

'What's to say? I'm sorry'

Residents mourn ending of drive to save lawn

Reaction to the decision on Tuesday to drop the Great Lawn fund drive ranged from sadness to resignation. Nobody contacted was particularly surprised or angry that the drive to save the central portion of the historic Great lawn of the Cheney families failed to materialize.

Here are some of the reactions:

Eleanor Coltman, chairman of the Cheney Hall Board of Commissioners: "I knew it would be difficult to do but I thought it was possible — that they had enough people involved. I'm sorry to hear it."

Lillian T. Segar, co-chairman, Cheney Homestead Commission: "I'm very surprised at the news. I'm sure I speak for everyone on the commission when I say we're all very disappointed. It was a project we felt would be supported and should be supported. We had high hopes for it. We thought there were enough concerned citizens in town."

John Sutherland, director of the Institute of Local History, Manchester Community College: "What's to say? I'm sorry. I suspect what the Great Lawn ran into was the fact that this town is enjoying a surplus of fund raising drives. . . the Center for the Performing Arts, the Cheney Hall, to name a few. Maybe this was just one too many. The Great Lawn was

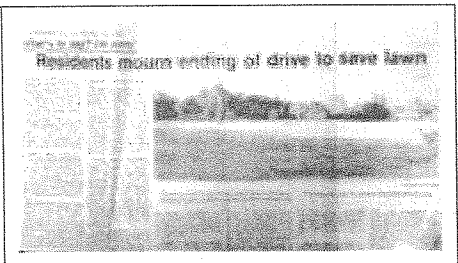
a latecomer. Obviously, there's a limit."

Jon Harrison, president of the Manchester Historical Society, a member of the Cheney National Historic District Commission: "I'm disappointed. I think the Great Lawn was an asset to the town that ought to be saved. On the other hand, I never sensed a good deal of enthusiasm for the job of saving the Great Lawn." Why no enthusiasm? "It's not as tangible as something like a building. But it is an open space. And open space has its own value. That particular space has value to Manchester."

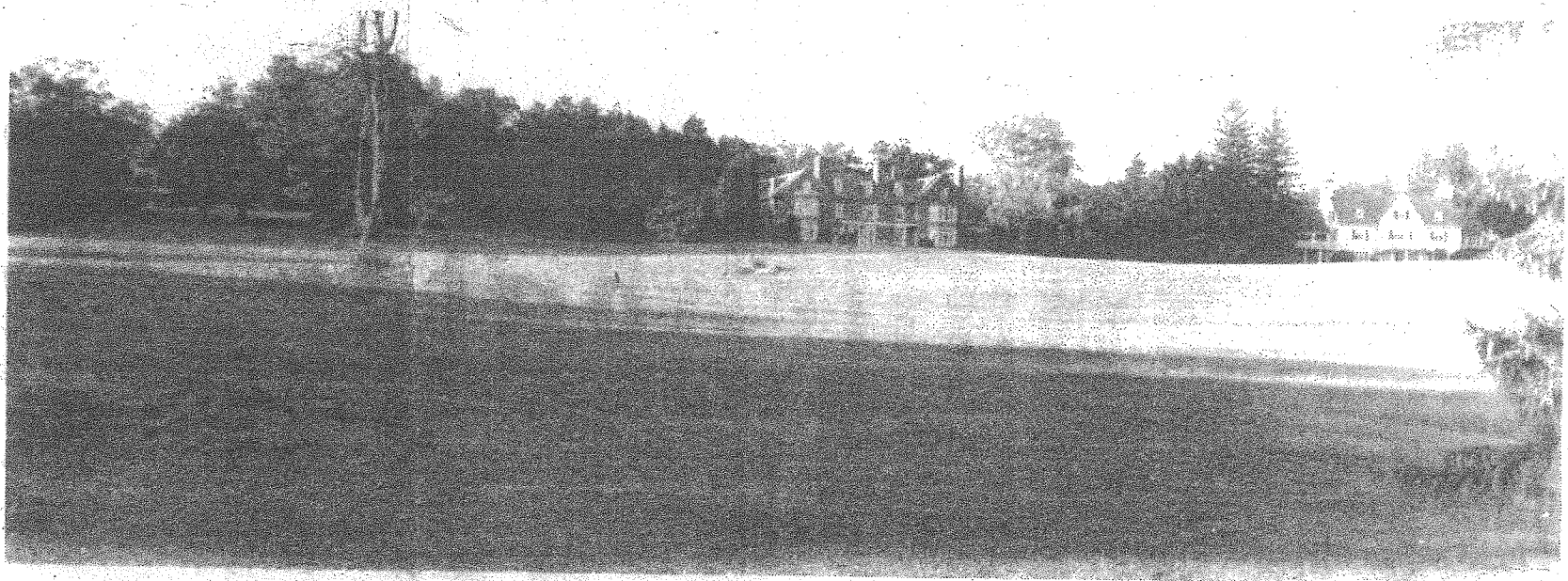
Attorney **Robert H. Blechman**, co-chairman, Cheney Hall fund raising committee, also member Little Theater of Manchester: "It's a sorry day that this will be irrevocably lost to what the developers want. The owners want to do what's in their best interest and that's only natural. But all I know is when you pass it, it's pretty. It's likely that what will come won't be as pretty. I'm sure if the whales disappeared off the face of the planet, that would be more important. But this has its significance."

Nathan Agostinelli, former mayor of Manchester, president of Manchester State Bank: "It comes down to basically what the people want. Obviously, the majority of

Webmaster's note by Susan Barlow: This 1983 Herald newspaper article seems to indicate that "saving the lawn" was a lost cause. But in 2005, the Town of Manchester, with government open-space funds, purchased nine acres of the Great Lawn to preserve it and make it available to the public.



Continued —



Herald photo by Pinto

The central part of the Cheney Great Lawn, fronting on Hartford Road, is slated to be the site of 14 homes now

that preservationists' fund drive has been abandoned.

the people in Manchester don't seem to care if it (the Great Lawn) is preserved or not.... I think now that this has fallen by the wayside, we should concentrate our efforts on Cheney Hall."

Joseph J. Garman, president, Manchester Chamber of Com-

merce: "To be perfectly blunt, speaking as an individual, not for the Chamber, I think it's kind of sad that they're going to turn it over into housing of any kind. The fact that there was no response was indicative of a lot of people's feeling that it was a lost cause to begin with. This is the word I got up

and down the street. These people own it and they can do with it what they want.' I hate to see it happen, but they bought it; they own it. There's not an awful lot you can do."

Allen M. Ward, 18 Keeney St., who had pledged \$500 to the fund

drive: "I'm disappointed. I'm afraid there wasn't enough time, there were several other things going on at the same time. A lot of people don't realize if it gets built up it will be an entirely different site. They're just not making land these days, at least not in Manchester."