

The Courier

FEBRUARY 2010

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A quarterly publication of the Manchester Historical Society, Inc. / 175 Pine Street / Manchester, Connecticut 06040 / (860) 647-9985

Center Memorial Park Threatened Again!

SOCIETY SUPPORTS PRESERVATION EFFORT

THE MANCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY supports the preservation of Center Memorial Park in its natural state. Over the years, attempts have been made to pave areas of the park. The Historical Society and the public, with widely circulated petitions, have opposed these encroachments.

Yet the Town has spent \$60,000 to study enlarging the library at its current location. This project only studied the option of expanding the library at this location, even though many residents and taxpayers have suggested moving the library to another location rather than adversely affecting the historic seven-acre park in the center of our town. Other ideas, such as using current space differently, finding other space for some library functions, improving crosswalks to other parking areas, providing a drive-through book drop, etc., have been suggested over the years, but none have been implemented. The architectural consultant on this project has produced a design layout for a 65,000 sq. ft. library complex (nearly triple the size of the current library) in the north side of the park and a large paved parking lot in the west side of the park.

The many friends of the park want to preserve this historic area with its curved paths, pavilion, and memorial statues to veterans. The Manchester Historical Society has gone on record as counting the park as one of the charming sites in Manchester—one that deserves better than to be considered a spot to be paved and built upon.

After discussion and voting on the motion at a Historical Society board meeting, we sent this letter to Scott Shanley, General Manager:

“The Manchester Historical Society strongly opposes any encroachment on historic Center Memorial Park for parking or enlargement of the library building. This land is an icon of Manchester, important both historically and environmentally in the center of our town. The land was given to the public by the Cheney family for a park, and we advocate preserving its natural character, as envisioned by its donors. We request that once and for all the Town declare this park off limits for paving and development.”

If you agree that Center Park should be preserved, you can contact General Manager Scott Shanley at 860-647-3123 (email: sshanley@ci.manchester.ct.us), Mayor Louis Spadaccini (email: LouisS@ci.manchester.ct.us), or any member of the Town Board of Directors.



[Photo by John Spaulding for the Historical Society]

The Dancing Bear fountain in Center Memorial Park, an icon of Manchester’s charm, was given by the Cheney family in 1909 to memorialize Frank Cheney, one of the Cheney Brothers who founded the silk mills. Curving paths behind the fountain lead to a flag pavilion and to Linden Street.



[Pub. by Fred W. Mills, So. Manchester CT]

The park as seen from the terrace. South Manchester, Conn.



[Pub. Morris Berman, New Haven, CT]

Memorial Park, South Manchester, Conn.

Window Project a Big Success

by Susan Barlow

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS AGLOW with compliments about the History Center and its much improved windows. Even passersby tell us that the building looks attractive and the windows look great.

The newly restored windows are now in good preserved condition, with no glass panes falling out. Damaged wood around the panes and openings has been replaced and these windows painted inside and out. John Dormer, Society President and project manager, said, "The contractor, Proulx & LaRoche Builders, Inc., has done a great job. If we were doing this amount of work with volunteers, we would never have completed this many windows in a few months, as they have done—it would have taken us years."

So far, the Society has spent nearly \$200,000 for contractor and architectural fees. Our grant from Connecticut's Historic Restoration Fund (administered by the



Some of the restored windows at the Manchester History Center.

Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism) required that a preservation architect specify the work, so that the windows will be in keeping with the building's historic appearance. The matching grant provided about half of the total cost and the rest of the money has come from Society funds earmarked for building projects.

Thank you to everyone who helped on this immense project, including those volunteers who have been fixing windows one by one, over the years. All contributors are invited to celebrate our windows at a party on Sunday, April 13 at 2 p.m. (see listing in Calendar on page 5).

While these windows have taken on new life, there are still other windows yet to be restored. Some of them are not as visible, for example those on the north side of the

building, but it's important to complete them to optimize our fuel-saving and building security. The windows need to keep the weather out so that when our collections are moved in, they will not get damaged. We hope our members and friends will consider a donation to the ongoing "No Pane, No Gain Window Restoration Drive." Either send a donation directly to us (see mailing address on back cover of newsletter), or phone 860-647-9983 to ask for a "No Pane, No Gain" brochure to be mailed to you.

