



*THIS IS HOW is look driving out East Main Street in Branford 1909, when it was part of the Lower Boston Post Road. Photo is courtesy of the Branford Historical Society.*

### Pictures of the Past

## Post road connected major cities

#### **The Boston Post Road**

A post road was established in 1673 to connect New York City and Boston. This road became known as the King's Highway, the Great Road or the Boston Post Road named for the post riders who used it. There were actually three Boston Post Road connecting Boston and New Haven. The original road went from New Haven through Hartford, Springfield and Worcester and became known as the Upper Road or Old Boston Post Road. The Middle Post Road went from New Haven to Wethersfield, then cut through Massachusetts. The Lower Boston Post Road followed the Connecticut shoreline to Rhode Island. All three routes merged at New Haven and the post road became one road from there to New York City. Today Route 1 is a different route than the Boston Post Road though in some places follows the old road.

From New Haven the King's Highway followed a path over the Great Hill (Branford Hills) and included Main Street in Branford. It continued east to Guilford where the road today is still known as the Boston Post Road. East Main Street in Branford east of the river was for many years called the Guilford Turnpike though it was part of the Boston Post Road. Route 1 along North Main Street which bypassed Branford Center was not built until 1932.

Taverns were established along the post road to accommodate travelers. The Jonathan Towner Halfway House was built about 1743 and was so named because it was half way between Branford and Guilford. For many years it provided lodging to travelers using the Boston Post Road and was long owned by the Towner family. The building stood across from St. Agnes Cemetery and was torn down in the 1970s.

**Jane Peterson Bouley**