an exhibition of life and labor in
South Manchester, Connecticut: 1880 - 1930

Saturday, October 17, 1981
1 to 4 p.m.
The Clock Tower Mill, 63 Elm Street
FREE ADMISSION - public invited
"CHENEY BROTHERS WAS THE WORLD"

an exhibition of life and labor in

South Manchester, Connecticut: 1880 - 1930

by Sylvian E. Ofiara & John F. Sutherland

Sponsored by: The Institute of Local History, Manchester Community College; Cheney Brothers Historic District Commission, Town of Manchester.

Funded by: The Connecticut Humanities Council

"Cheney Brothers was the world!" These words summed up one worker's memories of the years when Manchester was known as the silk kingdom. In 1838 six Cheney brothers began spinning silken thread in a small water-powered mill on Hop Brook in back of the family's Hartford Road homestead. By 1920 the company employed nearly 5,000 workers and performed all phases of silk manufacture, from raw imported silk to finished fabric. In 1923, Cheney's sales reach $23,000,000. Cheney Brothers was one of the largest and most prosperous silk mills in the nation. Cheney silks were famous throughout the country and the world.

Cheney Brothers' success transformed Manchester from a rural village to an industrial community. Thousands of immigrants came from Europe to work in the silk mills. As the population grew, so did the town. By 1914 the mill complex covered thirty-six acres on both sides of Hartford Road. The huge labor force settled on new or enlarged streets on the east and west sides as hundreds of homes were built to accommodate them. New churches, stores and places of amusement appeared. The people of Manchester settled, raised families and put down new roots. Now the Cheney era has passed, but the mills, the homes, and many of the workers and their descendants remain. This exhibition tells their story. These photographs enable us to observe families at work and at play in the neighborhoods they helped to create. We hope that former workers will remember and young people will learn about the era when "Cheney Brothers was the world."

We would like to see your old photographs for possible use in future exhibitions; originals will be returned immediately. These pictures will then become permanent additions to the College's photographic archives. Thus you have an opportunity to contribute to the presentation of Manchester's past.

The photographs used in this exhibition are available for temporary loan to institutions in Manchester. For further information, contact John F. Sutherland, Institute of Local History, Manchester Community College, Tel. 646-4900, ext. 272.
The Institute of Local History and the Cheney Historic District Commission wish to express their appreciation to the individuals and institutions whose contributions made this exhibition possible.

Elizabeth Abbe  
Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Andisio  
Dr. Herbert Bandes  
Mr. & Mrs. William Belfiore  
Herbert Bengston  
Anthony Borkowski  
Aline Bouchard  
Betty Jean Billings  
Irene Brown  
Cheney Brothers, Inc.  
Connecticut Historical Society  
Connecticut Firemen's Historical Society  
Bertha Chapin  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
Leon Follett  
Steven Galvin  
Cecile Grout  
Alton Hall  
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Harrison  
The Journal-Inquirer  
Everett Kennedy  
Emma Kingbaum  
Arnold Kleinschmidt  
Isabelle Knofla  
Arthur Larder  
Mr. & Mrs. Horace Learned  

Dr. Thomas R. Lewis  
Stephen Ling  
Lutz Junior Museum  
Carl Mancarella  
Manchester Evening Herald  
Manchester Historical Society  
John Murray  
Peter Negrola  
Arlene Paterwick  
James Perry  
John Robinson  
Willian Ryan  
Merritt Ritson  
Salem-Nassiff Studio & Camera Shop  
St. Mary's Protestant Episcopal Church  
Jack Scheiderman  
Margaret Kohls Schleminger  
Adeline Smith  
Eugene Spaziani  
Mr. & Mrs. George C. Stoneman  
Margaret Kingbaum Storrs  
Eileen Sullivan  
Joseph Sullivan  
Dr. William Vincent  
Robert Weiss
The following individuals have contributed greatly to our understanding of Manchester's past through their interviews for Manchester Community College's Oral History Program.

John Adams
Nathan Agostinelli
Edson Bailey
Irving Bayer
William E. Buckley
Elizabeth Chase
John P. Cheney
Thomas J. Cordner
Mary C. Dannaher
Mary Della Fera
Leonard Eccellente
Louise Gaggianesi
Howard S. Gilman
Mr. & Mrs. Guido Giorgetti
Anthony Golas
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Mr. & Mrs. Luigi Pola
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Harold Turkington
Richard Wright
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