Some day our 40,000-square-foot building, the former Cheney Brothers Machine Shop, will house our museum as well as offices and events. Another part of the project (but not funded by the grant) will be to install interior storm windows on certain windows to improve the energy efficiency of the building.

The Courier

A newsletter of the
Manchester Historical Society

Web page: www.manchesterhistory.org

E-mail: manchesterhistory@juno.com

OFFICERS

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One by One...

WINDOW RESTORATION CONTINUES



One by one, the windows at the History Center are being restored. Thanks to all the volunteers who have worked on this project, and to the donors who have given over \$30,000 to preserve the windows of this historic building through the "No Pane, No Gain" fund drive.

Welcome, New Members!

The Society welcomes the following new members who joined between December 1, 2009 and January 31, 2010:

FROM MANCHESTER

Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Hardwick
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hetzel
Timothy Hoops
Thomas Johnson III
Cathy Keane
Emily H. Perrett
Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Richardson
Jason Scappaticci
Gail Secchiaroli
Virginia Thornton

FROM ELSEWHERE

Mr. & Mrs. George Dormer Fairport, NY
Margaret Koehler Vernon, CT
David Malley Bolton, CT
Shane McCann Vernon, CT
Marie Miller So. Windsor, CT

Sprucing Up the Homestead Tenant Apartment

Jill Mack, Homestead Committee Chair, wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the recent renovation of the tenant apartment at 106 Hartford Road. Without our volunteers and contributors, this would have cost a small fortune. "I am especially pleased that George Hakkila, our new tenant in the attached apartment, worked along with the committee and other volunteers to complete the renovations." The work included removing the old tile and refinishing the original kitchen floor, refinishing the original bathroom floor, re-pouring a portion of the concrete floor, new carpet installation in the living room and entryway, and painting three rooms.

The volunteers were Mary Frink, Eileen Griffin, George Hakkila, Jean Lamenzo, Rob Laughlin, Jill Mack, Brenda Paullo, Bob Rosenberg, Ed Rowe, Jason Scappaticci, Greg Schuyler, and Chris Wallen. Donations of labor, supplies, furnishings, materials and services came from Anne Miller (Anne Miller Real Estate), Jim Mistretta (Surroundings), TJ's Handyman Services, Aaron Ansaldi, John Parla, Colin McNamara, Don Lappen, Jim Britton, Kevin Mack, Dave Smith, Jim Stead, a refrigerator from Jim and Jackie Britton, and refreshments provided by Anne Beechler and Jill Mack.

Because everyone pitched in, the cost of the renovation was under \$1,500. Thanks to all who made this happen!

We Will Miss...

DR. PIERRE MARTENEY Pierre was a longtime member of the Society and a man of many and varied interests. His primary interests centered around music including singing and playing and rebuilding pianos. He was actively involved with the Little Theater of Manchester and the Lutz Children's Museum in addition to the Historical Society.

ELIZABETH THIBEAU Betty together with her late husband Tony, were members of the Society for many years. After Tony's passing, Betty continued to volunteer at Society events, most recently at the Christmas Gala and at the museum store.

Calling Manchester's WWII Veterans

If you have not yet received your certificate from the Connecticut Secretary of State in recognition of your WWII service, please check with us at 860-647-9983. We are holding many unclaimed certificates which can be picked up at our Pine Street offices by calling ahead. Family members are welcome to pick up certificates for veterans who are unable to do so or for those who are deceased.

