

# THIS IS MANCHESTER

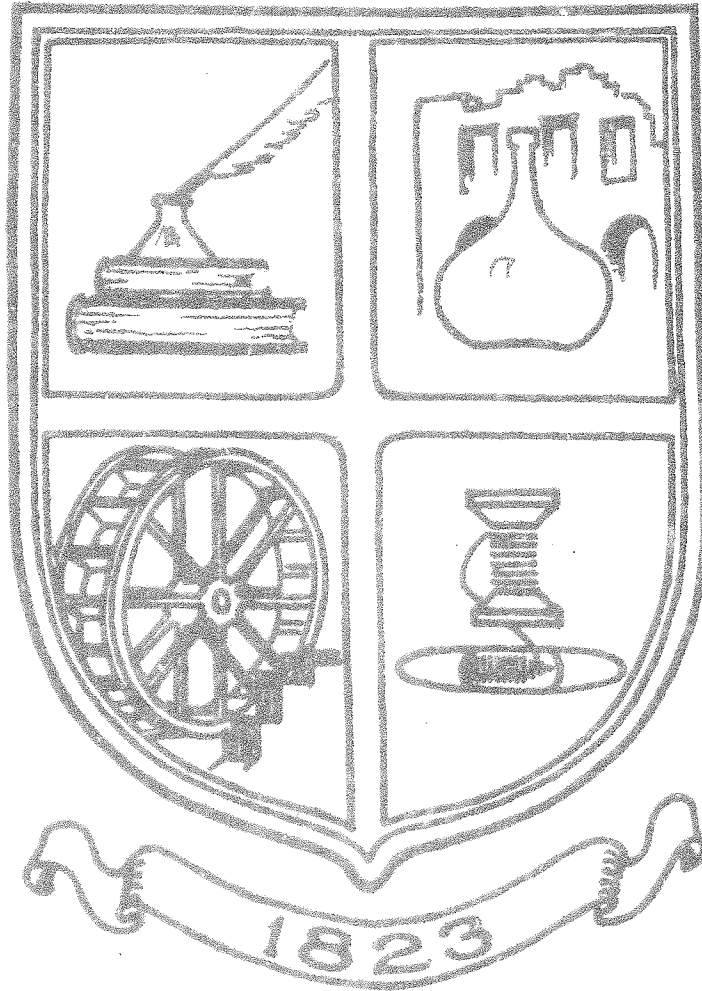
Notes regarding “This Is Manchester” booklet, re-published in 1965 by the Board of Education, and probably originally prepared in the 1950s. Reprinted in its entirety.

The Manchester Historical Society web site is posting this vintage booklet because it still contains some pertinent information about Manchester – although the booklet is over 45 years old. The lists of schools, parks, religious groups, recreations facilities, and factories (including Cheney Mills) are out of date, as is the picture of an all-male town Board of Directors. Still, the view of the Podunk Indians on pages 13 and 14 has a modern outlook, acknowledging that the settlers took the Indians’ land, cut down the trees, and that many Indians died in battle and from disease. And certainly dinosaur bones and skeletons were found in the Buckland section of Manchester. There’s an interesting comment on page 33 about a rivalry between the North End and the South End. The history of newspapers in Manchester is still of interest, although the Manchester Herald stopped publishing some years ago.

So, we present the booklet with its flaws and charm. Please be aware that it is out of date. Your comments may be directed to the Historical Society or to the webmaster, Susan Barlow.

Posted July 2010

# THIS IS MANCHESTER



Manchester Historical Society Edition



MANCHESTER'S MUNICIPAL BUILDING,  
SEAT OF OUR TOWN GOVERNMENT

## MANCHESTER

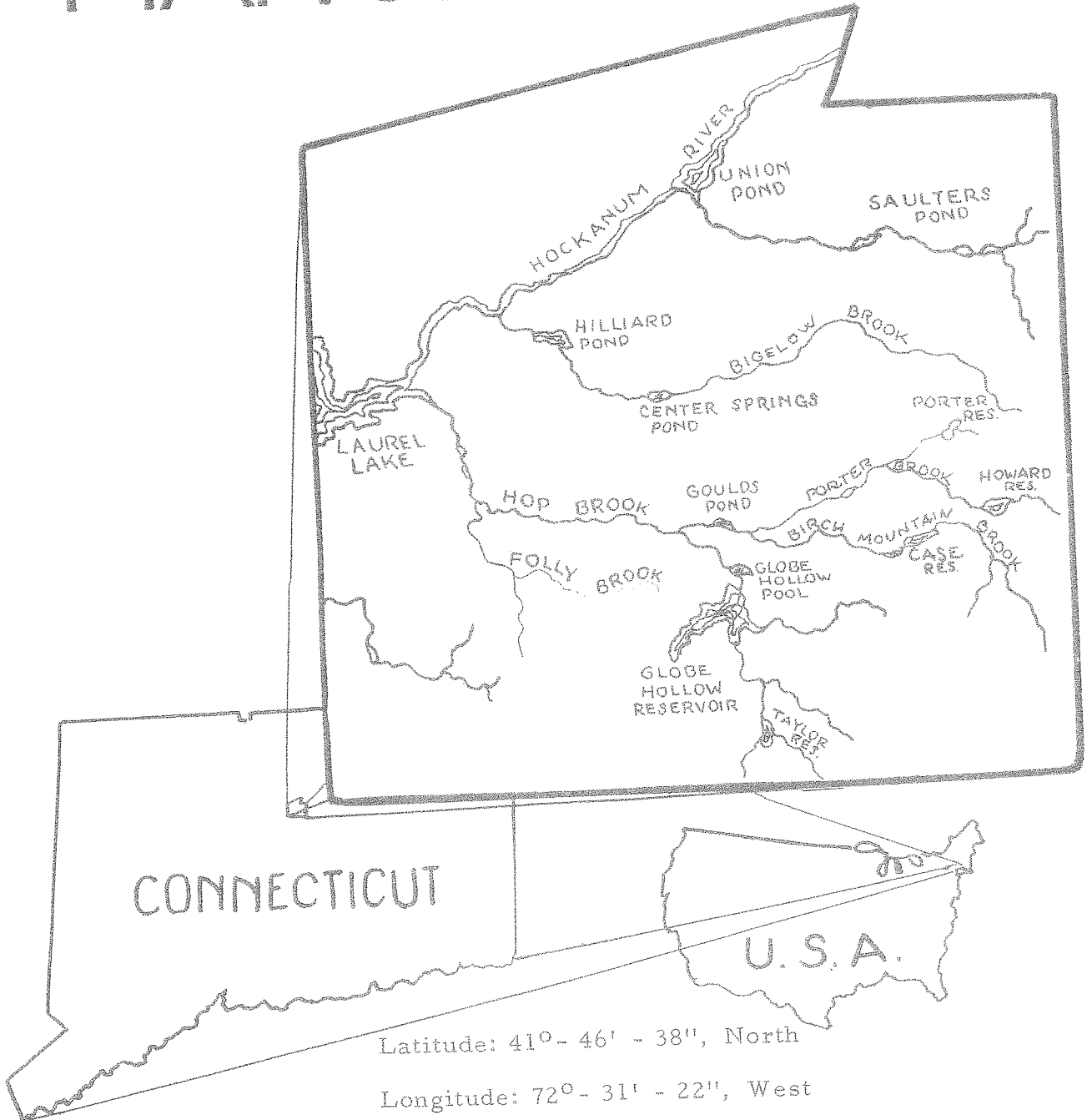
### "THE CITY OF VILLAGE CHARM"

Manchester has a history which is rich and interesting. It is most important to have a record of it preserved for future generations. We in the school system feel that it is most fitting that a group of dedicated, retired teachers and administrators have given of their time and efforts in the compilation of this booklet. We are grateful for their efforts and are confident that it will be an excellent resource.

William H. Curtis  
Superintendent of Schools

With the kind cooperation of the Manchester Board of Education, the Manchester Historical Society is able to sponsor this re-print of This Is Manchester, done for the unit on local history in Manchester schools.

# THIS IS MANCHESTER



Latitude:  $41^{\circ} - 46' - 38''$ , North

Longitude:  $72^{\circ} - 31' - 22''$ , West

Above Sea Level: Low - 70', Laurel Lake  
High - 790', Birch Mountain

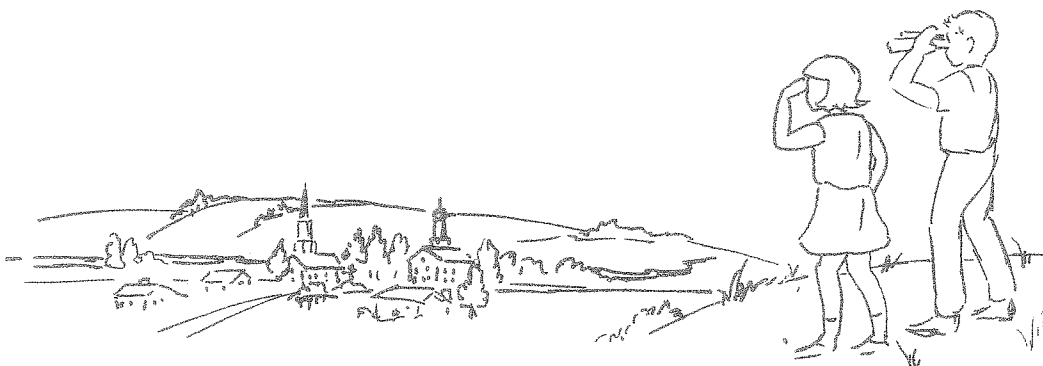


## Introduction

Look at Manchester today. You see beautiful homes and apartments. You see lawns, gardens, shrubs and trees. You see schools, factories, stores, garages, restaurants, churches, fire-houses, hospitals, and libraries. You see parks, hills, hollows, streams, woodlands, trails, and paved roads. In your homes, you use water, gas, oil, and electricity to bathe you, feed you, warm you, cool you, and even entertain you.

There is a wonderful story behind each one of these buildings. There is a wonderful story behind each hill, stream, and utility. You can discover some of these stories. At the beginning, you will see Manchester when it was a barren wasteland. Strange lizard-like reptiles crawled over this wasteland. At the end of the story, you will know how this wasteland grew into a rich community. For millions of years, Nature and Man have been working to make the changes.

First, you will see a picture of Manchester long before a single human being appeared. Nature, alone, was the builder of the hills, the hollows, the streams, the rocks, and the soil. Then Man appeared to build on Nature's foundation.



## Chapter 1

### MANCHESTER BEFORE THE COMING OF MAN

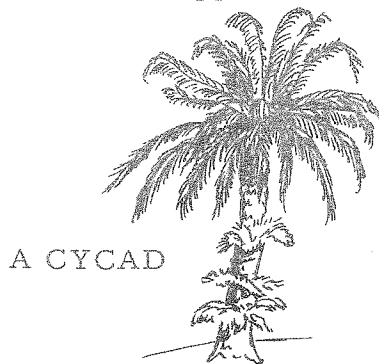
Geologists are men and women who know how to study rocks, soil, skeletons, and fossils. These things are found in caves, quarries, excavations, fields, and woodlands. Geologists know how to read history from these wonders of Nature. This is the history of Manchester's surface above and below the ground that you see.

Deep down in the earth is a firm foundation made of crystalline rocks. Millions of years ago, these rocks were huge molten lumps. The lumps stretched out in melted form and finally cooled. As they cooled, they covered Connecticut with an enormous rocky wasteland.

The ages rolled on: The rocky base was covered by water. Tremendous earthquakes threw up huge mountains in parts of the state. Manchester remained a lowland under water. The first fish and a little plant and insect life appeared. Reptile-like animals roamed the hills.

