The Cain Park Theatre Collection

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The Cain Park Theatre Collection

The first municipally-run, outdoor civic theatre in the country, Cain Park was the brainchild of Cleveland Heights Mayor Frank C. Cain and Heights High School drama teacher Dr. Dina Rees "Doc" Evans. Rising from the ashes of the Great Depression, Cain Park was built using finances and labor made possible by New Deal agencies, namely the County Soldiers and Sailors Relief Commission and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). From the beginning, "Doc" Evans' plans for the Park were ambitious, yet she accomplished nearly everything she set her mind on. Throughout the 1940's, Cain Park Theatre staged at least one production for each week of its ten-week seasons. These productions included works by Shakespeare, Moliere, Ibsen, Sardou, Pirandello, Gilbert and Sullivan, and countless others. There were dramas, musicals, period pieces, and comedies. No matter the genre, the seats at Cain Park's amphitheater were always full, during both good times and bad. The trials of a country at war and competition from the Golden Age of Hollywood did little to slow down the open-air theatre in the woods between Taylor and Lee roads.

In fact, Cain Park Theatre, led by its co-founder and manager "Doc" Evans, did all it could to keep morale up during World War II. In March of 1942, "Army Red!", an original production written by Cain Park alumnus and serviceman John Price, showed the citizens of Cleveland Heights what it would be like if an actual air raid were to take place in their...