



The Maria Seymour Brooker Memorial 1918 - 2008

"The Memorial is yours.

You can make much of it for the benefit of humanity."

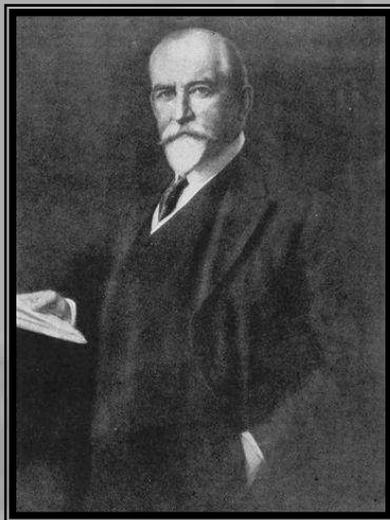
Charles Frederick Brooker

July 2, 1918

July 2008 marked the 90th year since the Maria Seymour Brooker Memorial was endowed and incorporated. The following presentation shares some of our history, especially the early years and the changes that have shaped what Brooker Memorial is today.



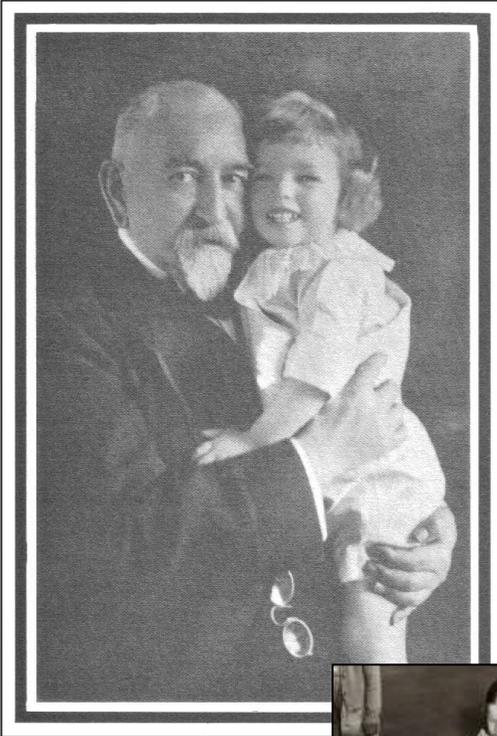
Maria Seymour Brooker
1815 - 1876



Charles F. Brooker
1847 - 1926

When Charles Frederick Brooker was 29, his mother passed away. He resolved then, to one day establish a memorial in her honor. On July 2, 1918, at the first meeting of the Board of Managers of the newly formed Maria Seymour Brooker Memorial, Mr. Brooker shared his hopes and dreams for what he believed would be an institution of great benefit to Torrington, his home town.

