

1950

1960

1970

1910

1980

1920

1990

1930

2000

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990

CELEBRATING

100

YEARS

OF MANCHESTER'S

MOST MEMORABLE

MOMENTS

DECADE BY DECADE

BY RAY CARBONE & GEMMA FRENCH

1950

1960

1970

1910

1980

1920

1990

1930

2000

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990



SOMETHING WORTHY TO BE REMEMBERED

*The History of the Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce 1911-2011*

Photo by John Gauvin – Studio One Photography

© Copyright 2011
Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce.
All rights reserved.
www.manchester-chamber.org

Printed in the United States of America
ISBN: 978-0-615-45278-4

Book written by
Ray Carbone, Carbone Productions
Laconia, New Hampshire
www.carboneproductions.com
and
Gemma French
Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Book designed by wedü, inc.,
Manchester, New Hampshire
www.wedu.com

Book printed by Cummings Printing,
Hooksett, New Hampshire
www.cummingsprinting.com

Front cover design by wedü, inc.,
Manchester, New Hampshire

All other photos:
Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
Manchester Historic Association
John Gauvin - Studio One Photography

Notice of Liability
Every effort has been made to ensure this
book contains accurate information. However,
much of the information was obtained
through interviews with Chamber staff and
volunteers and is printed as it was recorded
by the writers. Some information in this
book was taken from Chamber publications
such as annual reports and newsletters
from the last 100 years. Information taken
from those materials was written from the
perspective of Chamber staff and volunteers.
The authors shall not be liable for any loss or
damage suffered by readers as a result of any
information contained herein.

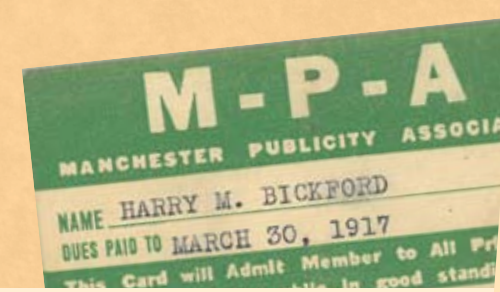


Table of Contents

Mission Statement	4
Introduction by Robin Comstock, President & CEO.....	5
2011 Board of Directors	6
Foreword by Gary Long, Public Service of New Hampshire	7

CHAPTER 1	8
Prelude-1911: The Pursuit of Peace and Industry.....	8-11

CHAPTER 2	12
1912-1919: Amoskeag Makes Manchester	12-15

CHAPTER 3	16
1920-1939: No More "One Company Town"	16-19

CHAPTER 4	20
1940-1949: The War, the Workers and the Airfield.....	20-23

CHAPTER 5	24
1950-1959: Growth and Diversity.....	24-27

CHAPTER 6	28
1960-1969: Facing the Future	28-31

CHAPTER 7	32
1970-1979: Seeds of Growth	32-35

CHAPTER 8	36
1980-1989: A New Day Dawning.....	36-39

CHAPTER 9	40
1990-1999: Flying High Into a New Day.....	40-43

CHAPTER 10	44
2000-2011: The Future is Here	44-49

Acknowledgements & Credits	50-51
Centennial Celebration Sponsors	52-53



GREATER MANCHESTER CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE MISSION STATEMENTS

“The Manchester Chamber of Commerce is an organization of business and professional men and women who, through cooperative effort, strive at all times to make Manchester a better community for all in which to trade, live, work and prosper.”

-1945

“An organization that is representative of all interests and works for the interests of all.”

-1949

“To enhance the civic, economic, cultural and social betterment and interests of the people of Greater Manchester.”

-1971

“Working creatively for the good of business and for the greater good of all.”

-1976

“The mission of the GMCC is to develop and enhance an economically strong community through the free enterprise system.”

-1989

2011 Mission

It is the mission of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce to be a member-focused organization that drives the greater Manchester business environment and the economic health and vitality of the region by supporting business growth, professional development and networking opportunities, while advocating for our membership.

Introduction

On April 21, 2011, the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce celebrated its 100-year anniversary. This means this community-based business advocacy organization has witnessed two World Wars, the Great Depression, women’s right to vote, the Korean War, the civil rights movement, Hawaii and Alaska welcomed into statehood, the first landing on the moon, and so much more. It would take three generations at the dinner table to recall the journey and all of the cultural, economic and political slips and accelerations that have occurred in a century of business.

Now is the time to pause and reflect upon not just the historic occurrences themselves, but the people who made them happen. Whether civil and social unrest and cultural evolution or political and economic upheaval and progress, all community-based activity comes back to the faces and personalities of the individuals who give time, resources and intellect for community betterment in general, and for us at the Chamber, specifically, through business. Our greatest success, no matter how large or small, at the core is anchored in the individuals who create the fabric of community at any particular point in time. And, it is their willingness to give of themselves that establishes the course of history of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, its agenda and its activity. The Chamber has enjoyed 100 years of the best and the brightest men and women participating and volunteering their time, wealth and wisdom, on behalf of the business community.

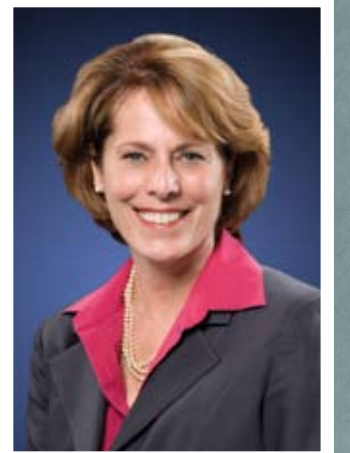
Today, that unwavering support directly translates into just under 1,000 member businesses and 200 active volunteers. These businessmen and women come from all walks of life, ethnic backgrounds, and an array of personal and professional experience. They work together, developing and advancing the agenda of this community-based organization as dedicated today as they were 100 years ago. They do this because they believe their voice is stronger together and that they are ultimately more capable and effective together as a community—with a shared purpose and objective anchored in the belief that a cohesive and unified business sector makes for a richer and more dynamic community. As we were in 1911, today in 2011 we are still about the people—the personalities,

the faces, the stories and the experiences that members of the business community share every day.

Early in our historic research, we noticed how many times through so many years the word “opportunity” was used to describe an era and its subsequent windows of change and evolution. Many issues that the Chamber is still passionate about and dedicated to are issues that have been interwoven into the organization’s agenda since its original incorporation. Some threads of community are never changing, particularly as they are the basis for a healthy, vital and vibrant business community that is able to create and sustain good jobs and offer competitive compensation, so that residents are able to enjoy a rich life for themselves and their families. In that way, this century is no different than the last. Our business community is still focused on education; workforce availability and readiness; transportation, including air, rail and auto; safety; a unified voice and a vibrant network.

We are today’s caretakers, and we are all deeply appreciative and profoundly aware that who we are, what we do and how we move through the agenda builds a path for the future. It is with sincere humility that we would like to reflect upon those who preceded us and their efforts for progress realized through the success and sustainability of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. We will carry their drive and dedication forward and into the welcoming hands of tomorrow. After all, the City of Manchester is a place where “History Invites Opportunity” and where today we will embrace the opportunity to ensure a vital community and region well into the next century.

Robin A. Comstock
President & CEO
Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce



Robin A. Comstock



GREATER
MANCHESTER
Chamber of Commerce

2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman

Alexander Walker, President
Devine, Millimet & Branch, P.A.

Chair-elect

Andy Crews, President & CEO
AutoFair Automotive Corporation

Secretary

Cathy Champagne, President
Jutras Signs Inc.

Treasurer

Paul Ramsey, VP Energy Delivery
Public Service of New Hampshire

Past Chairman

Beth Roberts, V.P. of NNE Operations
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care of NE

Legal Counsel

Joseph DiBrigida, President
Sheehan Phinney Bass + Green PA

At-Large

David Roedel, Partner
Roedel Companies

At-Large

Russ Ouellette, Managing Partner
Sojourn Partners

DIRECTORS

Maureen Beauregard, *Families in Transition*

Richard Brenner, *New Hampshire Fisher Cats*

Mark Brewer, *Manchester-Boston Regional Airport*

Ronald Covey, *St. Mary's Bank*

Tom Donovan, *McLane, Graf, Raulerson
& Middleton*

Robert Duval, *TFMoran Inc.*

Jeff Eisenberg, *Eisenberg, Vital & Ryze Advertising*

Joe Graham, *WGIR Radio AM/610 FM/101.1*

David Mara, *Manchester Police Department*

Marie McKay, *Bigelow & Company, CPA /PC*

Dianne Mercier, *People's United Bank*

Jazmin Miranda-Smith

Sean Owen, *wedü*

Dr. Steven Paris, *Dartmouth-Hitchcock
Manchester*

Tom Puskarich, *Z food & drink*

Michael Reed, *Stebbins Commercial
Properties LLC*

Cathleen Schmidt, *Citizens Bank*

Nick Soggu, *SilverTech, Inc.*

James Thomforde, *Wiggins Airways, Inc.*

Frederick Urtz, *Lavallee Brensinger Architects*

Judi Window, *Granite State Ambassadors*

STAFF

Robin Comstock, *President & CEO*

Ann Makowski, *Chief Financial Officer*

Michael Skelton, *Vice President of Economic
Development & Advocacy*

Gemma French, *Vice President of Marketing &
Public Relations*

Shawnda Misina, *Membership Director*

Charlene Courtemanche, *Office Manager*

Emily De Puy, *Customer Relations Specialist*

Tammy Boucher, *Project Manager, Leadership
Greater Manchester*

Foreword

With our roots firmly planted in Manchester's economic growth for the past 125 years, Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH) is proud to salute the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce on its first 100 years.

Manchester has always been PSNH's hometown, from our pre-corporate days that included the electric streetcar barns at Manchester Traction, Light and Power to the company's new Energy Park headquarters in the Millyard. And, like the Chamber, supporting the economic development of greater Manchester has been a significant theme in our history. Making the transition from an agrarian-based economy to an industrialized city required the development of a broad-based electrical system that provided reliable power year-round. PSNH is proud of its role in the electrification of Manchester and surrounding communities, which led to a better way of life for residents.

PSNH has valued its relationship with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce since its earliest days. Both organizations share the mission of ensuring that the area's business sectors remain strong, diversified and vibrant, since this also leads to a better way of life and more opportunity for our residents.

The Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce has distinguished itself as one of the state's premier business advocacy organizations, both at the state and local level. The Chamber engages hundreds of businesspeople, including municipal, academic and community

groups, through an extensive committee structure that is a force of so many important projects and forward-looking initiatives. The Chamber's Governmental Affairs Committee remains one of the most active in the state and is capable of analyzing, tracking and weighing in on complex issues of most importance to the greater Manchester business community.

The 1,000 members of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce make it one of the largest chambers in New Hampshire, which leads to meaningful business-to-business networking and presentations on the latest projects or issues facing the business community.

On the pages that follow, you will get a glimpse of the innovation, dedication and resiliency that have been the Chamber's hallmark during its first 100 years. We believe you will see why PSNH, along with many other local businesses, is excited about its continued partnership with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce in keeping our city and the surrounding area's economy strong and thriving for the next century and beyond.

Gary A. Long

President

Public Service of New Hampshire



Gary A. Long



**Public Service
of New Hampshire**

A Northeast Utilities Company

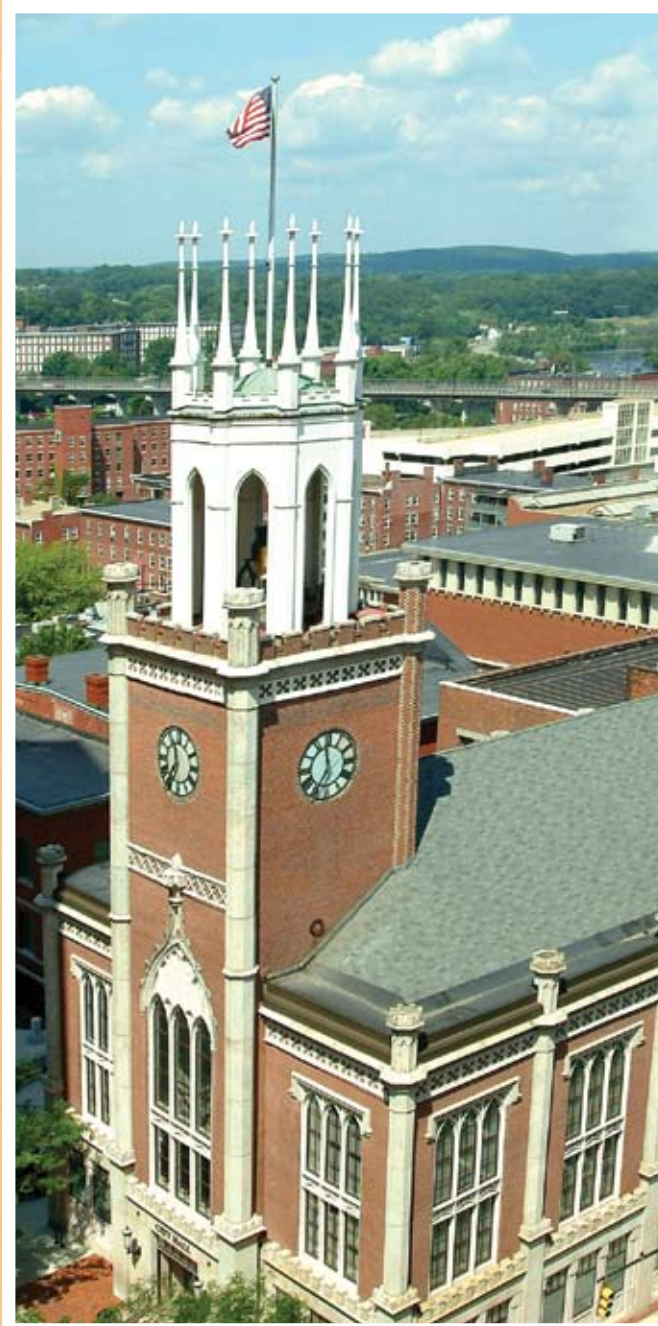


Photo by John Gauvin – Studio One Photography

Manchester City Hall as pictured in the *New York Industrial Recorder* in 1900.

PRELUDE-1911

The Pursuit of Peace and Industry

From its earliest days as a European settlement, Manchester has been shaped by businesspeople who saw opportunities around them and grabbed them, to the betterment of the overall community. It may have begun with Samuel Blodgett, described in a 1940s Chamber of Commerce publication as “a seasoned man of business.” Blodgett is credited with first conceiving of the idea of making the Merrimack River “the chief ‘highway’ of the state” by building a canal around the Amoskeag Falls. The honorable gentleman was 70 years old when he took on the project, and “[a]fter fourteen years of struggle and discouragement, during which time his entire private fortune (of \$60,000) was exhausted, he at length witnessed the successful completion of his canal in 1807.” The publication goes on to say, “Blodgett saw the value of waterpower, it is said during a visit to England he prophesized that (what was then called) Old Derryfield would someday become the ‘Manchester of the America.’” (Manchester, England was world renowned as a manufacturing city.) He was right. Within a decade of the canal’s completion, and with the addition of several smaller canals built to bypass strong rapids along the river, navigation of the Merrimack was fully opened and the river became a convenient and important “water highway” for commercial enterprises. By 1891 the city was honoring its business community with a “Trade Procession” down the then-dirt Elm Street that included bunting hung from the sides of buildings and a horse-drawn wagon toting a giant Uncle Sam figure.

