

First guard unit saw action in Spanish American War

Following the Civil War the formation of what would become the United States National Guard was initiated. In 1868 some local men organized Branford Battery A, which was part of the First Light Artillery of the Connecticut Volunteer Infantry.

Battery A held weekend drills, week-long camps and marched in all the local parades. They went by boat to Boston where troops from all of the New England held war maneuvers.

The Battery used a barn at the rear of a house on Montowese Street to store their cannons and practice marching and drills.

Horses were rented for weekend maneuvers from First Selectman M.P. Rice, who also owned a levery business.

This Armory was abandoned in 1898. It was turned around, moved back 15 feet and made into a two family dwelling by contractor Richard

Bradley in 1903. This building still stands at 6 Bradley Avenue.

Pythian Hall on South Main Street, later known as the Community House, was built by Benjamin Hosley in 1896 and used by Battery A as their new Armory.

For many years Battery A held drills at Pawson Park and could be seen in the fields with their horses and cannons.

A new Armory on Montowese Street was built in 1913 and Battery A had 133 men and 100 horses. At that time it was the only artillery company in the Connecticut National Guard.

Branford Battery A was called to duty during the Spanish American War in 1898 and later, as part of the Federal National Guard system, served their country during the two World Wars and Korea.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jane Peterson Bouley is the historian for the Town of Branford.



A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST
Jane Peterson Bouley



Photo courtesy of the Branford Historical Society.
Holding maneuvers at Pawson Park in 1889 are the members of Branford's first National Guard unit: Branford Battery A.

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