



Photo by Charlotte Pfeiff

*ON JAN. 25, 1943 a plane crashed at Sagal Lou Farm on Cherry Hill and the pilot parachuted to safety. The actor Robert Young was a visitor at the farm that night and assisted the pilot. Photo courtesy of the Branford Historical Society*

### Pictures of the Past

## Plane crashes not uncommon

#### Plane Crashes At Sagal Lou

It is not surprising that there have been several airplane crashes within our bounds given Branford's proximity to an airport. In 1933 Capt. Frederick Wilson USA was forced to make a landing at Sagal Lou Farm on Cherry Hill during a snowstorm. The plane landed upside down but damage was slight and Wilson received no injuries. He spent the night with Lester Nichols, secretary of the Malleable Iron Fittings Company, and a former army buddy. The next day he took the train to New York and with the help of a new CL&P truck, the plane was hoisted onto a flatcar.

On Jan. 25, 1943, chief observer Robert C. Cate was on duty at the observation tower at Branford Point and

reported a plane in distress. Lt. Charles G. Salem of Hempstead, L.I., parachuted out of his burning airplane and landed safely. The plane crashed at Sagal Lou and several men from Brushy Plains were the first to arrive and extinguished the fire. Eugene Rodney, a Hollywood writer and producer, owned Sagal Lou and spent several months a year managing the farm. Visiting him that night was the actor Robert Young and his wife, Betty Henderson, who were on their way from Boston to Washington. The pilot was taken into the Rodney home and treated for minor injuries by Dr. Nathan Levy. Robert Young and the pilot exchanged autographs and sent each other Christmas cards for many years.

**Jane Peterson Bouley**