

The Manchester Historical Society Presents **A “Bidwell” Walking Tour**

The Historical Society will lead a walking tour, starting at the corner of Prospect and Hartford Road. This **lengthy** walk will trace the route of E.L. Bidwell (1859-1932) from his childhood haunts, to his home, to the old South School (location of current Lutz Museum).

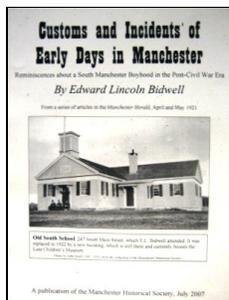
The Historical Society has published "*Customs and Incidents of Early Days in Manchester – Reminiscences about a South Manchester Boyhood in the Post-Civil War Era.*" It contains reprints of Bidwell's columns in the old Manchester Herald, with vintage and contemporary photographs.

Excerpts from the book:

- “At that time, as at the present, there were parents who considered their children perfect. If there was any trouble at school it was entirely the fault of the teacher. Another class did not consider their offspring infallible. My parents belonged to the latter class, and I was given distinctly to understand that if I received a whipping at school I would receive another one at home when my parents learned of it.”
- “The largest fish one catches is the one that gets away. Globe Hollow reservoir was unknown then, the place now occupied by it then being low land.”
- “The Taylors [who lived on South Main Street, part of our walk today] also had an icehouse at Globe Hollow and kept your icebox filled, regardless of size, for fifty cents per week.”
- “The first man teacher I had was the late Professor F.A. Lillie. He was a tall, slim stripling of nineteen when he applied to my father, who was school committee, for the position of teacher. He wore carpet slippers during school hours which impressed us very much, and a long coat with tails which caused him to appear taller than he was. Although he had scholars as large as he was, he maintained good discipline, and I do not recall an instance where he used the rod. His methods were possibly unique, but it was claimed that his scholars would learn if there was any learn in them. He was fond of music and taught us many songs and ditties. We sang the alphabet and multiplication tables to music....” [Ed. Note: Bidwell mentions later in the book that Mr. Lillie became the principal of the eighth district school, a large educational institution in Manchester.]

Old South School, 1900

*Photo from the collection of the
Manchester Historical Society*



Editor’s note: E.L. Bidwell’s brother-in-law was Henry Rogers, owner of the large and prosperous Rogers Paper Manufacturing Company with mills on Hartford Road and Charter Oak Street. It was Henry’s father, Peter Rogers, who founded the mills in 1832. They made pressboard, jacquard cards, and other specialties and employed many workers. The Hartford Road plant was near the Bidwell homestead on Prospect Street. –*Susan Barlow*

The book, pictured on left, is for sale in our museum store for \$8.00.