The ages rolled on: Heavy rains and melting snow carried sand, mud, and clay down from the mountains. This material covered the rocky base with a layer 1,000 feet thick.

The ages rolled on: This layer of sand, mud, and clay hardened into rocks, shale, and sandstone. Ferns, palm-like plants, conifers, and horsetails appeared.



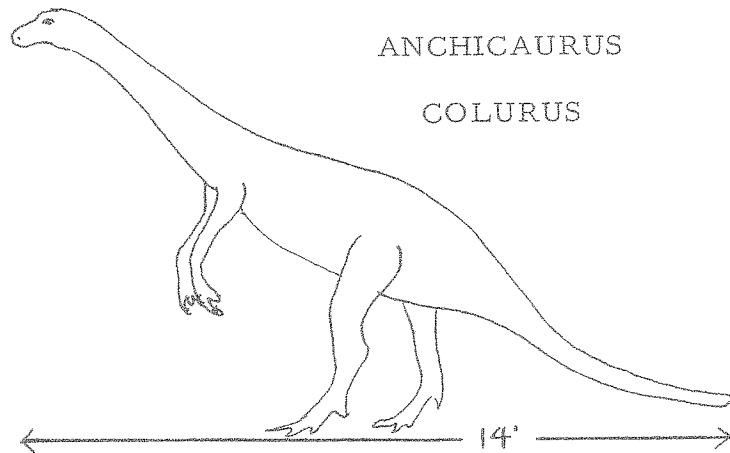


The ages rolled on: The valley settled, producing great cracks.

Sometimes this happens to plastered walls in new homes. Lava spouted up through the cracks and flowed over the surface. The lava cooled and hardened into traprock. Streams from the hills laid a layer of sand, mud, and clay over the traprock.

The ages rolled on: Huge dinosaurs appeared. Four dinosaur skeletons have been

found in Buckland quarry. Footprints have been found in shale in Manchester. The skeletons and footprints prove that a small type of dinosaur lived in Manchester.



The ages rolled on: Streams carried down finer particles of sand known as silt. Soil became more fertile. Hordes of reptiles and insects appeared.

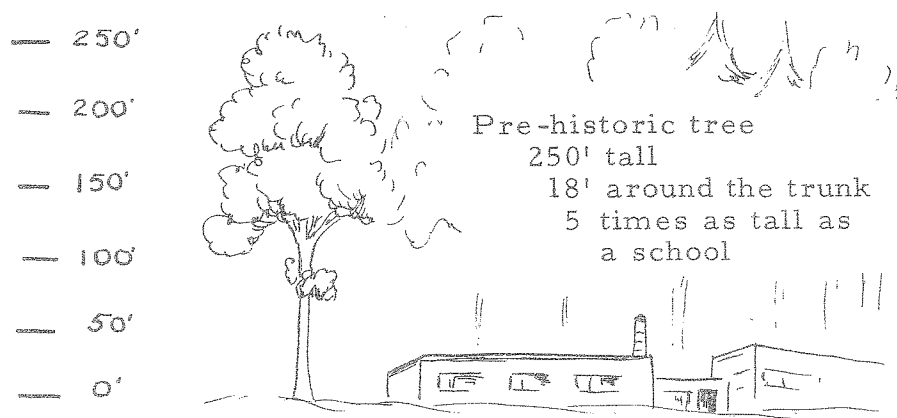
The ages rolled on: Another powerful earthquake shattered and tilted the traprock. Case Mountain (Lookout Mountain) at Highland Park was thrown up at this time.

The ages rolled on: Streams continued to wear down the mountains, depositing rocks, soil, and silt in lowlands. Shrubs, trees, grass, flowers could now grow in larger quantities. Now animals of the mammal family appeared.

The ages rolled on: The Ice Age arrived. Down from the North came the great glaciers. A vast ice sheet thousands of feet thick crept over Connecticut. This powerful sheet pushed and carried rocks, boulders, and soil and dropped them miles away from their original positions. Nearly all the soil in Manchester was delivered by the glaciers. Look around you today. You see that Man has built stone walls with the glacier rocks. Man raises tobacco in Buckland in glacier sand. Glacier rocks still dot Manchester's fields, woodlands, and roadsides.

The ages rolled on: The climate became warm and the ice melted. Large amounts of soil had been spread over the surface. Now bigger and better vegetation could grow.

You now have a little picture of Manchester as it looked ages before a single man appeared. You know some of the reasons for the hills and mountains, the hollows, the rocks, and the soil. You are now ready for the first human beings to appear in Manchester.



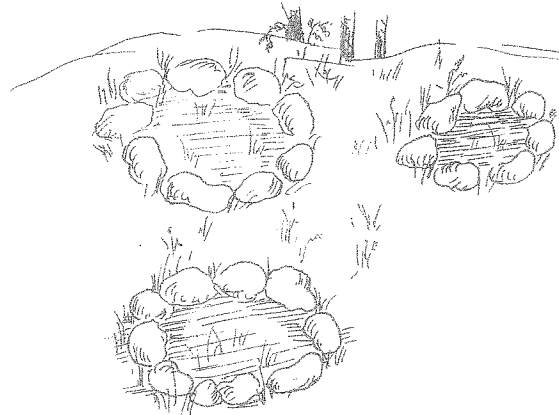
## Chapter 2

### MANCHESTER'S FIRST INHABITANTS: PODUNK INDIANS

Thousands of years ago, the human beings who lived in Connecticut had reddish brown skins, high cheekbones, and straight black hair. The men were tall, slender, and strong. They were members of the race called Indians.

The first small group of white men came to Connecticut in 1634. They were looking for a place to make homes for their families. They found the Indians living on a beautiful land. The land was covered with trees and laced with many rivers. The largest river, the Connecticut, crossed through the middle of the land and emptied into Long Island Sound. Two smaller rivers, the Podunk and the Hockanum, flowed into the Connecticut River at a spot now called East Hartford. Manchester, your town, is located on the Hockanum River. You will want to know the story of the Indians who lived here. They were a very small tribe called the Podunk Indians.

The Podunks were a peaceful people. They wished to make friends with the first white settlers who came to Manchester in 1670. At that time these Indians had at least four villages here. One was located on Olcott Street where the Verplanck School now stands. One was on West Center Street and another was on Bush Hill (Brush Hill).



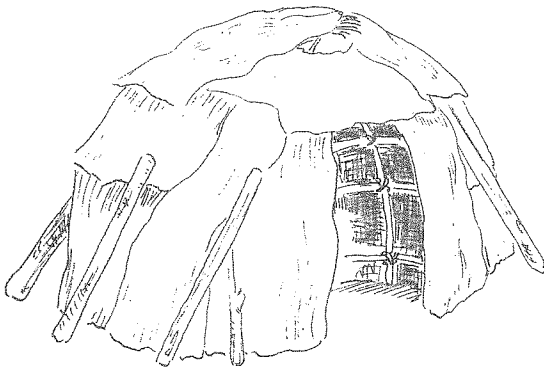
INDIAN FIREPLACES

Many arrow and spear points have been found at these camp grounds. On Eastland Drive you can still see several of their fireplaces and a huge boulder with a bowl-shaped dent in it where they cracked their nuts. The Podunks set up a camp here each fall in nutting season.



The Podunks built temporary homes called wigwams. They set poles in the ground in a circle. They bent and fastened the poles together at the top. They covered the sides with matted boughs and thatched the top with

reeds and rushes. Beds were their only furniture. A bed was made with a framework of branches and covered with the skins of animals.



WIGWAM OF THE  
PODUNK INDIANS

Indian men provided food for the family. They hunted in the woods and fished in the streams. The woods contained wild turkey, quail, partridges, pigeons, raccoons, rabbits, deer, and bears. They also used cranes, geese, ducks, otter, and beaver for food. From

the streams, they fished trout, eels, and shad.

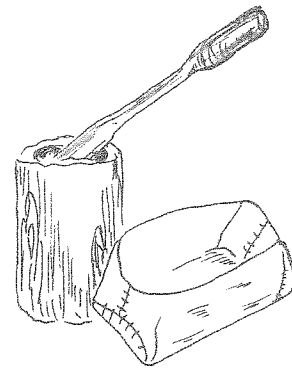
For hunting, the Indian men used bows and arrows. They made bows from tough wood and strings from animal sinews or reeds.

Arrows were made from reeds or elder sticks tipped with flint or stone. For fishing, the men used hooks made from animal bones and spears made of sharpened stone.

The Podunks' clothing was made of cured animal skins sometimes trimmed with shells, bright stones, or animal teeth.

Indian women raised and harvested the crops. Their crops were corn, beans, squash, and tobacco. For digging the soil, the women used wooden spades. Sometimes a strong shell was attached to a wood handle to make a sharper spade.

Dishes were needed for preparing food. Wooden bowls were dug out of tree knots. Stone bowls were chipped out of rocks. Pots were shaped from earth and baked in the fire. Pails were made from birch bark. Rush handles were attached to the pails.



Indians had footpaths or trails leading from one village to another. East Center Street and West Center Street made "the Great Trail". Tolland Turnpike was the Podunk trail that led to Snipsic Lake. For water travel, they used canoes. There were two kinds of canoes. One was built on a very light frame and covered with birch bark. This kind carried only one or two Indians and tipped over easily. Bigger canoes were also made. The Indians cut down a large tree trunk and scooped out the inside. The outside of the trunk formed the framework. The men carved the sides and ends into the desired shape. This large canoe was called a dug-out. It held about twenty people.

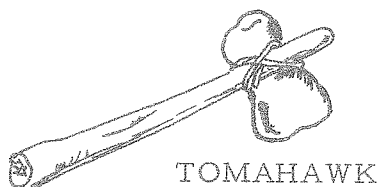
The Indians had no schools and no school books as they had no written language. The children were taught by their parents. Some day, little Indian boys and girls would become adults. There was much knowledge that they needed for their grown-up duties.

Mothers taught little daughters to weave and to make baskets and clay dishes. Mothers taught daughters to cure skins to make clothing and blankets. The little girls were taught to prepare food and care for babies. Little children learned how to keep the fire going and how to raise crops. They would need all these skills.

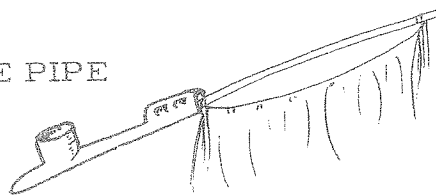
Fathers taught their sons how to make and handle canoes. Fathers taught the boys how to fashion bows and arrows and how to hunt and fish. Young boys learned the art of warfare. An Indian man's important duty was to protect his family.

Instead of money the Indians used wampum, which was made by fastening especially pretty shells or stones or beads to strips of skin. Wampum was used for trading and for ornament.

