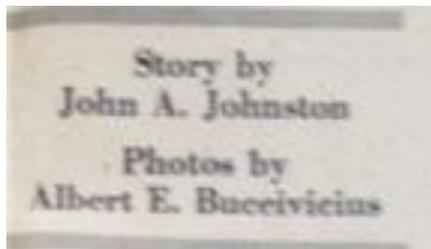


# Cheney Homestead Opens To Public This Weekend



## Manchester Evening Herald Friday, May 23, 1969.

Story by John A. Johnston.

Photos by Albert E. Buceivicius.

Transcribed by volunteer Maureen Hevey

A corner of Manchester (then a part of East Hartford) as it was in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, will be opened to the public for the first time this weekend. On Saturday and Sunday, from 1 to 5 p.m., the Manchester Historical Society will hold open house at the Cheney Homestead, 106 Hartford Rd.

A society hostess will be in each of the seven rooms to guide visitors and answer questions. The admission charge will be used to preserve and maintain the homestead museum.

The homestead was built sometime after the American Revolution [Webmaster's note: Subsequent research determined 1785] by Timothy Cheney, clockmaker, farmer, miller, who moved there from Orford Farm on what is now E. Center St., later returning to the farm. At the homestead, he worked the land and ran a sawmill with his son, George Welles [sic].

On Oct. 25, 1798, George married Electa Woodbridge, daughter of the proprietor of Woodbridge Tavern at Manchester Green. Between that date and 1819, eight sons and a daughter – George Welles, John, Charles, Ralph, Seth Welles, Ward, Rush, Frank, and Electa – were born to them.

Five brothers founded the Mt. Nebo Silk Co. in 1838, and this was later incorporated as Cheney Bros., for a long time a famous name in the silk industry.

Upon the death of their mother in 1853, the property was divided into nine shares, one for each child. As each passed on, his descendants heired an interest in the homestead until there were over 100 owners.

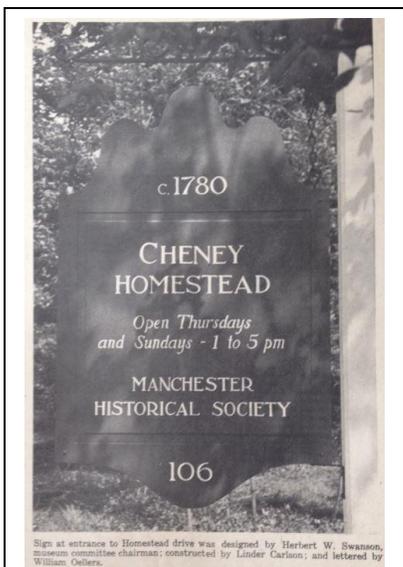
Eventually, each released his interest to the Cheney Historical Foundation. In October 1968, Horace Learned, George Cheney Jr., and Mrs. Wilkie Bushby, foundation trustees, deeded the property to the Manchester Historical Society, to be used as its headquarters, a historic museum, a repository for donations of historic memorabilia, and meeting place for small study groups.

Visitors enter what was at first the "keeping" room, the warmest for winter use, which eventually became the living room. To the east is the bedroom of father and mother, where all George and Electa's children were born. To the west, now a dining room, was the boys' bedroom.

To the right at the top of the stairs is the southeast guest chamber. To the left is the paneled "best" parlor, or upstairs living room. This opens onto ground level, since the house was built into a hillside. Opening from this room are a child's bedroom and the north guest chamber.

The house is furnished with an outstanding collection of 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century furniture, much of which was acquired by John Cheney in Philadelphia. There are also many paintings and engravings by John and Seth, who were well known artists of their era.

Open house weekend visitors will find ample parking space available at Manchester Community College, west of the homestead.

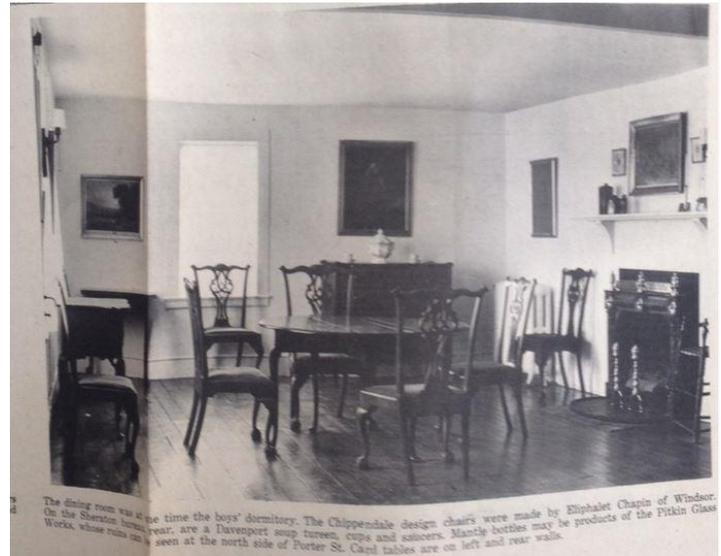


Sign at entrance to Homestead ... designed by Herbert W. Swanson, museum committee chairman; constructed by Linder Carlson; and lettered by William Oellers.



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