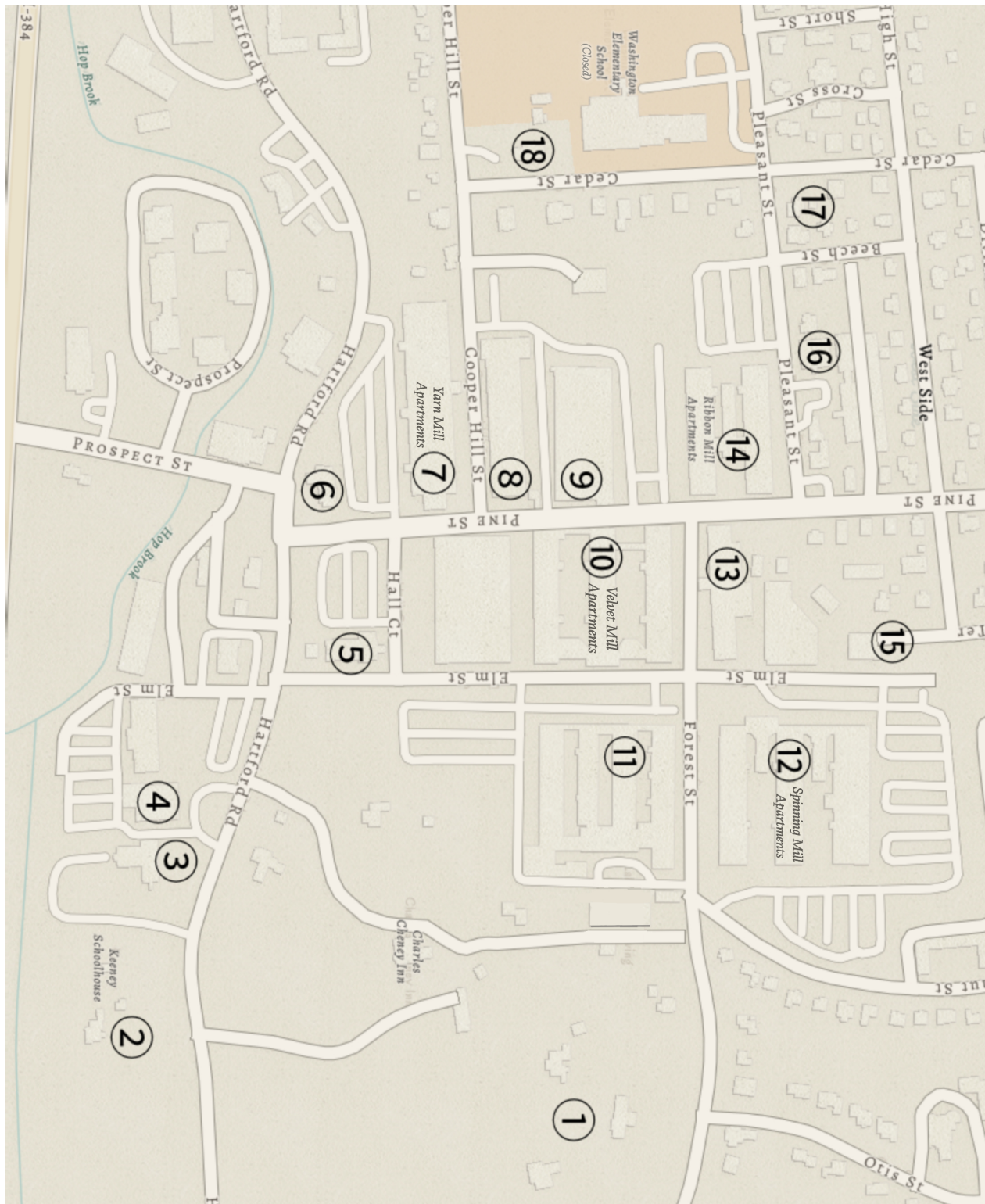




A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHENEY MILLS

From the late 19th to the early 20th century the Cheney Brothers Silk Manufacturing Company and their mills were the core of Manchester's growth and economy. From their beginnings in 1838, the Cheney Silk Mills grew exponentially and from 1860 to 1920 they were one of the largest silk manufacturers in America. By 1920 they employed about 4,670 workers, nearly a quarter of the population of Manchester. The Cheney family contributed greatly to the community in the form of schools, homes, recreation centers, public utilities and more. The Cheney Mills attracted many European immigrants and their children who made up 76% of Manchester in 1910. Some of the neighborhoods you see on this tour would have been immigrant neighborhoods, you can also find more along Spruce and the adjacent streets. While the Cheney's did a lot for the community, they were not perfect, workers at the Cheney Mills operated under better conditions than most Americans at the time but there were still disputes between management and laborers leading to two strikes.



