

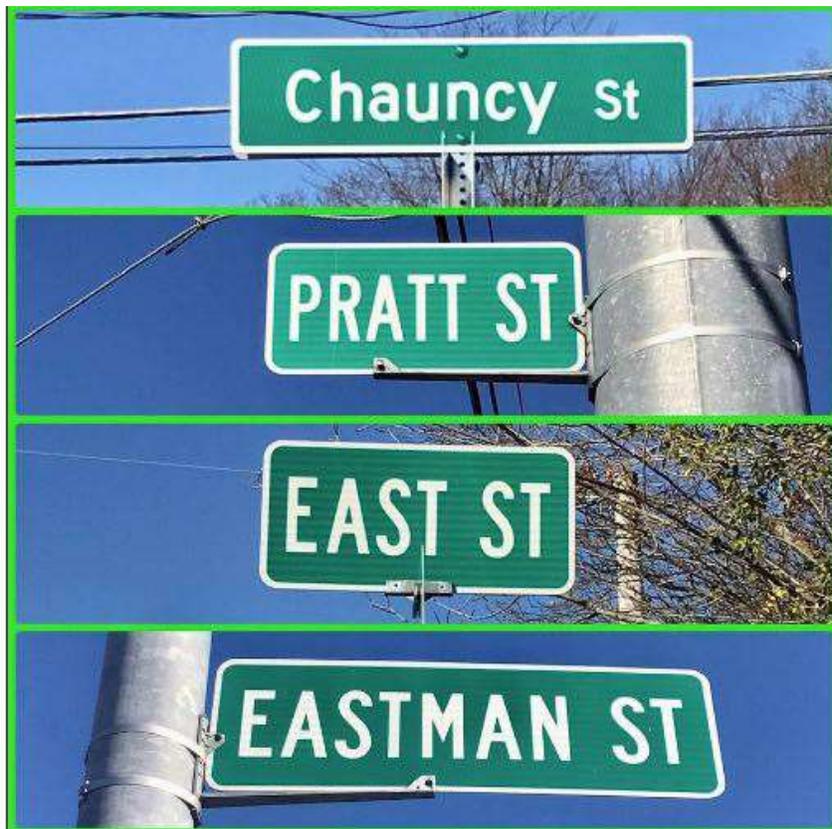
MANSFIELD MEMORIES: The many names of Route 106

By Kevin McNatt and Andrew Todesco | Mansfield@wickedlocal.com

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You might know it as Route 106, but in Mansfield, it goes by several names. It's Chauncy Street, then Pratt Street, then East Street, and finally Eastman Street. So why are there four different monikers for a stretch of road that's only a little over four miles long? We must look to history for the answer.

The best place to start is with an imaginary trip down Route 106 circa 1950, which would be rather different than today. At that time there were no underpasses, and the straightaway stretch of road between Mansfield and Easton now known as Eastman Street did not exist.

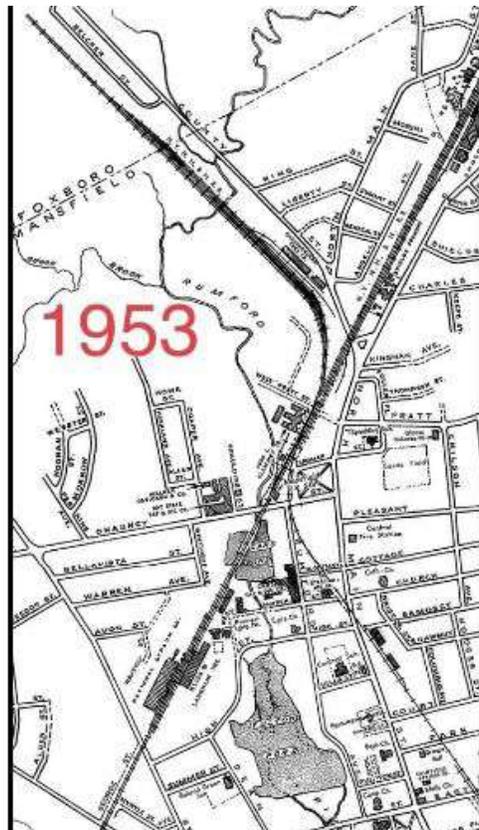


Route 106 in Mansfield goes by several names. It's Chauncy Street, then Pratt Street, then East Street, and finally Eastman Street. [Courtesy/Mansfield Historical Society]

So let's begin our journey. We are making our way from the direction of Plainville. At the Foxborough town line, we pass into Mansfield and find ourselves on Chauncy Street.

The road was laid out essentially as we know it today, until we get to Highland Avenue (currently the location of Station Jeep). Here Chauncy Street stayed at grade level, there was no underpass. The road passed closely to Card's Pond to the right, which has since been buried underground ... and is the reason that the underpass has been prone to flooding over the years. Chauncy Street then crossed the Rumford River and went over the railroad tracks at grade level. Chauncy then intersected with Rumford Avenue at the location then known as Depot Square, and ended at North Main Street. The Lowney (North) Common was twice its current size back then.

The extension of Chauncy Street that we know today, where we would find Cumberland Farms and the shopping plaza at 30 Chauncy St., did not exist. It was an open field known commonly as "Card's Field," where we might find the local youth playing a game of pickup football, baseball, or "Kick-the-Bar," a Mansfield game of a bygone era. But we digress.



Route 106 circa 1950, would be rather different than today. At that time there were no underpasses, and the straightaway stretch of road between Mansfield and Easton now known as Eastman Street did not exist. [Courtesy/Mansfield Historical Society]

To continue our journey to Easton, we had to take a left at the end of Chauncy Street and briefly proceed up North Main Street. We would take a right on to Pratt Street at what we now know as Geno's Restaurant (then Jack's Cafe).

As it does today, Pratt Street continued until it intersected with East Street. Route 106 changes its name to East Street at that point (at the new public safety building) because East Street is among the oldest in Mansfield and pre-dates Pratt Street. Pratt Street was so named because the Pratt family lived near the intersection of the two streets.

In 1950, Route 106 continued on East Street, went right at Flint Farm, and continued to North Street and on to Easton. The modern-day bypass between Mansfield and Easton did not exist in 1950. That stretch is now known as Eastman Street and was completed in 1964. The name "Eastman" was presumably chosen as a combination of "Easton" and "Mansfield." It made travel between the two towns much more convenient.

So, that is why Route 106 has four different names as it moves through Mansfield. The layout has changed, convenient bypasses were added, and certain stretches are much older than others.

Happy travels!

Kevin McNatt and Andrew Todesco are members of the Mansfield Historical Society. They can be reached at mansfieldhistoricalsociety@yahoo.com. Follow the society on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.