100 Years Ago...

From the South Manchester News

HUNNIFORD HOUSE SOLD TO ODD FELLOWS

The house at the southeast corner of Main and East Center Streets was sold in March 1910 to the Odd Fellows for the purpose of constructing a lodge and store building. It was previously known as the Gurley place and was used as a tavern. (The Odd Fellows building, a Manchester landmark for nearly 75 years, was torn down in 1982. Vietnam Veterans Park is now on that site.) —MARCH 25, 1910

FLYING MACHINE

The first flying machine ever known to pass over the town of Manchester was seen leisurely flying over the town on the morning of May 6, 1910. It was seen flying in southeasterly direction, apparently coming from Hartford. Jeffrey Moriarty, engineer at the Ninth District Schools, was out planting vegetables in his garden on School Street when he heard a whirring noise and on looking up saw the flying machine directly overhead. —MAY 6, 1910

Meet Your New Directors...

Last fall 5 new members joined the Board of Directors of the Society. We take this opportunity to introduce them to you.

GEORGE BEAUREGARD founder of the Beauregard Corporation. Now run by his son, the business designs commercial exhibits for trade shows, conventions and museums. George is still involved on the international side of the business. He also founded Millenicom, a telecommunications provider. George is a Life member of the Society and has been volunteering at events and sharing his expertise on displays.

VIVIAN FERGUSON is the official Town Historian. She has been chair person of the Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark District Commission for over 25 years. She is a practicing Justice of the Peace. A Manchester native, Vivian has been a powerful voice for the betterment of the town.

JOE LAWLER is retired from the State of Connecticut Treasury Department and previously was the burser for the Kingswood-Oxford School. Joe continues to work with the AARP Tax Assistance Program at the Senior Center. He has been volunteering at the Society for several years and currently serves as the Treasurer and is the coordinator of the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

TERRY PARLA served as president of the Manchester Land Conservation Trust for over 25 years, and continues to work as a realtor. She is a Life member of the Society. Terry has coordinated several of our events including the Tag Sales and Christmas Gala, which have been very successful.

CHARLES SWALLOW is retired from a long career at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. He has served on the board of the Manchester Scholarship Foundation and on the board of the East Hartford Federal Credit Union. He has been volunteering at the Society for a number of years and enjoys doing hands-on work.

We welcome them to the Board of Directors.

We Salute 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 2009:

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Ezequiel Alejandro | Bernice Frattaroli | Jill and Kevin Mack | Ruth Shapleigh-Brown |
| Cindy Atwater | Mary Frink | Colin MacNamara | David Smith |
| Barbara Armentano | Ida Gall | John Malone | Frances Smith |
| Cynthia Barlow | Linda Gates | Manchester Garden Club | Grace Smith |
| Malcolm Barlow | Dennis Gleeson | Marjorie Martin | Betty and John Spaulding |
| Susan Barlow | Cathy Grames | Thomas Matrick | Robin Starkel |
| Marc Bassos | Eileen Griffin | Jean Matthew | Vera Stearnes |
| Lynn Beaulieu | Evelyn Gryk-Frolich | Faith and Tim McCann | Nick Stevenson |
| George Beauregard | Marsha Gunther | Jan McCollum | Phil Susag |
| Anne Beechler | Joanne and Joe Hachey | Kris Miller | Carol Sutcliffe |
| Chris Bergin | Sue Hadge | Marie Miller | Charles Swallow |
| Dawn Black | Lois and Harold Harmon | Jackie Mirtl | Elsie Swanson |
| Terry and Lee Bogli | Elizabeth Healy | Neil Narkon | Eileen and Wayne Sweeney |
| Robert Brindamour | Ruth and Ken Herbele | Virginia Narkon | Jacqueline Sweeney |
| Jackie and James Britton | Pat and Bob Hetzel | Mike Nimirowski | Sean Sweeney |
| Cindy Brown | John Hovey | James Olcott | Betty Thibeau |
| Sandra Bursey | Gordon Howard | Carol and Bill O'Neill | Dorothy Tomlinson |
| JoAnn Burton | Florence Johnson | James Orfitelli | Vanessa Torres |
| Marilyn Camaco | Monica Katkavich | Don Paine | Paula Viscogliosi |
| Vivian Carlson | Jean Kelsey | Earl Parent, Jr. | Ed Wait |
| Mary Jane Carter | Doris Kennedy | John Parla | Carole Walden |
| Elaine Charendoff | Ann Kibbie | Terry and Leonardo Parla | Connie Walker |
| Mary Jane Cooper | Jean and Lou Kocsis | Brenda Paullo | Christine Wallen |
| Matha Davidson | Peggy Koehler | Jessica Plank | Kathryn Wilson |
| Peg DeForge | Mildred Kos | Winthrop Porter | Thelma Woodbridge |
| Marles Deveau | Lillian Krukak | Laura and Jon Reichelt | Jane and Rudy Zadnik |
| John Dormer | Jean and Marshall Lamenzo | Ed Richardson | Matt Ferrigno, Baldev Sandhu and their Boy Scout crews |
| Harriet and Larry Duff | Linda and Don LaPlante | Genevieve Robb | |
| Mary and Robert Dunne | Robert Laughlin | Robert Rosenberg | |
| Doug Edwards | Mary Ann and Joe Lawler | Ed Rowe | |
| Richard Egan | Fred Lea | John Rowe | |
| Sonoko Fagans | Lillian Legier | Ron Schack | |
| Kay Faulds | Geri Lemelin | Audrey and Earl Schaefer | |
| Vivian Ferguson | Tanyss Ludescher | David Shapiro | |
| Frances Forde | Gerry Lupacchino | Edith Schoell | |

