

HENRY SABIN CHASE

"A man of rare vision in the world of business adventure and one whose understanding heart lent cheer and courage to his fellow men. A man, he seems, of cheerful yesterdays and confident tomorrows."

— Plaque in the old Chase Companies building

Henry Sabin Chase, born in Waterbury on October 1, 1855, was responsible for the expansion and development of the vast complex of companies bearing the name Chase. His father, August S. Chase, an outstanding industrial leader, had been president of the Waterbury Manufacturing Company, a major producer of brass products during the end of the nineteenth century.

After receiving his early education in Waterbury schools, Chase attended the Gunnery School and Hopkins Grammar School in New Haven where he prepared for Yale, graduating with honors in 1877. Soon thereafter he entered the office of the Holmes, Booth & Haydens Company.

Following the death of his father in 1896, Henry Chase succeeded to the presidency of the Waterbury Manufacturing Company. In 1917, he presided over its merger with the Chase Rolling Mill Co. (built in 1900) and the Chase Metal Works (built in 1910) to form the Chase Companies. This firm was a monument to the business vision, energy and daring of Henry Chase, fortified by the faith and wise counsel of his brother and successor, Frederick S. Chase. When expansion was stifled by the location of the company between the river and the rail line, Henry's note to his engineer was "please change the location of the Naugatuck River." It was. The Chase Companies became one of the three leaders of the brass industry in the world, with 4,000 employees making 33,000 products. Chase Metal Works, "the plant which is nearly a mile long", was one of the largest brass mills in the country.

In addition to being an industrialist, banker and lover of art, literature and nature, he was concerned with public improvements; socially and aesthetically. He was a director of Waterbury Hospital, opened and financed the Waterbury Dispensary and supported many city beautification projects that still carry the Chase name.

In 1917, Henry Chase left his native city another monument: the handsome Chase Office building on Grand Street. By engaging the noted architect, Cass Gilbert, who also designed City Hall on the opposite side of the street, Mr. Chase contributed to the grandeur and variety of architecture in downtown Waterbury.

He died on March 4, 1918.