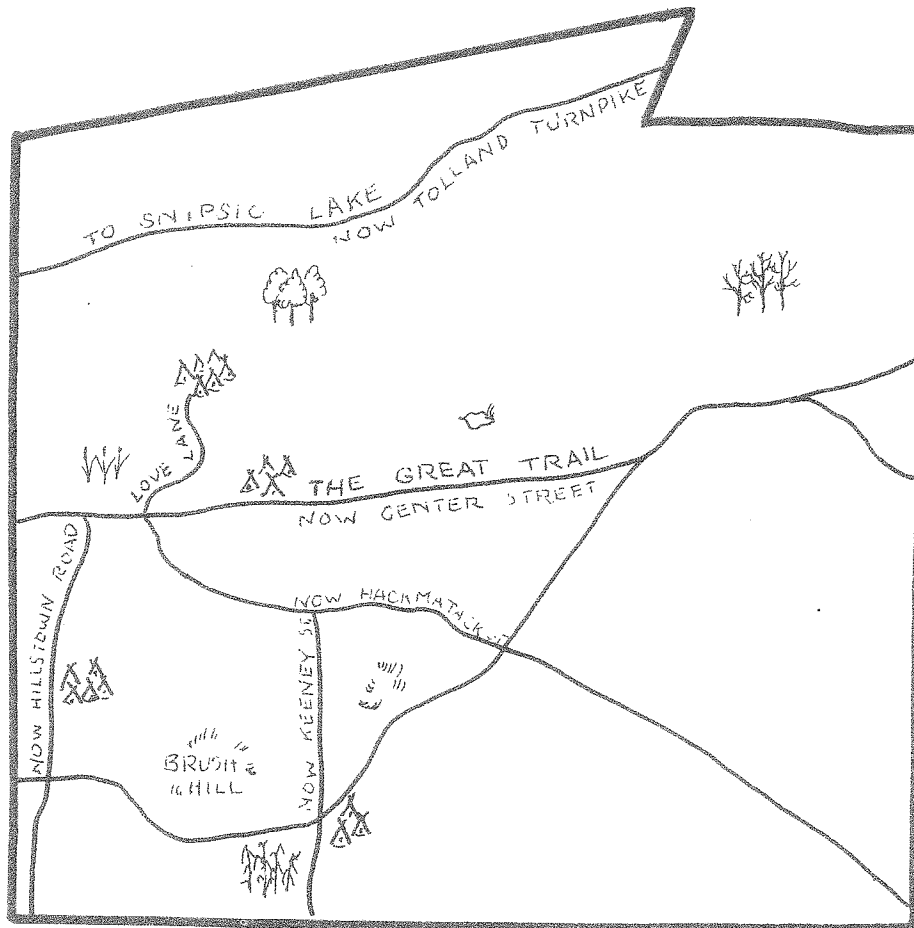
The early Connecticut white men learned much from these Indians. The newcomers had had no experience of living in a wilderness. They could not have survived if they had not copied Indian methods of life. People in Manchester still enjoy one of the things learned from the Indians. It is a kind of food called succotash. The Indians had learned the art of blending fresh corn from the cob with the beans that they grew.





PEACE PIPE





PODUNK INDIAN TRAILS AND VILLAGES IN MANCHESTER





 = Podunk Villages


 = Podunk Trails

 = Swamp where the Podunks hid from their enemies, the Pequots.

 = Corn fields which they planted on high ground where the frosts did not come as soon as in the valleys.

 = Osage orange trees whose wood the Podunks used for bows.

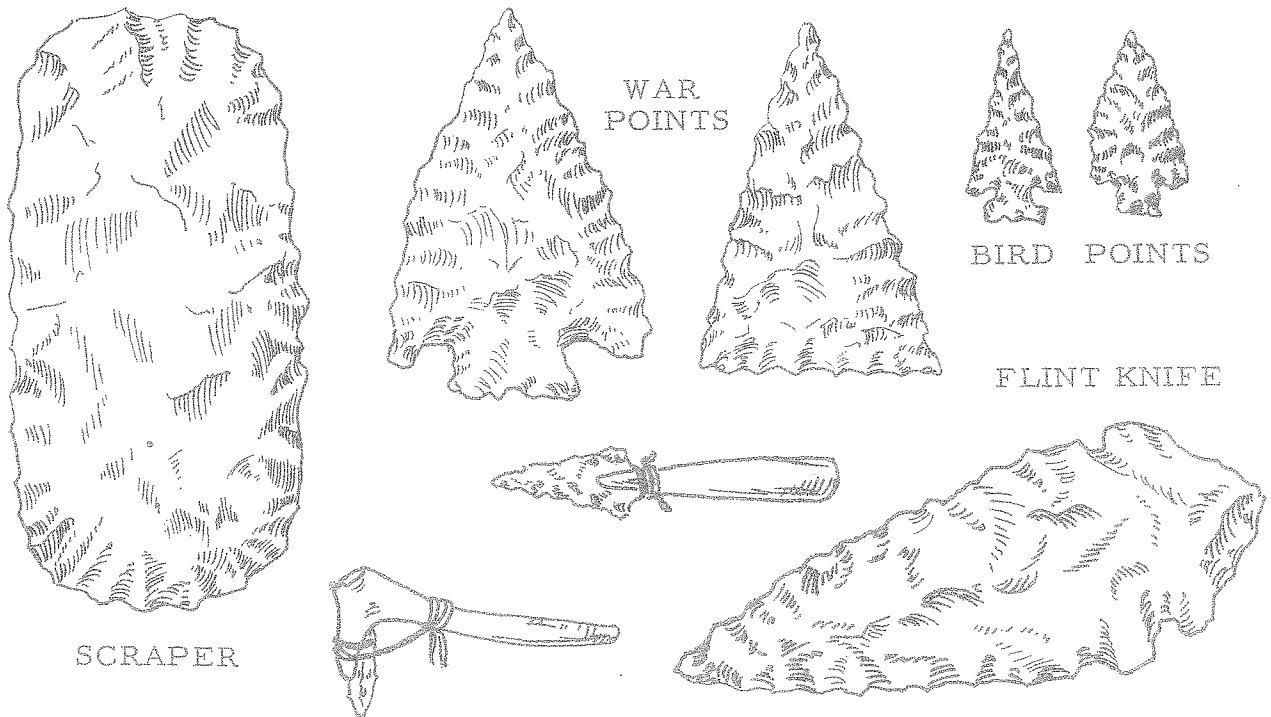
 = Hickory groves where the Podunks set up camp during the nutting season.

 = Center Springs Falls where the Podunks fished for lamprey eels.

In time the Indians grew to dislike the white settlers for many reasons. The white men took their land and cut down their trees to make permanent homes. The Indians lost their hunting grounds and the animals they needed for food, clothing, and shelter. Battles between Indians and white men took place. Bows and arrows were no match for the settlers' muskets and gunpowder. Many Indians died in battle and from disease. Many Indians left Connecticut and traveled westward to look for new hunting grounds. When Manchester became a town, there were few Indians left in any part of Connecticut.

You now have reached the period in Manchester's history when the very earliest human beings, the Indians, had left. You will now follow the story of Manchester's history as more and more white people came to make permanent homes.

#### INDIAN TOOLS AND WEAPONS





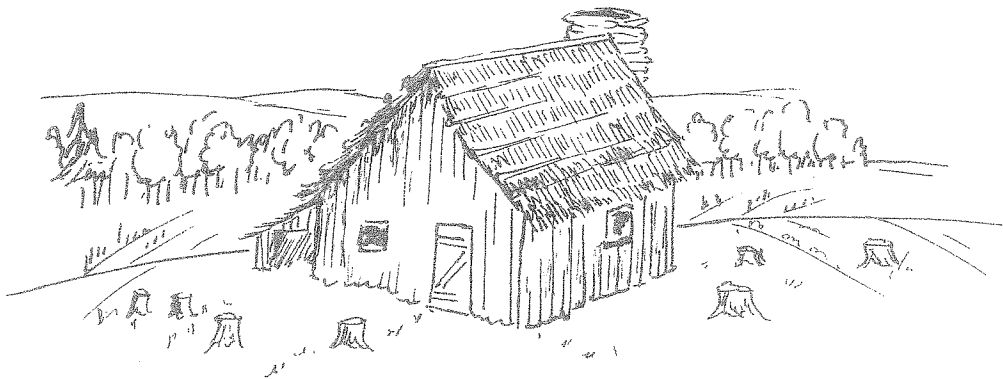
## Chapter 3

### MANCHESTER IN COLONIAL DAYS

Three hundred years ago, the first settlers came from Massachusetts to the area now called Manchester. This area was not called Manchester then. It was a part of Hartford. Hartford bought from the Indians a tract of land stretching from Hartford's eastern boundary to the Bolton Hills. The eastern part of this purchase finally became the town of Manchester. Later on in Manchester's story, you will hear Manchester called Five Mile Tract. Then you will hear Manchester called Orford Parish. Finally, it will be called by the name you know, Manchester. You see, it takes a long, long time to create a community.

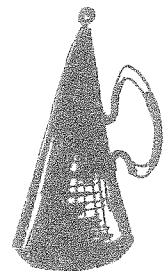
These colonists began their new lives near the Hockanum River, Bigelow Brook, and Hop Brook. This new life was busy and dangerous. The area was a forest land where wild animals roamed for food. These early settlers had to cut down trees and burn brush to provide cleared land for homes and farms. They needed pastures for the few cattle and sheep they had brought with them.

The colonists built log houses thatched with long grass. The windows were covered with oiled paper to let in the daylight. At night, heavy wooden shutters were closed for protection against the weather and the Indians.



People suffered in these first homes. Cold winds blew in and snow drifted over beds at night. The kitchen was a very cheerful place. A fireplace was used for heat, light, and cooking. Seats were built at the ends of the fireplace. Here the children sat at night and watched the merry sparks fly up the chimney.

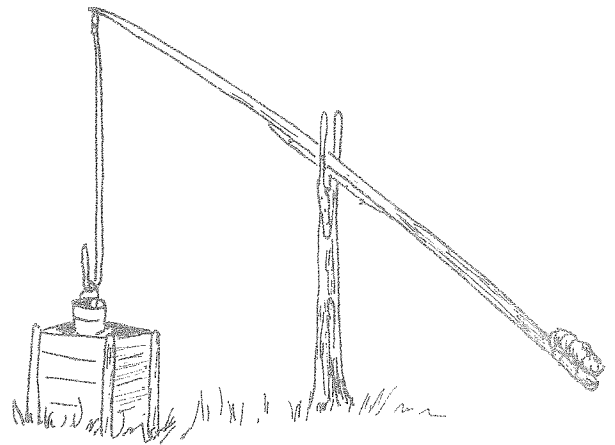
It was important to keep the fire going in the fireplace. To make a new fire took about half an hour. Flint and steel were rubbed together to make a spark. The rubbing was done just above a small tinder box. This tinder box contained pieces of cloth called tinder. The dry cloth finally caught the sparks and began to burn. This was the beginning of a new fire. To save time, sometimes the colonist borrowed live coals from a neighbor.



Food was prepared in a large kettle and cooked in the fire-place. It was served in wooden bowls called trenchers and eaten with wooden spoons. Later, dishes were made of pewter. Pewter is a soft metal made of tin and lead.

Drinking water came from wells which the settlers dug in the ground. Some of these wells with well-sweeps and buckets can still be seen.

There were no clocks or watches in these early homes. Hour glasses and sundials were used to tell time.

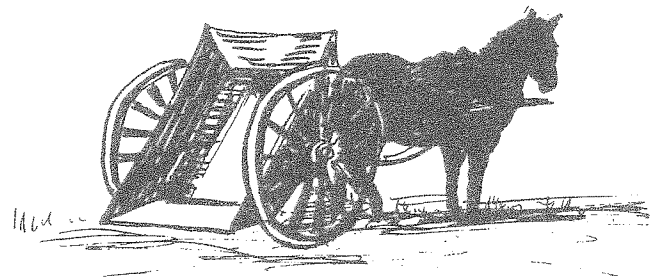


COLONIAL WELL-SWEEP

The woods and streams provided some food for the settlers. They also raised crops on the land they had cleared. Their chief crop was corn, which they ground into meal by hand with a mortar and pestle. This skill they learned from the Indians. They also raised rye, barley, wheat, oats, beans, pumpkins, squash, tobacco, hemp and flax. Later in the colonial days, apple, pear, plum, and peach trees were started. Gradually the colonists began to grow many kinds of vegetables, such as peas, turnips, lettuce, beets, carrots, and radishes.

