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THOUSANDS OF 'MIRACLE WORKERS' IN MANCHESTER

What Silk Town Has to Offer to Attract People There

CHENEY BROTHERS TELL THE STORY

Growth of Place Chiefly Due to Development of Well Known Industry

The "miracle workers" live in a pretty New England town, standing by itself in the Connecticut Valley, surrounded by a rich farming district. They have comfortable homes and share in the social life of a model community. They work in a great manufacturing plant and a wonderful place it is. Just what they do and how they do it are told in a handsome book issued by the Cheney Brothers of South Manchester, for it is (in) their noted silk manufacturing plant that the "miracle workers" are found.

Illustrations show the clean, light rooms in which the silk makers work, the pleasant surroundings of the mills, the homes of the workers and some of the forms of recreation and education available to the workers and their children. The faces and clothes of the workers show health and prosperity. It is the hope of Cheney Brothers that this little book, showing the attractive working and living conditions in Manchester, will lead desirable workers to make this place their home.

Workers From Many Lands

When the manufacture of silk was started in Manchester more than seventy-five years ago, all the work was done by native Americans from the surrounding homes and farms. But, before long, more here was needed and immigrants from Europe were employed. From that day to the present the tide has been flowing from European countries to the Cheney mills. Those who went there and gave their best efforts to their employers have prospered. Many of them now hold places of responsibility in the mills and hundreds of them own pleasant homes. Not a few drive their own automobiles. They and their descendants have helped in building up this great industry and today they make up a majority of the townspeople.



First to come to the aid of the handful of natives at work in the silk mills were the Irish from the south of Ireland. The next large influx was from Sweden. Then came the Germans and the Danes and about the same period, the Irish from the north of Ireland. Later the Italians poured in and along with them the Poles and Lithuanians. Sprinkled among these nationalities in smaller numbers were Austrians, English, Scotch, French, Swiss and Greeks.

A Model Community

Manchester has long been known as a model manufacturing community. It has a population of about 18,000. In 1880 its population was only 6,462. Since then it has had a steady growth, with no setbacks, but with an advance, year by year. Its taxable property amounts to about \$20,000,000 of which Cheney Brothers own about three-fifths. The town tax rate is low and its debt is small. For the year 1915-1916 the tax rate was 10 mills and it had not been higher than that for several years.

The town is eight miles east of the Connecticut River and nine miles from Hartford, on the other side of the river. Steam and electric lines give frequent means of access to this city enabling Manchester residents to take advantage of the amusement and shopping facilities of the city.

Manchester is about five miles square. The New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad runs through the north part of the town from east to west. A branch railroad, two miles long, runs south to a terminus near the silk mills. A trolley line also connects the railroad with the south part of the town and trolley lines also connect both ends of the town with Hartford.

There are three railroad stations and five post offices in Manchester. The railroad stations are Manchester and Buckland on the main line and South Manchester on the Cheney branch line. The principal post offices are Manchester and South Manchester. The others, Manchester Green, Buckland and Highland Park, serve outlying villages.

Main street, a beautiful concrete paved way, runs north and south, connecting the Manchester post office near the railroad station with the South Manchester post office, which serves the silk mills. The cross-town trolley line runs the length of this street and connects with the two east and west lines which run to Hartford. A branch line runs east to Manchester Green.

Manchester has nearly 100 miles of electric-lighted streets and it has fifteen miles of paved sidewalks. It has a good water system fed by reservoirs in the hills to the east, and a sewerage system which drains to the west.

The growth of the town is due mainly to the growth of the silk mills. In 1880 they employed about 1,500. Now they employ 4,750. To provide homes for the workers in the mills, schools for their children, stores to supply their wants, churches and places of amusement and recreation, a thriving and well-built settlement has been built, encircling the mill plant with a steadily expanding fringe of buildings. This settlement is known as South Manchester, although it has no defined limits and simply takes its name from the post office.

In this particular district, populated mainly by employees of the silk mills, Cheney Brothers have spent large sums beautifying the landscape, building fine roads and sidewalks, establishing schools, a public hall, a recreation building, a public library and giving generously to churches and other worthy enterprises. In the South Manchester

district they own the water and sewer system, the electric lighting system, the gas works and about 200 dwelling houses. They insist upon cleanliness and neatness in and about all their premises and use every precaution to safeguard the health of the community.

The keeping of pigs or poultry in this part of the town is forbidden, but small farms may be obtained on the outskirts where some members of the family may grow vegetables, fruit and live stock, while others work in the mills. These farms are within easy driving distance of the mills and many who live in the surrounding country come in to their work at the mills every morning.

A Place of Homes

There are no tenement blocks in Manchester. Everybody lives in a house with an attractive yard on a pleasant street. Many of the houses are single cottages, but most of them are double houses with separate entrances.

Manchester has all the comforts of a city and at the same time it has the freedom and pure air of the country. It has fine sidewalks and streets, well lighted at night and cleared of snow in the winter; it has city water, gas and electricity; free mail delivery; a well equipped fire department - in short all city improvements. Yet its park-like layout, its open spaces and its beautiful trees and lawns give it the appearance of a country place.

Although the silk industry is Manchester's largest manufacturing enterprise the town has several paper mills, a woolen mill, a knitting mill and a machine mill.

(Transcribed from an article in The Hartford Courant, February 5, 1917, by volunteer Maureen Hevey)