The *New York Industrial Recorder*, a publication that claimed to be an illustrated record of American achievements in commerce, manufacturing, science and art. This 30-page issue was published in 1900 and highlighted the “Manchester of America’s” businesses, industries and prominent businessmen of the time.

Two years earlier in 1889, a cadre of prominent businessmen formed the Manchester Board of Trade, the precursor of the current Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. In 1900, the *New York Industrial Recorder* periodical was devoted to “The Manchester of America, the Great Industrial Metropolis of New Hampshire.” It read, “Probably the most important factor in the recent marked growth of this locality is this lively and energetic Board of Trade... The objects gained by the organization during the ten years of its existence have been of great value to the welfare of the community... While the Board offers reasonable inducement to desirable concerns to locate here, it repulses schemes needed propping on all sides,” the periodical stated. “The businessmen, manufacturers and professional men comprising the members of this organization know the value of self-help and invite competition. To the man of firm mettle, mind and principle, possessing push and industry, this locality offers unusual inducements, and to set them forth is the aim of the Board.”

According to that issue of the *New York Industrial Recorder*, “The Manchester Board of Trade stands in the front of similar organizations in New England,” and it noted that the group had 375 members. The Board’s working committees focused on finance, municipal affairs, manufacturing and mercantile affairs, insurance, railroads and transportation, statistics, and education and charitable matters. The final group included the famous cigar maker R.G. Sullivan, who would later become one of the Chamber’s founders.

The Kennard Building, where the first official meetings of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce were held. Later the Chamber was said to be located at 904-905 Amoskeag Bank Building where the organization employed a librarian named Margaret Fox. In 1917 the library held 60 volumes and 67 pamphlets chiefly in the specialties of commercial organization work and activities, as well as New England city directories.

Founding Members of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce – April 21, 1911

Charles M. Floyd
Eugene E. Reed
Albert J. Precourt
F.E. Martin
L. Ashton Thorp
Roger G. Sullivan
J.E. Mooney
F.W. Sargent
G.H. Chandler

Leonard G. Smith
Harry W. Spaulding
Charles C. Hayes
E.J. Bowers
William Marcotte
H.E. Slayton
William Savacool
G.P. Crafts

The establishment of Crafts & Green Shoe Manufacturers as depicted in the *New York Industrial Recorder* in 1900. G.P. Crafts was listed as a founding member of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in 1911.



When the Board was formed, the city had a population of nearly 44,000. Ten years later it had grown to 57,000 residents—based largely on the growth of riverfront mills that used the Merrimack to power their operations. The Board of Trade was given some measure of credit. The *Recorder* wrote, “The Board has grown rapidly in membership and influence, ranking today as one of the largest and most flourishing business organizations in New England.” On April 21, 1911, 17 local business leaders officially created a new organization to replace the Board of Trade. It was based on their shared belief that “advantages can be realized together while they are impossible when alone.” The incorporating documents read, “We, the subscribers,

do unite and form ourselves into a body to be called the Manchester Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of promoting and protecting the business, industrial and civic progress of metropolitan Manchester and its people.” It was a homogenous group. R.G. Sullivan owned one of New England’s largest cigar factories, producing 225,000 smokes a day. Leonard G. Smith was president of the Manchester Shoe Trimming Company; H. E. Slayton was president and treasurer of the F. M. Hoyt Shoe Company; George P. Crafts was treasurer of the G. P. Crafts Company, another shoe manufacturer. Charles M. Floyd, a former governor of New Hampshire, was an accomplished politician, as well as a director of several area banks and lumber companies; Eugene E. Reed was a telegrapher and train dispatcher for the Boston & Maine Railroad, and a former mayor who later served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1912; L. Ashton Thorp was a lawyer and talented orator who regularly lectured around New England on several topics, including “The Mission of the Twentieth Century.” The leader and president of this newly formed group was Charles C. Hayes, a local real estate tycoon and another former mayor who had led the Board of Trade for several years before the Chamber’s founding.



Elm Street looking south as pictured in the *New York Industrial Recorder* in 1900.

“Although Manchester has but recently celebrated her semi-centennial, there is much in her history to be proud of. Few cities have achieved a more honorable record in national and state affairs or accomplished greater work in the pursuit of peace and industry.”

– J.W. Fellows, *New England Magazine*, March 1897

That same year, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, the city’s largest employer and owner of one of the largest woolen textile mills in the world, legally transformed itself from an incorporated corporation into a “voluntary association” (i.e., a partnership). It would not be the first time the Chamber’s work would be tied to the status of the region’s dominant business.

Pictured above: a photo from the *New York Industrial Recorder* in 1900 of the R.G. Sullivan Cigar Factory, makers of the 7-20-4 Cigar.

Inset photo: R.G. Sullivan, cigar maker and founding member of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

This picture: Group portrait, interior view of the R.G. Sullivan Cigar Factory, makers of the 7-20-4 Cigar. Photo courtesy of the Manchester Historic Association.

1912-1919

Amoskeag Makes Manchester

The first official Chamber publication was printed in 1912 in partnership with the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company. While many of the city's larger mills at the time were shoemaking operations, Amoskeag, the biggest in Manchester, was also one of the largest cotton textile manufacturing facilities in the world, wielding influence over the financial, political and social realms of Manchester. The handsome little booklet, "The City of Manchester, N.H. and the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company," was printed "under the auspices of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce," indicating the strong link the company had with the business association. It was intended to convey "some idea of the city's general desirability as a place of residence and business," which was the Chamber's most important role at that time—public relations. The booklet includes illustrations and photographs of the Amoskeag's many mill buildings and several local landmarks, including elm-lined streets that earned Manchester the early nickname "The Elm City." To show the international scope of the Chamber's marketing efforts, a version was produced in French for distribution in Quebec.

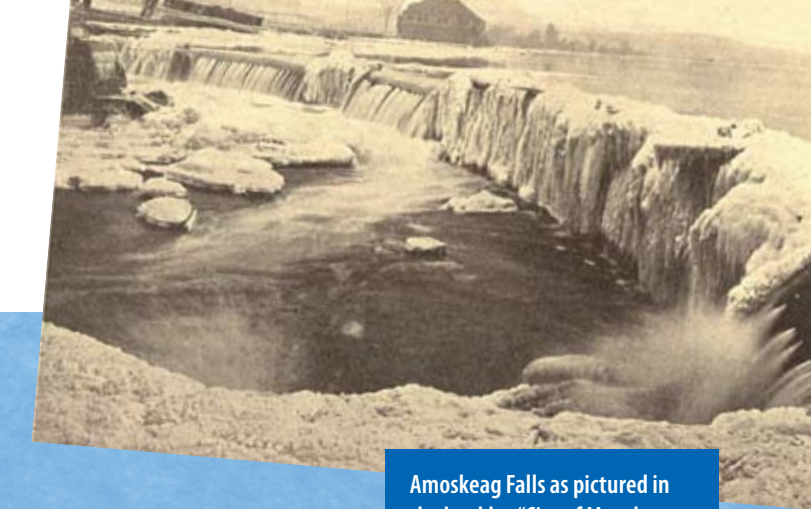
The publication touted many benefits of living in the city, including the weather, the quality of local schools, the diversity of churches and other public amenities. "It has a low tax rate, small public debt and equitable systems of valuation," it added. The booklet also noted that Manchester was "a city of homes, with opportunity for indefinite expansion." It promoted the city as an ideal place to establish a business. "It is a central location in New England. It is the center of six steam railway lines, rapid

transit, interurban and suburban electrical lines. It has a profusion of advantageous factory sites. It enjoys freedom from industrial troubles and affords an unfailing supply of highly qualified labor."

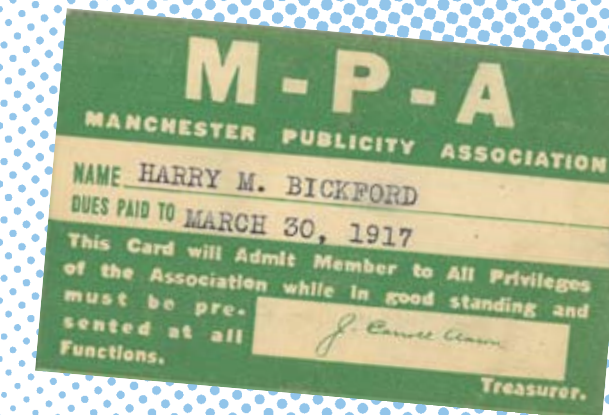
"There are reasons why you should live in Manchester. Its healthful climate, its inexhaustible pure water supply, its splendid school system, and its fine, regularly arranged well shaded streets. It is the best lighted city in the country...It has numerous clubs, places of amusement, and recreation resorts."

- The City of Manchester, N.H. and the Amoskeag Manufacturing Co., 1912

The booklet highlights the size of the labor force and the energy and work ethic of the employees of the Amoskeag. It also included what today would seem an unusual offer to draw new workers to Manchester: "To any employee of this (Amoskeag) Company of five (5) years standing who desires to build homes for themselves, the Company makes the following offer: During the year 1912, the Company will sell and deed to any such employee a lot of land 50 by 100 feet in the section between Coolidge Avenue and Rock Rimmon...(The Company) will accept a first and second mortgage, each for one-half of the purchase price of the land. Should a house in accordance with these restrictions be built on that lot within one year after the conveyance, these mortgages will be allowed to remain without interest so long as the mortgagor remains in the employ of the Company and continues to occupy the house. At the end of five years, should the mortgagor continue in the employ of the



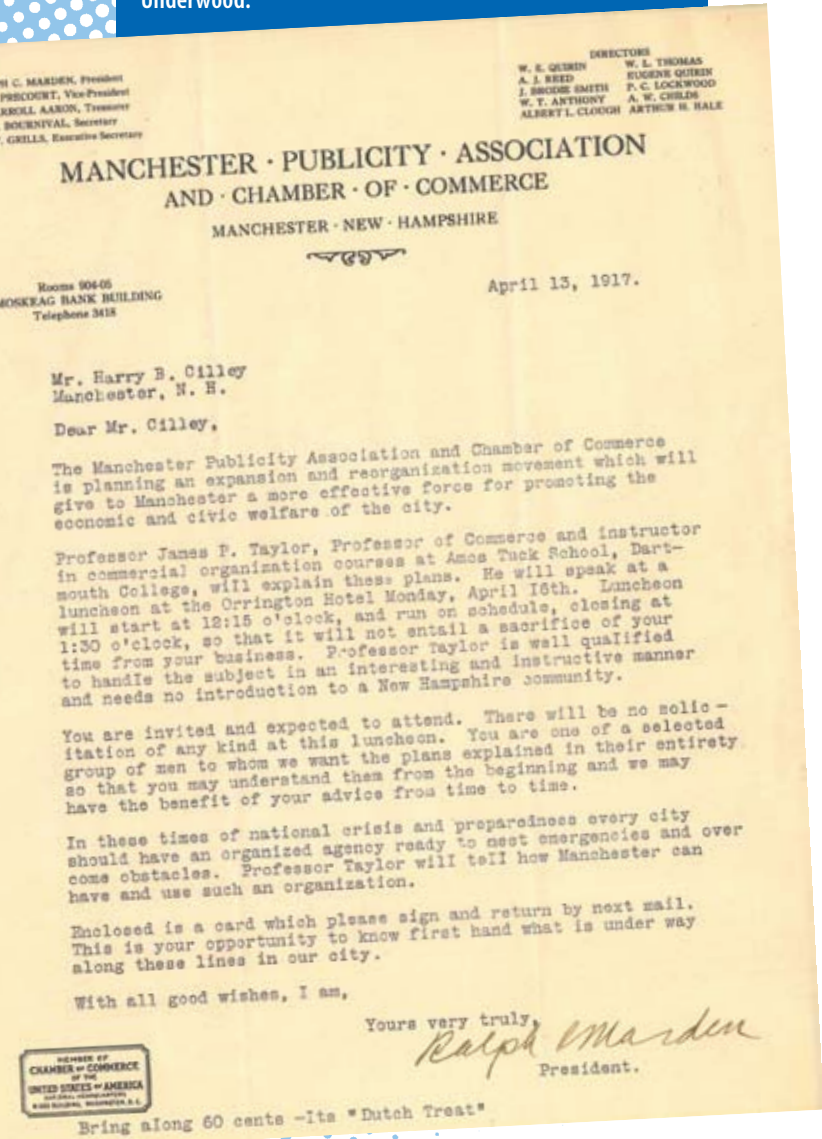
Amoskeag Falls as pictured in the booklet "City of Manchester, N.H. and the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company" issued under the auspices of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. Copyright 1912, W.H. Underwood.



Membership card from 1917 when the organization was called the Manchester Publicity Association and Chamber of Commerce.

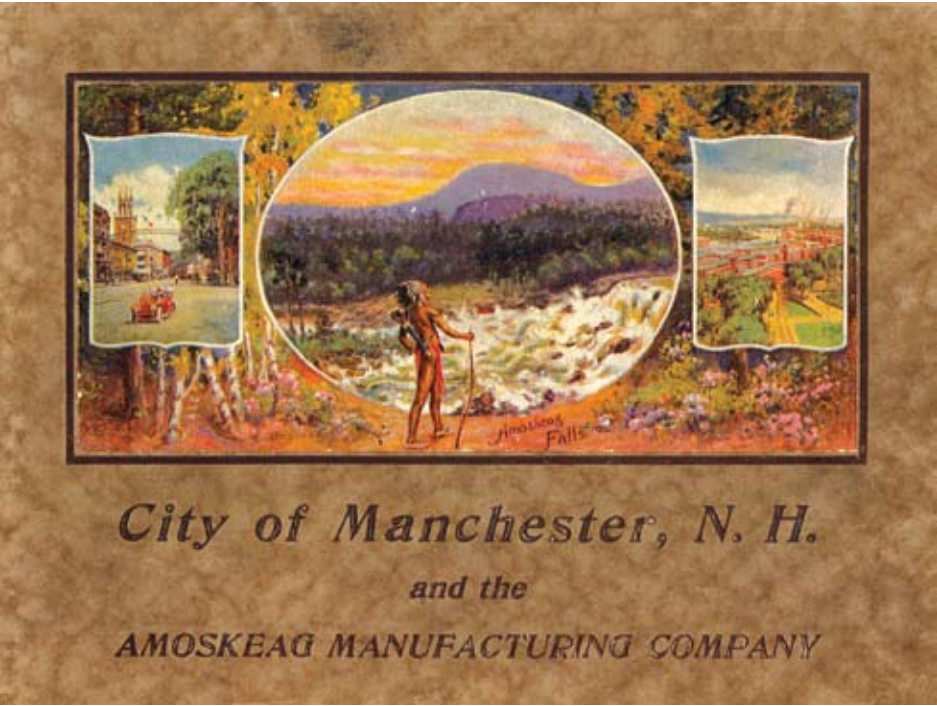
A letter written in 1917 inviting members of the Manchester Publicity Association and Chamber of Commerce to attend a luncheon about “a movement which will give to Manchester a more effective force for promoting the economic and civic welfare of the city.”

