



Photo courtesy of the Branford Historical Society

THE BRANFORD TRAIN STATION, as it looked when it was across from the Malleable Iron Fittings Company, just before it was torn down in 1939.

Pictures of the Past

Railroad changes character of rural farming community

The Branford Train Depot

The construction of the Shoreline Railroad in 1852 changed forever the rural farming community of Branford and opened it to industry and development. The New Haven railroad system, which included Branford, was the center of railroad transportation to New London, New York and points north.

The first "Iron Horse" to travel the shoreline route left New Haven's Chapel Street Station July 1, 1852 on its way to Saybrook with a stop in Branford. In 1871 the New Haven and Hartford Railroad and the New York and New Haven Railroad consolidated and became the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. The Shoreline Railroad joined the merger and ultimately over 130 companies were absorbed into the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad system.

Branford's first train station was on Montowese Street near the river but a new depot was built soon after at the foot of Rogers Street and opened in the summer of 1852. Business at the station grew steadily with the opening of the Malleable

Iron Fittings (MIF) Company and the development of the shoreline as a summer resort. There were also train stations in Stony Creek and Pine Orchard.

A handsome new brick depot was built in 1887 near Maple Street facing the MIF. It had long wood canopies on each side and housed the express office which was managed by a station master. At the turn of the century the express office was plagued by robberies, the safe blown up regularly and passengers robbed of their money. Despite these problems the station provided passenger service out of Branford for many years.

The Branford Train Station was demolished in 1939 because of heavy damage it received during the '38 hurricane and the decline of the railroad as a popular mode of transportation. There have been several smaller platforms on the site since 1939, the last one just completed to mark the reopening of shoreline passenger service.

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