It must have been difficult for these early farmers to prepare the soil for planting. The glacial rocks had to be dug from the fields. Wood was the only material they could use for garden tools. A little iron could be found. This iron was used for the tips of hoes, spades, axes, and wooden plowshares.

Clothing was made from the fleece of sheep. The fleece was cleaned, dyed, carded, spun, and woven into cloth by hand. This rough cloth was called homespun. Hemp and flax from the fields were also made into woven cloth. In many homes the whir of the spinning wheel and the click of the handloom could be heard.



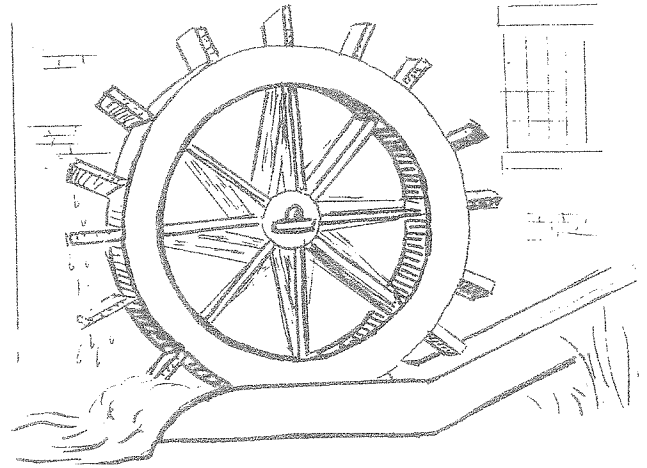
MARVIN CONE CART  
MADE AT MANCHESTER GREEN

The settlers traveled by foot and ox-cart along the Indian trails. Gradually the footpaths widened into rough roads. Later a few horses were brought from England to

help with the plowing and traveling. Wagons drawn by horses appeared. People began to ride horseback.

The first mills were built on Hockanum River, Bigelow Brook, and Hop Brook. Large water wheels were used to draw power from the water to run the mills. Saw mills made lumber from trees. Grist mills ground

grain into flour. A blacksmith shop at "The Green" made iron shoes for oxen and horses, and carts, wagons, plows, and other farm tools. The blacksmith hammered out nails and hinges. These mills made life much easier for the colonists. A copper mine was opened in the



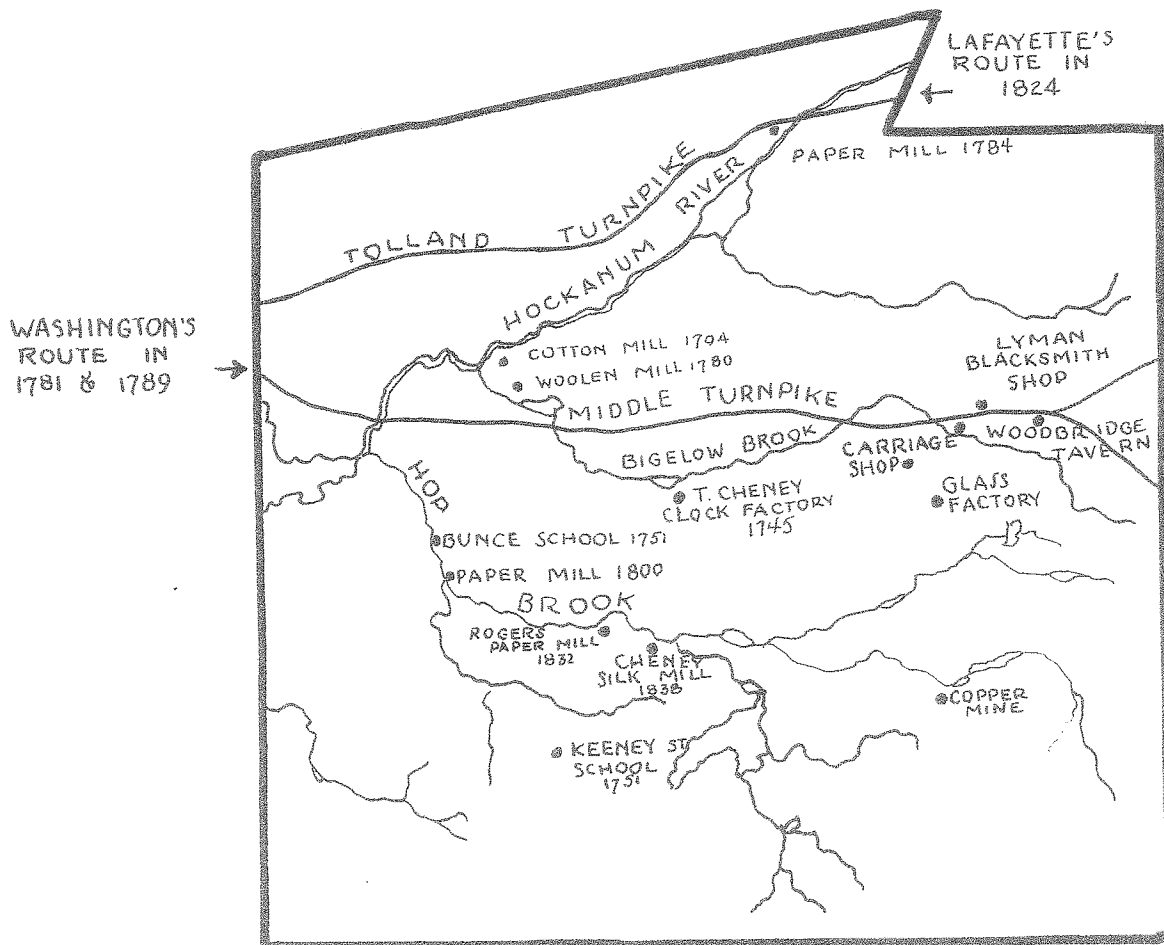
UNDERSHOT WATER WHEEL

Highland Park area but it was not profitable. In a shop at the spot where Center Springs Park is now located Timothy Cheney made tall wooden clocks with wooden wheels. This type of clock was called a grandfather's clock. Now it was easier to tell time. One of the inventors of the steamboat, Fitch, was an apprentice in the clock shop.

The first school was raised about 200 years ago on Thanksgiving Day in 1751. This school was located on Hop Brook across the street from the place where Bunce School now stands. It was a one room school. Pupils sat facing the wall on long benches.

Long shelf-like desks lined the walls. The room was heated by a wood-burning stove. Parents and schoolmaster supplied the wood. Drinking water for the children was furnished by the nearest home. A common dipper was used by all. Of course, there was no paper, but each child had a slate and a slate pencil for his writing.

At the beginning of the first chapter of Manchester's history, you looked at Manchester as it is today. You can now see the very early beginnings of some of Manchester's homes, factories, schools, farms, and pasture lands. There is still a long story ahead before you will know how Manchester became a rich community with many valuable possessions.



## Chapter 4

### MANCHESTER DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR AND THE EARLY DAYS OF OUR REPUBLIC

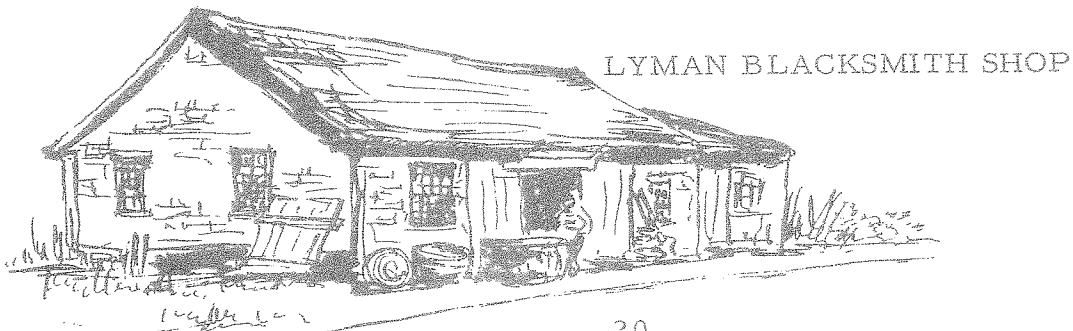
When the first farm homes were built in the Five Mile Tract, Connecticut was a colony. The colony belonged to the country of England across the Atlantic Ocean. The English government made the laws which the colonists had to obey. Many of these laws favored the English people over the American colonists.

In 1775, the thirteen colonies in America rebelled against such laws in the Revolutionary War. The fighting lasted for six long years, causing much suffering and hardship.

Not long before the American Revolution, the nearly one hundred farmers in the Five Mile Tract had been given permission to have their own church instead of attending church in East Hartford. The new church community was named Orford Parish. The Center Congregational Church stands where Orford Parish built its early church.

At the beginning of the Revolution, twenty-five men and boys from Orford Parish enlisted in the army led by General George Washington. General Washington stopped at the Woodbridge Tavern in Manchester Green on one of his trips through Connecticut.

Paper made in Union Village in the north end of Orford Parish was used for the Hartford newspaper which printed the news of the first battle in the Revolutionary War, the Battle of Lexington in Massachusetts.



Some of the gun powder used in the Revolutionary War was made in a mill near Manchester Green owned by Elisha and William Pitkin and Samuel Bishop. As payment for making the powder, the Pitkins were given permission to be the only manufacturers of glass in Connecticut for twenty-five years.

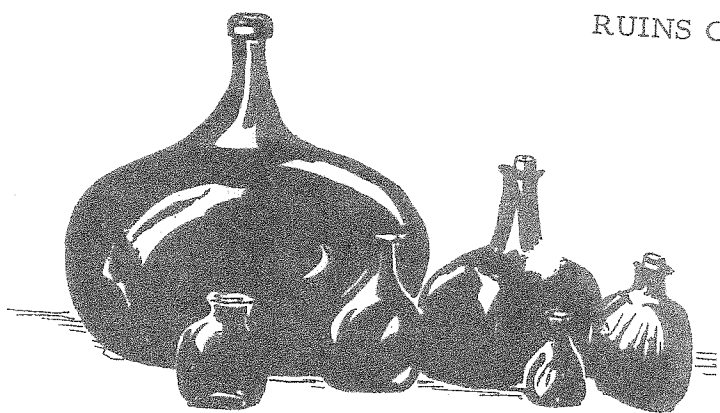
In 1781, the thirteen colonies became the thirteen states of the United States of America. In 1823, Orford Parish became the separate town of Manchester.

There was an increase in manufacturing in Manchester during and after the war. Power to turn the big mill wheels came from the water of the Hockanum River or Bigelow Brook or Hop Brook.



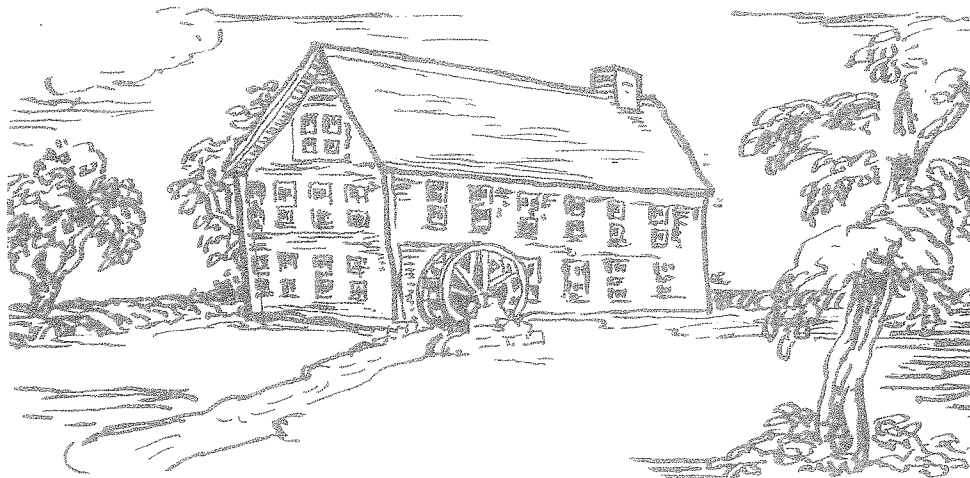
#### RUINS OF THE PITKIN GLASS FACTORY

The Pitkin Glass Works made glass bottles. Very large bottles were used for sending cider to the West Indies. Many small bottles of dark brown or dark green glass were made.



