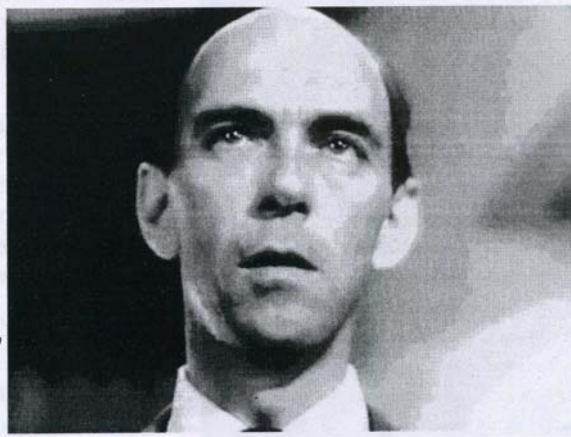


It's Your Community...Your History

The Chatsworth Historical Society would like to have you join us in preserving Chatsworth's past. If you have any old Chatsworth publications, or have old photos of the area, we would love to have copies of them. We would also like to hear your stories about growing up in Chatsworth or what brought you to Chatsworth and why you stayed here.

Memories Shared: COOKIE JAR THEATER



Several of our members grew up with the opportunity to participate in the Cookie Jar Theater. It was created by Milton Parsons and his wife, Collette, who lived on Farralone, north of Chatsworth St.

Milton Parsons was recently featured in a documentary produced by Charles Henson. Charles has sent us a copy and we look forward to showing the documentary in a future meeting, but for now here are some excerpts about Milton.

THE FACE IS FAMILIAR

“With his sad eyes, solemn expression and dour, New England accent, Milton Parsons was the perfect cinematic undertaker: slightly old-fashioned and humorously grim. Indeed, it's a role he often essayed, along with various mad scientists and lunatics, religious fanatics and creepy butlers.

“After working closely together for years, Milton and Collette made their association permanent: they were married in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, on June 28, 1933.”

The Boston Globe, July 12, 1936

*Milton's transition to the movies came in 1939. After its award-winning first run on Broadway, Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, directed by Frank Craven, was released to touring companies. It opened in Los Angeles at the Biltmore Theatre on*

April 4, 1939, with Milton playing choirmaster Simon Stimpson, a man troubled by drink and bitterness. At the conclusion of the run, he found himself with a motion picture contract at MGM.

“Although straight dramatic roles sometimes came his way, Milton was often chosen for the precise timing and delivery which he used to add comic relief to a plethora of mysteries. Sometimes, he even exhibited a skill for slapstick.”

“The house at 10801 Farralone in Chatsworth was to become their permanent residence, as well as their own theater and school, for the rest of their lives. Collette gave birth to daughter Sally Ann Parsons on September 3, 1940, and the cast was complete.”

“Between movies, both Milton and Collette, and later Sally Ann, were very active in their community, serving with the PTA and the Historical Society; Collette was a Campfire Girls leader, as well. In 1949, the Parsons' began working with the children of the Chatsworth Cookie Jar Theatre. Milton's Hollywood friends, including Barry Fitzgerald, Paul Kelly, Alexander Knox, Florence Bates and others, lent their support to the efforts. The 1951 season opened with *Little Women*, with Milton directing from Collette's script, and Sally Ann playing the part of Beth. The productions used different venues, ranging from the American Legion Post to the patio homes of supporters. By popular demand from the community, Milton and Collette opened a school of dramatic technique and expression at their Farralone home in October of 1951, giving weekly classes to children from primary grades through high school.”



*Milton Parsons holding pitchfork in classic pose
“American Gothic” from the Music Man.*

Editors note: Milton and Collette passed away in 1980. Their daughter Sally Ann pursued a career in costume design and is the owner of ParsonsMeares providing costumes for Broadway shows in New York City.