

Varied settings became hub of the community

Recreation in Branford was not formalized until 1921 when the Branford Community Council was organized.

The council, under Chairman Frank Kinney Sr., had 500 members who paid a yearly fee of \$1 per year. A house at 960 Main St. was leased for a period of five years. The house, known as the old red Harrison house, was built about 1760 by Farrington Harrison (1738-1808).

Farrington's grandson, Henry, owned the house until his death in 1913 and developed Harrison Avenue into building lots. Farrington and Henry were related to Nathaniel Harrison who built the Harrison House at 124 Main St. about 1724.

The Community House on Main Street had a fully equipped health center conducted by the Visiting Nurse Association as a memorial to their founder, the late Dr. Charles W.



PICTURES
OF THE PAST

Jane Peterson Bouley

Gaylord. The recreational center also conducted a kindergarten with volunteer teachers and many women in town took an active interest in the project. The well equipped kitchen provided a meeting place for many clubs and organizations in town.

The use of the Henry Harrison House as a community center was abandoned when the lease expired in 1926. The Community Council briefly

used a building on Harrison Avenue and subsequently the council was disbanded. The old Pythian Hall at Montowese and South Main streets served as Branford's third Community House from 1928 to 1962.

Later the Henry Harrison House was home for many years to the popular Polly's Tea Room. The building was torn down in 1952 to make way for a new grocery store.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jane Peterson Bouley is town historian for Branford.

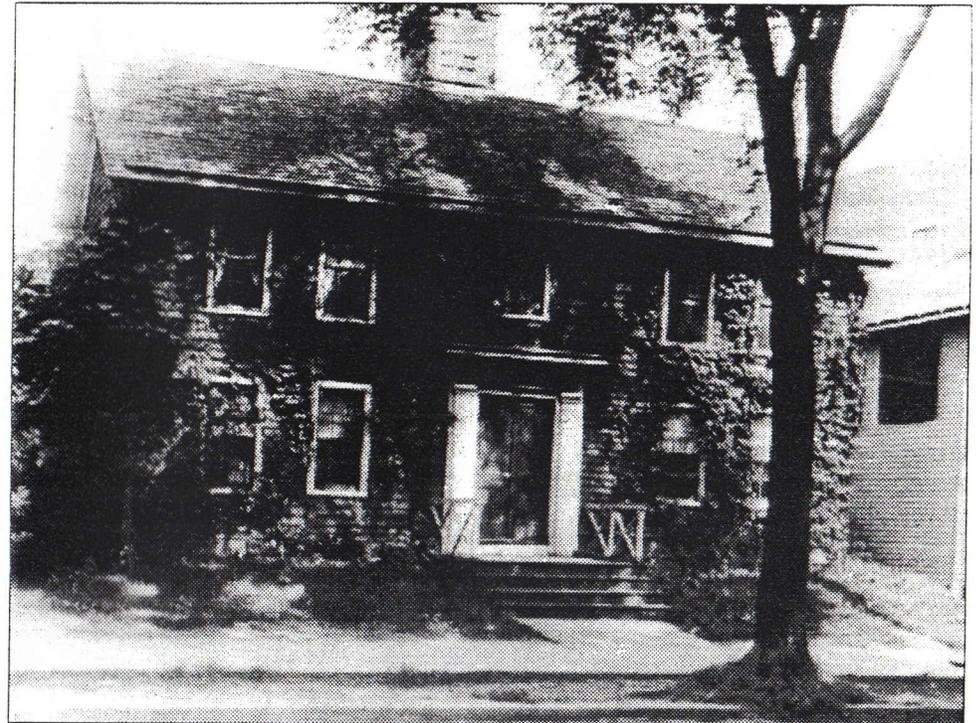


Photo courtesy Branford Historical Society

The Henry Harrison House at 960 Main St. served as Branford's first Community House from 1921-26. Polly's Tea Room occupied the building for many years before it was torn down in 1952. This photo was taken by Mason Foote Smith.