

# Hidden Gems Walking Tour

**STARTING AT FRONT STEPS OF TOWN HALL, 41 CENTER STREET**

Join Susan Barlow of the Manchester Historical Society for this walking tour, visiting some beautiful and historic spots along the way. We will walk through Center Memorial Park and talk about its history. We will walk in the Cheney Brothers National Historic Landmark District, and view houses that won a preservation award, and several that were sold at the September 1937 Cheney house auction. We'll see the home and offices of Dr. Noah Burr (1875-1943), hidden behind the Johnson blocks. Each walk varies, and sometimes we have special guests. On some of the Hidden Gems walks, we have visited St. James School, Otis Street's former Cheney mansion, and the Tiffany stained-glass windows at St. Mary's Episcopal Church – visit [http://www.manchesterhistory.org/Flyers/Flyer\\_StMaryTiffanyWndws.pdf](http://www.manchesterhistory.org/Flyers/Flyer_StMaryTiffanyWndws.pdf) to read about the windows.

Here is information about the first stop on our walk, Manchester's Town Hall: Before incorporation, the town meetings were at the official church: Center Congregational Church.

- At incorporation, 1823, Town meetings were held at the Congregational or Methodist church, both at the center of town.
- 1879: Town bought the Congregational church for \$700, moved it a little to the west. The Congregationalists built a new, Victorian-style, church.
- 1896: Hall of Records on land donated by the Cheneys.
- 1926: New town hall, designed by Frank Farley, grandson of Frank & Susan Cheney.

**Postcard of former  
Town Hall, c. 1905,  
formerly the  
Congregational  
Church.**

*From Historical Society collection.*



## Resources with information about local history:

- *A New England Pattern, the History of Manchester, Connecticut*, by William E. Buckley, published 1973 by the Pequot Press.
- *The History of Manchester, Connecticut* by Mathias Spiess and Percy Bidwell, published 1923 now on our web site in the reprints section (out of print but available at library and at online used book sites).
- *Old Manchester II...The Storytellers*, compiled, written, and edited by M. K. Adams, published in 1995 by the Manchester Historical Society, available at Historical Society and public library.
- *Historical and Architectural Resource Surveys of Manchester*, various publication dates, available at Town Hall planning department, Manchester Historical Society, and public library.

Dr. Burr's home & office—note the two gabled windows in the mansard roof. *Dick Jenkins photo.*



Check out our local-history **television** program, Saturdays at 8 p.m. on Channel 15, Cox public access, in Manchester, South Windsor, Glastonbury, Rocky Hill, Wethersfield, and Newington.

Visit the Historical Society at [www.manchesterhistory.org](http://www.manchesterhistory.org) or phone us at 860-647-9983.

Our mission: To educate the public about the history of Manchester, Connecticut; to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit information and artifacts about the town and its diverse population; and to advocate for the preservation of significant historic resources.