Pictured below right: the first publication of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce published in conjunction with the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company. Copyright 1912, W.H. Underwood.



Company and to occupy the house, the second mortgage will be surrendered for the consideration of one dollar. At the end of ten years...the first mortgage will be surrendered for the consideration of one dollar.” The pact also notes that Amoskeag would help any builder contracted by a property owner to get financing through local banks. “Note—This offer will be extended over the year 1912 or until all the available land has been allotted,” the statement concludes.

The deal to sell a piece of property for two dollars may seem unusual at a time when unions were virtually nonexistent in America, employees worked under harsh and sometimes dangerous conditions (e.g., children were among the millyard employees because their small stature allowed them to get into the massive machinery to evaluate problems) and owners held considerable power over their employees. But the Amoskeag’s paternal attitude towards its workers was not altogether uncommon among early industrialists. This largesse represented a company simply doing what the Chamber members had pledged to do at its founding: “promoting and protecting the interests of both Manchester’s businesses and its people.”

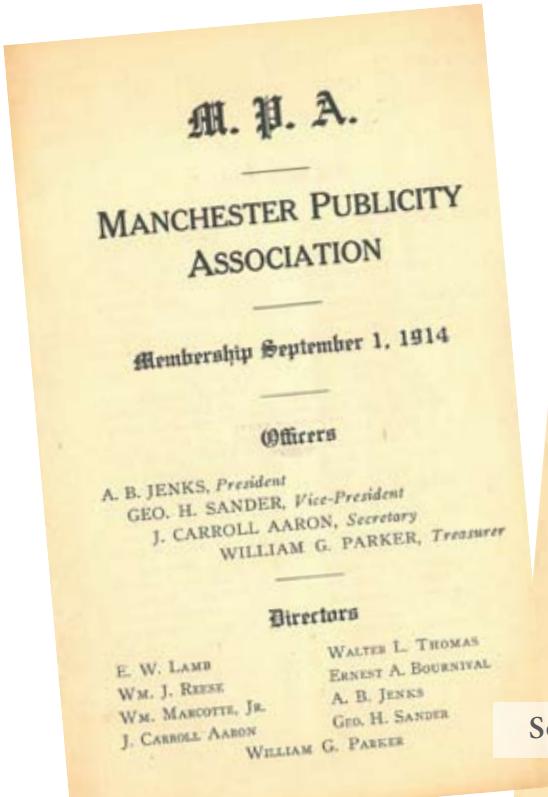


Meanwhile, a Concord-based magazine named the *Granite Monthly* listed the Chamber under the name “The Manchester Publicity Association and Chamber of Commerce” in an issue published in 1916. It noted the Chamber’s historic link with the original Manchester Board of Trade but wrote that the Manchester Publicity Association, which was created in 1913, eventually “took over” the Chamber. “There is a membership of 530 of the influential men of the community,” the magazine said. “The organization is at the present time broadening into full industrial, commercial, civic and agricultural lines and expects to do things in Manchester.”

Given the economic challenges lurking just down the road, it is not unrealistic to think that some of the city’s accomplishments over the next few decades were the result of the network of business interests the Chamber was becoming at this time.

The group dropped the Manchester Publicity Association part of its name in April 1925 and went back to using Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

Listing of the officers and directors of the Manchester Publicity Association in 1914.



Manchester Chamber of Commerce song sheet.



STATISTICS of •AMOSKEAG• MANUFACTURING COMPANY (1912)

Incorporated	1831
Reorganized	1911
Annual Pay Roll	\$ 7,800,000
Weekly Pay Roll	\$150,000
Number of Males Employed	8,500
Number of Females Employed	7,000
Total Number Employed	15,500
Number of Cotton Spindles	620,000
Number of Worsted Spindles	50,000
Cotton Looms	22,700
Worsted Looms	1,700
Miles of Cloth Woven per Hour	50
Miles of Cloth Woven per Day	471
Miles of Cloth Woven per Annum	147,119
Number of Turbine Water Wheels	31
Number of Boilers	203
Number of Steam Engines	12
Number of Generators Electric	80
Number of Electric Motors	370
Tons of Coal Consumed per Annum	131,484
Wages Paid in 1831	\$36,298
Wages Paid in 1890	\$2,435,481
Wages Paid in 1911	\$6,370,089
Gallons of Oil Consumed per Annum	75,000
Square Feet of Floor Space in Buildings.	5,844,340
Acres of Floor Space in Buildings	137

-Taken from City of Manchester, N.H. and the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company. Issued under the auspices of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. Copyright 1912.

1920-1939

No More “One Company Town”

It is unfortunate that the Chamber's files have few records of its activities from its first 40 years of activity, between its founding in 1911 and World War II, especially since it was an era of such dramatic change, from the prosperous teens to the Great Depression of the 1930s. The city's historical records show that the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company continued to dominate Manchester's economic landscape, making Manchester, in some respects, a “one-company town.” This proved to be a problem when, in the 1920s, New England's once powerful mill industries began to be shuttered as their owners built new, more profitable mills in the South to be closer to cotton fields and cheaper labor.

The Amoskeag was soon altering its long-held paternal attitude toward employees, demanding they work longer hours for less pay. In 1922 the city lost its image as a “strike-free” manufacturing town when thousands of Amoskeag's employees walked off the job. Nine long months later, the workers gained nothing and returned, as none of their demands were met.

According to the several business publications of the time, Amoskeag's managers were seeing a marked decline in sales, “particularly of gingham—an Amoskeag mainstay” by the mid-1920s. One publication reports that the “Amoskeag Manufacturing Company reorganized as a holding company, or trust, and changed its name to Amoskeag Company in 1925...The new company established a (separate) trust...to operate the mills.”

Some observers—including the 1938 issue of the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*—said the mills' problems quickly grew worse during this era because a large portion of pent-up reserves from the flush years were transferred to the private “holding” company and withheld from the mills' operation. One business publication stated, “The mills had just enough money to operate, but there were no funds for maintenance and little for upkeep and replacement of machinery, spare parts were taken from machines that had been shut down.”

Slowly, mill buildings were abandoned as the company's operation shrunk. When Amoskeag's gross sales slid from \$33 million in 1926 to \$10.2 million in 1932 (the worst year of the Depression), the company received a tax abatement from city leaders, who feared the giant company might otherwise shut down. Later, some observers said Amoskeag could have done more to keep its operations competitive during this era—besides continually cutting workers' jobs and forcing employees to work longer hours for less pay, which led to two more bitter strikes in the 1930s. “According to critics, the company refused to change with the times...the possibility of moving production into sheets and bedding was turned down. In addition, employees who demonstrated that the company could easily expand its small rayon production and regain profitability were ignored,” reported a periodical of the time.

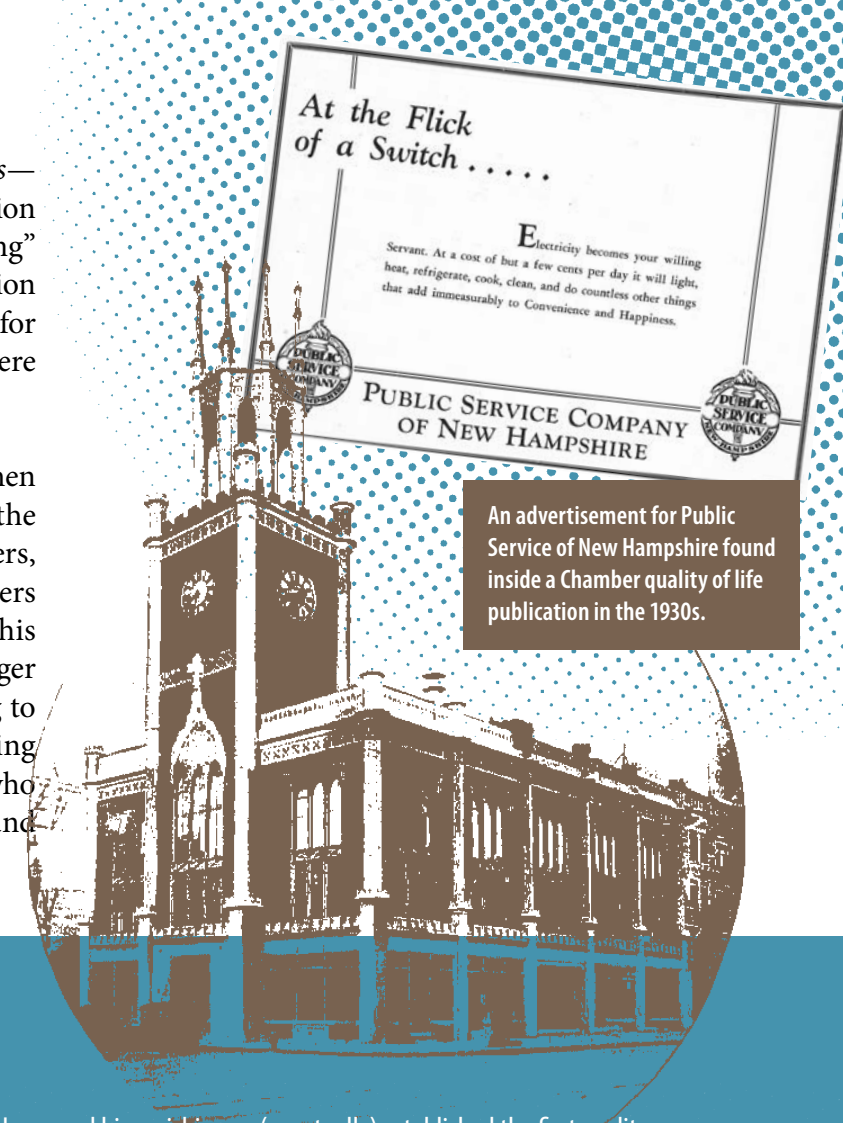
THE FIRST U.S. Credit Union

By the beginning of the twentieth century, thousands of immigrants pursuing work and a better life found their way to the mills of the largest textile-manufacturing center in the nation—Manchester, New Hampshire. Although gainfully employed, they were denied the privileges of savings and credit. On a hillside overlooking the mills stood St. Marie's Church. As pastor, Monsignor Pierre Hevey knew that many of his parishioners worked in these mills and needed a safe place to save their money and gain access to reasonable credit.

Monsignor Hevey and his parishioners (eventually) established the first credit union in the United States in 1908. Originally called St. Mary's Cooperative Credit Association, its name was revised in 1925 to La Caisse Populaire Ste.-Marie, or “Bank of the People,” St. Mary's. Today it is known as St. Mary's Bank.

From these humble beginnings the movement that promoted thrift and provided access to credit for the working class spread across America. Today there are more than 10,000 credit unions in the U.S., representing 80 million members.

- Courtesy of America's Credit Union Museum, Manchester, NH





The Manchester Chamber of Commerce Welcome and Information Center in the 1930s.

On Christmas Eve 1935, almost 105 years after the original company had incorporated, the Amoskeag Mill facility abruptly closed its doors. On January 20, 1936, the U.S. District Court ordered Amoskeag's owners to submit a reorganization plan no later than March. Although this was done, the risky plan was withdrawn after the devastating March 19, 1936 flood. On July 10, 1936, Arthur Black, the special master in the bankruptcy hearings, noted 12 years of losses and "at least twenty-five percent more spindles than the market warrants." He recommended liquidation. Not long afterwards, federal judge George C. Sweeney ordered the company's assets be liquidated to satisfy its creditors.

On August 8, 1936, the auction was announced. The assets had been valued at \$5 million. This announcement left the city in an urgent state. Losing its biggest employer could have a devastating economic ripple effect throughout the region, leaving thousands jobless and many other area businesses with a significant loss of income. "There were people from all over the country, from all over the world, who were coming here to look over the (Amoskeag) machinery," said Elizabeth LaRocca, former president of the Manchester Historic Association and community relations manager of PSNH's southern division. "Companies were lining up at the door, wanting to buy the movable assets and leave. The bankruptcy court would have sold the assets to the highest bidders who were coming in from as far away as South America and Japan. The equipment would have been sold and taken away, along with the jobs."

"One of the extraordinary things about the city of Manchester is that when its textile base collapsed, it was actually the business and community leaders of Manchester that helped Manchester recover almost overnight."

— Elizabeth LaRocca, Community Relations Manager, Southern Division, PSNH; and former President of the Manchester Historic Association

Rather than surrender to this fate, the local business community responded with a characteristic "can-do" attitude, said LaRocca. "One of the extraordinary things about the city of Manchester is that when its textile base collapsed, it was the leadership, tenacity and courage among the local business and community leaders that helped Manchester recover by ensuring the diversification of its economy," she said. They vowed that never again would they allow one company to dominate the city as Amoskeag Manufacturing had done.

By October 13, 1936, less than a year after the mill had closed its gates, this group of leading citizens incorporated a new entity, the independent "Amoskeag Industries," to coordinate the community response efforts. It purchased the old Amoskeag Manufacturing Company millyard assets for \$5 million, principally through the support of about a half-dozen local banks and Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH), the state's largest utility and one of the Chamber's oldest and most vigorous supporters. The banks offered \$2.25 million in loans while PSNH agreed to purchase and operate the old mill's power plants and electrical distribution system for \$2.25 million, with the balance raised through the sale of stock to local citizens and several businesses, including PSNH, Manchester Gas and NH Insurance Company.

The new Amoskeag Industries quickly began selling other assets to smaller manufacturing firms, which provided local jobs, LaRocca said. And by leasing available space to other operations, the city ended up with a more diversified economic base. By September of 1939, more than 60 percent of the old mills' space was leased to new tenants, and the Queen City had a new lease on life.



An advertisement for Northeast Airlines in a Manchester Chamber of Commerce magazine from the early 1930s. An article included in the same edition stressed the importance of the Manchester Airport.

The Manchester Airport

By Russell W. Hilliard

MANCHESTER has an airport of such size and location that it has become the most active of airports in this section. It is a valuable asset to the city, the largest in New England, and its location north of Boston, and this air to become the center of flying activities in this part of New England.

The runway was a valuable asset to the city, and this air to become the center of flying activities in this part of New England.



WAITING WINGS. A Northeast fleet of luxurious, superbly conditioned Constellation and DC-3's lies in readiness to speed passengers and freight (from Manchester) to a variety of destinations throughout New England, to New York, Montreal . . . the world beyond.

