

► Pine Orchard

Pictures of the Past



Hollywood Court in Short Beach

Where Once Was Hollywood

Short Beach, like the other shoreline communities of Branford, was a thriving summer resort from the 1880s to the 1930s. Toward the end of this era smaller cottages were built along the shore to attract the growing number of tourists traveling by automobile or wishing to vacation for a short period of time. Such is the case with Hollywood Court.

Hollywood was built about 1928 along Westwood Road in Short Beach by the Marvelwood Real Estate Company whose principal owner was William Kennedy, a New Haven lawyer. The cottages were named after the famous city in California and the bungalows also had individual names. Some of these were "San Diego, LaJolla, Corona, Pasadena, Monterey, Ventura and Figueroa." The cottages were white with four small rooms and they had walkways connecting them. The grounds were landscaped with flowers and arbors. The complex was active during the summer rental season but in the winter it remained vacant and the local children delighted in jumping from roof to roof or using the buildings for hiding places while playing tag.

Some of the year-round residents of Short Beach complained about the noise that Hollywood created and locally it acquired the nickname "The Dirty Dozen" although there were really 23 bungalows in all. By the mid 1930s the era of the shoreline resort was coming to an end due to the Depression and other factors and Hollywood would suffer financial problems. In 1941 Hollywood Court was bought by the Short Beach Civic Association and most of the cottages were sold or demolished. Two were offered to the Boy Scouts who connected them for their club house. A few remaining cottages were retained in one corner of the property for rental income and the last of these was torn down in 1976.

In 1941 the former Hollywood Court was made into a playground with a ball field, swings and basketball courts. It was dedicated in 1946 as Pardee Park being named for a local boy who lost his life in World War II. Today Pardee Park remains a playground for the children and a center of many activities for the people of Short Beach.

- Jane Peterson Bouley
Branford Historical Society