

Pictures of the Past

A look back at town's high schools.

Branford's first high school was originally an upgraded school on Main Street at the corner of present day Harrison Avenue and was called "Center School." It was built during the Civil War for \$800 and was a small two story structure. In 1879 it became the high school and was enlarged to 35 x 75 feet by contractor Richard Bradley. East and west wings were added to the building in 1881. This structure was used as the high school for 16 years and later served as an elementary school. The steeple blew off during the '38 hurricane forcing the school to close. The building was finally torn down in 1940 and was replaced by the brick SNET building.

The need for a larger high school was realized in the late 19th century due to the growing immigrant population seeking employment at the Malleable Iron Fittings Company or the Branford Lock Works. In

1894 a building lot on Laurel Street was purchased from John Eades for \$1,400. The school was designed by architect John H. Edelmann and built by Joseph N. Graveline for \$22,000. The school was originally four rooms and two temporary rooms were added to the rear of the structure in 1948 and remain to this day.

Yet another high school was built on Eades Street in 1928 and the current Branford High School on East Main Street was built in 1958. What was the high school on Laurel Street became known as the "Laurel Street School" and provided elementary education to the children of Branford Center until 1976. Since that time Laurel Street School has been used for the Branford Board of Education offices and remains one of the few existing Queen Anne style schoolhouses in the state of Connecticut.

Jane Peterson Bouley



Branford's second high school on Laurel Street was built in 1894 and today still serves as the offices for the Branford Board of Education. Photo taken in 1909 by Oswin Robinson. Courtesy of Ing Hallden.