Manchester Offers Easy Accessibility by Air for Business, Agriculture, Industry, and Recreation

A valued asset of New Hampshire's "Queen City", Manchester, is its surprising proximity to New York, the center of world trade, by swift 3-flights-daily Northeast Airlines service. And, of course, this progressive New Hampshire city is linked by daily flights not only to New York and Boston, with connections for the entire world beyond . . . but to such northern points as Hanover, Lebanon, White River Junction, Barre, Montpelier, Burlington . . . and Montreal, with connections for the vast reaches of Canada.

It gives the Manchester and New Hampshire resident justifiable pride to realize that persons and manufactured goods can be transported via air to any point in the world in less than 62 hours from Manchester! This knowledge is asuring to those who seek to see their city prosper, for it is essential to industrial growth to have the full facilities of air transportation available for the swift carriage of passengers, mail, express and freight to the world trading centers. And Northeast Airlines is daily fulfilling this prerequisite.

The passenger service of Northeast Airlines is a vital link, helping to forge this continuous chain of "air flight to everywhere". are the Air Taxis now available at most New Hampshire airports. These Air Taxis whisk you quickly by air to the smaller communities which are unable to accommodate large airline aircraft. Here, indeed, is "airport to doorstep" service of inestimable value to so many New Hampshire towns.

This Granite State, and its vital nerve center of Manchester, comprise a study in versatility and abundance which has been found attractive to the citizens of the world no matter in what form of enterprise they may be engaged . . . and fulfilling the liaison role of swift, comfortable air transport is the fleet of proven performance . . .

Northeast Airlines
FIRST IN NEW ENGLAND SKIES

1940-1949

The War, the Workers, and the Airfield

The 1940s were a time of rapid change for America, beginning with the all-out effort to win victory in World War II and ending with the postwar emergence of a prosperous, consumer-oriented middle class. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce worked with the changing economy, continuing its ongoing promotion of the city as a great place to live and work. One Chamber publication identified “Manchester in the very heart of New England,” and illustrated the point with a map showing its circles of influence heading out of the city to other parts of the region.

In the early 1940s, the Chamber served as headquarters for the Committee for Economic Development, worked to protect its members from the growing problem of fraudulent solicitations, and revised its bylaws to guarantee representation to all parts of the business community. During the war, many Chamber members were faced with a shortage of available workers as men joined the military. The Chamber’s Industrial Group conducted a six-week labor survey in which 1,400 house-to-house

Pictured above: a Manchester Chamber of Commerce publication called “Manchester, New Hampshire, A City of Opportunity,” published in 1944. The booklet stated, “This publication tries to give one a brief resume of the city’s history, a graphic picture of our present-day community and an insight into our plans for the future.”

Pictured below: a photograph from the inside of the Chamber offices at 57 Market Street.

calls were made in an effort to find much-needed manpower, and a special forum was held on “Postwar Job Opportunities” for homecoming veterans. The Chamber also announced plans to install a display case at the Boston & Maine Railroad station to allow manufacturing members to show off their wares to travelers and other visitors. By that time, the organization was increasingly conscious of the value of conventions, noting in one annual report that a convention could add “at least \$100,000 to the economic life of our city.”

“The River of Success has many swift and dangerous currents, it is only the game fish that swim up-stream; the dead fish float down.”

– Omer H. Amyot, Chamber President,
quoted from the Chamber’s 1944 annual report

For retail businesses, the Chamber promoted Manchester’s Red Tag Days, which were held in February and August. These special sale days drew shoppers from throughout the region to the downtown. There was also the new Manchester Garden and Flower Show, the first such exhibition of its kind ever held in this community and plans were to repeat it on an annual basis. In the interests of its manufacturing firms, the Chamber hosted a New Hampshire Industrial Exposition. More than 16,000 people attended the four-day event, including scores of local school children. According to the annual report, “These youngsters, who will be the workers and civic leaders of tomorrow, expressed general interest in the work of the various manufacturers and the products being manufactured in our state... It goes without saying that they now have a better understanding of what we mean when we say that industry is the backbone of New Hampshire’s economy.”



A photograph of the Chamber’s first permanent home at 57 Market Street. Early in 1946 the Chamber’s Board of Directors made arrangements to purchase the building, which is pictured above. A contingency fund had been accumulating, which allowed them to make the purchase. The building was originally sold by Amoskeag Industries in 1936 and was sold to the Chamber for exactly what the buyer had purchased it for.



A photograph of the Chamber’s display case at the Boston & Maine Railroad station, which allowed Chamber members to show off their wares to travelers and other visitors.



A photograph of shoppers during the Chamber’s Red Tag Days. These special sales held in February and August drew shoppers from throughout the region to the downtown.



A Chamber publication called “Made in Manchester” listed all products and businesses located in Manchester. This image was depicted on the back cover of the publication and boasts Manchester’s proximity to other major cities.

A 1945 publication of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. This booklet described Manchester as northern New England’s largest industrial, wholesale and retail center. The booklet stated, “Manchester, New Hampshire is but one of 33 communities in the United States that bears the name Manchester, but it is the largest of them all.” The population at that time was 77,000.

Of special importance to the Chamber throughout the decade was expanding local air traffic, which was seen as increasing Manchester’s role as a product distribution center, and by the end of the war, tapping into Americans’ newfound excitement about personal travel.

In 1940, the Manchester Air Base had been selected by the Army Air Corp (predecessor of the U.S. Air Force) to serve as a base. Two years later, the U.S. War Department (predecessor of the Department of Defense) renamed the facility Grenier Field, in honor of city native Lt. Jean D. Grenier, who had died on a training mission in the 1930s. The Chamber’s 1945 annual report mentioned the organization’s ongoing challenge of bringing commercial air traffic to the city and mentioned “an outstanding meeting [that] included representatives from several airline companies.”

Early in 1946, the Chamber’s Board of Directors made arrangements to purchase the organization’s first headquarters at 57 Market Street. This was made possible thanks to the foresight of past directors, who had slowly been accumulating a contingency fund. A Chamber publication reads, “Your Chamber is most grateful to those individuals who originally purchased the building from Amoskeag Industries Inc., in 1936 and who in 1946 turned it over to the Chamber for exactly what they paid for it. Thanks to them your Chamber of Commerce has a permanent home.”

In 1949, the Chamber published a small booklet, “Manchester... A City of Opportunity,” which noted that the city’s largest sector was still manufacturing. While textile and shoe companies made up the largest portion, the booklet

A plaque that was distributed to Chamber members for them to display in their office or storefront, dissuading solicitations from non-Chamber members.

mentioned businesses that produced brushes, fire escapes, hampers, rugs, tires and vaults; R.G. Sullivan, Inc. was called “the largest cigar factory in New England [using] more than two million pounds of tobacco annually.” Also, the Habitant Soup Company reportedly produced more than 15 million cans of four “exclusive specialized” soups, including genuine Quebec French-style pea soup.

By the end of the decade, the Chamber had published a Classified Directory of Manufacturers, which sold for 50 cents. The companies listed included firms that made fur coats, gauze, luggage and sewing needles. The Chamber’s 1949 annual report mentioned, for the first time, that the Chamber’s annual meeting was held in conjunction with a dinner, held January 31, 1949, at the Masonic Temple. The celebration dinner is now a cherished tradition on the Chamber’s calendar and honors the Citizen of the Year.

As the 1940s ended, the Chamber was poised on the brink of a period of rapid economic growth. The next decade would allow the organization to flourish with member involvement through the committee structure, as the city saw a postwar economic boom.



An illustration from the Chamber publication called “Made in Manchester,” which touted Manchester’s labor market as being “Excellent! Plentiful! Cooperative!”

CHAMBER 1940s ACCOMPLISHMENTS

At the beginning of the America’s involvement in World War II, the Chamber sponsored a housing project for the military personnel of the North Atlantic Wing of the Air Transport Command stationed at the airport.

The Chamber participated in all Paper and Metal Salvage Drives, which the federal government organized to encourage home front support for World War II.

In 1944, the Chamber sponsored the city’s downtown Christmas Lights Display. It was a project the group managed for decades before handing it off to the City of Manchester.

A 1945 campaign increased the total number of Chamber members from about 320 to 450.

In 1946, the Chamber participated in the official recognition of the 100th anniversary of the City of Manchester.

The Chamber’s Tourist Booth served as many as 25,000 people during ten weeks of summer.

-As reported in Chamber annual reports from the 1940s

1950-1959

Growth and Diversity

Organizations like chambers of commerce go through their ups and downs, based on numerous factors, including current economic conditions, leadership teams and membership participation. During the 1950s, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce was a well-oiled machine, with numerous committees steering the postwar economic boom to the advantage of growth in the city of Manchester.

Art Harnett, who served as executive director of the Chamber for almost 30 years, recalls the 1950s as the “glory days,” when the city and the business community worked together harmoniously. “The commitment made in those days was an amazing change from the days of prior years,” he explained. “The old Board of Trade [which proceeded the Chamber’s founding] was essentially a retail movement. But things changed dramatically after World War II. We moved into a three-pronged approach: retail, industrial and service.

“The two strongest entities were the Chamber and the city’s Industrial Council,” Harnett said, adding that the business group followed a well-planned course during the decade. “I thought it was the business community’s duty to make the city a better community,” he explained. “My philosophy was that a rising tide lifts all ships. We committed ourselves to both the needs of the business community and the community itself; we represented the best interests of the communities.”

“There is no question that we have taken another step down that road of community betterment,” wrote Chamber President James H. Mahony in the 1953 annual report.

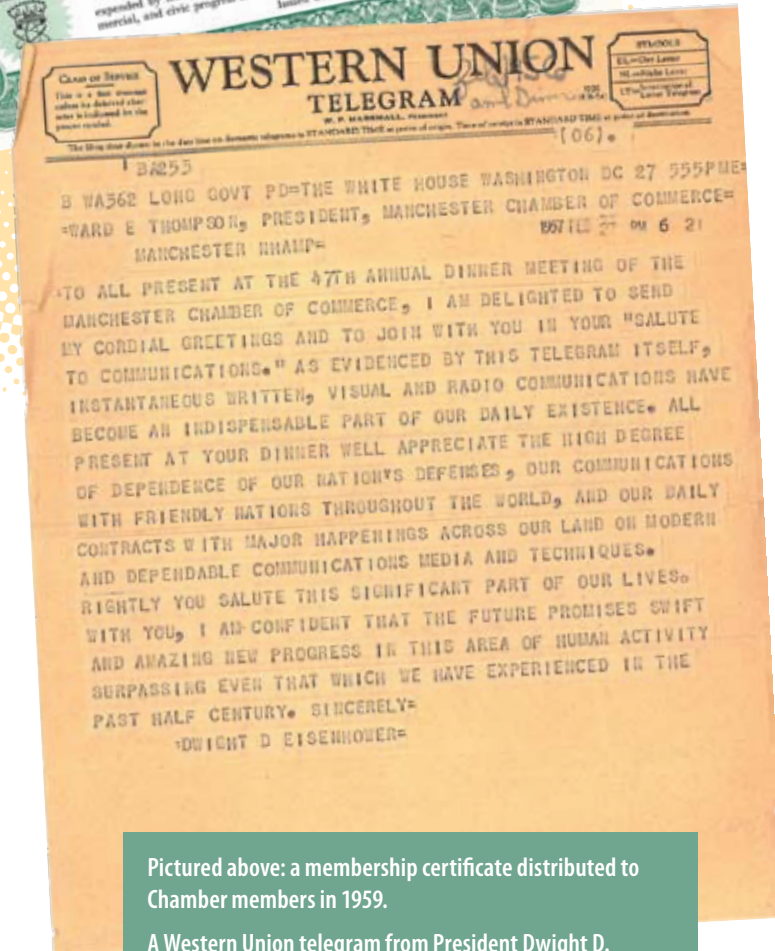
“Let us carry forward with every increasing strength the zealous and enthusiastic crusade, utilizing the Chamber’s famous tagline, IDEAS, MEN and MONEY, to make Manchester a better city in which to live, work and play,” added President Ward E. Thompson a few years later.

The December 1950 issue of *Nation’s Business* magazine included “Manchester—Revival on the Merrimack,” which noted the remarkable recovery of the old Amoskeag Millyard and the city. New businesses recruited to the city included national brands like Johnson & Johnson, U.S. Rubber and Sears & Roebuck. Throughout the 1950s, the Chamber continued to work in some of the same areas and expanded into new ones.

“Cities don’t stand still...They forge ahead or slip back...A constructive movement begun today may not be realized until next year or years after that but it may be observed that as the years roll by and improvements come and expansion is realized, you can date their inception back to the time when a group of men and women gathered in the Chamber of Commerce and talked it over. They kindled the spark that later grew into a flame of constructive effort.”

— Herbert Brewster, Chamber President, 1956

One significant new involvement was in education. The Chamber co-sponsored a student and adult retail training course. It helped Saint Anselm College institute textile courses so local manufacturers would be able to find trained employees locally. The Chamber sponsored the famous business courses designed by early self-improvement expert Dale Carnegie. It published Tax Calendar Guides for members. It organized a “Practical Politics” course that would prove to be



Pictured above: a membership certificate distributed to Chamber members in 1959.

A Western Union telegram from President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1957. The telegram was sent to the Chamber of Commerce for the 47th annual dinner meeting where the theme was “Salute to Communications.”



The Chamber’s Women’s Division held the city’s first outdoor art show in 1953. The show drew a crowd of 10,000 people.

11

GOOD REASONS WHY *I belong to the* MANCHESTER CHAMBER of COMMERCE

- The Chamber represents my city to the outside world. It acts as the good-will ambassador of the city. I cannot always do it myself. But, the Chamber can always find the man who will.
- Our Chamber of Commerce retains the collective brains and energy of business leaders on duty throughout the year. These promote my business and your business.
- The organization acts for the general welfare of every man, woman and child in this city.
- Our Chamber of Commerce encourages local trade, promotes better living conditions, maintains property values, protects business against unscrupulous legislation and schemes.
- I believe that organized community effort secures results.
- I believe the Chamber of Commerce is a potent force for good. I know it must be financed. It is my privilege to help provide the budget.
- Citizenship is a privilege. I want to cooperate and enjoy working with others in a good cause. I do not desire to have my citizenship considered as an obligation.
- I expect my city to make a certain amount of progress each year. I find the Chamber of Commerce an outlet for doing my share.
- It is a non-partisan, non-sectarian organization. It appeals to my sense of civic-mindedness.
- Manchester has problems to solve. The solution will not just happen. It is part of my job to help.
- The Manchester Chamber of Commerce changes community wishful thinking into intelligent action.

*-Published in the 1953 "Your Chamber Speaks,"
a publication of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce*

popular throughout the 1960s. It developed the Manchester Personnel Club to promote "improved personnel methods and leadership." This organization, which we would today call human resources officers, played an active Chamber role for many years, conducting surveys, bringing in guest speakers and staging leadership conferences.