① Cheney Family Homes 1800s - 1900s

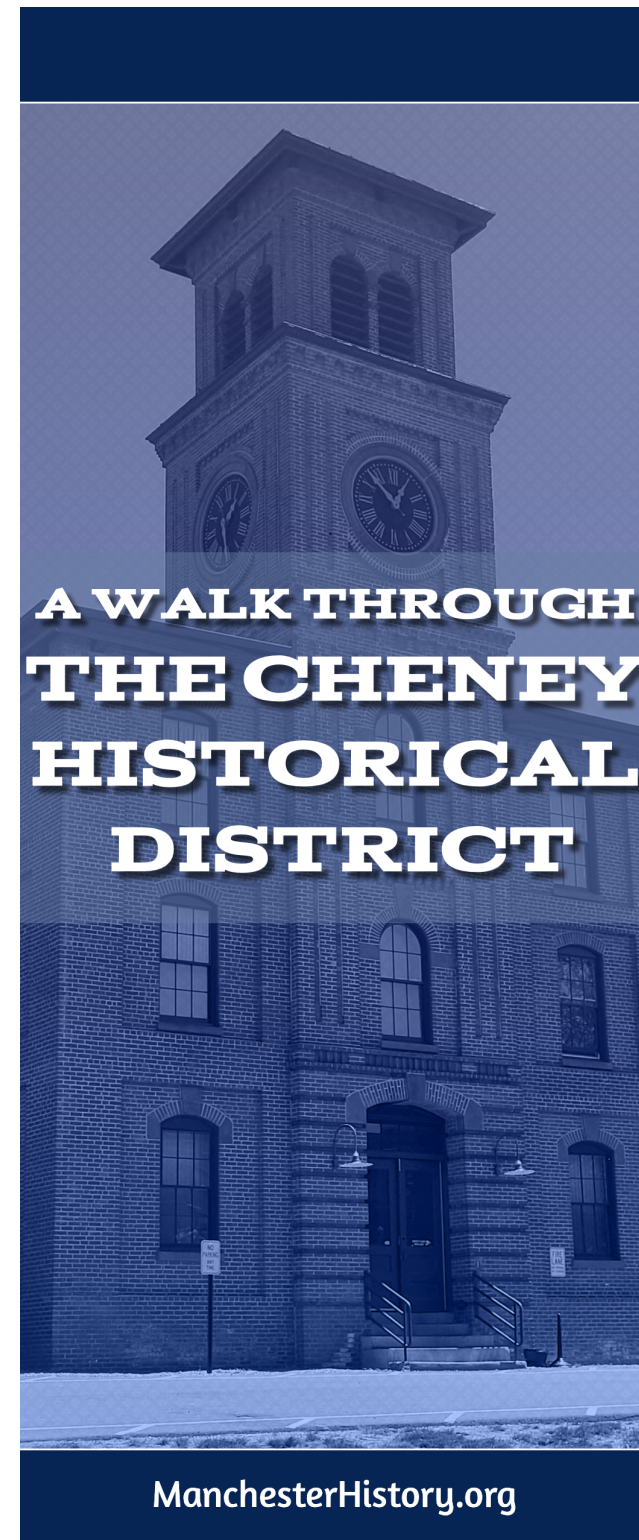
Thirteen homes on Hartford Rd. and Forest St. facing the Great Lawn. Displaying a wide variety of architectural styles, most are now private homes. Although some are open for special events or operate as bed and breakfasts



② Cheney Homestead ~ 1785 106 Hartford Road

Childhood home of the founders of the Cheney Brothers. Built by their grandfather Timothy Cheney, a clockmaker. See manchesterhistory.org for open hours.

A WALK THROUGH THE CHENEY HISTORICAL DISTRICT



ManchesterHistory.org



③ 130 Hartford Road ~ 1890

Served as the first Cheney vocational school where young people could study textiles to work at the mills.



**④ Cheney Office Building ~1910
146 Hartford Road**

Served as the main office building throughout the firm's existence and where new workers were first exposed to the mills.



**⑤ Cheney Hall - 1867
177 Hartford Road**

Served as the area's community center for more than 50 years, designed by Boston architect Hammatt Billings. Currently home to the Little Theatre of Manchester.



**⑥ Pine Street Firehouse - 1897
230 Pine Street**

Housed the Cheney Volunteer fire department. Currently home to the Connecticut Firemen's Historical Society.



**⑦ Yarn Mill - 1911
210 Pine Street**

After Cheney Brothers closed it became King's Department store in the 1960s, followed by various other businesses. Now serves as apartments.



**⑧ Dye House - 1914
31 Cooper Hill Street**

Workers dyed textiles with dangerous chemicals that were dumped into a nearby brook.



**⑨ Velvet Weave Shed - 1914
182 Pine Street**

This building is connected to the Dye House via skyway bridges. You can also see the unique saw-toothed roofs which allowed natural light to shine inside without being direct sunlight.



**⑩ Velvet Mill - 1901
60 Elm Street**

Cheney velvets were some of the company's most popular products. Last textile mill to shut down in the 1980s under new management.



**⑪ Clocktower Spinning Mill - 1872
63 Elm Street**

First mill building erected North of Hartford Rd. It was the first building to rely on steam power and was the birthplace of Pioneer Parachute which operated from 1939 to the 1970s.



**⑫ Weaving Mills - 1886
91 Elm Street**

The largest building in the district standing at three stories and 215,000 square feet.



**⑬ Machine Shop - 1895
175 Pine Street**

Machinists, plumbers, painters, carpenters, and others repaired and maintained the Cheney Brothers buildings and equipment. Current site of the Manchester History Center. Exhibits of local history and research resources. See manchesterhistory.org for hours.



**⑭ Ribbon Mill - 1907
162 Pine Street**

Mills that made the famous silk "Cheney Cravats" (neckties) in addition to ribbons.



**⑮ Silk Vault ~ 1920
110 Elm Street**

Built following an attempted robbery of raw silk. Facilitated safe storage of valuable silk in transit



**⑯ Public Bath House ~ 1913
27-29 Pleasant Street**

Built around 1913, served as a place for workers and their families to bathe since many homes didn't have a bath. Though the building has been changed you can still see the separate entrances for men and women. Now Silktown Roofing est. 1980.

**⑰ West Side Workers
Neighborhood - 1880-1920**

Over 100 company built single, two, and three family houses. Home to many European immigrant families. Other workers lived in several areas along Spruce Street.



**⑱ Cheney Elementary - 1859
126 Cedar Street**

Served as a school for children of the Cheney family and some of their employees. Now houses the Old Manchester Museum.