

What's in a street name? Some interesting history



PICTURES OF THE PAST

Jane Peterson Bouley

A study of the origin and names of the streets in Branford provides an interesting look at the history of the town. The first streets settled by the colonists in 1644 were the present day Main Street and Montowese Street both called in the records "Towne Street." There was also a small path off of Montowese Street called "Pig Lane" which is long since gone. Of course the

roads during that period until the turn of the century were little more than unpaved paths.

The majority of streets in Branford are named for a family or person. Many still retain the names of the early English settlers - Averill Place, Baldwin Drive, Blackstone Avenue, Barker Place, Bartholomew Road, Beach Place, Bradley Avenue, Goodsell Point Road, Gould Lane, Harrison Avenue, Hoadley Road, Howd Avenue, Johnson Point Road, Lanphier Road, Linsley Road, Maltby Street, Monroe Street, Palmer Road, Plant Road, Rogers Street, Russell Street, Sheldon Road, Taintor Drive and Tyler Street.

Others are named for more recent residents such as Aceto Street, Bowhay Hill, Burban Drive, Clancy Road, Damberg Place, Etzel Road, Hammer Place, Hamre Lane, Lavassa Terrace or Piscitello Drive, to name a few.

A few roads in Branford are named for the town's earliest Indian settlers - Montowese Street, Pawson Park Road, Sachem Road, Sagamore Cove Road, Sowheag Path and Squaw Brook Road. Some believe that Yowago Avenue is also an Indian name but it was named for the gentlemen, Young, Warner and Goss, who were involved in the development of Pine Orchard.

There are many streets in Branford named for objects in nature particularly trees. We have Maple Street, Elm Street, Ivy Street, Applewood Road, Cedar Street, Chestnut Street, Dogwood Court, Fir

Tree Lane, Forest Street, Hemlock Road and Laurel Street.

An interesting street name is Linden Avenue which is named for a tree, not a person. During the summer resort period several streets and cottages along the shore were named "Linden."

In 1954 the United States Postal Service mandated that no town shall have the same street names and many changes in Branford took place. Main Street in Short Beach became Shore Drive, Main Street in Stony Creek became Thimble Islands Road, Bradley Street became Court Street and so on. The name changes created much confusion and today we still

have many similar street names - Bradley Street and Avenue, Wilford Avenue and Road, Linden Avenue and Linden Point Road, Summer Island Road and Extension, East, South, North, and West Main Streets. There is an Oak Street, Oakdale Road, Oakdale Place, Oakgate Drive, Oak Hollow Road and Oak Ridge Road. Perhaps the most confusing are Old Pawson Road, Pawson Landing Road, Pawson Park Road and Pawson Trail Road.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jane Peterson Bouley is the historian for the Branford Historical Society.



From Jane P. Bouley's postcard collection
Branford has many interesting street names. This circa 1910 view shows Main Street in Stony Creek. Note the road is unpaved and there are trolley tracks to the right. In 1954 the name was changed to Thimble Islands Road.