



Photo courtesy of Jane Peterson Bouley

*HARRIET FORBES operated the Forbes Sanitorium on Branford Hills from 1923 to 1931.*

### Pictures of the past

## Sanitarium offered alternative to traditional homebirth setting

### **The Forbes Sanitorium**

Before the 20th century childbirth was a home event and it was not until after the depression that hospitalization became the accepted practice. After World War I sanitariums provided a place for childbirth or convalescence and many children in Branford were born at The Forbes Sanitorium on Branford Hills.

The Forbes family came from East Haven and settled the Branford Hills area before the Civil War. The Forbes property was known as the "Brick Lot" near Alps Road and a train station once stood on the north end of the property. Harriet, wife of Horace Forbes, was the youngest daughter of Samuel N. and Rose (Bradley) Gray. The Gray family had several Branford connections, Harriet's sister Pauline married Charles A.

Howd of Stony Creek and her aunt Mary E. Gray was the wife of postmaster Henry D. Linsley.

Harriet Gray Forbes was a private nurse and in 1923 established The Forbes Sanitorium at her home. Here she specialized in maternity cases and cared for elderly men and women. Sick children also convalesced at the sanitarium or had their tonsils out by one of several doctors.

Horace Forbes died in 1931 at the age of 68 and Harriet closed the sanitarium after operating it for eight years. She moved out West and sold the property to George and Anna Fitzgerald as a private home. The old Forbes Sanitorium was torn down many years ago when Route 1 was commercially developed.

**Jane Peterson Bouley**