The Chamber instituted several new programs during the 1950s, including a Better Homes and Food Show that drew over 11,000 people. A police safety campaign was launched that resulted in Chief Francis McGranahan being named New Hampshire Police Chief of the Year. Also, in 1952 the newly formed Women's Division of the Chamber developed an Outdoor Art Festival and Fashion Show.

In 1953, the Chamber created a longstanding tradition that is continued to this day. During the 1954 annual meeting and dinner, the Chamber recognized the first Man of the Year, an award that was presented to William McElroy. Just a few years later in 1955, the award would be renamed the Citizen of Manchester Award, as it was given to a woman, Mrs. Mary C. Manning. Today it is called the Citizen of the Year Award and serves the same purpose as it did then—recognizing an outstanding individual for leadership and community service.

In 1953 the Manchester Chamber's Personnel Club was organized to promote improved personnel methods and leadership.



The Man of the Year Award was later called the Citizen of Manchester Award. In 2011 it is known as the Citizen of the Year Award.

The first Man of the Year Award given to William McElroy in 1954.



Despite all of the new programs and initiatives of the early part of the decade, the Chamber continued to work on issues that had been on its agenda for years. The organization remained vocal in supporting efforts to increase commercial air services and to develop areas in and around the Grenier Air Force Base. It initiated a study of Manchester's aviation needs, which resulted in increased use of land and facilities at Grenier. Immediate industrial construction on the base was approved by the Air Force; one industry had plans to build, and plans were made for an industrial park as the Air Force released other land it controlled. (The federal government planned to let go of all its local airfield property after the end of World War II.) The following year the Chamber conducted the first airborne board of directors meeting in New England, aboard a Northeast Airline flagship, for the purpose of viewing industrial development land possibilities in the Grenier Field area. In 1958, the Chamber sponsored the largest two-day aviation recognition program in the state's history; the Air Age Show was able to publicize the joint civilian-military uses and availability of Grenier Field, drawing about 85,000 people.

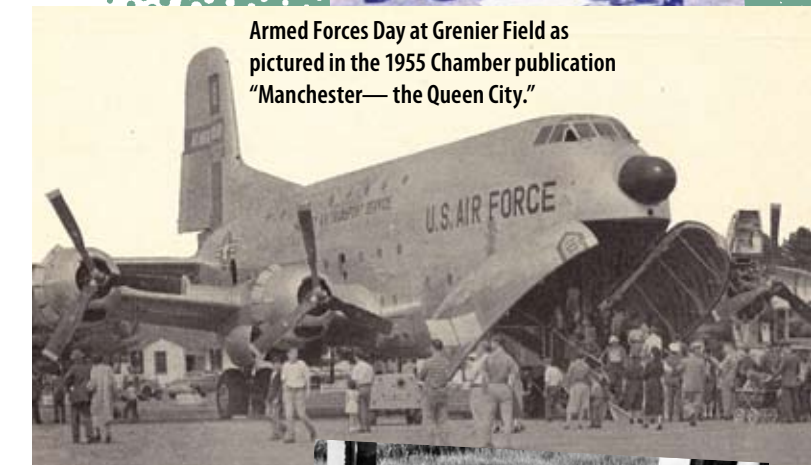
The Chamber also became more active in promoting the benefits of the city to both businesses and visitors, including the increasing numbers of convention programmers. Its redecorated Tourist Booth served about 38,000 people in 1957. It produced several new publications, from the regular "Manchester Speaks" business bulletins to a new booklet named "Manchester—the Queen City." It distributed 38,000 copies of a new "Invitation from Manchester" booklet, which outlined the city's facilities and opportunities. It produced the first New Hampshire on Parade Exposition, stimulating trade and attracting over 24,000 people.

The Chamber also appeared to become more active in the city's long-range plans, studying a proposed charter revision and plans for clearance of sub-standard housing areas while publicly supporting early urban renewal plans like the Pearl Street Redevelopment Program. In 1959, the group hosted an all-day conference on urban renewal and community planning, a concept that was becoming popular among American cities impacted by the growth of shopping malls outside traditional downtown areas. But as the decade ended, the Chamber—as well as Manchester, and the rest of America—was about to enter a new day of challenges.

Chief of Police McGranahan and retired Reverend Gilbert stand next to one of the Chamber's safety signs aimed at promoting school safety. Beginning in 1951 these signs were placed at the intersections near city grammar schools.



Armed Forces Day at Grenier Field as pictured in the 1955 Chamber publication "Manchester—the Queen City."



Taken in 1950, this photo shows the Manchester Chamber of Commerce Tourism Booth operated in cooperation with the Merrimack Valley Region Association, Manchester Municipal Government and the New Hampshire State Planning and Development Commission. During a normal summer season this booth attracted 8,000 vehicles and approximately 25,000 passengers.



1960-1969

Facing the Future

The 1960s proved to be a decade of both reflection and renewal for the Chamber of Commerce, as members looked hopefully towards the future and dealt with significant ongoing challenges. Things began well. In 1960, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce congratulated the local organization's new membership Fair Share Support Plan. The program assessed businesses and individuals their annual dues based on several different factors, including its primary business model (manufacturing, financial, retail, etc.), and the number of employees. The national chamber called the Manchester Chamber's idea "one of the finest now being employed anywhere in the nation, and a definite compliment to the business community of Manchester, New Hampshire, for its development and approach." The program also stabilized the financial structure of the Chamber at the time.

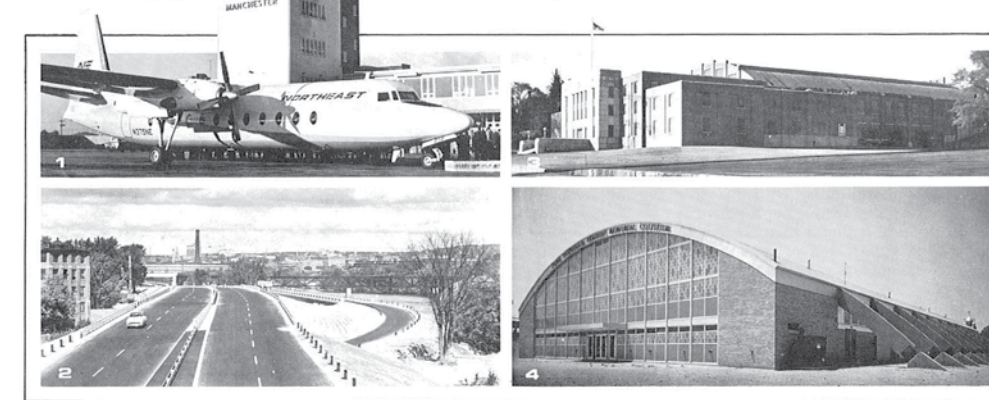
In 1960, the Chamber also began holding regular public meetings, called the Chamber-City Forum Series, where residents and community leaders could interact in an informal format. Longtime Chamber Executive Director Art Harnett started the meetings on Tuesday mornings at seven-thirty, figuring that many businesspeople had already moved out to the suburbs and the morning format would work better than a traditional "after-hours" event. He was right and the idea was so good it was soon copied by other cities. Today, the Chamber holds similar breakfast forums on topical issues four or five times a year.

The most significant challenge Harnett recalls from the 1960s was the Chamber's ongoing effort to transform the U.S. Grenier Air Force Base from a military facility into a municipal airport. "The Chamber's Aviation Committee was recognized by most people as the most powerful committee in the state," he recalled. The group was

ALL
CITIES
OFFER

MANCHESTER

CONVENTION FACILITIES



involved in writing legislation that established the Manchester Airport Authority, and local business interests were beginning to realize the importance of having a municipal airfield. "It linked so many commercial and business interests," Harnett explained. "It affected so many elements of life and community."

The Chamber held several meetings with Northeast Airlines to improve its air carrier service. Then in 1963 the facility became even more important when the U.S. military announced plans to transfer all of its air operations to the Pease facility on the seacoast and to leave the Manchester facility to become an all-civilian operation. "How this latest development at Grenier Field is resolved will decide much of the future economic life of Manchester and the entire state of New Hampshire," one annual report predicted, adding that the Chamber had already asked the U.S. Department of Defense to give Manchester first priority consideration for all government holdings located at Grenier Field when the Air Force units vacated.

In the latter part of the decade, the Chamber continued to push forward on issues regarding commercial development in and around the airport. With the failed efforts to correct the inadequacies to the access roads to the industrial complex, the Chamber's Transportation Committee introduced legislation and organized support for the successful passage of a \$60,000 engineering study for a new Brown Avenue entrance.

CHAMBER 1960s ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The year 1961 marked the 150th anniversary of the naming of the City of Manchester, as well as the Chamber's 50th anniversary.

In 1962, the Chamber assisted the city in staging a "Manchester Welcomes Home" event to honor America's first astronaut, Commander Alan B. Shepard of Derry. An estimated 90,000 spectators saw the celebrity motorcade and formal ceremonies in front of City Hall.

In 1963, the Chamber launched the Queen City Invitational Basketball Benefit Tournament to benefit the youth of the area.

In 1963, the Chamber helped host a National Security Seminar, one of only a handful held across the country.

In 1968, the Chamber got the Queen City involved in a 12-week promotional campaign that earned Manchester the title of "Coffee Town, U.S.A.," sponsored by the International Coffee Organization and the Pan-American Coffee Bureau.

In 1967, the Chamber published a 24-page booklet called "This is Manchester, the Four Seasons Crossroads of New England," touting Manchester as a great convention center.

-As reported in Chamber annual reports from the 1960s



The economic difficulties of the decade kept coming, recalled Harnett. Businesses relocated out of the urban centers. “The American retailer was looking for plazas and open space. Parking was the critical thing,” he said. “It was not too digestible to any of us, seeing it was going to turn the downtown, transforming it from the retail center of New Hampshire into a lesser commodity. The downtown business owners hated to see their fellow retailers leave. Jordan Marsh left, they located out at Bedford, and that caused a lot of consternation.” Still, there was some cause for optimism. Urban renewal had come to the city, bringing change, including the demolition of a good part of the old Amoskeag Millyard, which bothered some people, but also promised better use of downtown space ahead. What Harnett called “a hunk of farmland” off South Willow Street was viewed for a new shopping plaza that would later become the hugely successful Mall of New Hampshire.

“Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its power, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered.”

*– Daniel Webster (1782-1852),
a remark regularly recorded in Chamber annual reports of the 1960s.*



On the political side, the Chamber worked with the city for the preservation of 460 acres of the east industrial zone land, and supported zoning ordinances in the interest of preserving the proper management of land use within the city. Chamber members were particularly concerned about the future industrial and service needs of firms located in the old Amoskeag Millyard area. The Chamber studied and supported the development of the 70-acre Brown Avenue industrial park, urging the City of Manchester to purchase and develop the park in order to properly service those firms displaced by the industrial renewal of the Millyard.

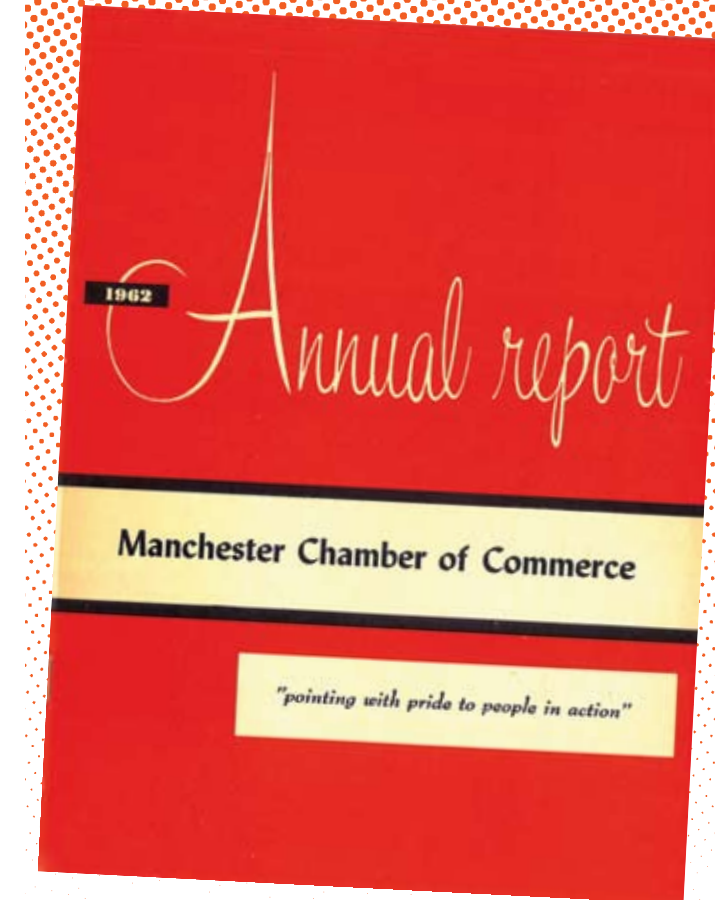
In 1968, the Chamber faced serious fiscal crises. Chamber President John G. Dayton reported that “the general operating costs are underfinanced by the Manchester business community; we have a staff too small to service the expectancies of the membership, the committees and the total community; we have a communications gap where the investing member is not always aware of his Chamber’s many efforts; and the Chamber and our community has a serious responsibility of leadership development among our residents.” Meanwhile, the organization managed to create the Manchester Committee, a fact-finding and action task force geared towards redeveloping and revitalizing the downtown business district. It continued to study programs aimed at alleviating the city’s low- and middle-income housing crunch. It pushed for completion of a new Amoskeag Bridge. It supported a “Shop Manchester” campaign, as well as a revision of the city charter.

The decade came to an end with the official announcement of the development of Hampshire Plaza at 1000 Elm Street, a 259-foot tall building that would become the tallest structure north of Boston when it was completed in 1972. The building had offices upstairs and on the ground level an “urban mall” with shops that business leaders hoped would revive the struggling downtown.



Some referred to it as the beginning of the renaissance of Manchester. But it was not to be. The building did not draw people to the central business district or spur the kind of development the Chamber and other businesspeople hoped for. (Years later, the building was renamed the Brady-Sullivan Plaza and found more success by focusing almost exclusively on providing professional office space.)

Hampshire Plaza at 1000 Elm Street.



1970-1979

Seeds of Growth

Sometimes hard times become the impetus for plans that prosper later. The 1970s continued to be a challenging era for the community, but it was during this time that the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce got involved with several projects that would result in significant positive progress years later. (It was during this decade that the Chamber changed its name to include the word “Greater” to accurately represent the regional reach of the organization.) Manchester resident Sylvio Dupuis, a past mayor and active member of the Chamber for more than 30 years, said the decade was an era of unprecedented cooperation between the public and private sectors, something he called, at the time, “stretching hands across Elm Street,” with City Hall on one side and the Chamber office on the other.

“My sense was that a public-private partnership was what we needed at the time,” he said. “When I was elected mayor in 1975, we had something called the Manchester Agenda. We had a group of businesspeople, bankers and business owners, along with the Board of Mayor and Alderman, and other city officials, and we looked at the next five years.”