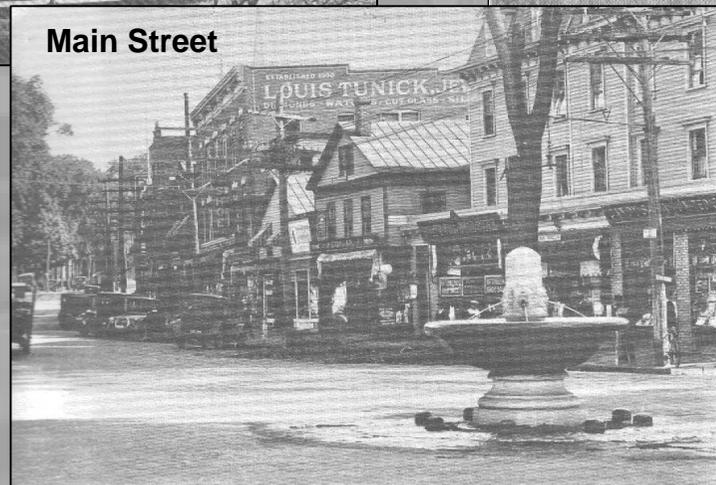
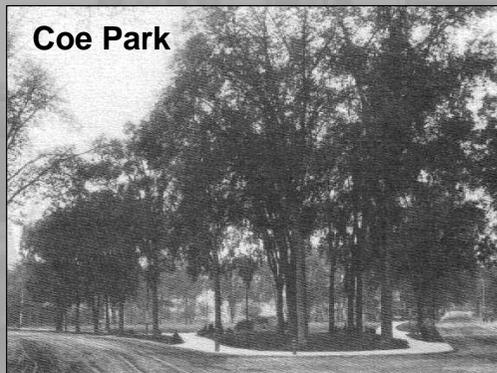
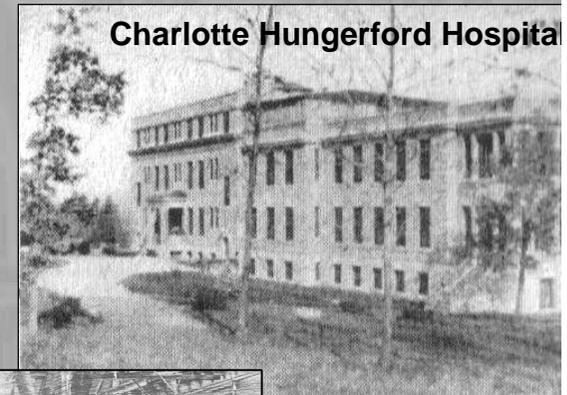
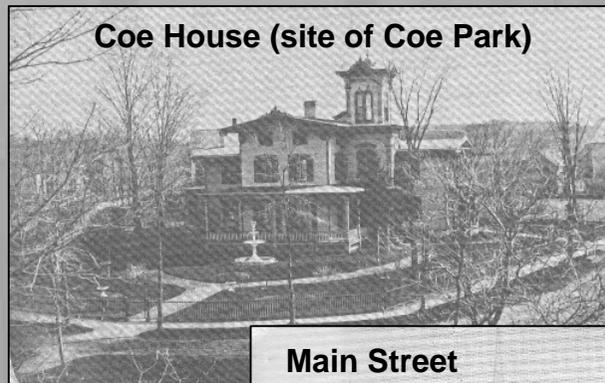
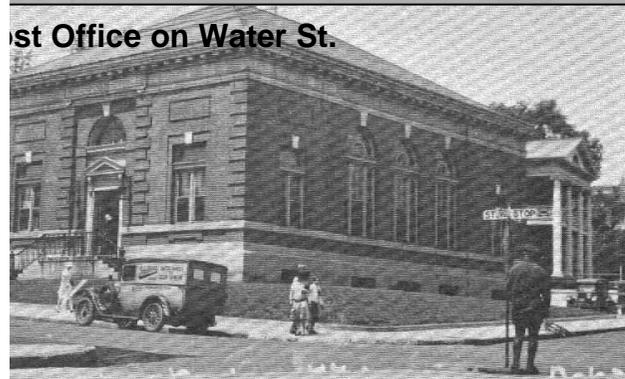
Following are portions of his dedication speech.
“Having been blessed with a God-fearing and devoted mother, and knowing that whatever success my efforts have met with, have been largely influenced by her precept and example, it has been my desire to do something for my native place which would perpetuate her memory and emphasize, in a practical way, the spirit which animated her in her devotion to her children, all the best things in life, and the welfare of those around her.”



“And so the installation of this Memorial enables me to carry into practical operation two ideas which have possessed me for a long time; the first already alluded to, the other my belief that there is an opportunity to create a centre for welfare work and charitable endeavor, which would make the town more desirable for everyone, because of practical work for the alleviation of suffering; assistance for those who were in need of help, temporary or otherwise, care for the little ones when circumstances surrounding them made such care almost impossible; healthy and cheerful surroundings at low cost for those whose life is devoted to caring for the sick; and space in the open air for the enjoyment of boys and girls under the best influences.”



"It has seemed to me for a long time that an associated, well-directed effort of this kind would make Torrington, or any other large manufacturing centre, a better place to live in; a more desirable home for people to work; that such an institution as this we are contemplating, managed and cared for on conservative, business lines, with effective continuous management, would impress all, that the more fortunate people in the community were really unselfish and did care for the welfare of others, to such an extent as to contribute by their personal effort and means to bettering conditions for those less fortunate."



