

GENEALOGY OF CHENEY BROTHERS

Newbury: John¹, Peter², Peter³; Orford Parish: Benjamin⁴, Timothy⁵
 Manchester: George⁶

Gen.	(George W.)	Charles*	Ralph**	Rush**	Ward**	Frank**	John* Beth	Timothy ⁶ (Halsey)
7	1. George W. 2. John S.* 3. William H.* 4. James*	1. Frank W.** 2. Knight D.**	1. Richard O.*	1. Harry* 2. Robert*	1. Arthur* J.F. Frank,			
8	1. Wells (1) 2. Louis (1)# 3. William C. (2) 4. Walter (3) 5. John P. (4)	a. Emily(1) b. Charles(1)** c. Horace (1)* d. Howell (1)* e. John D. (1) f. Seth L. (1) g. Frank D. (1) h. Austin (1) i. Clifford(2)* j. Philip (2)* k. Knight, Jr. (2) l. Thomas (2)	1. Richard, Jr. (1)					1. Thomas 2. Charles S.*
9	John P., Jr. (e)	Ward (b)** Roger (c)# David (d)# Learned: John (a) Horace (a)*						a. C. Herman(2)
10								

KEY = ** President C.B.

* Director C.B.

() Number = son of number gen. 8 above

() Letter = son of letter gen. 9 above

() = Cheneys never in C.B.

= Left the business

Other Cheneys never in C.B.:

Gen. 9: George W. line: Sherwood A. (2)

Charles line: Ward (1), m. Russell (2)

Gen. 10: George W. line: George Wells (a), Benjamin (e)

Charles line: Horace, Jr. (c), Kimberly(d), Timothy(d),

Stuart(f), F. Dexter (g), Edward (g)

Welcome to a Tour of the Cheney Family Cemetery East Center Street, Manchester, CT

Courtesy of the Manchester Historical Society
 Susan Barlow and Ruth Brown, Connecticut Gravestone Network

The contents of this handout were taken from a small book titled
"IF ALL THE GREAT MEN The Cheneys of Manchester"

By Margreta Swenson Cheney (Mrs. Kimberly Cheney)

Written in 1975; revised and reprinted in 1977 by the author especially for the Cheney
 Homestead, Manchester, CT. (built in 1785) and can be purchased for \$3.00.

These are just some Highlights of the Cheney Family History

1635 – John Cheney came to Newbury, Mass.

1724 – **Benjamin** – John's grandson, married Elizabeth Long in Windsor. He bought a grist mill in Orford Parish (now Manchester). His sons Timothy⁽⁵⁾ and Silas⁽⁵⁾ became great clockmakers whose factory was located at what is today Center Springs Park. The water wheel of the factory was powered by Bigelow Brook. A 3rd son Benjamin⁽⁵⁾ eventually bought out his brothers and moved the clock business to Middletown where it continued through the 19th century.

Timothy⁽⁵⁾ 1731-1795 and 4th child of Benjamin⁽⁴⁾ was released from the Army during the Revolutionary war by General Washington in 1776 so that he could make powder sleeves for the army. In the 1780's he bought land at Hop Brook where he made his home and built a saw mill, grist mill, and homestead which is now a museum.

Timothy's⁽⁵⁾ **son Timothy**⁽⁶⁾ married Electa Woodbridge; they had nine children – 8 sons and one daughter: George Wells, John, Charles, Ralph, Seth, Ward, Rush, Frank, and Electa.

George⁽⁷⁾ 1799-1841 married Mary who was the daughter of Calvin & Lovina Cheney. He was busy in the legislature and held positions of Town Clerk and Justice of Peace. He was instrumental in the process of Manchester becoming incorporated in 1823 as was their father. George's sons and grandsons also went into the silk business.

John⁽⁷⁾ 1801-1885 John and Seth were close and both very gifted artists. John became an engraver. His first plate was made out of a copper kettle from his mother's kitchen. After his brother Seth's death he settled down in the Homestead where he died a bachelor at age 84.

Seth ⁽⁷⁾ 1810-1856 was the portrait artist who traveled abroad often working in Boston and Europe. He suffered from bad health and died of tuberculosis at age 46. He lost his first wife Emily Pitkin also from the disease. He was also known for being an avid activist in the Anti-Slavery movement as was certainly his second wife Ednah Dow Littlehale of Boston. In 1897 she gave a 2 hour address for the Mechanics Institute on the "Reign of Womanhood". During their brief time they befriended and did portraits for many of the famous names of the day; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Daniel Webster to name a couple. A niece of hers married Knight Dexter Seth's nephew. Seth died only 3 years after his second marriage and left behind a daughter who died of typhoid fever at age 17.

Charles ⁽⁷⁾ 1803-1874 started a Mulberry Farm in Ohio, his house there was the first Underground Railroad beyond the Cincinnati line. He was also good friends with fellow abolitionist and printing shop owner S. Chase who was a member of Lincoln's cabinet. He returned to Hartford in 1842 and lived on Prospect St. where Travelers now stands.