The private-public partnership flourished throughout the decade. For instance, at the same time the Chamber was campaigning to get the city to build a parking lot to support the new downtown Hampshire Plaza, it announced that it supported, in principle, the multi-million dollar shopping center for South Willow Street and Huse Road that would become the 125-store Mall of New Hampshire, and be the lynchpin for an explosion of retail development in that neighborhood. And while the group pressed for accelerated implementation of the Amoskeag Mills Industrial Renewal Project, it also conducted an in-depth study of Manchester’s housing needs and deterrents to construction, worked with local health service delivery institutions to expand and improve Manchester hospital care, and held energy conferences to encourage conservation during the Energy Crisis.

Dupuis identified two key areas of importance: area infrastructure and airport development. Manchester’s public transportation at the time was very poor, Dupuis recalled. “It was probably the worst in the country.” But in 1975, city officials worked with local business interests to create the Manchester Transit Authority and win a federal transportation grant that brought 27 new buses and 52 new school buses to Manchester. “And the Chamber helped out on that very much,” the former mayor said.

“We reside in a healthy economic community, a geographical area with an excellent environment, and in a non-metropolitan atmosphere conducive to the enjoyment of a full and rewarding life. Our opportunities are of enormous magnitude.”

— Edward O. Powers, Chamber President, 1974



Chamber newsletter from January 1976.

SYNERGISM

...1973

Chamber Service Box Score	
DECEMBER 1975	
Total Incoming Mail	971
Total Outgoing Mail	4,262
Total Incoming Calls	320
Meetings	31

Chamber stats from 1976 Chamber newsletter.



A collection of Chamber annual reports from the 1970s.

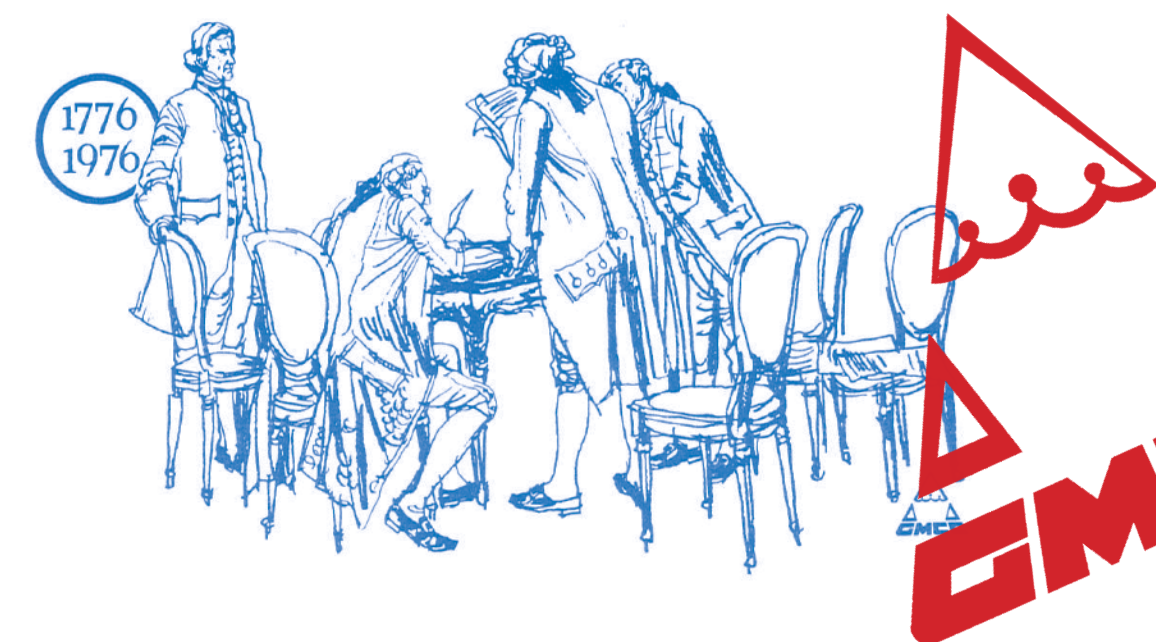
The Manchester Agenda group also began working on both fresh water and wastewater treatment plants. “Industries coming in needed clean water and they needed a way to dispose of wastewater going back out,” Dupuis said. “Those infrastructure issues, they didn’t sound very glamorous but that’s what was needed.” When they were built, the development of the Manchester Airport and Brown Avenue began to blossom.

The Chamber sponsored a transportation survey to convince federal aviation officials that the region could support regular passenger airline service. As the quality of commercial air service sunk to alarmingly low levels in 1971, the Chamber joined forces with the Manchester Airport Authority to support the merger of Delta Airlines with struggling Northeast Airlines as the only realistic solution to obtaining a major air carrier for this area of the country. Soon the group saw the fruition of its efforts when the federal government’s Civil Aeronautics Board approved the merger and gave a certificate of service to Delta Airlines. One major setback for the airport occurred when the aged terminal building burned down in 1973. “It was interesting because that was a time of a lot of vandalism,” Dupuis said. “At first somebody thought that somebody had tried to blow it up. You know, there was this opposition to the Vietnam War. But then they discovered that the explosions they’d heard were just aerosol cans in the building exploding.”

With the terminal gone, it soon became evident to many in the business community that the airport needed to serve a wider area than previously envisioned, i.e., providing flights to and from Boston and New York City. A new terminal building was soon completed and it was twice the size of the old one. “It really looked like an airport terminal,” Dupuis said. “It had a restaurant and everything.” In 1976 the Chamber assisted the airport authority in obtaining permission to add 14 daily flights between Boston and Manchester, and it continued discussions with Delta aimed at improving and expanding its service.

Throughout the 1970s, the Chamber offered a group insurance plan to members, encouraged the hiring of minorities and sponsored the nation’s first one-on-one business-education dialogue program, involving more than 450 teachers and 110 businesses, in an effort to improve understanding of the roles of each institution. In 1979, the Chamber added a new staff position to reflect its renewed commitment to conveying the area’s business concerns to government officials, and it co-sponsored the first public presentation of the Mondav Plan, which years later became the city’s plan to build a civic center, known today as the Verizon Wireless Arena.

City records show that Mayor Charles “Dick” Stanton, who served for much of the 1970s, left behind papers reflecting the 1970s as a time that saw “the last years of urban renewal in Manchester, and the emergence of the City as a strong economic force.” The Chamber was helping things move forward by working on the Manchester Agenda and renewing its commitment to the area’s businesses and the general community. It was the kind of focus that would be needed to navigate through the next ten years.



CHAMBER *1970s* ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the 1970s, the Chamber promoted the region to businesses and visitors with a 15-minute state-of-the-art color filmstrip presentation called “This is Manchester,” and full color booklets like “Manchester, the City of Progress.”

In 1974 the Chamber sponsored the Queen City Invitational Hockey Tournament.

In 1976, the nation’s bicentennial brought increased attention on the city’s cultural role and with the help of Mayor Charles “Dick” Stanton, the Chamber arranged to have Manchester designated the one and only New Hampshire stop for the Bicentennial Freedom Train that was traveling around the country.

-As reported in Chamber annual reports from the 1970s

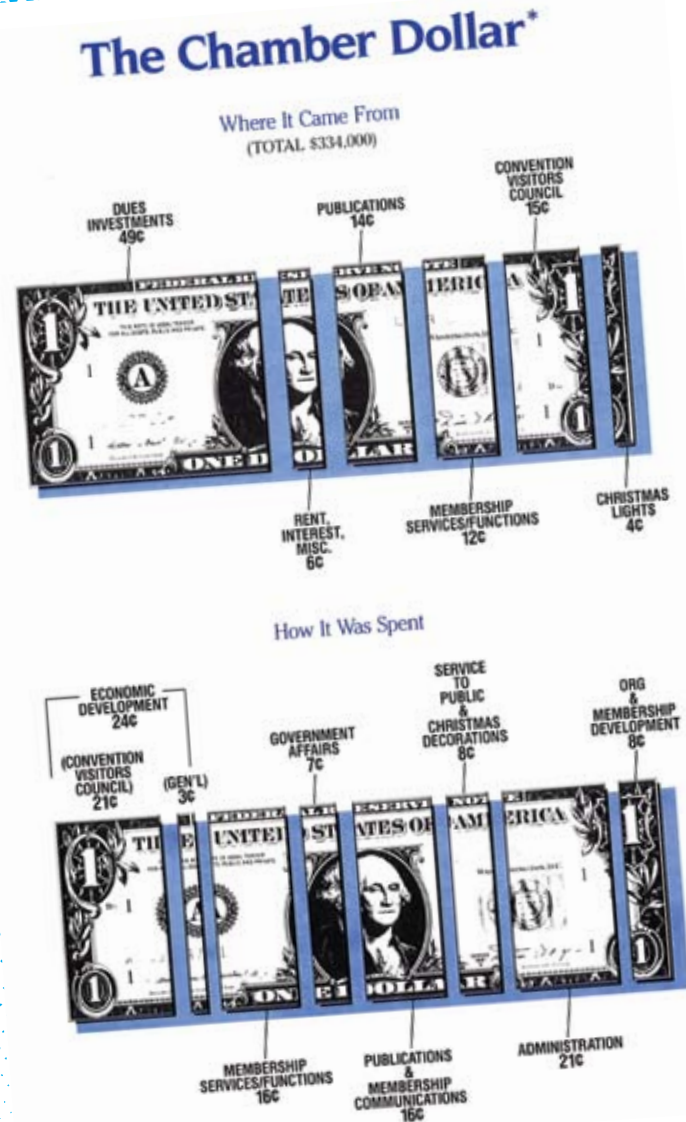
1980-1989

A New Day Dawning

The work of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce throughout the 1980s can best be told in broad strokes. “There is a new day dawning and the Chamber is at the heart of it,” declared Chamber Board Chairman Sylvio Dupuis in 1981.

But the organization soon ran into serious financial difficulties. By 1982 it was forced to sell its building at 57 Market Street that had served as its headquarters since the 1930s. It moved into a new professional building at 889 Elm Street. Thomas Schwieger, president and CEO of the Chamber during most of the 1980s and 1990s, said the sale was necessary to get the business group looking ahead and past its recent rough patch. “I saw the role of the Chamber as a community leader, the voice of the business community, and that addressing key issues would enhance the community as a whole,” Schwieger said. “Did we succeed? Absolutely! We put a lot of emphasis on developing partnerships with others, including boards and departments in the City, and with other authorities.”

“The Chamber News” announced in late 1980 that Robert P. Benard, chairman of the “Priorities ‘81” committee and dean at Merrimack Valley College, would lead the board of directors on its first “retreat” at the Sheraton Wayfarer in Bedford. It would be a real work session where ideas were refined and defined to produce strategies critical for making “the New Chamber a leader for the 80s.” (For several years during this era, the Chamber referred to itself as the “New Chamber.”) Eventually, this time of reflection led the organization to become the first accredited chamber of commerce in New Hampshire.



A breakdown of Chamber revenue and expenses from 1984 annual report.

THE HISTORY OF Manchester-Boston Regional Airport

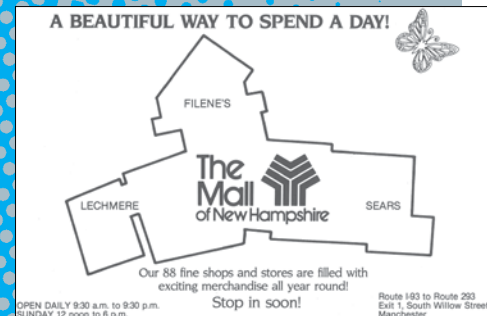
- **June 7, 1927**— The Manchester Board of Mayor and Aldermen approve spending \$15,000 to begin development of a Manchester airport.
- **October 21, 1927**— The newly formed Manchester Board of Aviation and Recreation approves construction of an airport on an 84-acre tract of land near Pine Island Pond. Ground is broken four days later and within a month two 1,800-foot dirt runways are cleared.
- **1933**— The first passenger terminal opens in Manchester.
- **May 20, 1941**— The first U.S. Army Air Force (precursor of the Air Force) troops arrive: 107 enlisted men and five officers. Area newspaper advertisements welcome the military to the area.
- **February 1942**— Manchester Air Base is renamed Grenier Field by the War Department in honor of Manchester native Lt. Jean B. Grenier, who died in a training mission in 1934.
- **1955**— The Air Force responds to civic leaders and approves a joint military-civilian use of Grenier Field.
- **1959**— The Manchester Airport Authority (MAA) is established by City Charter as a municipal commission.
- **1966**— The Air Force relocates all remaining flying units to other air bases and transfers control of Grenier Field to the City of Manchester and the adjacent Town of Londonderry.
- **1978**— Grenier Field/Manchester Municipal Airport is officially renamed Manchester Airport.
- **March 1992**— Phase I of the redevelopment of Manchester Airport begins. Plans include a new passenger terminal, taxiways, roadways and parking.
- **1997**— For the first time, Manchester Airport surpasses one million passengers serviced.
- **December 1997**— Phase II of the redevelopment of Manchester Airport begins. Plans include improvements to runways and taxiways, a new passenger terminal addition, a parking garage and a new airport entrance road.
- **1999**— For the first time, Manchester Airport surpasses two million passengers.
- **2000**— For the first time, Manchester Airport services three million passengers.
- **August 2003**— The airport's main runway reopens after a reconstruction project that lengthens it from 7,000 to 9,250 feet.
- **2004**— For the first time, Manchester Airport surpasses four million passengers.
- **February 2004**— Manchester Airport opens its second passenger terminal, a 75,000 square foot structure.
- **April 2004**— The Federal Aviation Authority Administration breaks ground on a new 165-foot air traffic control tower at Manchester Airport.
- **2005**— Manchester Airport welcomes almost 4.4 million passengers and sets a new annual passenger activity record.
- **April 18, 2006**— Manchester Airport is officially renamed Manchester-Boston Regional Airport to better reflect the important role it plays in New England.



-Courtesy of Manchester-Boston Regional Airport

“The old rules don’t apply. It’s very difficult to tell what’s going to happen.”

– ABC News correspondent Bettina Gregory, speaking at the 1980 GMCC annual dinner meeting



An advertisement for the Mall of New Hampshire from the Chamber's Greater Manchester Magazine and Membership Directory.



An advertisement in a Chamber magazine for Pilgrim Airlines. The airline promoted one-hour direct flight service from Manchester to New York City.



An advertisement for the Center of New Hampshire Expo Center from the Chamber's Greater Manchester Magazine and Membership Directory.

Early in the decade, the Chamber established a Transportation Program to review local needs and to develop a long-range plan related to the highway system, air service and railroad needs. The group's work included efforts to support funding of the South Willow Street widening project near the Mall of New

Hampshire. (The prominent mall was opened in 1977 and underwent a significant expansion in the late 1990s.)

The Chamber continued to promote Manchester as a good convention city, with materials like a conventioners/visitor brochure. According to this Chamber publication, “It is estimated that persons attending a convention and business meeting event in the city generate \$8 to \$10 million in business each year.”

