

Pictures of the Past

The Stony Creek Theater was built in 1914 by William Howd of Stony Creek with lumber purchased from F. Jourdan & Son of Branford. The building was 28 feet by 60 feet and served in those early years as a silent movie theater. Before the days of the "talkie," it was equipped with a player piano and admission was free for the local child willing to pump the piano. In 1925 the theater was known as Idle Hour Moving Pictures.

The theater became nationally-known before World War II as a summer stock theater. It was started in 1928 by a local acting group, the Parish Players, who were directed by Broadway actor Reynolds Evans, a summer resident of Pleasant Point. The theater attracted many well-known actors and directors, among them Orson Welles and Sinclair Lewis. In 1937 admission was 75 cents (tax included). The beginning of the war forced the theater to close.

It is not well-known that the building was used for a number of years as a factory for women's undergarments. The factory was founded in 1943 by Joseph Kispert of Hamden, a designer and manufacturer of corsets. He was also vice president of the Dora Miles Company at 45 Harrison Ave. in Branford which manufactured corsets in the building formerly known as the Tryst.



Photo by Clarence Putney, courtesy of the Branford Historical Society

THE STONY CREEK THEATER served as a corset and girdle factory from 1943 to 1960.

The Dora Miles factory in Branford closed in 1967. The Stony Creek operation was sold to Charles Collini who called it the Materna Line. He ran the company from

1946 until it closed in 1960.

Today the Stony Creek Puppet Theater is once again being used as it was original-

ly intended and provides a wide variety of stage performances.

- Jane Peterson Bouley