

R.O. Cheney House

ON OUR WALKING TOURS: HIDDEN GEMS AND CHENEY MANSIONS

Our walking tours often stop on Otis Street to admire the former Oak Hill mansion, built about 1910 by Richard Otis Cheney (1874-1931). Maps of Manchester before the 1940s do not show Otis Street, since Oak Hill encompassed the land from Forest to Park Street and included the mansion, a carriage house, servants' quarters, and extensive gardens. The house originally had a view of Hartford off to the west. Edward J. Holl (1874-1967), a real estate developer, owned the mansion and subdivided it into apartments, which still feature huge fireplaces, wooden paneling, and large windows. Two of the buildings on the east side of today's Otis Street were part of the R.O. Cheney estate, but were converted to single-family residences in the 1940s.

R.O. Cheney's grandson donated the architectural drawings of Oak Hill to the Manchester Historical Society, and one of them is reproduced below.



Architectural drawing of south elevation.



Postcard: "Oak Hill, Residence of R.O. Cheney, South Manchester, Conn."

Resources with information about local history:

- *A New England Pattern, the History of Manchester, Connecticut*, by William E. Buckley, published 1973 by the Pequot Press AND *The History of Manchester, Connecticut* by Mathias Spiess and Percy Bidwell, published 1923 (both out of print but available at library and online at used book sites).
- *Old Manchester II...The Storytellers*, compiled, written, and edited by M. K. Adams, published in 1995 by the Manchester Historical Society, available at Historical Society and public library.
- *Historical and Architectural Resource Surveys of Manchester*, various publication dates, available at Town Hall planning department, Manchester Historical Society, and public library.
- <http://data.visionappraisal.com/ManchesterCT/DEFAULT.asp> Database of Manchester's houses. Click "enter online database" to search. Sometimes the listed dates of construction are the dates when the houses came onto the grand list as separate properties, and so further research may be needed to determine the date.
- www.manchesterhistory.org Premier source for local history information!
- Our local-history **television** program airs Saturdays at 8 p.m. on Channel 15, Cox public access, in Manchester, South Windsor, Glastonbury, Rocky Hill, Wethersfield, and Newington.

Our mission: To educate the public about the history of Manchester, Connecticut; to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit information and artifacts about the town and its diverse population; and to advocate for the preservation of significant historic resources.