Ralph ⁽⁷⁾ 1806-1897 was a devote farmer and 1st president at the Mt. Nebo Silk Co. from 1838-1855 when the business became incorporated and he then took care of the companies draft horses. He had adopted his wife Jerusha Goodwin's two children and son Richard Otis Cheney continued to manage the farm.

Ward ⁽⁷⁾ 1813-1876 Remembered as the most brilliant. When the Cheney Brothers became incorporated in 1855, Ward was made president and held that position until his death.

Rush ⁽⁷⁾ 1815-1882 Rush and Frank were the family inventors. Rush married an English woman named Julia Goodwin, they had 4 children. Although known as a rather eccentric and elusive group they did own a baseball team whose star player was an American Indian.

Frank ⁽⁷⁾ 1817 -1904 and wife Susan Cushing were known for their philanthropic adventures and devotion to the immigrant workers of the mill.

Cheney, Woodbridge, Olcott, and Pitkin notes, connecting the important families in the area: •The parents of the Cheney Brothers who founded the Cheney silk mills were George (1771-1829) and Electa Woodbridge Cheney. George's mother was Mary Olcott (1736?-1786), who was the daughter of Nathaniel Olcott & Hanna Pitkin. • George's sister Clarissa married Joseph Pitkin in 1795 (Clarissa's remains are in Squire Elisha tomb, East Hartford's Center Cemetery.) Pitkin was used as a middle name throughout the 19th century: Walter Pitkin Cheney, b. 1809, Mary Pitkin Cheney, b. 1813. • Seth Wells Cheney, one of the artist brothers and a member of the generation who founded the silk mills, was married twice. First marriage was in 1847 to Emily Woodbridge Pitkin (1825-1850). Emily was the daughter of Horace Pitkin. • In 1884, John Henry Cheney married Minnie Pitkin, daughter of James Rusel [sic] Pitkin. One of John Henry's sisters married a Pitkin.

The following is an approximate chronological list to illustrate the Cheney involvement:

- 1838 - Building of Mt. Nebo Silk Mill
- 1843 - Reader hired to read to workers
- 1843 - Episcopal Church built
- 1850 - Lending library set up in Mill office
- 1855-1900 Influx of Immigrant Labor
- 1855 - First housing built for workers
- 1855 - Oct. 18. Mills close for dedication of Catholic Church
- 1859 - Schoolhouse built
- 1860 - Gas lighting for town from power plant
- 1861 - 1865 Civil War
- Spencer Rifle financed by Cheney Brothers
- 1867 - Cheney Hall built
- 1869 - South Manchester RR bought
- 1872 - Schoolhouse built
- 1872 - Manchester Water Co.: Taylor Reservoir
- 1874 - Land donated for Catholic Church
- 1880 - Donation for poor. Maintenance of Streets
- 1886 - Land donated for Swedish Lutheran Church
- 1887 - House bought for Library
- 1889 - Land donated for Hall of Records, funds by Frank, Jr.
- 1889 - Manchester Water Co.: Porter Reservoir
- 1889 - New wing built on school
- 1889 - Sewers built and maintained
- 1890 - Boarding house built for 100 teachers
- 1890 - Trade school at mill for employees children
- 1890 - High school curriculum for 9th district
- 1891 - Manchester Building & Loan Co. founded by Frank, Jr.
- 1892 - Land donated for German Lutheran Church
- 1894 - 1926 - Frank, Jr. donates for public buildings and parks.
- 1895 - Trolley line financed by public bond issue
- 1895 - 9th School District schools financed
- 1897 - Hook & Ladder #1: for mills & residences
- 1898 - Land donated for Church of Nazarene
- 1902 - High School built
- 1903 - Adult Evening school
- 1905 - Manchester Trust Co.: Family leadership
- 1905 - Manchester Water Co.: Howard Reservoir
- 1913 - Great School fire: New Schools built
- 1913 - Library burned: New house bought
- 1915 - Manchester Water Co.: Globe Hollow Reservoir
- 1916 - Reservoir land leased to golfers
- 1918 - Gas Company sold
- 1919 - Army-Navy Club built - donations
- 1920 - Hospital built - Family contributes
- 1920-1927 - \$50,000 to town for new library
- 1922 - Peak employment: 4,650
- 1923 - Centennial - Frank, Jr. chairman. Extravaganza!
- 1924 - Land donated for Howell Cheney trade school
- 1925 - High School sold to Town
- 1927 - Land donated for Town Hall - cash by Frank, Jr.
- 1929 - Crash: Cheney Brothers
- 1932 - 9th District Schools sold to town - Loss
- 1933 - 3 Reservoirs sold - Huge loss
- 1935 - Bankruptcy of Cheney Brothers
- 1937 - Mary Cheney Library built - land donated
- 1937 - 474 workers houses sold, Loss
- 1940 - Pioneer Parachute Co. (Nylon) 2,000 employed
- 1954 - C.B. sold to J. P. Stevens Co.
- 1955 - Stevens sold remaining property - Huge profit
- 1957 - Stevens sold to LaFrance Industries
- 1957 - Mills sold to small enterprises
- 1975 - Velvet mill under Cheney name employs 400