In the mid 1980s, the Chamber instituted Leadership Greater Manchester, a community program designed to help groom civic leaders for the future. The Leadership Greater Manchester program today boasts more than 700 alumni and is still going strong. It is the longest-running leadership program in the state and became the model for the Leadership New Hampshire program.

The Chamber also hosted six Business After Hours events, which allowed local business institutions to introduce themselves to the community in a casual setting. The Chamber also sponsored a business-and-industry forum to focus on labor shortage problems in the greater Manchester area. The Chamber re-established its Education Committee to conduct forums on education problems and challenges, and created a Housing Task Force to work with city officials to identify ways local housing needs could be met. But central to the Chamber, and to many city officials and residents, continued to be the potential development of Manchester Airport, said Schwieger. “We played a major role in restructuring the Airport Authority, which resulted in new management and the eventual building of the terminal and other developments at the airport.”

Opponents said Manchester could not support a large regional airport, that the facility would have a detrimental impact on local property taxes, and offered various other complaints, Schwieger recalled. “It was just change they were concerned about, period,” he said. “I’m not sure how it would have gone if we hadn’t moved forward when we did. You only have a certain window of opportunity for these things and that window may have closed if not for the Chamber stepping forward when it did.”

During the second half of the decade, the Chamber became more involved in the political process—successfully laying the groundwork for some significant improvements down the road. For the first time, an annual report mentioned the idea that the state's first-in-the-nation presidential primary was more than just a campaign stop: “The New Hampshire Presidential Primary is usually thought of as a political event; however it has a tremendous economic impact on the area and provides the community with an opportunity to build its image.” The Chamber sponsored a “Get Out the Vote” campaign, hosted candidate breakfast forums and blocked a planned change to the city's charter that “would have removed personnel responsibility from department heads.” Another Chamber event that was created in the late 1980s was a networking event called Tri-City Expo. The massive “business after hours” event was a collaborative effort of the state's three largest chambers of commerce: Manchester, Nashua and Concord. The event created a networking opportunity for Chamber members and also allowed them to exhibit their business. The event continues to this day and draws an average of 200 exhibitors and more than 1,000 attendees every year.

In the late 1980s, efforts to revitalize downtown Manchester were given a push by the Chamber's “Vision 2000” study. In 1986-87, the Chamber funded half the cost of a special civic center study, in cooperation with the Greater Manchester Development Corporation. It would be more than 15 years before the Verizon Wireless Arena would open its doors, justifying the Chamber's long-held faith in the economic impact of a downtown civic center. In the meantime, the group continued to look ahead.

Chamber newsletters from November 1981 and November 1982.



1990-1999

Flying High into a New Day

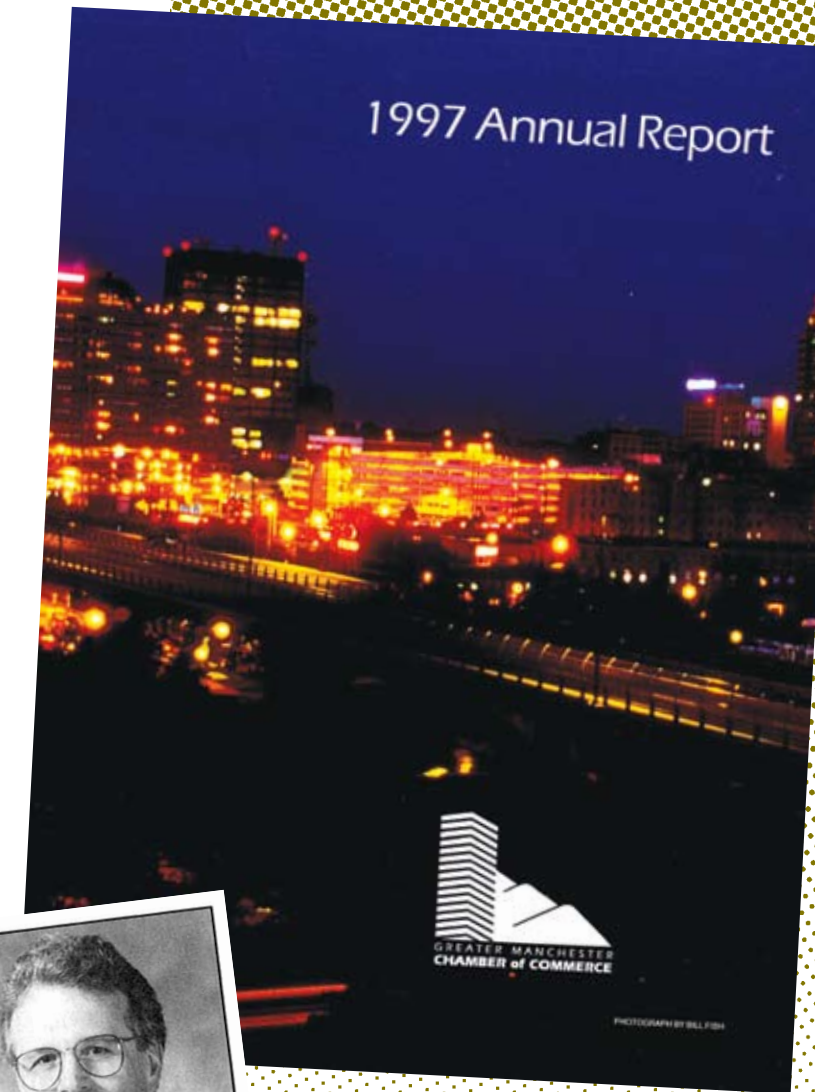
“City development is such a complex thing and we don’t really understand the concept yet,” said Thomas Schwieger, who served as president and CEO of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce during the 1990s. “But one of the fascinating things about the whole history of Manchester is, well, I remember seeing an old newsreel that called it ‘The City That Wouldn’t Die.’ The Amoskeag mills were closed and all its assets were going to be auctioned off. But the city fathers, out of the old remnants of that company, created Amoskeag Industries, a nonprofit organization that’s still in existence. Manchester had become a one-company town. Now it’s no longer even a one-industry town. It’s very diversified,” said Schwieger.

In the 1990s, the Chamber and its members would once again see tough times as opportunities for creativity and growth. By 1990, the Chamber had outgrown its original space in the office building at 889 Elm Street. It took over the third floor of the building and sublet approximately 25 percent of the space, operating it as an informal business incubator. Several business entities and one not-for-profit organization had their starts there. But the Chamber still had some significant financial difficulties. Several local banks, longtime Chamber members, closed their doors. Then a business contracted to produce the annual membership directory failed, creating another severe financial setback. The staff was trimmed from ten to six people.

But between 1990 and 1994, the Chamber coordinated efforts to create a Downtown CPR, or Citizens’ Planning Revitalization group. That organization led to the writing of an award-winning study by an outside consulting group focused on downtown redevelopment and the establishment of InTown Manchester, an independent organization that coordinates downtown beautification and activities. The Chamber facilitated the hiring of InTown Manchester’s professional staff, housed it for a period of months and provided \$20,000 of seed money to get it started. The recommendations included ideas for an ice rink in front of Hampshire Plaza and the restructuring of Elm Street. Both ideas eventually came to fruition, but the ice rink would later be replaced by a much larger version that would have far-reaching economic impact for the city’s central business district.

In 1993, the chairman of the Chamber’s Board of Directors, Sylvio Dupuis, and Manchester’s mayor, Ray Wiecezorek, co-sponsored a “Manchester Agenda” retreat in Wolfeboro. A select group of business and political leaders spent time brainstorming ideas for moving the community forward economically. The group agreed upon several key priorities for the future of the community.

One was to establish a new government review task force. The task force would prove to be the foundation for a new City Charter Commission, the development of a new City Charter and its eventual acceptance by Manchester voters. In addition, the Manchester Agenda group charged the Greater Manchester Development Corporation with creating a new regional economic development program. When the corporation dissolved, the Chamber picked up the gauntlet and established a Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) funded entirely by the private sector. A professional staff was hired to implement the program and it became part of the Chamber’s overall business strategy. As a result of the REDI efforts, leaders of Manchester, Concord and Nashua held a “regional economic development” meeting in 1995, and the next year the Chamber hosted an Internet Expo in the Portsmouth area.



Tom Schwieger, Chamber president and CEO from 1986-2000.

“People make cities. Each and every one of them makes a contribution to the fabric of our community.”

– 1997 Chamber newsletter

Behind all these efforts, however, was the campaign to see the Manchester Airport continue to be developed and the construction of a downtown civic center, said Schwieger. In January 1994, a new 158,000-square-foot airport passenger terminal opened. More additions and improvements followed, including the construction of a major parking garage close to the terminal building. The airport was well on its way to fulfilling the promise Chamber members had envisioned for decades.

In July and August of 1997, the Chamber organized several community workshops throughout the city to explore possible sites and designs for, among other things, a new children’s hospital facility. But it was the civic center idea that once again came to the forefront, Schweiger recalled. “The civic center, it had a lot of lives,” he said. “The Manchester Development Corporation had looked into the idea, and before that the city had done a study that was put on a shelf. It was always put aside when all the emphasis was put on the airport.” But based on public input from those workshop sessions, the Chamber announced that “the design team has recommended the Staples Block (at the corner of Elm and

Granite Street) for further study of a civic center. It is a central location, the focal point of the Granite Street Gateway, reasonably accessible to public parking and ideally positioned to promote further economic development.”

“At that time, there were some members of the City’s Aldermanic Board who had some resentment towards the Chamber, feeling it was doing too much,” Schwieger said. “It was Elias ’Skip’ Ashooh, who had served on the Manchester Development Corporation, who pushed to keep the project moving forward. He spent hours and hours on it, getting everything lined up for a nonbinding referendum vote on the civic center proposal. The Chamber did all the groundwork on getting out the vote and educating people about it and it just passed. I think it carried about 53 percent of the vote, but a similar proposal in Worcester, Massachusetts, went through about five votes before it finally passed. So this was like a landslide.”

“After the success of the airport efforts, the civic center approval was like frosting on the cake,” Ashooh said. The Chamber and the Manchester area were ready to enter the new century and a new era of success.



The very first Manchester Chamber of Commerce logo.



Manchester Chamber of Commerce logo used in the 1950s and 1960s.



Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce logo used in the 1970s.



Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce logo used from the 1980s to 2002.



Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce logo used from 2003-2009.



Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce logo used today.



Centennial edition of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce logo used in 2011.

2000-2010

The Future is Here

The years between 2000 and 2010 marked a time of both advancement and self-reflection for the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. Robin Comstock, who became the organization's first female president and CEO in January 2001, confesses that many of the positive things that came to fruition during her early tenure are the result of the wise leadership of her predecessors. Art Harnett led the Chamber from 1953 to 1983, and Thomas Schwieger had the reins from 1986 to 2000. "Those who came before me had extraordinary vision," Comstock said. "They saw the big picture and took on comprehensive projects to ensure things like the continued revitalization and growth of the downtown and its central business district."

Thanks to those big ideas, just months after she arrived, Comstock was at the opening of the new \$70 million Verizon Wireless Arena, the downtown civic center the Chamber had vocally expressed interest in seeing built since the 1970s. "It was very forward thinking for the time," said Comstock. "Most of the civic centers and ballparks that were being built then were located on the outskirts of downtown. It was progressive thinking to commit to bringing such a facility into the middle of the central business district. And since then, many others have done it."

The vision was that the arena would create traffic and a market that the business tenants would like to have," she explained. "It was believed that if you want good restaurants, if you want healthy and cultural community and vital attractions, if you want the artistic to thrive, you have to bring people into

town to support them." The Verizon, as the civic center is now commonly known, serves as "home ice" for the Manchester Monarchs, one of the most successful minor league hockey teams in America, and hosts everything from major musical artists like Aerosmith and Cher, to trade shows, to the annual FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) student invention competition created by local inventor Dean Kamen.

Among Comstock's first initiatives upon arriving at the Chamber was to increase the organization's focus on regionalization, and building regional thinkers resulting in regional citizens which meant getting surrounding towns talking to each other about working cooperatively to solve problems that stretched beyond their borders. "At the time it was so unheard of," she recalled. "We went to numerous town meetings until late at night, to convince them to talk about working cooperatively,

In 2009, CNNMoney.com rated Manchester 13th in a list of the 100 best cities to live and launch a business in the United States. In addition, Kiplinger voted Manchester the second most tax-friendly city in the United States. In 2010, Forbes magazine named Manchester the 7th most livable city in America.

and asked them to sign a pledge representing their commitment to work together as a cohesive region. Many roundtables, town meetings and discussion groups later resulted in 13 communities signing a pledge to work cooperatively as a region under the Chamber of Commerce umbrella. That effort evolved into the Chamber's Metro-Center initiative."

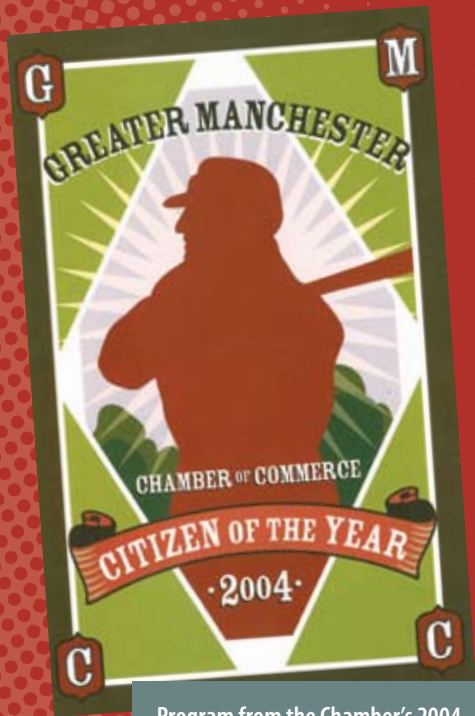
Prior to Comstock's tenure, the Chamber played an important role in forming the downtown independent central business district association, now known as InTown Manchester. The not-for-profit corporation was born out of the Chamber's Downtown Committee in the late 1990s. At that time, the committee believed establishing and sustaining a vital downtown was imperative to the well-being of the community,



January 12, 2010, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce grand opening and ribbon cutting at new offices at 54 Hanover Street. Pictured from left to right: Phyllis Stibler, Stibler Associates; Michael Reed, Stebbins Commercial Properties; Alison Stebbins, Fidelity Investments; Robin Comstock, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce; Mayor Ted Gatsas, City of Manchester; Michael L'Ecuyer, Bellwether Community Credit Union.



Photo by John Gauvin – Studio One Photography



Program from the Chamber's 2004 Citizen of the Year Dinner.

and its ability to attract and keep good jobs, and dynamic employers in the city. The Downtown Committee members also felt it was the responsibility of local commercial enterprises to make sure downtown had the infrastructure it needed to grow. "They felt that being the caretakers of the downtown was too important a job to leave it solely to the public sector and elected leadership," Comstock said. "They thought neglecting it was counterproductive to creating and sustaining good jobs, and growing businesses." As a result, the Chamber was instrumental in instituting a special tax-assessment district that would fund the association that would be known as InTown Manchester.

