



Photo by Mason Foote Smith

THE OFFICE of the "Branford Opinion" in 1900 was located in the Post Office Block on Main Street. The photo is courtesy of the Branford Historical Society.

Pictures of the Past

News articles now seem humorous

Branford Local News

The first local newspaper in Branford was the *Branford News* published in 1878 by Philo Hall and this paper ceased publication after only six months. The *Branford Gleaner* was printed sporadically from 1878 until March 1880 when finances forced its demise. The *Branford Opinion* was published from 1896 until 1914 and browsing through its pages sometimes provides a humorous glimpse of life almost one hundred years ago.

A sampling of town news in 1900 from the *Branford Opinion* is as follows....The rock concert given by the Till family at the Baptist Church was one of the best musical events of the season. They performed on rocks from the Skinner Mountain in the north of England. Using mallets they played many favorite tunes....There will be a two dollar fine for walking on the grass on the Green...Many complaints have been lodged about how Henry the son of W.D. Smith drives recklessly about town....A gypsy with five horses and three wagons camped on the Green by the horse sheds on their way from Nebraska to Providence...."Nannie," the goat of P.H. Hart of Cedar Street is dead....Mrs. E.R. Monroe recently took from her hennery an egg 7 inches

long...Hog cholera is quite prevalent in town and a number of them have died in the 4th Ward...One of our prominent businessmen is seen running around the bases on the ballfield every evening for the purpose of reducing his weight...Dr. A.J. Tenney purchased a cow Monday....Turtle soup is served free every night at Toole's Cafe.

There were also problems in 1900 as reported in the newspaper that we today no longer experience. There were a number of bicycle and horse accidents sometimes resulting in serious injuries. Crime such as brawls, thefts and store break-ins posed a problem and occasionally a gang of thugs would wander through town. It was reported each week who had purchased a new horse and whose horse had died. Without radio or television the townspeople relied on social clubs and neighborhood parties for entertainment and the traveling circus passed through town every summer.

Since 1928 the *Branford Review* has published our local news and we might pause to think how our news of today might appear to Branfordites in 100 years!

Jane Peterson Bouley