

The Rialto Theater by Mel Montemerlo Sept. 30, 2016

The Rialto Theater opened on October 25, 1922. It was owned by Dominick Alfano and Leo Viola. We know from the 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks that Leo Viola had a confectionary store in the Barrett block in 1913. Dominick Alfano had a confectionary store in the same location prior to Leo Viola. According to the October 25, 1922 issue of the Springfield Daily News, they built a magnificent movie theater which held 625 people, a stage with an asbestos curtain, a fireproof projection room, concrete floors and stairways, and it was all built to the latest safety standards. It also had two stores to rent on the street level. There is one store on each side of the theater entrance.



The Rialto Theater, Main St. Windsor Locks, Conn

Here are two advertisements for the Rialto Theater. One is from 1934. The other is from 1940, when Dave Magliora was managing the theater.

RIALTO
THEATRE
 WINDSOR LOCKS, CONNECTICUT

Matinee Prices—10-20c Evening Prices—10-25c

MOVING OUT TO-NIGHT—
“THE CAT AND THE FIDDLE”
 With RAMON NOVARRO, JEANETTE MACDONALD,
 FRANK MORGAN, CHARLES BUTTERWORTH

SATURDAY—Three Shows: At 2, 6 and 8
 KATHERINE HEPBURN in
“SPITFIRE”
 With ROBERT YOUNG, RALPH BELLAMY
 and MARTHA SLEEPER

SUNDAY—Two Shows: At 6 and 8
“THE TRUMPET BLOWS”
 With GEORGE RAFT, ADOLPHE MENJOU
 and FRANCIS DRAKE

MONDAY—Matinee at 4; Evening at 8
“ZOO IN BUDAPEST”
 With LORETTA YOUNG and GENE RAYMOND
 Auspices Grace M. E. Church—No Advance in Prices

TUESDAY—One Night Only
“SING AND LIKE IT”
 With ZASU PFITS, PERT KELTON,
 EDWARD EVERETT HORTON

WEDNESDAY—One Night Only—No Advance in Prices
“MAN’S CASTLE”
 With SPENCER TRACY and LORETTA YOUNG
 Auspices Windsor Locks Athletic Association

THURSDAY and FRIDAY—
“NANA”
 With ANNA STEN and PHILIP HOLMES

1934 Advertisement for the Rialto Theater

RIALTO Theatre
MOVIE GUIDE
 Phone: 229-2 Windsor Locks, Conn. Phone: 229-2

Sun. and Mon. Jan. 28 and 29
 SUNDAY 2 CONTINUOUS — MONDAY 6:15 CONTINUOUS
“The Hunchback Loved Her!”

—and out of that motivation grew one of the greatest novels ever written. For more than a century it has moved the world's millions. Now it comes to life on the screen in a mighty mobilization of every kind of thrill in the history of the theatre...



CHARLES LAUGHTON
 — VICTOR HUGO'S
HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

With SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE, THOMAS MITCHELL, MAUREEN O'HARA

MARCH OF TIME CURRENT EVENTS A DOCKING THEY DID GO

1940 Advertisement for the Rialto Theater

The stage was used for putting on plays and musicals. It was often used for high school plays. Fraternal organizations used the stage for shows to raise money for charitable works. It was used as a place for politicians to give speeches, and for meetings of both the local Democrat and Republican parties. The stage was used for school graduations. In the World War II years, there were stars such as Kate Smith and Joan Fontaine, who came to the Rialto and did war bond rallies.

According to the October 20, 1929 issue of the Springfield Republican, there were two movie theaters in Windsor Locks. One was the Rialto, and the other was the Palace theater on the North side of Grove St., near Main St. The Palace Theater was previously called the Princess Theater. The owners of the Rialto, Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano, bought the Palace theater and closed it down. That was in 1927. The reason was that the competition was making it unprofitable for both theaters. They then sold the Palace theater to Harold Lavigne, the husband of Blanche Bianchi, who turned the building into a bowling alley.

In the December 16, 1930 edition of the Springfield Republican, it was reported that there was a hunting accident, and one of the owners, Leo Viola, was shot accidentally by his hunting partner, Joseph Gatti, who was also his nephew. Mr. Viola died quickly. The coroner was summoned, and he declared it an accidental shooting. Mr. Viola had immigrated here from Italy. He was unmarried. He had become a successful businessman.

According to the Springfield Republican of June 10, 1939, a major renovation of the interior of the theater was done. They installed new spring cushion seats, the latest sound reproduction system and extra thick carpeting in the lobby and aisles to reduce noise, a modern heating system, a complete lighting system, and the walls were modified to decrease unwanted sounds. ().

Dave Magliora managed the Rialto Theater for 25 years. He also owned the Brown Derby for eight years. He died on June 18, 1973. (Springfield Union, Jul 19, 1973)

Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano owned the Rialto from 1922 until Leo Viola died in 1930. We can assume that Dominick Alfano owned at least part of it until it was sold to Mr. Natale Tambussi in 1947. Mr. Tambussi owned it from 1947 to 1960. After that, it was owned by Michael Halperin of Hartford.

The Rialto Theater, along with all of the businesses on Main St. were demolished in the mid-1970s during the redevelopment of the Main Street area.

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