World War I

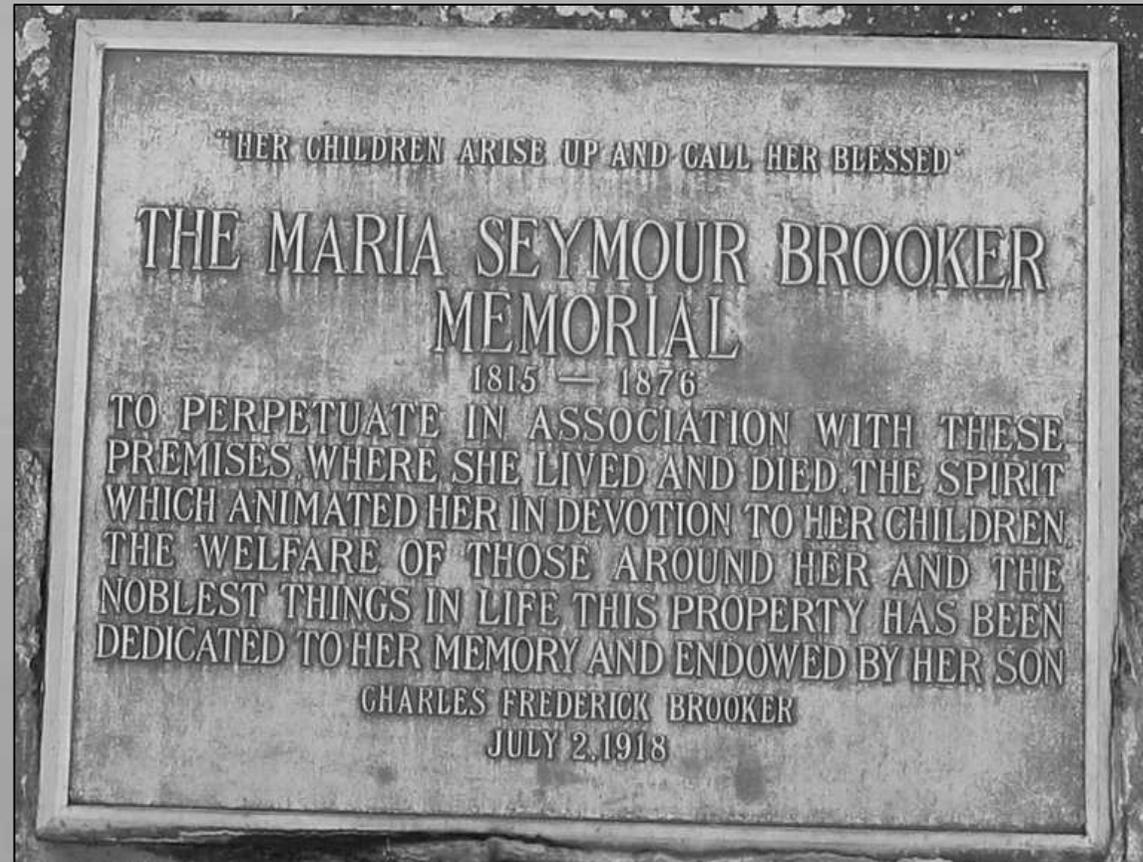
- **In 1917, the United States joined World War I when President Woodrow Wilson called on Americans to "make the world safe for democracy."**
- **The official Armistice was declared on November 11, 1918**
- **World-wide, nine million people had died on the battlefield**

"In these days of stress and storm, when the very foundations of society seem to be shaking, days of tragic events, our minds should be turned to less material directions, and, when we can, try to disprove the false doctrines which menace our very existence."

"If what has been done in this instance becomes, by your management, direction and personal effort, a contribution to this general idea, then we may well feel satisfied that we have at least tried to do our share to prove the assertion that the Golden Rule still prevails."

"As a charitable institution it will be free from taxes, and, with your united effort, productive of the best results, adding to the already enviable reputation of Torrington for progress, efficiency and well doing in every direction."

Mr. Brooker concluded his remarks saying: "The Memorial is yours. You can make much of it for the benefit of humanity. It is placed in your hands, with the firm belief that you will carry out the ideas which brought it into existence, and devote it to the best interests of the place which gave me a start in life, which is, and always will be, nearer to my heart than any other place on earth, because it is my old home."





3 Buildings and 3 Acres of Land at the Corner of Litchfield Street and Wilson Avenue

Mr. Brooker's original endowment was \$150,000 – a very sizeable gift in those days. When Mr. Brooker passed away in 1926, he bequeathed an additional \$200,000 to the Memorial. Since that time, private and corporate donations and gifts have continued to sustain this organization and its programs.

