



Photo courtesy of the Branford Historical Society

THE JOHN W. NICHOLS FAMILY at their home in Cherry Hill about 1905.

Pictures of the Past

Cherry Hill's history detailed

The Cherry Hill Farm

The section of Branford known as Cherry Hill was once deemed of little value and was called "Littleworth." About 1735 Samuel Barker erected a home at the base of the hill and began farming the area. The next owner Captain Daniel Morris and his son James imported 300 cherry trees from England and planted them on the hill. They sold many bushels of the fruit every year and the name would eventually become known as "Cherry Hill." The last cherry tree was lost during the '38 hurricane. The Morris family were also the first in Branford to raise and sell watermelons.

Ralph Isaacs owned the farm during the Revolutionary War. He had an interesting background for Yankee Connecticut in that he was a Christian with a Portugese and Jewish background. He was also an English sympathizer during the war and rather than be imprisoned the court exiled him to his farm in Branford. He was one of the founders of the Branford Episcopal Church.

General Schuyler Hamilton, son of

Alexander Hamilton, was married to Ralph Isaac's granddaughter and owned the farm in Branford. He built a fine home on top of the hill and used it as a retreat. At the turn of this century John W. Nichols ran a successful farming operation at the Cherry Hill estate.

In more recent years the Cherry Hill farm was owned by Louis Sagal and called "Sagal Lou." His son-in-law Eugene Rodney was a playwright and producer and was also active in the Branford farming operation. The actor Robert Young frequently made "flying" visits to Branford and stayed with the Rodneys. During World War II Sagal Lou sold milk throughout the area particularly to Yale University. Sagal Lou milk bottles are now prized collector's items.

The Sachs brothers purchased the property from Sagal Lou and continued the farm operation. The Cherry Hill Shopping Center, bowling alley and apartments were later built on the site.

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