



THE FORMER PYTHIAN HALL as it looked in 1909.

Pictures of the Past

Community House served as recreation headquarters

An effort to organize a recreation department in Branford was begun in the 1920s under the auspices of the Branford Community Council with Frank Kinney Sr. as board chairman. Basketball games and other events were held in a red colonial house on Main Street near Harrison Avenue. This building formerly belonged to the Henry Harrison family and later became the popular Polly's Tea Room. It was torn down in the 1950s.

More familiar is the old Community House at the corner of South Main and Montowese Steets, formerly known as Wilford's Corner. This structure was built in 1896 by Benjamin A. Hosley as the Knights of Pythias Hall. Pythian Hall was used for an armory and in 1919 was a cor-

set factory. In 1926 Pythian Hall was purchased by the Malleable Iron Fittings Company and the next year turned over to the Branford Community Council.

The old Community House, under the directorship of Harry Brazeau, provided a place for town events and recreation for many years. After World War II, the condition of the building deteriorated and was nicknamed the "Dust Bowl." Joseph Trapasso became recreation director in 1951 and, with much community support, a new Community House was built on Church Street in 1962. The former Pythian Hall was torn down in 1963 and the site is used today as a parking lot.

by Jane Peterson Bouley