In early 2001 a Technology Committee was established to unify and advocate for members of the technology sector. By that time numerous start-up tech-firms had joined the Chamber, and a whole new industry was quickly emerging as a dominant force in the business community. The committee met monthly and quickly came out of the gates with a sound plan for a technology expo, which was orchestrated and subsequently attracted numerous exhibitors and hundreds of attendees. At the same time, an evening social event known as Tech-Brew was established, and a morning information forum event was also developed to support the needs of this sector of the business community. Hundreds participated in this unique endeavor for years.

Later that year, horrific terrorist bombings occurred in New York City at the World Trade Center and in other U.S. locations. Although New York is more than 250 miles away, the event impacted the greater Manchester area and the local economy. "It brought businesses into an increased awareness of public safety and beautification," Comstock said. "The Chamber worked on projects aimed at safety and beauty which resulted in representing business interests as the premise to address crime and homelessness in Manchester by establishing the first-ever day center for those in need. An extraordinary community garden program was also established in partnership with the City to beautify the street-scape of the city."

The latter efforts eventually lead to a major tourism initiative, which was possible, Comstock said, because the arena and stadium had created audiences and consumers. Manchester was primed: InTown Manchester was in place, the central

business district was being improved and Granite Street was expanded. Route 101 finally connected Manchester to the Seacoast, and the airport was completed, and expanding.

In 2003, the Chamber worked with city and state officials to incorporate the Manchester Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, noting that every dollar spent on promoting tourism in the area created nine dollars in revenue. After months of roundtables and numerous high-level conversations, it was agreed that the Chamber would create and hold a distinctive corporation to be known as the Manchester Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. The establishment and creation of the operation and the structural framework of the CVB would be handled by the Chamber, and it would also provide oversight management. However, the CVB staff quickly became consumed by the job of raising funds to support operational costs of the organization. This turn of activity prohibited the CVB from doing the work it had pledged to do for its members: promote and market them. The CVB was finally closed when funding was turned off by the City, and the CVB's membership and programs could not sustain the organization.

That same year, the Chamber helped win a \$15 million federal grant to fund the expansion of Granite Street and beautify the entrance to the downtown area. In addition, Manchester's evolving demographic profile became ever more apparent during this decade. Many English-as-a-second-language businesses were opening. The highest growth was in the Latino community, which resulted in a group of individuals forming a Chamber committee that met weekly for almost two years to develop a mission and objective statement and program of work. The group eventually dissolved itself, believing that it was more functional for members of the committee to integrate into the larger organization than be singularly focused on themselves as minorities and immigrants.

In 2004, the Chamber helped bring free Wi-Fi service to the downtown, an amenity few cities the size of Manchester had at the time. The Chamber's members also held discussions with the City about how to better utilize Manchester's historic buildings. The resulting zoning changes later won a prestigious National Trust for Preservation Award.



Photos by John Gauvin – Studio One Photography



Photo by John Gauvin – Studio One Photography



Photo by John Gauvin – Studio One Photography



Dick Anagnost accepts the 2009 Citizen of the Year Award. Also pictured, 2010 Annual Dinner Chairman Paul LeBlanc, president, Southern New Hampshire University.

In 2005, construction of the \$19 million MerchantsAuto.com Stadium (later to become the Northeast Delta Dental Stadium) was completed. It is the home of the Double A New Hampshire Fisher Cats baseball team and is considered one of the finest minor league ballparks in the country. “The facility is not a standalone project,” Comstock said. “It also serves as a lynchpin for further development of the nearby Gaslight and Warehouse districts, an idea that’s been on the Chamber’s radar for a long time....You’re seeing the beginnings of that effort now with the \$100 million Elliot at River’s Edge Ambulatory Care Center. It’s a world-class urgent care center.”

By the end of the decade, the airport the Chamber had long fought for was one of the fastest growing in the nation. In 2006, it was renamed the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, officially recognizing that much of its business came from being a quick drive from one of America’s largest cities.

In 2008, the Chamber again went through a period of self-evaluation. Some board members wondered out loud if, given that many of the functions and services once exclusively provided by the Chamber were now available through the web and other social, virtual and literal networking organizations, the Chamber itself was irrelevant or even archaic. Maybe the 100-year-old institution had served a niche in days gone by but would prove to have no role in the future, they said. After spending some time listening to its members and others in the community, the Chamber decided in October of that year to put more emphasis on its membership, developing new management and marketing approaches, and to refocus its emphasis on Manchester.

In 2009, the Chamber was internally and externally re-organized, focus groups were held, and surveys conducted within the membership and among the broader community too. Out of that period of self-evaluation, the Chamber moved to a tiered membership structure with benefits and services bundled into a once-a-year package, so members could choose exactly what services they wanted to use. It also launched a new marketing campaign with the slogan, “Build Your Brand. Expand Your Network. Shape Your Community.” These were new words, but in many ways they were simply reflecting, in a fresh way, what the Chamber had been doing for

100 years: helping businesses improve themselves, resulting in helping the greater Manchester community grow and prosper.

In addition, in December 2009, after 24 years at its 889 Elm Street location, the Chamber moved its offices once again, this time to a street-level location at 54 Hanover Street. The move afforded the Chamber higher visibility and engagement within the community. By January 2010, the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce was once again unveiling the organization as new, re-invented and poised for the future.

The changes brought with them an aggressive three-year plan to grow the membership, and a renewed commitment to customer service, communications and the city of Manchester. Along with the internal changes, the Chamber continued to advocate for issues affecting the business community. The Chamber lobbied hard to oppose a tax on LLCs, legislation that was eventually overturned. Its economic development agenda included the continued support of passenger rail service from Boston to Manchester. The Chamber also hosted the city’s first PechaKucha event, obtaining special licensing from Japan to host a breakfast forum that featured seven speakers with short seven-minute presentations. Social media continued to be a focus at several Chamber events, and the organization launched the region’s first-ever Greater Manchester Restaurant Week, which drew more than 4,000 diners to the region.

The Chamber ended this decade on the eve of its 100th anniversary and true to the mission its 17 incorporating members envisioned: “To induce a coordination of the diversified business interests of Manchester for the development and up building of the city...to cause the idea of expansion, the desire for better things, for superior attractions, for a more beautiful city, and greater civic achievements, to pervade the life of Manchester.” But, as always, the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce is prepared to take on the challenges and embrace the opportunities of the future.



Hanover Street, the site of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce office in 2011.

Photo by John Gauvin – Studio One Photography



Photo by John Gauvin – Studio One Photography

Acknowledgements & Credits

During the past 100 years, the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce has benefited from the time, talent and resources given by thousands of members of Manchester's business community. We wish to honor those who have given during the past century and who continue to give their time today. This book would not have been possible without the contributions and involvement of the following individuals and organizations:

Ray Carbone of Carbone Productions for accepting the challenge of pouring over the Chamber's files of historical documents, annual reports and newsletters. Ray embraced the opportunity to document the history and create a document that captures the years of advocacy and hard work provided to the community by many through their Chamber volunteer work. Carbone operates Carbone Productions, based in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire. His writing has appeared in *The Boston Globe*, *The New Hampshire Union Leader*, *New Hampshire Sunday News*, *New Hampshire* magazine, *Business New Hampshire*, *The New Hampshire Business Review*, *The Citizen of Laconia/Sunday Citizen* and *The Laconia Daily Sun*. Carbone's first book, *The Lakes Region of New Hampshire: Four Seasons, Countless Memories*, is the first-ever collection of full-color photographs and essays about the area, featuring the works of various area residents. It is available at www.lakesregionnhbook.com.

Gemma French for having the vision and the energy to take on this project and the leadership to take it from start to finish. As vice president of Marketing & Public Relations for the Chamber, French is responsible for all of the branding, marketing, and communications for the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. She oversees the membership department, all programs and events and ensures the Chamber is maintaining the highest level of customer and member relations.

Joan Bennett of The Write Connection for professional copyediting services.

Gary Long of Public Service of New Hampshire for being such a great friend and advocate for the Chamber, serving as board chairman and writing the foreword for this book.

Aurore Eaton of the Manchester Historic Association for dedicating her time to provide the Chamber with archival material and images from the Manchester Research Center.

Former staff members **Art Hartnett**, who served as Chamber president for 30 years, for providing anecdotes from his tenure.

Tom Schwieger, who served as Chamber president for nearly 15 years, for providing stories and information from the late 1980s and 1990s. **Robin Comstock**, Chamber president from 2001-present for providing stories and information from the 2000s.

Sylvio Dupuis, past Chamber board chairman and former mayor of Manchester, for providing information about the Chamber during the 1970s.

Elizabeth LaRocca of Public Service of New Hampshire for her tireless commitment to telling the story of Amoskeag Industries and being a champion for the City of Manchester.

John Gauvin of **Studio One Photography** for providing some of the current Manchester photos for the book. www.studioonenh.com.

The Manchester Historic Association for housing some of the Chamber's archival materials and for providing photos for the book.

wedü, inc. for creating the beautiful design and lending creativity to the book. wedü is known for its innovative strategic thinking in advertising, marketing and interactive. Located in downtown Manchester, N.H., wedü has won numerous awards for its national and regional projects. wedü has been a longtime partner of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

Cummings Printing for its help and guidance in the production and printing of this book.

The Manchester-Boston Regional Airport and the **New Hampshire Aviation Museum** for providing valuable insights and information about the history of the regional airport.

Ed Brouder, one of the authors of *Manchester's Airport: Flying Through Time*, co-authored with Maurice B. Quirin, Barbara D. Miles and Christopher Van Veen; Library of Congress Control Number: 2006908231; ISBN: 0-9721489-9-X

Randolph Lagneback, co-author with Tamara Hareven of *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory City*, 1978.

Manchester native **Janice Brown**, whose research appears on the NHsearchroots.com website, as well as the cowhampshire.blogharbor.com website.

Chapter 3 Credits:

"Amoskeag Comeback," *Business Week*, September 2, 1939, p. 21.

"Amoskeag: Court Imposes Death Sentence on Huge Textile Plant," *Newsweek*, August 1, 1936, p. 30.

Hareven, Tamara K., and Randolph Langenbach, *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory City*, New York: Pantheon, 1978.

One Hundred Fiftieth Annual Report: 1831-1981, Boston: Amoskeag Company, 1981.

"Payroll Rescue," *Business Week*, April 17, 1937, p. 29.

Sweezy, Alan R., "The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May 1938, pp. 473-512.

"Taps for Amoskeag," *Business Week*, July 25, 1936, p. 36.

Manchester, a Brief Record of Its Past and a Picture of Its Present: Manchester, N.H.: J.B. Clarke, 1875, 521 pgs.



Centennial Celebration Sponsors

The Altos Marketing Group
 AMPM Facility Services
 Anagnost Investments, Inc.
 Ansell & Anderson P.A.
 Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield
 AutoFair Automotive Corporation
 BAE Systems
 Baker Newman Noyes
 Bank of America
 Bank of New England
 Bellwether Community Credit Union
 Bentley Commons at Bedford
 Bigelow & Company, CPA/PC
 BioStatix
 Brady-Sullivan Properties
 Catholic Medical Center
 Central Paper Products Co., Inc.
 Centrix Bank
 Citizens Bank
 Comcast
 Compass Health Care Advisors
 Dartmouth-Hitchcock Manchester
 Devine, Millimet & Branch, P.A.
 Eisenberg, Vital & Ryze Advertising

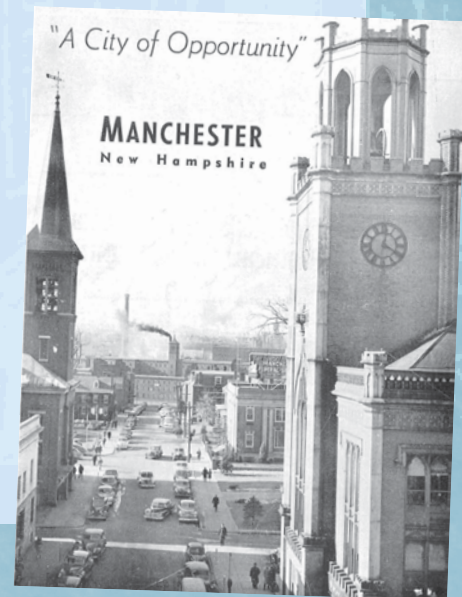
Elliot Health System
 EPE Corporation
 FairPoint Communications
 Fidelity Investments
 Gamache Enterprises
 Gelinas & Company CPA
 Granite State Credit Union
 Grapevine Marketing
 Griffin York & Krause
 Halifax American Energy
 Hanover Street Chophouse
 Harvard Pilgrim Health Care of NE
 Harvey Construction Corp. of NH
 Howe, Riley & Howe, CPAs
 Image 4
 Infantine Insurance/Ferdinando Insurance/Cross Insurance
 Jacques Flower Shop
 Laconia Savings Bank
 Lavallee Brensinger Architects
 Liberty Mutual Personal Markets
 m5
 Manchester Monarchs Hockey Club
 Manchester-Boston Regional Airport
 McLane Law Firm

Members First Credit Union
 Mesh Interactive Agency
 MVP Health Care
 Nelson Kinder Mosseau & Saturley PC
 New Hampshire College & University Council
 New Hampshire Fisher Cats LLC
 New Hampshire Healthy Kids
 New Hampshire Institute of Art
 New Hampshire Union Leader
 Nixon Peabody LLP
 Northeast Delta Dental
 Northway Bank
 Northwestern Mutual Financial Network
 Pastoral Counseling Services, Inc.
 PELMAC Industries, Inc.
 People's United Bank
 PingPR
 Print Savvy, Inc.
 Printers Square
 Public Service of New Hampshire
 Rath, Young and Pignatelli
 Red Oak Apartment Homes, Inc.
 Regency Mortgage Corp.
 Roedel Companies, LLC

Rumbletree
 Savoir Faire Marketing/ Communications
 Service Credit Union
 Sheehan Phinney Bass + Green PA
 SilverTech Inc.
 SMG - Verizon Wireless Arena
 Southern New Hampshire University
 Spectrum Marketing Companies
 St. Mary's Bank
 Stebbins Commercial Properties, Inc.
 Stonyfield Farm
 T-Bones/Cactus Jacks
 TD Bank
 TFMoran, Inc.
 Trivantus, Inc.
 Wadleigh, Starr & Peters, P.L.L.C.
 Walnut Street Productions
 wedü
 Wieczorek Insurance, Inc.
 Wiggin & Nourie, P.A.
 Wiggins Airways, Inc.



Photo by John Gauvin – Studio One Photography



1950

1960

1970

1910

1980

1920

1990

1930

2000

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990

1950

1960

1970

1910

1980

1920

1990

1930

2000

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990



54 HANOVER STREET
MANCHESTER, NH 03101
P: 603.666.6600 F: 603.626.0910
WWW.MANCHESTER-CHAMBER.ORG