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

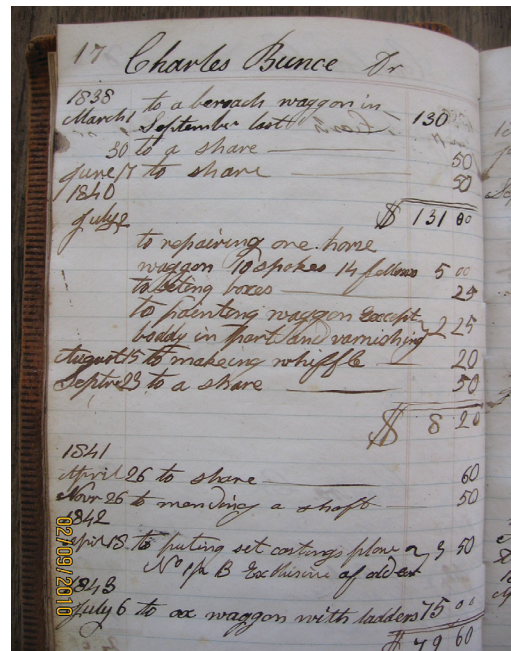
Benjamin Lyman Account Book Donated to Society

THE SOCIETY RECENTLY RECEIVED an account book kept by Benjamin Lyman of Manchester Green. The book had been given to a West Hartford church in 2007 for a church rummage sale. Fortunately, the church director recognized it for its historical significance, and called us last fall and asked if we would like to have it.

Of course, the answer was an immediate "Yes!"

It turned out that it was not obvious that it originally came from Manchester, Conn. After some detective work by the church director, the connection to Manchester was made, and that is when we were called.

The book covers the period from 1837 to 1850 and shows that Lyman, who was known as a carriage builder, also had a blacksmith shop located about where the VFW Post is now at The Green. In addition to building horse-drawn wagons, Lyman also was well known for his cast iron plows. Many well-known Manchester names are shown as customers of Lyman, including the Union Manufacturing Co., which bought copious quantities of wood from him.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Unless noted, admission to lectures and walking tours is \$1 for members and \$3 for non-members. Most lectures and events take place at the Manchester History Center, 175 Pine Street, or as noted. Additional information about upcoming events is available online at www.manchesterhistory.org.

February 27 Saturday at 3:00 p.m.

Cheney Railroad History Walk

An easy but bumpy walk along the former South Manchester Railroad, built in 1869 to connect the Cheney silk mills to the main line in North Manchester. Hike along the one mile portion owned by the Manchester Land Conservation Trust, about 1 ¼ hours. Meet at north end of Main St. behind Farr's Sporting Goods. Extreme weather cancels.