PITKIN GLASS BOTTLES

The most important of the new town's industries was the manufacture of silk thread. Seven brothers in the Cheney family opened a silk mill on Hop Brook. From the first small two-story building grew Manchester's largest industry for over a hundred years.

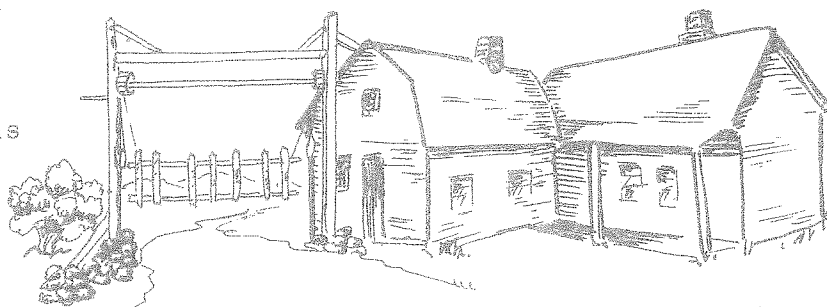


CHENEY BROTHERS FIRST MILL, 1838

New business and more people brought a need for new roads. Two turnpikes were built through the town. Travelers had to pay a toll for the use of either Tolland Turnpike in Buckland or Middle Turnpike. The number of taverns for providing food and lodging in Manchester increased.

People traveled on horseback or in big coaches pulled by teams of horses.

Another war would soon change Manchester's way of life again.



TOLL HOUSE ON MIDDLE TURNPIKE  
OPENED IN 1796



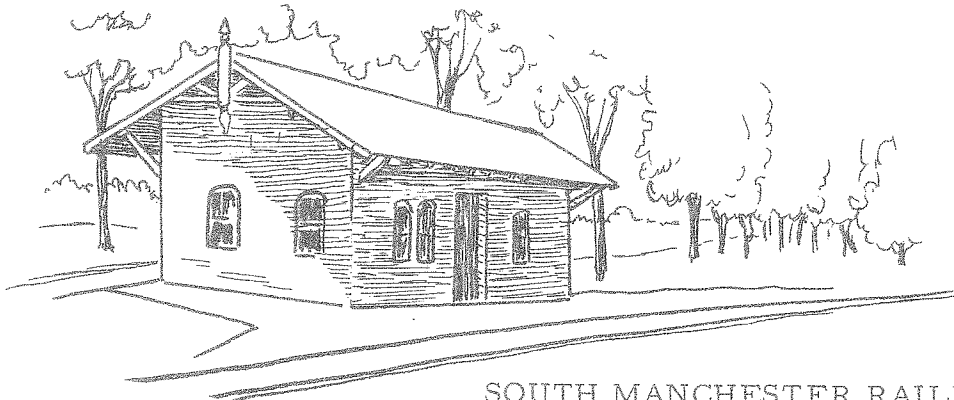
## Chapter 5

### MANCHESTER DURING CIVIL WAR TIMES

During the first 150 years of Manchester's story, you met many settlers. They cleared land for homes, farms and pastures. They widened roads. They started trading with people outside of Manchester. They used the roads and rivers for shipping their products. They started factories, schools, and a church. They fought in the Revolutionary War to make the United States a free country.

All the early settlers had been born in England. Their children and grandchildren continued to make Manchester grow. Today, Manchester people have ancestors who were born in many foreign lands. They, also, have helped Manchester to grow into a rich community. Why did this change in ancestry happen?

Manchester factories grew in size. New kinds of mills were started. Mill owners could not find enough men in Manchester to do the work. The owners urged workers to leave their native lands to earn money here. Many came to Manchester from England, Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Poland, Italy, Germany, and other foreign lands to make permanent homes. These people were called immigrants. The immigrants, their children, and their grandchildren have helped Manchester to grow.



SOUTH MANCHESTER RAILROAD STATION

The factories produced many more goods than they could use. In 1850, the Hartford, Providence, and Fishkill Railroad was built. The railroad carried Manchester's products to the outside world. It transported people, mail, and raw materials into Manchester. Of course this railroad was much faster than the oxcart, the horse and wagon, the stagecoach, and the river barge had been. Many immigrants helped to lay the ties and tracks. These immigrants helped Manchester to grow.

Many of these immigrants joined the churches already built in Manchester. Others built their own churches. No single church could fill the needs of the newcomers.



As the population grew, more schools were needed. The town was divided into sections called districts. There were nine districts and each district had a school. Each school gave free education to children through eight grades. In each school there was a schoolmaster or school dame. There were two private academies for high school education. Only the rich could afford to send their children to them. This high school education was not free. Many pupils who wished to attend a high school journeyed to Hartford for their education.

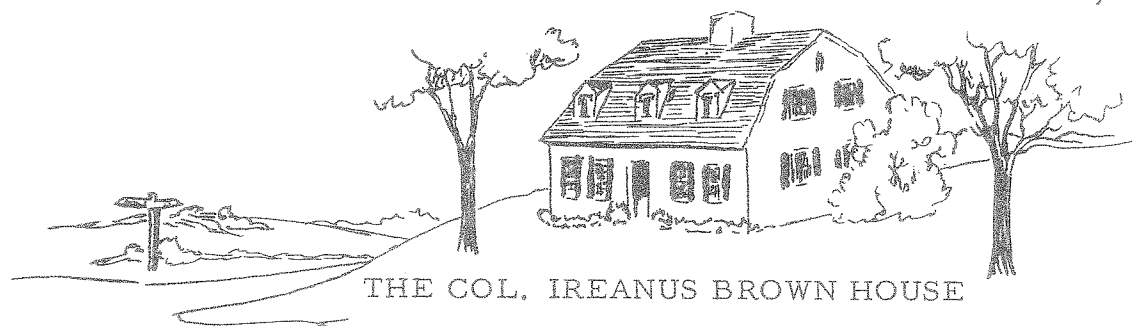
The schools had a larger number of pupils in the winter than in the fall and spring. In the winter, work on the farm slowed down and children's help was not needed at home.

A very sad time came to the United States. Manchester residents felt this sadness. This was the Civil War (1861-1865). This was a sad war because citizens of the United States fought each other. Negro slavery was one of the reasons why the citizens fought.

Southern states grew large crops of cotton. Negroes in Africa were captured and forced to work as slaves on these cotton plantations.

President Abraham Lincoln and many other people felt that it was very wrong to buy and sell human beings. They did not want Indians and Negroes to be used as slaves. Connecticut's state government passed a law in 1848 forbidding slavery in this state. Manchester residents helped Negro slaves who had escaped from their owners to flee to Canada. There was no slavery in Canada. The run-away slaves fled from "station" to "station" in the dark of night. Manchester was a "station". This system was called the "Underground Railroad". On South Main Street in Manchester there is a house which was part of this "railroad". There is a secret closet under the stairs in this house. It is believed that run-away slaves were sometimes hidden here.

The Southern states decided to leave the Union and start a government of their own. This new government was called the Confederacy.



Confederate soldiers fired upon the United States flag in 1861. This started the Civil War. President Lincoln called for volunteers to fight the Confederacy and save the Union. Many Manchester boys and men answered the call. At this time, Manchester was a small town with only 651 voters. During the Civil War, 268 Manchester men fought for their country. Of those 268, forty-eight died of wounds or disease.

Manchester residents helped the United States government in other ways. Workers in a mill in Buckland manufactured warm woolen blankets for the Union army. A Manchester man named Christopher Spencer invented a

repeating rifle. Up to this time, a rifle could fire only one shot. Then it had to be loaded again.



SPENCER REPEATING RIFLE

Two hundred thousand of the repeating rifles were manufactured and used by the Union soldiers.

Finally the Civil War ended, and the Union forces had won. The United States government could again start to grow strong. Manchester residents had helped the Union. They could now return to peaceful living in Manchester.

On Memorial Day, May 30, every year, Manchester people honor the veterans of the Civil War and other wars with a parade and a ceremony at Center Park. In Manchester cemeteries the graves of the veterans are decorated with flowers.

You have probably seen the bronze statue of a Union soldier in Center Park. This statue was erected in 1877 to honor Manchester men and boys who fought to keep our country a united nation, free from slavery.

You have now reached the year 1865 in Manchester's story. Factories have grown and trade has increased. A railroad has been built. More churches and schools have been started. Manchester residents have been saddened by another war. People of several nationalities make up the population. The next one hundred years will bring many more changes to your town.



THE STATUE OF A UNION SOLDIER  
IN MANCHESTER'S CENTER PARK

## Chapter 6

### MANCHESTER'S INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

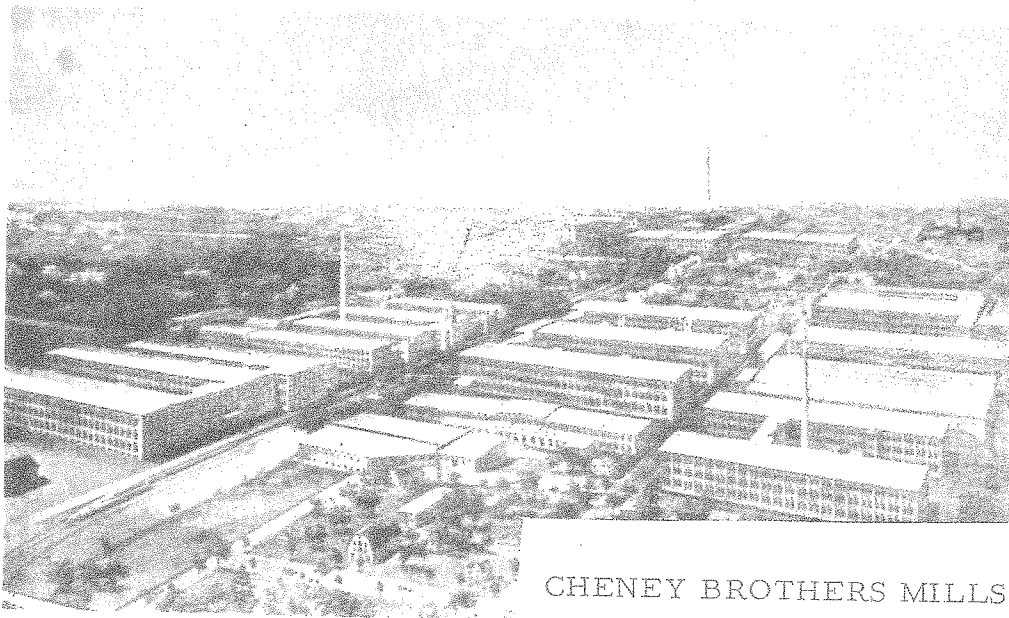
After the Civil War, Manchester changed rapidly. Farmers had set up their own church as Orford Parish in 1772. The next generation of farmers and a few owners of small mills saw their community become the town of Manchester in 1823. By 1870, manufacturing was more important than farming in providing jobs and in bringing prosperity to Manchester.

