

The origins of a meadow named Hammer Field

The wetlands between Main Street and the river were known in the early days of Branford's settlement as Gratwick's Meadow. The site now known as Hammer Field remained a meadow well into this century.



PICTURES OF THE PAST

Jane Bouley

By 1910 a dirt path appropriately named, Meadow Street, ran along this area and was lined with companies that utilized the railroad for transportation. Among those were the Malleable Iron Fittings Company (MIF), the Atlantic Wire and the S.V. Osborn Company. The busy Branford train station was on the west-end of Meadow Street toward Kirkham Street.

Workers from Branford Center would cut across the meadow on their way to work at the MIF and jump across the creek that ran along Hopson Avenue. At high tide they had to take the long way around. Some farming was done on the east side of the land toward the present Community House. The area was also used as a dump. A building on the edge of the meadow and seen in the photograph was the practice hall for the Branford Band.

In 1915, the MIF began using the meadow to dispose of sand and debris from its molding operations. After the meadow was filled in, the top was covered with two feet of loam and the site was made into a much-needed

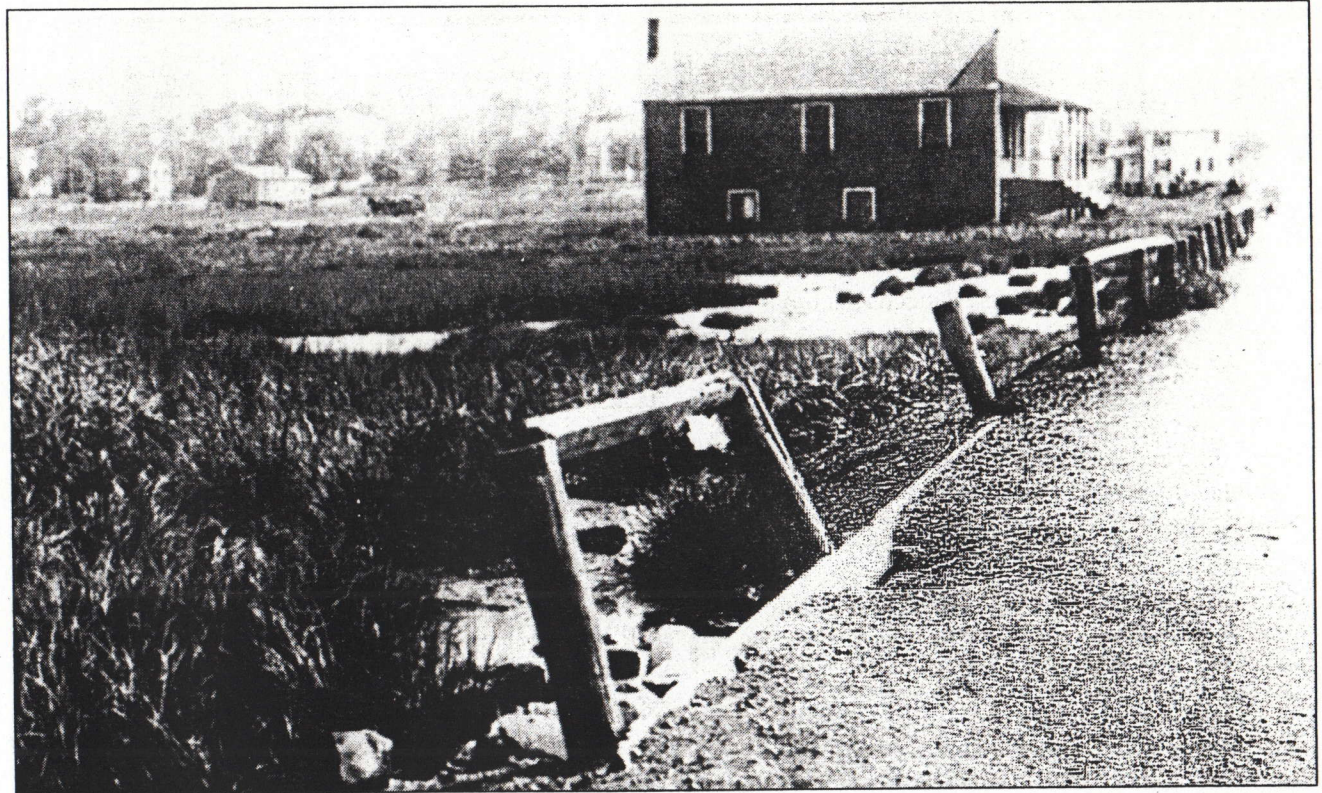


Photo courtesy of Branford Historical Society.

Site of the present Hammer Field around 1910. In the background is Osborn's Feed and Grain.

ball field.

In 1931, the land was donated to the Town of Branford as a recreational park and became known as Hammer Field, named for the owners of MIF.

In 1962, land along Hammer Field was donated by the Hitchcock family to the town and was used to build

Branford's new Community House. Both Hammer Field and the Community House, on the site once known as Gratwick's Meadow, have provided the Town of Branford with superb recreational facilities.

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