March 1 Monday 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Cheney Hall

GHAHHM Docent Training Symposium

The topic will be mills and their impact on their communities. Lectures take place in Cheney Hall, with tours of Cheney Homestead and the Loom Room at the History Center afterwards. Manchester Historical Society members free.

March 14 Sunday 1:00 p.m.

Manchester History Center

Native Americans in Manchester

Steve Penny will describe life in pre-colonial Connecticut and the Podunk Indians of the Manchester area.

April 10 Saturday 8:15 am–2:00 pm

Association for the Study of Connecticut History (ASCH)

Spring conference

A program of scholarly and popular presentations on aspects of Connecticut history.

Admission fees: Members of Manchester Historical Society, ASCH, and Little Theater of Manchester \$25; Seniors \$20; General public \$30. Includes lunch and snacks. Contacts: Ed Rowe (806 Vernon St., Manchester 06042) or Guocun Yang (Manchester Community College) 860-512-278

April 18 Sunday 2:00 pm

Window Restoration party at the History Center

All window restoration contributors are invited to celebrate the completion of the window restoration project. Meet the contractor, architect and project manager. Light refreshments.

April 24 Saturday 1:00 pm

Salter's Pond Hike

Meet in parking lot in front of the swimming pool.

April 30 Friday 6:00 pm

Annual Dinner of the Society

Members will receive a mailing with details and a reservation form.

May 2 Sunday 1:00–4:00 pm

Boy Scout exhibit opening at Old Manchester Museum Ceremony at 2:00 pm. Celebrating the 100th anniversary of Boy Scouts of America and the 99th anniversary of Boy Scouts in Manchester.

History On Your Television

by Susan Barlow, Producer

The history of Saint Bridget Church and the Highland Park Market were included in recent Historical Society television shows.

Upcoming shows will include a recording of the November 2009 Road Race presentation by members of the Road Race committee.

The Society's TV shows air on channel 15 at 8 p.m.; running time varies from less than an hour up to two hours. Each show runs for a month, so if you miss it on the first Saturday of the month, you can catch it on subsequent Saturdays. Cox public access, Channel 15, broadcasts in Manchester, South Windsor, Glastonbury, Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, and Newington.

Some of our programs are available at Mary Cheney Library and some are for sale at the museum stores.

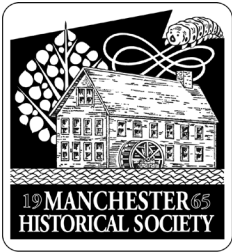


Tag Sale Time!

It's a "win-win" situation—clean your attic and closets, and the Historical Society can make some cash. Good saleable items may be dropped off at the History Center Monday through Friday between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. They can also be dropped off on Saturday by calling ahead to Terry Parla at 860-643-1823.

Books, toys, tools, furniture, household goods, china, sports items, seasonal decorations, kitchenware, gardening equipment, linens and items both useful and decorative are needed. Please no clothing, text books or computers.

The Tag Sale will take place during Heritage Week, June 5-12, 2010 at the History Center at 175 Pine St. There will be a preview and early buying on Friday, June 4 from 5 to 8 p.m. with a \$5.00 entrance fee.



The Manchester Historical Society
175 Pine Street
Manchester, Connecticut 06040

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Hours Expanded at Museum Store

THE SOCIETY MUSEUM STORE located at the History Center (175 Pine Street) is now open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Thanks to a donation by member Jan McCollum, there is now a sign posted near the front steps of the Pine Street entrance when the store is open, inviting customers to come in.



In addition to shoppers, other members of the public and neighbors have dropped in to see what's going on in our historic building.

We continue to sell items with a Manchester connection which are suitable for birthday gifts or "good reads" for local history buffs. You are invited to come in and browse the many available items.



Museum Stores and Outlets

OLD MANCHESTER MUSEUM, 126 Cedar Street

Open Saturday 10-4 and Sunday 1-4
(Open by appointment only January-April)

HISTORY CENTER, 175 Pine Street

Open Monday through Friday 10 - 2

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER AT TOWN HALL

Open Monday-Friday 8 - 5