The Cheney family and the Cheney Brothers Silk Manufacturing Company did much to develop a model manufacturing town. The company began weaving fine silk cloth. All over the nation, ladies wanted their best dresses to be made of beautiful Cheney silk. The company built more mills. More immigrants came to work in the mills. The Cheney company built two boarding houses and many attractive little homes near the mills. Here their workers could live for very low rent payment. The neatness of the mills and the beauty of the lawns and gardens around the Cheney homes set an example. The mill workers followed that example.

Cheney Brothers built a school for their workers' children. The building is now the Lutz Junior Museum. Later the Cheneys built a big school for all children in the south end of town. This school burned in 1913. Cheney Brothers then built the schools which are now parts of Bennet Junior High School. These schools were rented to the town for a dollar a year until 1937. Until 1894, students went to Hartford for high school classes. The first Manchester High School graduating class had six members. Mr. Fred A. Verplanck, for whom Verplanck School is named, was its first principal.

Cheney Brothers organized the first fire department in Manchester near the mills.

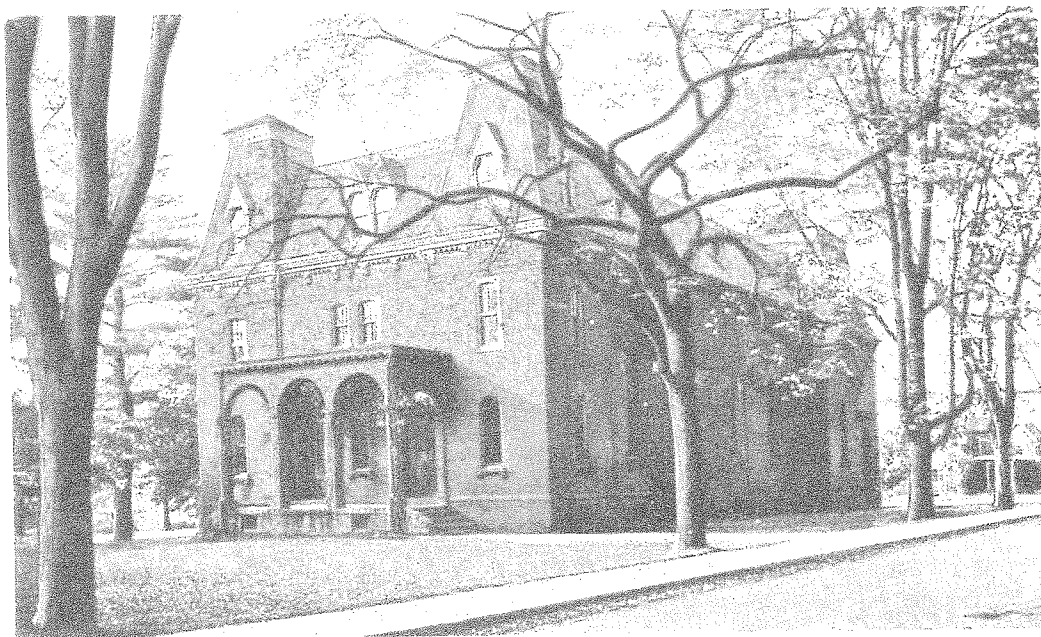
The first library in Manchester began in the Cheney mills. Girls doing weaving found their work more pleasant if someone read aloud to them while they worked. They formed a South Manchester Library Association. They bought a set of 225 books called the Harper Family Library. Some of these books can be seen today in the Mary Cheney Library. The books were kept in Cheney Hall for many years. Almost a hundred years later Cheney Brothers provided part of the money to build the Mary Cheney Library in Center Park.



CHENEY BROTHERS MILLS

IN 1945

Cheney Hall was built by Cheney Brothers to make a place for entertainments and meetings. The lower floor was used as a reading room. Plays were presented on the stage of the main hall. Lectures were given there on subjects of importance in those days. One such subject was whether women should be able to vote. Several groups held religious services there until they could build their own churches. The third floor was an armory for the First Connecticut Militia. A group of boys also had their own military company. They used wooden rifles called "Quaker rifles" because they were not for war. The Quaker rifles were kept in Cheney Hall.



CHENEY HALL, ONCE A CENTER FOR  
SOUTH MANCHESTER PUBLIC ACTIVITY



Cheney Brothers was the biggest manufacturing company in Manchester and had most influence on the town's progress. But there were many other factories in Manchester in the last part of the nineteenth century.

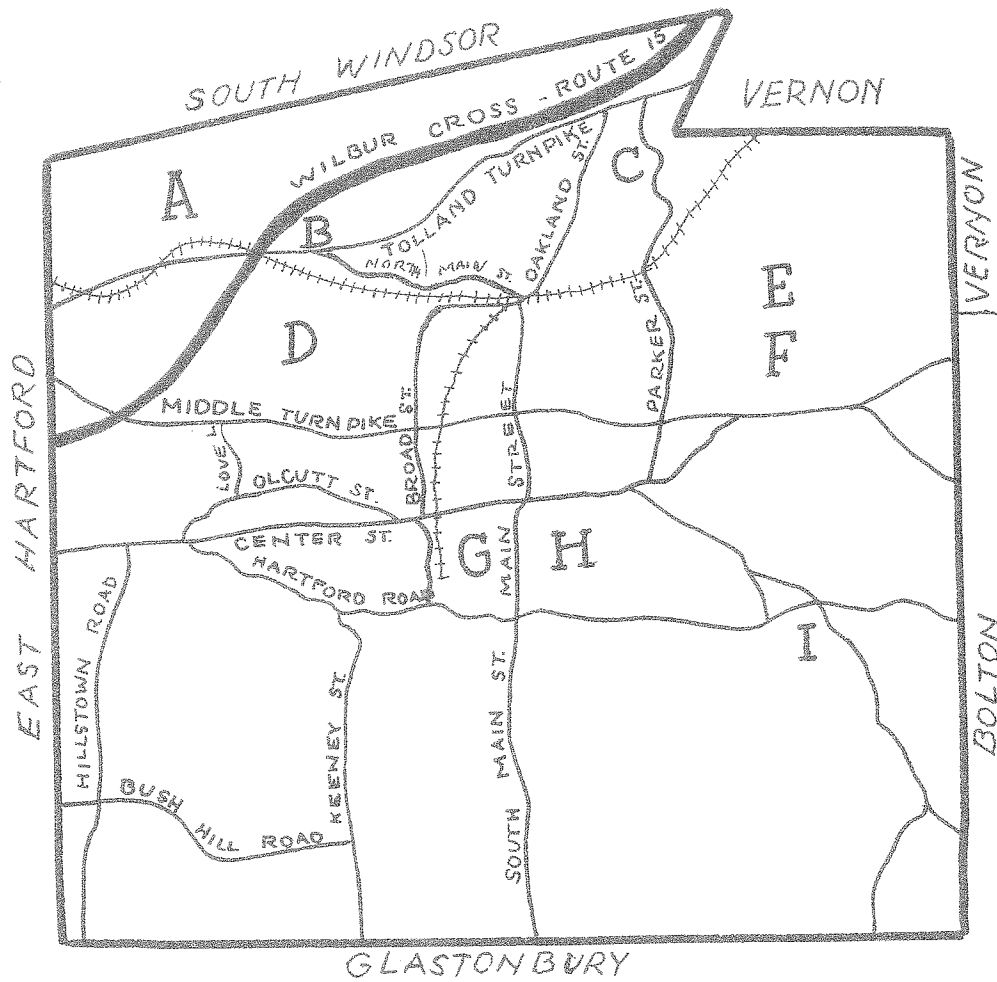
Six mills were manufacturing paper in Manchester at that time. Three have kept up production for nearly a hundred years. They are Lydall and Foulds Company, Case Brothers, and the Rogers Corporation. There was a stocking factory at Manchester Green, a mill making gingham cloth on Union Street in North Manchester, and a woolen mill in Hilliardville. Late in the century several other industries started. The Orford Soap Company began to make a famous cleansing powder, Bon Ami. It was made only in Manchester until 1959. The Norton Electrical Company started the manufacture of meters. This firm has kept up its work in making special instruments ever since.

Family farms grew fewer but large scale agriculture was important in Manchester. Before the Revolutionary War, some farmers in Orford Parish grew tobacco. One Orford Parish man paid his taxes in 1743 with two large barrels of tobacco and a few coins. Tobacco raising became big business in the last part of the nineteenth century. Another big agricultural business that started at that time was the Burr Nurseries. Burr has kept its place as a leading producer of young trees and flowers.

One store which was begun in the nineteenth century has been kept open by the family which organized it. This is Watkins Brothers furniture store.

Three banks were established in Manchester, in the early 1900's, to serve its many business needs.

SOME OF MANCHESTER'S STREETS, ITS RAILROADS,  
ITS SECTIONS AND ITS NEIGHBORING TOWNS



- |      |               |   |                  |
|------|---------------|---|------------------|
| ++++ | RAILROADS     | E | LYDALLVILLE      |
| A    | MEEKVILLE     | F | MANCHESTER GREEN |
| B    | BUCKLAND      | G | WEST SIDE        |
| C    | OAKLAND       | H | EAST SIDE        |
| D    | HILLIARDVILLE | I | HIGHLAND PARK    |

While Cheney Hall served the South End of Manchester for various entertainments, the North End had Apel's Opera House. The name is not very exact. Few, if any, operas were produced there. But local actors used the stage. Some touring play companies put on shows. Some of the earliest moving pictures were shown there. The brick building which was Apel's Opera House stands today where Summit Street joins Oakland.

North Manchester had a library association just after the Civil War. For many years its book collection was kept in a private home and then in the school building. Dr. Francis Whiton left money for the fine library building which is named for him.

For many years there was rivalry and a little bad feeling between residents of the North End and the South End and between those living on the West Side and the East Side. An excellent newspaper has helped to do away with the separation of the town into sections.

Three newspapers started but failed before and during the time of the Manchester Evening Herald's publication. The Herald began in 1881 as a semi-weekly, the first such in Connecticut. The Ferguson family did not start the Herald but the grandfather of the present owners was on the first staff and became owner. Three generations of Fergusons have put out one of the country's best small-city newspapers.

When the twentieth century was born, Manchester was a center of manufacturing and a very progressive community.

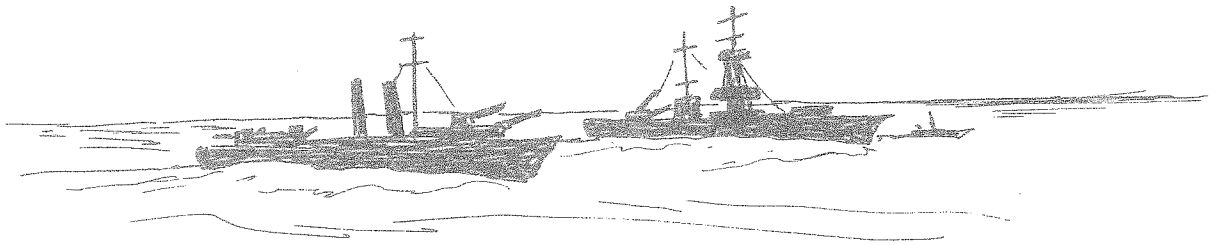
## Chapter 7

### MANCHESTER DURING WORLD WAR I AND WORLD WAR II

School children of 1917 often listened to their grandfathers' stories of the Civil War. Many grandfathers fought and suffered to preserve the Union. They wanted their grandchildren to remember the brave deeds of the Civil War veterans. Every Memorial Day, these children collected flowers for the graves of veterans in Manchester cemeteries. Every Memorial Day these children marched to Cheney Hall to sing The Star-Spangled Banner and Battle Hymn of the Republic. At Cheney Hall a pupil recited Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Even the smallest children knew that the Civil War was fought to keep a strong United States government. A strong Union meant freedom for all.