The original property consisted of 3 acres of land at the corner of Wilson Avenue and Litchfield Street in Torrington. On this property were 3 houses and an out-building that would be used as a “playhouse” for the Day Nursery.



Administration Building
(former home of Charles F. Brooker)

The first house on the corner was Mr. Brooker's birthplace and would be used as the Administration building. This building held the books and accounts of the Memorial and also served as a headquarters for visiting nurses.

Miss Harriet Parker was hired as the first Supervisor of the Brooker Memorial and served in that capacity for the next 32 years, until 1950. Her starting salary was \$90.00 a month, including room and board.



Day Nursery



**Day Nursery
View from Back Yard
(Playground and Playhouse)**

The next house was to be used for the Day nursery. The Day Nursery was for the care, nutrition and education of infants and small children whose parents worked or were ill. It was also to be a home for orphans and foundlings and to assist in their adoption.

Addie Newett was hired as the first Matron for \$45.00 per month; Florence Cook as Assistant Matron for \$25.00 per month and Annie Logan as general housekeeper at \$35.00 per month, room and board included for all 3.

The rate at the Day Nursery was determined to be .10 cents a day per child and .05 cents for each additional child in the same family.

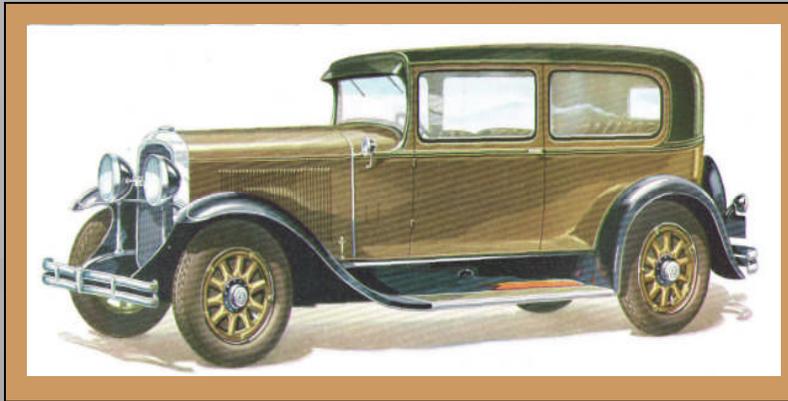
The third house on the property was to be the Nurses Home. The purpose was to (quote) “provide a central headquarters for nurses in Torrington and adjacent territory, and an abode in which women who are competent nurses, whether graduate or otherwise, may have suitable lodging and board at reasonable prices, and social opportunities and the freedom, comfort, advantages and protection of a home under proper influences.”

In December 1919 at the 1st Annual meeting, President James Doughty reported that “There has been but little doing in the Nurses’ Home as there are no nurses to be had. The few in town have residences here and there are none coming from outside.” By late 1920, it was decided to rent the rooms to school teachers.

In 1925 the Board voted to change the Nurses building into a “Home for the Aged” and in 1926, the first resident moved in. Mrs. Julia Dowd, a widow, was welcomed to stay at the rate of \$2.50 per week with full use of the kitchenette.



**Nurses’ Home
(Later changed to Home for the
Aged)**



In 1930 a new “4 passenger” Buick was purchased to replace the aging “2-seater”. With a \$300 trade-in, the net price for the new car was a whopping \$1,500! New “dial” telephones were installed. Only one “ring number” was assigned but extensions were installed in each building.

The new telephone number was 484.

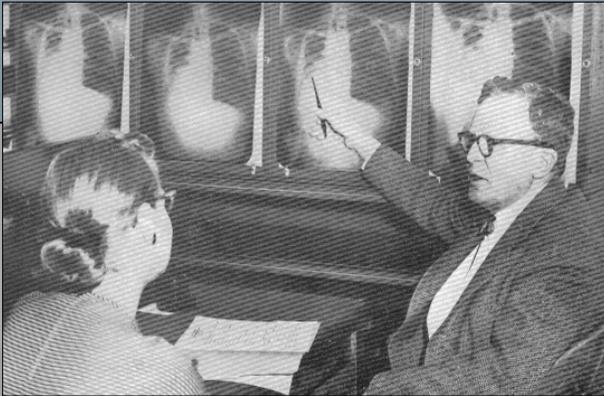
New gas furnaces were installed in all 3 buildings eliminating the need for the full-time janitor whose job it had been to monitor and stoke the old coal burners.

