

Pictures of the Past**Historical house left in 'disgrace'****The Old Baldwin House**

Today at the corner of Main Street and Cherry Hill Road is a veterinary hospital where once stood an ancient house known as the Baldwin House. Six acres of land were given by the town to Daniel Swaine in 1681 and at the corner of Blatchley's Cartway (now Cherry Hill Road) he built a home. Daniel Swaine's heirs sold the property in 1687 to Nathaniel Harrison Sr. who occupied the house until his death in 1727.

The Baldwin House has close ties to the Harrison House at 124 Main St., now the headquarters for the Branford Historical Society. Nathaniel Harrison Sr. gave to his son Nathaniel II (1692-1760) the western part of the homelot whereupon the son built a new home about 1724. The Harrison family would occupy this second house until 1800 when the only child of Nathaniel Harrison III - Martha Harrison Baldwin - sold the Harrison House and moved into her great-grandfather's house at the

corner of Blatchley's Cartway.

Martha Harrison, widow of Nicodemus Baldwin lived in the corner house with her second husband Jonathan Palmer and their nine children. The Baldwin House had a succession of owners until 1743 when John Ford willed the property to Yale College. Martha Harrison Baldwin Palmer had a lease for 99 years from the college.

By 1900 the old Baldwin House was abandoned but the architecture of the building was studied by Isham and Brown and plans for the house were published in their book *Early Connecticut Houses* that year. The *Branford Opinion* notes in September 1900 that "the old Baldwin House at the corner of Cherry Hill Road and Main Street is a disgrace." The newspaper makes a final statement June 8, 1901 "The old Baldwin House is no more. A large crowd of men and boys with ropes pulled it down."

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Thanks to John Kirby!



Photo courtesy of the Branford Historical Society

THE OLD BALDWIN HOUSE once stood at the corner of Cherry Hill Road and Main Street. It was torn down in 1901.