



Photo courtesy of Mel Baisley

Site of the present Hammer Field circa 1910. At far left of photo is Osborn's Feed and Grain.

Pictures of the Past

The wetlands between Main Street and the river was 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.

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 them 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 and the area was also used as a dump. A building on the edge of the meadow and seen in the photograph above 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 ballfield. 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 the 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.

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