In the Spring of 1917 these same children saw the beginning of a new war. This was World War I. This war had been raging in Europe for three years. The United States entered this war to preserve freedom for all people.

Manchester fathers and big brothers left excellent jobs and comfortable homes to help in the war. These men received some military training in the United States. They were then transported across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe to fight for freedom.



Children became very interested in words. Letters from their loved one contained words the children had never heard before. Some of these words were: comfort kit, fox hole, blimey, No Man's Land, pup tent, and duffel bag.

During World War I, everyone on the "Home Front" helped in the war for freedom. Almost every family planted a War Garden and canned produce. This meant more food could be sent overseas to the fighting men. The people at home bought Liberty Bonds to give the United States Government money. In every home, the women and girls knitted warm clothing from khaki-colored and Navy blue yarn. The Red Cross provided the yarn and sent the finished clothing to the boys in Europe. The Red Cross set up centers in Manchester churches. At these centers, women made surgical shirts, eye bandages, and surgical dressings.

The war continued. Almost daily, word came to a Manchester home that a loved one had been wounded or killed in action in a foreign land. Many young men died at Camp Devens in Massachusetts during an influenza epidemic. Many children saw, for the first time, a military funeral. They saw a flag-draped casket and military escort. They heard the sounding of "Taps" at the grave.

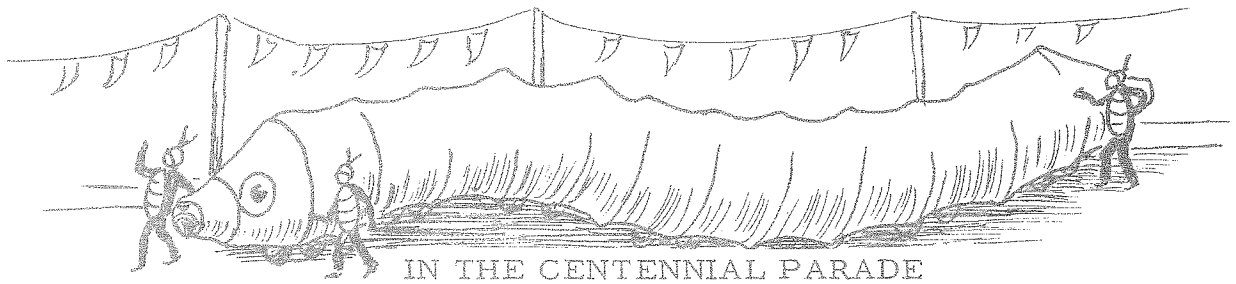
Finally at three o'clock on the morning of November 11, 1918, factory whistles and church bells announced the end of World War I. This was Armistice Day. Manchester people were very happy. It meant that their "boys" would soon be home, and their factories could return to making the things they had so long been without.

They grabbed old tin cans, toy drums, cooking utensils, metal spoons. With these noise-makers, they started a parade to Center Park. By sunrise a throng of people had gathered there. Everyone joined in the singing of hymns of thanksgiving, The Star-Spangled Banner, and America. Later that day, a bigger parade with real bands was organized. Schools, factories, stores were closed. Everyone was on the street celebrating.

In 1919, Manchester residents built a permanent tribute to the heroes of World War I. This tribute was Manchester Memorial Hospital. It was a 56-bed hospital. Today it has grown to be a 300-bed hospital. Forty-three trees were planted on the lawn. These trees honor the forty-three men who died fighting for freedom in World War I.

During World War I, Manchester residents had worked together to do a sad task. In 1923, Manchester residents again banded together to do a big task. This was a very happy task. This was Manchester's Centennial Celebration. The Centennial celebrated the one hundredth birthday of the town of Manchester. For one whole week, Manchester celebrated this important date. School children of Manchester saw and heard the story of Manchester's growth from the days of the Podunk Indians up to 1923.

There was a wonderful parade of floats and marchers. Five thousand people and thirty bands took part.



This is a list of a few of the units in the parade:

an Indian village with real Indians in native dress,  
Colonial homes with old-fashioned flower gardens,  
a replica of Washington's visit to Woodbridge Tavern,  
a stage coach drawn by four horses,  
a blacksmith shop with a blacksmith at work, and  
a huge, squirming silkworm.

There were exhibits, dances, sports events, and a pageant.

A complete Indian village was set up on the Centennial grounds.

There were Indians from a Maine reservation. For the entire week, these Indians lived a true Indian life. There were braves, squaws, papooses, and tepees. The Indians canoed in their birch-bark canoes on a pond. This pond has now been filled in to make Manchester High School's football field.

You have been given a little picture of Manchester's one hundredth birthday party in 1923. You will help to celebrate Manchester's one hundred and fiftieth birthday in 1973. You will want to show this same story of long ago. You will want to show all the marvelous things that have happened since 1923.

After World War I, Manchester continued to grow and change. Free mail delivery came to every home. Electric toasters, washing machines, refrigerators made housekeeping easier. New industries started. Old industries made new products. The population increased. New churches and schools were built. The trolley car disappeared from Main Street. A bus took its place. Radios gave new entertainment in the home. Most Manchester families could afford an automobile.

This happy picture of Manchester life was interrupted for a few years during the Depression in the 1930's. Factories had no orders for their products. Workers had no work. They had no money to spend in stores. They could not pay their taxes. The town had no money to pay employees. Banks were closed. These were very dark days. This was a temporary setback for Manchester. Manchester people worked hard and soon returned to growth and prosperity.

In a violent hurricane, September 1938, Manchester lost many hundreds of its stately trees. Buildings were blown down. Bridges were washed out and more than half the roads in the town were closed. It was weeks before the ruin was repaired.

In 1941, Manchester's life was saddened by another war. The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and the American ships in that harbor in December, 1941. The United States declared war on Japan and Germany two days later. Germany was Japan's ally. Now again a father or big brother was taken away from home and sent to a foreign land to help keep freedom for all people. There was another great danger. For the first time, Americans lived in constant danger of enemy air attack right here in America.

Manchester's peaceful life changed. Everyone gave all his attention to the war effort. Volunteers were needed for many activities. Men and women manned the Air Raid Warning Post in Bolton. Air Raid wardens were trained to protect Manchester's possessions and lives. Emergency hospitals were established. Red Cross workers gave First Aid lessons.

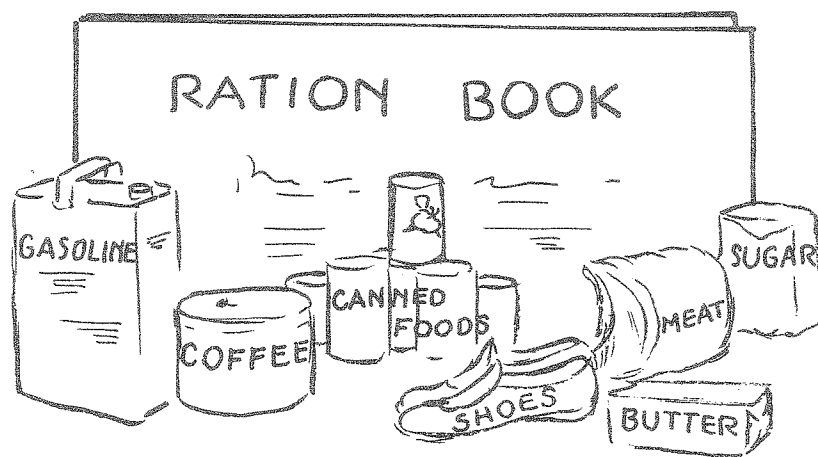


War Bonds were bought to raise money for this expensive war. People took vacations at home. This made more room on trains and planes for troop movements.

School children bravely continued their regular school work. This was not easy. Teachers were scarce. Many had joined the Armed Forces. Schools were over-crowded, because many new families had moved to Manchester. There was a shortage of food, clothing, and places to live. Reports of casualties to their loved ones saddened these children.

Pupils took part in the "old clothes drives" for the needy in foreign lands. They collected waste paper, scrap metal, and milkweed pods. These articles were used to make important war products. Pupils became part-time farmers and grew Victory Gardens.

Manchester teachers worked after school on the rationing program. They were also helpful in the airplane spotting and air raid warden systems.



ARTICLES RATIONED DURING WORLD WAR II

High school pupils worked after school in jobs left vacant when older men joined the Armed Forces. They planned dances for the soldiers stationed at the Armory on Main Street. They studied new courses to help the war effort. "The ABC's of Mending" helped to make clothes last longer. "Fighting Food Wastes in the Home" saved food for the fighting men.

Manchester factories changed to the manufacture of war products. Owners and workers had to learn new skills. Some of the articles produced in Manchester factories by Manchester workers for the war effort were:

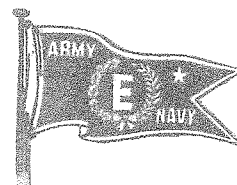
nylon parachutes, mosquito netting, tents,  
plastics for canteen caps and field telephone sets,  
Air Force flying jackets and Army parkas,  
ammeters and voltmeters for ocean-going vessels,  
clutches for anti-aircraft guns, and  
a mechanism for the bomb that forced Japan to surrender.

MATERIALS FOR WAR ACTION  
MADE IN MANCHESTER



One of our factories won the Army-Navy E five times for the excellence of its work.

By 1945, Manchester was a booming war center. The population had risen to 35,000. New houses and apartments were built to make homes for the new residents. Orford Village and Silver Lane homes were built by the Federal Government at this time.



AWARDED FOR  
WAR WORK

Store owners had a hard time. They could not stock their shelves. Many, many articles could not be bought at all. Many, many articles were rationed. Some of the articles that were rationed or completely missing from the stores were: fuel, clothes, meat and dairy products, cigarettes, bedding, ranges, electrical equipment, automobiles and tires, sugar. At Christmas time, little children were given wooden toys instead of metal toys.

The surrender of Germany and later of Japan brought relief and joy to Manchester. This meant the return of loved ones to the home. This meant that Manchester could again become a happy community.

On Veterans' Day, Manchester High School pupils gather at Memorial Field to honor the graduates who died during World War II. For each an American flag is placed in the ground. A granite monument in a parklet on East Center Street honors all the dead of that war, who died to bring peace to our country and the world.

## Chapter 8

### MANCHESTER TODAY

Manchester has turned into the second half of the twentieth century. It lives up to its nickname of "The City of Village Charm."

Manchester is large enough to be a city but the government is still a town government. The Board of Directors governs the town. The nine members of the Board are elected by vote of Manchester citizens. The Board usually meets once a week. They decide what Manchester needs and how much the town can spend on roads and parks and schools and many other items. The Board employs a Town Manager to carry out its decisions. A special committee of citizens is elected as a Board of Education to operate the schools.

The Cheney Company never recovered from the problems of the Depression. The company was sold to owners who do not live in Manchester. Five mills keep the Cheney name. They make velvet, upholstery fabrics and plush for covering toys.

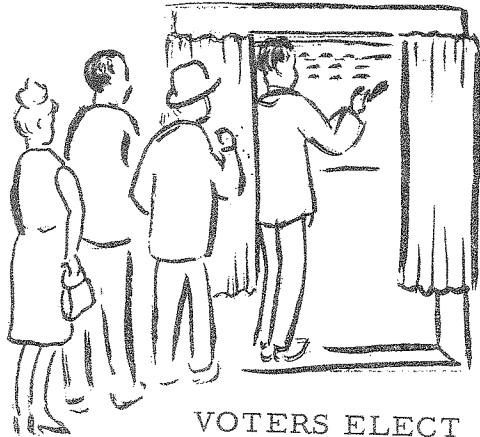
There are many medium-sized and small factories in town. Paper products, tools, machinery, electrical equipment and ladies' coats are produced. No company employs more than 500 workers.

