

Branford enjoyed a presidential visit in 1880

President Rutherford B. Hayes, the 19th President of the United State, paid a visit to the New Haven area in June 1880. President Hayes' great-grandfather, Ezekiel Hayes, lived in Branford in the mid-18th century.



PICTURES OF THE PAST
Jane Bouley

Ezekiel's first wife, Rebecca Russell, was the daughter of John Russell and Sarah Trowbridge and granddaughter of the Rev. Samuel Russell.

Ezekiel Hayes worked as a blacksmith and a toolmaker making scythes, axes and cowbells. In 1749 Ezekiel Hayes made bricks on his property and constructed a large building on Main Street later known as the Totoket Hotel. It was such an imposing structure that the local people called it "Hayes Follie."

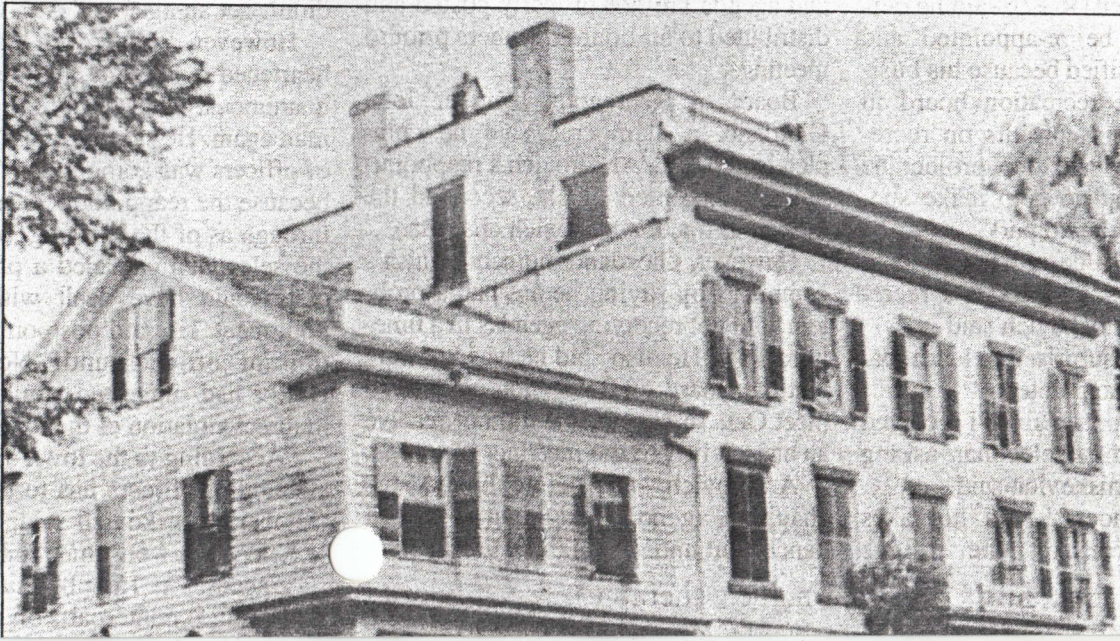
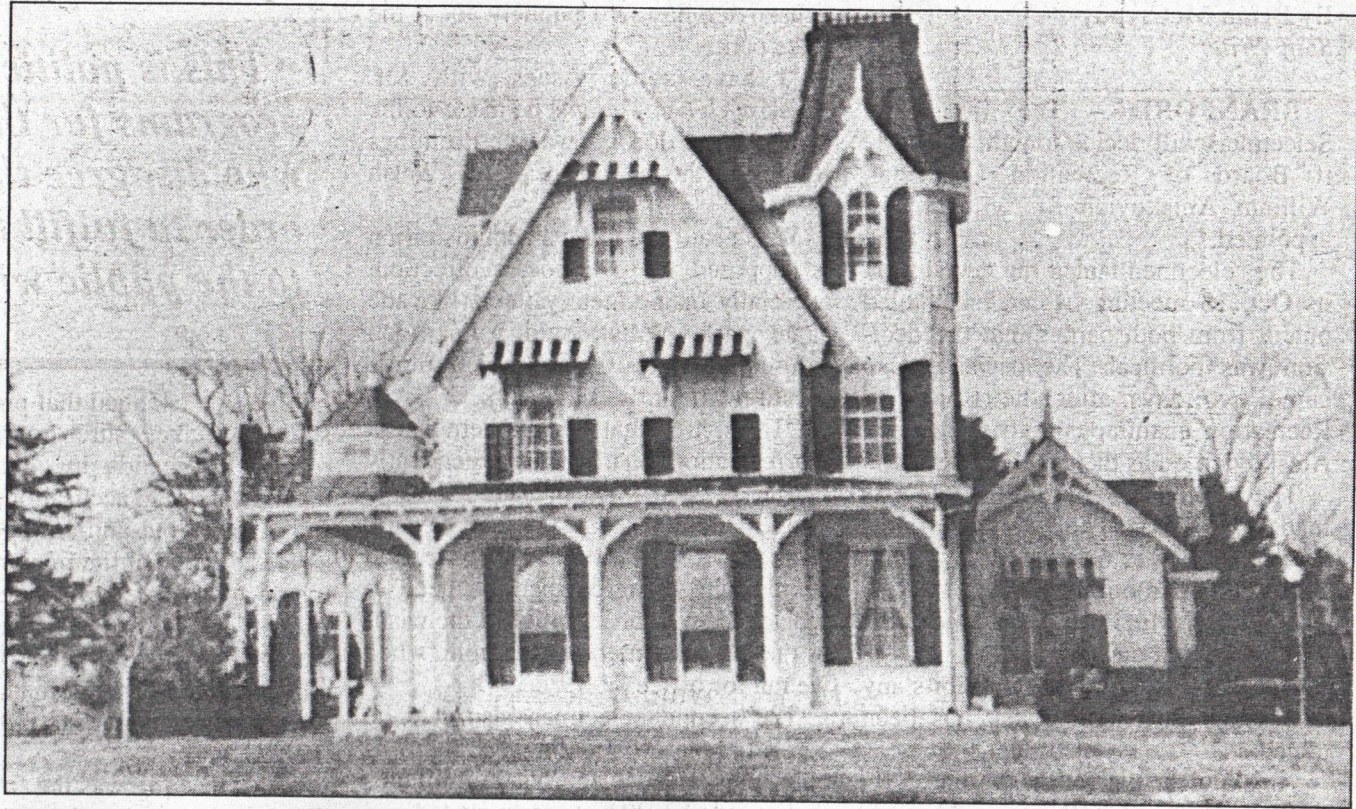
The building burned in 1970 and is now the site of the Branford Book and Card Shoppe.

