of Directors) and volunteered her time and efforts wherever they were needed. All

of our members over the past 20 years have had their memberships administered by Florence in one way or another. The history museum and Cheney Homestead were staffed with volunteer docents arranged by Florence for many years. She served on the Woodbridge Committee from its inception over 10 years ago. She was also famous for her baked goods and we all enjoyed the desserts she made for most any occasion. Florence will be greatly missed by all of us and her shoes will be very hard to fill.

WINTHROP PORTER Win lived his entire life in Manchester, except for the time he served in the U. S. Air Force. Win was very active in the Historical Society in recent years and especially enjoyed providing tours of the museum for the third grade school children every year. He was interested in history from his childhood and that was shown in his passion for collecting coins and stamps.

Saluting More of Our Valued Volunteers!

In the previous issue of *The Courier* several of our valued volunteers were inadvertently omitted from the list. We apologize to them and would like to thank them and recognize their service here.

SUE HADGE, CAROLINE HAKKILA
SUSAN AND DAVID LYONS, PEG NEWTON

Museum Reopens for 2012

Gorman Brothers' Quarries Exhibit

The Old Manchester Museum reopens on Saturday May 5 and will remain open for the year until mid-December. The open hours are as for last year: Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Please note we may be closed for public holidays. Please check before coming to the museum by calling ahead to 860-647-9742.

This year, the museum features a new exhibit about the Gorman brothers, Michael and Patrick, who were builders and also operated two quarries in town—the redstone quarry at Buckland and the gneiss quarry in Glastonbury near Case Mountain. Remnants of the gneiss quarry are still to be seen, after a short hike from Line Street.

The Gorman Brothers also built many structures in town including bridges, buildings, and houses. Pictures of their works are included in the display.

GIGANTIC Book & Tag Sale

June 2 to 10, 2012
9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Every Day
Free Admission

Don't miss the last of our fun and profitable fundraising book-and-tag sales. We are moving things around in the History Center and won't have the room needed for future tag sales, so this is the last one. Be sure to visit our 10,000 square feet of items! Shop, socialize and help raise funds for the Society. Items include over 10,000 books for adults and children, household items, collectibles, mint proof coin sets, three wedding gowns, rare books, antiques, holiday items, furniture, rugs, china, silver, glassware, jewelry, electronics, toys, puzzles and games. **NEW:** the Book Cellar has moved to the lower level! Enter from Forest Street (near the intersection with Pine Street.). Parking is available in the lot north of the building and off Forest Street, next to our building. More information about Historical Society events and the book-and-tag sale can be found on the website at www.manchesterhistory.org. Thanks to Terry Parla, our tag sale manager extraordinaire, and all the volunteers who worked so hard, we have raised substantial funds for the Society over several years and many fun book-and-tag sales.



New Email Addresses

Please note that we are now using
NEW Email Addresses

For general email contact:
info@manchesterhistory.org

Executive Director Mary Donohue:
mdonohue@manchesterhistory.org
Development Director Eileen Sweeney:
esweeney@manchesterhistory.org

President John Dormer:
jdormer@manchesterhistory.org

Curator Dave Smith:
dsmith@manchesterhistory.org

Please Note: if you are still using any of our old email addresses, your message may not get to the intended recipient after May 31st.

Meet Our Newest Board Director



Dennis Gleeson has recently joined the Society's Board of Directors. He is an avid history buff and enjoys researching family history.

Dennis grew up in town and graduated from Manchester High School in 1963. He has worked in the automobile industry and recently retired. Dennis and his wife Phyllis have two grown sons. Now that he has spare time, Dennis spends a lot of it digging into his and his wife's family history. His wife's family tree now has about 10,000 entries and he is pursuing his own family background.

Answering requests from our members and the public for research help has occupied a lot of his time, and he enjoys being able to help others with their family research projects. He has also provided service to the Find-A-Grave website by adding many photos and information about local graves.

CASUALTIES from page 4

- on 1 July, 1862. Corodon was sent to the U.S. General Hospital on David's Island, and discharged on 10 November, 1862.
- **The 12th Connecticut Infantry Regiment** held operations against Forts St. Philip and Jackson like the 9th. The Regiment was the first to land in the occupation of New Orleans, Louisiana. It also had duty at Camps Parapet and Carrollton in Louisiana until October 1862.
- **John Smith** enlisted as a private on 9 December 1861. He joined Company D, **12th Connecticut Infantry Regiment** on 10 February 1862. John died at Camp Parapet on 29 July 1862.

HELP SUPPORT THE ANNUAL FUND

The Annual Fund campaign is a very important part of our fund raising each year. Monies raised help to keep the Society running by paying for the day-to-day costs such as utilities and the many other expenses that can not be covered by grants and sponsorships. We greatly appreciate any and all donations to this fund.