Manchester offers many opportunities for its people to live a pleasant and rewarding life.

Manchester has twenty-two churches and religious groups. Religious services and the activities of groups of adults and of young people who attend the services put religion into living.

Manchester's citizens take pride in their tree-lined streets, and well-kept homes.

# HOW MANCHESTER IS GOVERNED

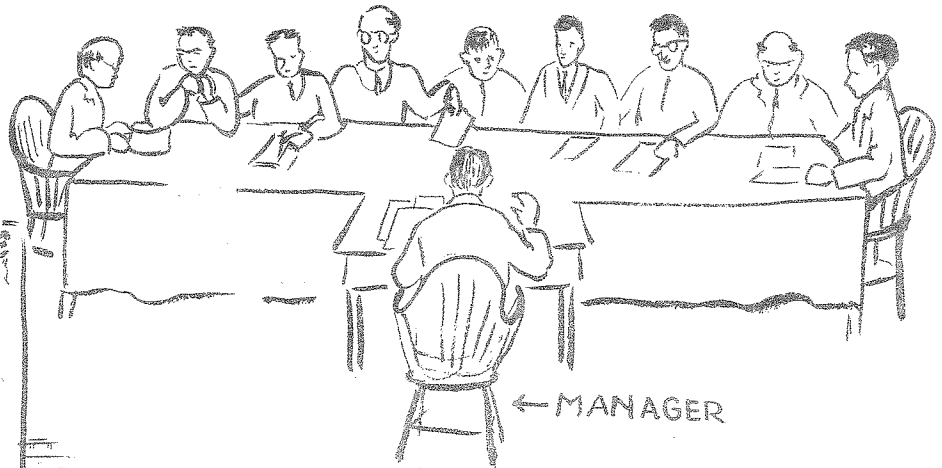


VOTERS ELECT



TOWN CLERK  
who keeps town records  
and issues licenses  
(including your dog license)

NINE DIRECTORS



← MANAGER

who pass town laws, decide on  
how much taxes people will  
pay and how the town will  
spend its money. They appoint  
a manager who has charge of  
most of the town's business.

NINE MEMBERS OF THE  
BOARD OF EDUCATION



who have charge of the schools

Manchester has excellent schools. New schools or additions to older schools are frequently built to serve the increasing numbers of school children. Public schools built since 1950 are: Bowers, Verplanck, Waddell, Buckley, Keeney, Illing Junior High and Manchester High School. New Catholic schools are: St. Bridget, St. Bartholomew, Assumption Junior High and East Catholic High.

The Lutz Junior Museum gives interest to education. Classes at the museum and exhibits sent to the schools make strange things seem real. Costumes and utensils show life in olden times and in foreign countries. Birds and animals become children's friends at the Oak Grove Nature Center.

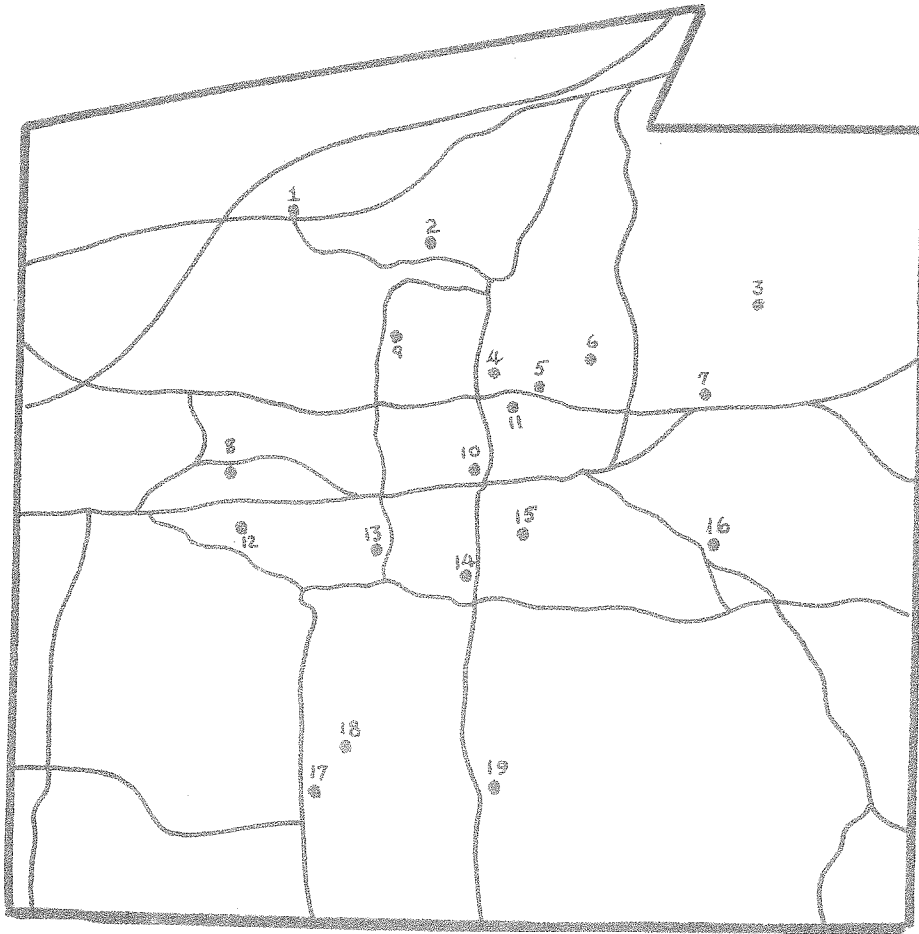
The rapidly growing collection of books and magazines at the Mary Cheney Library, with its branch at the West Side, and at the Whiton Library offer wide reading for study and pleasure.

There are clubs to satisfy every interest. Business men meet regularly in service clubs and in the Chamber of Commerce. They all help the town. National organizations such as the Masons and the Knights of Columbus and the war veteran groups have Manchester chapters. There are music clubs and art clubs, a stamp club and a garden club, and many, many, more.

Manchester offers opportunity for many kinds of recreation. There are athletic teams in the schools, at the East Side "Rec" (Recreation Center), at the West Side "Rec", and at the Community "Y" in North Manchester. The town has sixteen playgrounds, four parks, three outdoor swimming pools and two indoor pools. Three golf clubs are within easy reach of Manchester players.

Merchandise from all over the world is sold at local stores and modern shopping plazas.

# LOCATION OF MANCHESTER'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS



1. Buckland
2. Robertson, named for J. T. Robertson, founder of Bon Ami Company
3. Buckley, named for Dr. William Buckley, Board of Education
4. Bentley, named for its former principal, Thomas Bentley
5. Illing Junior High, named for Arthur H. Illing, former superintendent of schools
6. Bowers, named for Judge and Mrs. Herbert Bowers
7. Manchester Green
8. Verplanck, named for Fred A. Verplanck, first superintendent of all Manchester schools
9. Waddell, named for George Waddell, first town manager
10. Lincoln, named for Abraham Lincoln, Civil War President
11. Manchester High School
12. Orford, named for Orford Parish
13. Washington, named for George Washington, our first President
14. Bennet Junior High, named for Elisabeth Bennet, a principal
15. Nathan Hale, named for Nathan Hale, Revolutionary patriot
16. Highland Park
17. Old Keeney Street
18. New Keeney Street
19. South

Some Manchester people take part in the arts. Others enjoy the arts as observers. The Manchester Community Players and the Little Theatre of Manchester present popular plays often during the year. The Gilbert and Sullivan singers combine lively music with acting in a yearly show. The Art Association has an annual exhibition and keeps delightful examples of local art on view at the libraries and banks. The Community Orchestra and the schools' musical groups bring fine music to Manchester.

In the early days, men and women living in the Five Mile Tract spent many hours getting to church in Hartford and later to East Hartford. When their own church was organized as Orford Parish, they were pleased and proud to be so separated. In Colonial days these neighbor towns seemed very far away.

Since World War II, these towns have been growing closer together. The distance in time between Manchester, East Hartford and Hartford is far shorter now that we have our fine highways, new bridges and so many automobiles. More Manchester residents earn their living in Hartford and East Hartford than in Manchester itself. Many problems seem to need decisions by the several towns in the Capitol Area instead of by single towns. Hartford, East Hartford, and Manchester, once a single community, are today working together again.

Manchester is like a city in the many opportunities it has to offer. It has "village charm" of friendliness and of helpfulness among its people. It has had such a proud past and, with the continuing devotion of its citizens, it cannot help but move onward to an even brighter future.



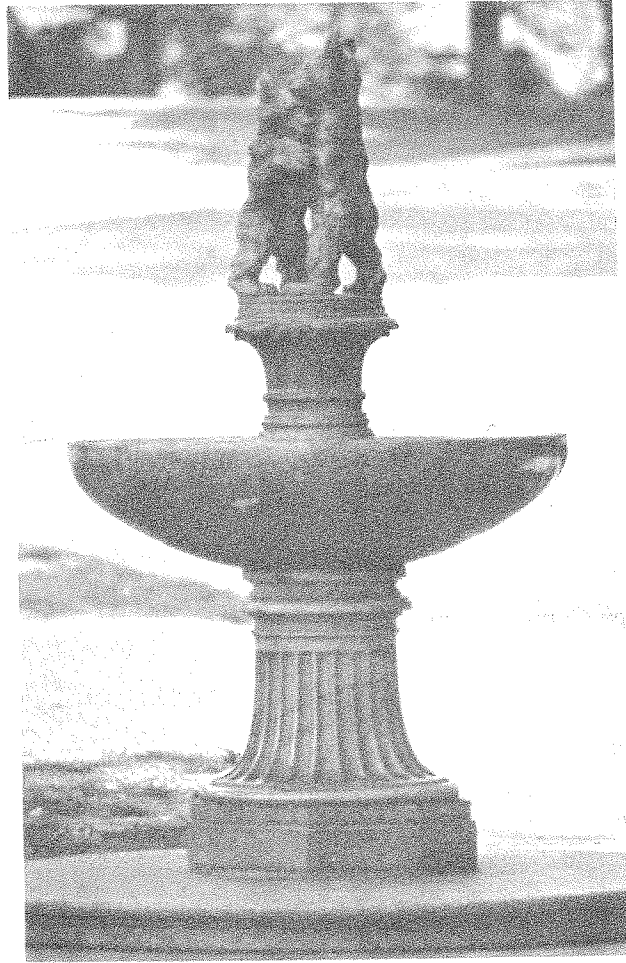
MANCHESTER SONG

*f* in slow march rhythm

This land of ours is full of towns, Of  
The boys and girls of yes - ter - day Are the  
towns both great and small, But  
grown - ups of to - day, To -  
when it comes to prais - ing them, Why, Man -  
mor - row we will lead our town. We'll learn  
ches - ter beats them all  
how thru work and play.

I am proud of my town; Is my town proud of me?  
What she needs is cit-i-zens trained in loy-al - ty;  
When we work and we play with our fel-low-men, Good  
cit - i - zens we will be, Then  
I'll be proud of Man - ches - ter, my town, And I'll  
make her proud of me.

ONE OF MANCHESTER'S MANY BEAUTY SPOTS



THE DANCING BEARS FOUNTAIN IN CENTER PARK

Given by Miss Mary Cheney

Published by Manchester Board of Education - 1965