In 1931 the annual children’s summer outing was cancelled due to the “infantile paralysis” epidemic and fear of how the disease was spread.



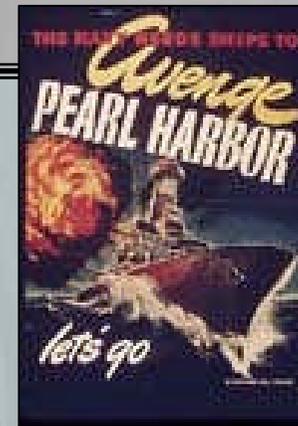
“The Tuberculosis Department has been most active. While many times, the cases when referred to us, were too far advanced for us to do more for the patient than give bedside care, we have been able to do much instructive work in the families.”

*Miss Harriet Parker, Supervisor
1st Annual Report, December 1919*



Screening and home care for tuberculosis patients began in 1918 and continued for many years. Although many patients died or were transferred to sanatoriums, hundreds of patients and their families received education in their homes on how the disease was spread, treatment and prevention. Tuberculosis screening/testing was done until 2001, when the Health Care portion of the Memorial was discontinued.

During the depression years of the 30s and the war years of the 40s, the Brooker Memorial continued to grow and add services to meet the growing needs of the community.



1947 - Dr. Jonas Salk is recruited by the University of Pittsburgh to develop a Polio virus research program

1954 - Two million children vaccinated with the Salk vaccine

By 1957 - The incidence of polio in the U.S. falls by 85 - 90%



In 1954 the Brooker started to provide Salk polio vaccinations. Clinics were held on a regular basis until the more effective, easier to administer and cheaper Sabine oral vaccine was released in 1961.

In August of 1958 the New Building Was Completed



By the late 50's the Board felt that even more good work could be done for the community. With that end in mind, the first 2 houses at the corner of Wilson Avenue were torn down and a new, modern building was completed in 1958.

New Brooker Memorial Tour Sunday

WASHINGTON—Guided tours and health exhibits have been arranged as features of the open house tomorrow afternoon at the new Maria Seymour Brooker Memorial building on Litchfield St. With officers of the health department acting as guides, all Washington residents were invited to inspect the new building of the modern health department which was completed last

year. The new building, representing the latest in modern health care, houses a clinic for children, a T.B. clinic, a speech and audio clinic, and a department for the supervision of health care. A full-time health director, George W. Laycock, was appointed last January, and his office is now in the new building. The health department is the largest of the health pro-

grams in memory of his father, Charles F. Brooker, who was the first health director of the city. The new building is situated in three blocks on Litchfield St. and is a part of the city's health program. The new building is a fine example of modern health care.

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OVER 300 PERSONS attended open house yesterday at new building of Maria Seymour Brooker Memorial. Health exhibits depicting various departments and services were a feature of the program.

In above photo, left to right, are: Mayor Anthony C. Gelormino; Earle T. Jarvis, vice president and treasurer; Frederick F. Fuessenich, president, and George W. Laycock, health director. (Ocaín Photo)

Over 300 At Open House At Brooker Mem.

Brooker Memorial Notes

A grand opening was held with more than 300 community members touring the new building.

In the new facility many of the clinics could now be accommodated under one roof. Nursing and Health Education, Mothering Classes, Babysitting Classes, Crippled Children Clinics, Tuberculosis Screening and Polio Vaccinations were provided on a regular basis.



Nursing and Health Education



Mothering Classes

Babysitting Classes



Crippled Children Clinics

Visiting
Nurses
uniforms
were
updated to a
new, modern
look and the
rate per visit
increased to
\$4.00.