President Hayes arrived in New Haven by train with his wife and son and stayed with his "kinfolk" Thomas and Rutherford Trowbridge. In New Haven he attended Yale Law School Commencement, watched the Yale-Harvard baseball game and was the guest of honor at a grand reception.

On June 28th they took a carriage to Branford where they visited Center Cemetery and then the Trowbridge cottage in Indian Neck.

The Trowbridge cottage at 93 Linden Ave. was built in 1871 and is attributed to architect Henry Austin of New Haven. It later served as the annex to the Montowese House and today remains a fine example of Victorian architecture.

Captain James Blackstone, for whom library is named, joined the group and at age 87 was one of the few citizens that remembered Ezekiel Hayes.



The Trowbridge cottage at 93 Linden Ave. (above) was the site of a visit by President Rutherford B. Hayes. The Totoket Hotel on Main Street (left) was built by the president's

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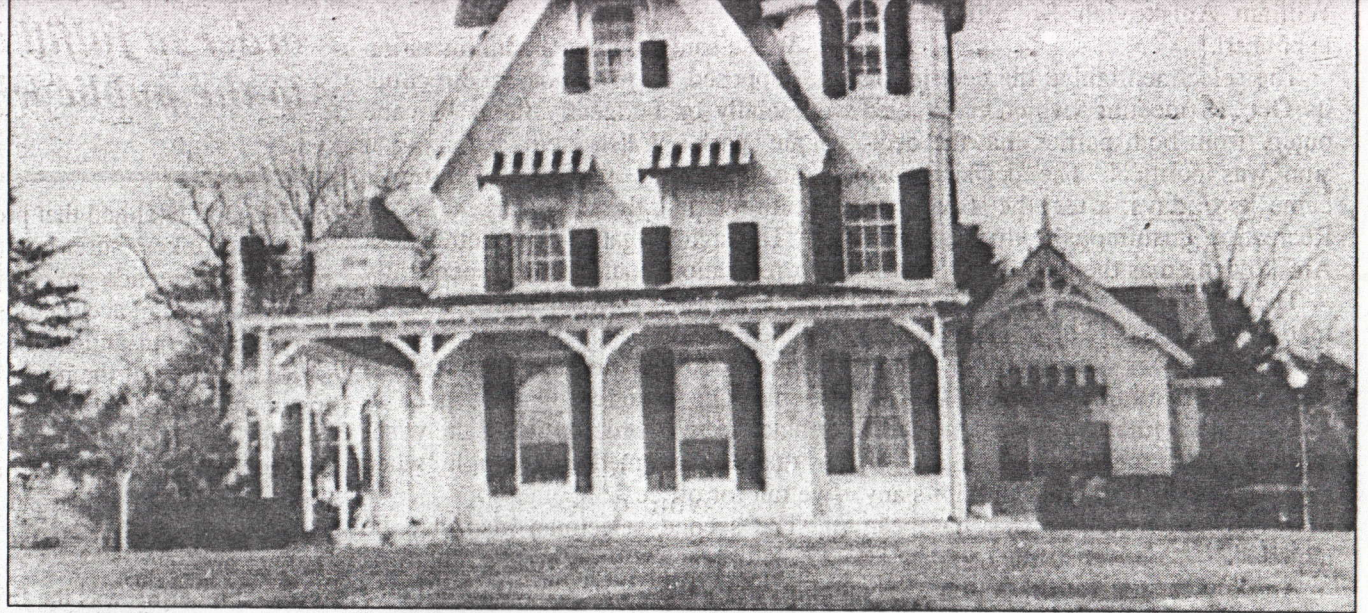
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The party then went to the Totoket Hotel, owned by Philo Hall, the local newspaper editor. A reception was held on the Green where the president gave a speech and shook hands with the audience.

An old scythe, made by Ezekiel Hayes, was given to the president by Captain Blackstone. President Hayes returned to New Haven and ended his visit with a public reception.



The Trowbridge cottage at 93 Linden Ave. (above) was the site of a visit by President Rutherford B. Hayes. The Totoket Hotel on Main Street (at left) was built by the president's great-grandfather Ezekiel Hayes.

Photos courtesy of the Branford Historical Society