



Photo by John Morton, courtesy of the Branford Historical Society
*BRANFORD HIGH SCHOOL'S Class of 1911's float at the 1910
Branford Carnival is pictured.*

Pictures of the Past

Carnival was most popular at the turn of the century

Carnival Days

A popular event in Branford at the turn of the century was the annual Branford Carnival. The first carnival was held Oct. 7, 1880 on the Green and featured a cattle and dog show, vegetable exhibit and a parade with floats. In the ensuing years the fair included additional events such as a grease pole by the GAR monument and horse and buggy races down Montowese Street.

In 1905 the carnival was taken over by the Branford Business Men's Association and moved to the Driving Park on East Main Street. Bicycle and trotting races were held at the new location in addition to the annual parade. Athletic events and

an evening dance were the features on Saturday. Winning a prize at the parade was the MIF float with Roman gladiators riding on top being pulled by four white horses. About 6,000 people attended the carnival that year.

The last Branford Carnival was held in 1910 at the Driving Park with the usual exhibits, dances and events. An exciting entry in the parade was a float made by Claus Johnson of a model airplane which caused much commotion as most people had never seen a plane. The closing of the Driving Park was the major factor in the termination of the annual carnival.

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