Brooker Memorial Notes

BY GEORGE W. LAYCOCK

Director

1/11/63

Mrs. Blanche Zubrowski of 134 North Elm St., has been added to the Memorial staff as our first full - time Homemaker. With eight hard working, conscientious homemakers active in the current corps, it was difficult to choose one for this position, but in doing so we tried to take into consideration availability, variety of cases served, etc. This means that Mrs. Zubrowski will be on call for 40 hours a week, just like one of our visiting nurses, and can be assigned to any case at any time just as we would send a visiting nurse into a home whenever the need arose. She will be under the supervision of Mrs. Nancy Cook, who is taking over this week as our part - time homemaker supervisor.

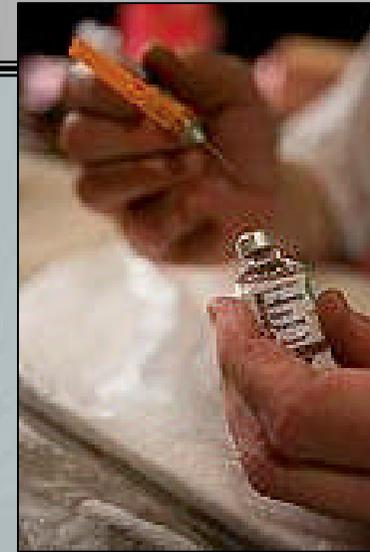


BROOKER MEMORIAL HOMEMAKER STAFF with new supervisor, Mrs. Nancy Cook, RN, is pictured above. These women gave 7,104 hours of service to families in Torrington, Harwinton, Litchfield, Goshen and New Hartford during their first year of work. Left to right, are: front row — Mrs. Ruth Comeau, Mrs. Ethel Patenaude, and Mrs. Stephanie Connor; standing — Mrs. Ella Clarke, Mrs. Rose Roy, Mrs. Nancy Cook, Mrs. Blanche Zubrowski and Mrs. Mary Gay. Absent when the picture was taken were Mrs. Julia Schaller. (Schlott Photo)

In January 1963, Mrs. Blanche Zubrowski was hired as the first full-time employee for the Homemaker Program. She was on call 40 hours a week and could be assigned at any time, any place, as need arose. The rate for a homemaker was \$1.50/hr.



By 1988, home nursing visits were discontinued but health care services were still being provided to the community. Programs included well baby and well-child clinics, pre-school vision and hearing tests, parenting classes, child care, immunizations, healthy heart clinics, blood pressure screening and much more.



***“Our family, and the two men we honor . . .
have always believed in helping our
community whenever possible. What could
be more fitting than to establish a dental
clinic for needy children?”***

***Zena Temkin
Dental Clinic
Dedication
May 1994***



In May, 1994, Dr. and Mrs. Isadore Temkin and their family donated all equipment and renovations to establish a permanent, on-site Children's Dental Clinic in memory of the late Drs. Abraham Temkin and Isadore Garbus. In just two months, 123 uninsured or under-insured youngsters ages 3 to 18 made appointments and 83 visits were completed. By the end of the first year, with 2 volunteer dentists working 2 afternoons a week, over 300 children were seen.



In 1988, a full time child care director was hired. Demand for services continued to grow and in 1995 work began on a 4,100 sq. ft. addition for the new “Child Care and Learning Center”. This new building would accommodate 64 children from infancy through school age.





1997 Dental Clinic Expansion

In 1997 the Dental Clinic was expanded from one exam chair to three chairs. An additional 2 pediatric dentists from UConn logged 24 hours a week. In the 3 years since the clinic began, visits soared to over 1,000!



With improvements in the state's health insurance plan for children, most children finally had access to private pediatricians for ongoing care. As a result, all Health Services provided by Brooker Memorial were discontinued in 2001. In the spring of 2002, the Community Health and Wellness Center of Greater Torrington relocated its offices to within the Brooker building.





During the past year, our Children's Dental Center logged over 8,000 visits and our licensed Child Care program served 75 children, with 32 slots dedicated to children under the age of 3. Today, we look to the future with as much conviction and enthusiasm as Mr. Brooker did 90 years ago.



The Maria Seymour Brooker Memorial 1918 – 2008

Thanks to all of our dedicated employees, volunteers, corporators and the citizens we serve, Maria Seymour Brooker Memorial will keep to Mr. Brooker's original path...

*"to continue to perpetuate
the works of benevolence, aid, charity and education
to which my mother was devoted throughout her life."*

Special Thanks to Liz Tieman who researched and produced this slide show.