Yes, I/We want to be part of the Manchester Historical Society's continued growth and transformation! Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:

- \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250
 \$500 \$1000 Other \$_____

Please make check payable to Manchester Historical Society and mail to 175 Pine Street, Manchester, CT 06040

Pay with check, or: Visa MasterCard

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Credit Card #: _____

Name on Card: _____

Card Exp. Date: _____

Thank you for your support!



GIGANTIC TAG SALE June 2-10

The Society's final tag sale will be held from Saturday, June 2 through Sunday, June 10 at the History Center, 175 Pine Street. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day and admission is FREE. Shop our huge sale area for thousands of items including antiques, collectibles, household goods, sports equipment, toys and games, furniture, holiday décor, and thousands of BOOKS! Come help us by buying items at the sale—proceeds help the Historical Society to grow.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All lectures are at the History Center at 175 Pine St. at 1:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Parking is available 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 walking tours is \$1 for Society members, \$3 for non-members, and free for children under age 16. Check online at www.manchesterhistory.org for the latest information on upcoming events.

May 12, Saturday, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.,
Manchester Town Hall

FAMILY HISTORY DAY

Learn how to research your family history with help from genealogy experts. Find out what information is available in the Town Hall and tour the facilities at the Town Clerk's office. You can sign up for a free half hour private consultation with a certified genealogist by phoning 860-647-3037.

May 12, Saturday, 1:00 p.m.

WATERCRESS RAMBLE WALK

Explore the locations of the former Mary Cheney gardens. Meet at Cheney Homestead, 106 Hartford Road. Park in the nearby Fuss & O'Neill lot, 146 Hartford Road. Please wear sturdy shoes. Admission is \$1 for Perennial Planters and Garden Club members.

May 20, Sunday, 1:00 p.m.

NEW YORK 1964 WORLD'S FAIR LECTURE

Jason Scappaticci, a member of our board of directors, will give an illustrated presentation describing the 1964-1965 World's Fair.

May 25 and 26, Friday-Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
WOODBIDGE TAG SALE, 495 E. Middle Tpke.

A one-time tag/estate sale will be held at the Woodbridge Farmstead. Items include books, clothing, linens, tools, household goods, etc. Although there are some older Woodbridge family items, none of the items for sale are of historic importance.

May 26, Saturday, 1:00 p.m.

CHENEY RAILROAD HISTORY WALK

Explore an easy but bumpy 1¼ hour walk along the former railroad, which was built in 1869 to connect the Cheney Silk Mills to the main rail line through North Manchester. Learn about the history of the South Manchester Railroad. Meet at the north side of Farr's Sporting Goods, park at the nearby shopping plaza.

June 2, Saturday, 1:00 p.m.

CENTER SPRINGS PARK WALK

Take a 1¼ hour history walk on the loop trail, starting at the parking lot at 39 Lodge Drive. Wear sturdy shoes. No dogs, please.

June 2, Saturday thru June 10, Sunday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

GIGANTIC BOOK & TAG SALE at the History Center

Take advantage of free admission to our 10,000 sq.ft. sale of thousands of books, children's toys and games, furniture, antiques, household and sports goods, gardening equipment artwork, linens, collectible coin sets, etc.

June 4, Monday, 5:30 p.m.

EAST CEMETERY WALK

Take a free tour of the old part of East Cemetery with Ruth Shapleigh-Brown of the CT Gravestone Network. She will point out interesting and historic stones and their symbolism. No rain date.

June 9, Saturday, all day

HERITAGE DAY IN MANCHESTER

All museums will be open and free to the public. Visit Cheney Hall, Cheney Homestead, Lutz Children's Museum, the Fire Museum and all the Historical Society properties; Cheney Homestead, Old Manchester Museum and the Loom Room on the ground floor of the History Center (enter from Forest Street).

June 24, Sunday, 2:00 p.m.

HILLIARD MILLS TOUR AND LECTURE

Meet at 624 Hilliard Street and tour the historic woolen mill with owner Pete Bonzani.

August 4, Saturday, 1:00 p.m.

HIDDEN GEMS WALK

See off-the-beaten-track sights in the center of Manchester including the former Dr. Burr and Patrick Gorman mansions, and a special showing of the Tiffany windows at St. Mary's Church.

September 29, Saturday, 1:00 p.m.

CHENEY DISTRICT WALK

Free annual 2-hour stroll through the center of the Cheney Bros. National Historic Landmark District, visiting Cheney hall, the silk mills, the South Manchester Railroad, the former Cheney machine shop and the nearby neighborhoods of workers housing. Chris Paulin of MCC's Institute of Local History will talk about the history of the silk mills. Meet at 146 Hartford Road.

October 21, Sunday, 1:00 p.m., History Center

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

Calling members to attend our annual business meeting and election of officers. Please remember that any suggestions for nominations to the board of directors must be received at the History Center before September 5, 2012.



The Manchester Historical Society
 175 Pine Street
 Manchester, Connecticut 06040

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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	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Woodbridge Farmstead Fund	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> I have enclosed a matching gift form		<i>Make checks payable to: Manchester Historical Society</i>	

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