

FILM PICKED FOR PRESTIGIOUS VENUES



CONTRIBUTED

Filmmaker Scott Sniffen interviews Ann Lilley, center, and Dorothy Wargo while making 'Home of the Brave,' a documentary about Southbury's efforts 75 years ago to stand up to an American Nazi group that tried to build a training camp in town. The film will be shown in Washington and at the Boston Film Festival.

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REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

SOUTHBURY

It's on to Washington, D.C., and Boston for "Home of the Brave." The documentary that chronicles Southbury's resistance to an American Nazi group in 1937 will be shown at the U.S. Capitol on May 8, and at the prestigious Boston Film Festival on April 13.

"It's a big market, it's a huge market," said resident Scott Sniffen, who produced and directed the film to coincide with the 75th anniversary of Southbury's brush with the German American Bund.

Sniffen submitted the 39minute documentary to 13 film festivals across the country, and Boston is the first to accept it.

The film will be grouped with other documentaries in competition for an award at the festival, which runs from April 12-21.

"Just to get selected, I told everybody, that's just a cool thing on its own," Sniffen said. "You're in with films that are of the same high caliber."

The documentary made its debut in November to a soldout audience at Pomperaug High School.

Sniffen interviewed current and former residents who remembered when the Bund tried to build a training camp on 178 acres in the Kettletown section in 1937.

The 50,000-member group chose the site because it was close to a railroad station, making it convenient for followers from New York and New Jersey to travel Connecticut for their pro-Nazi activities.

Residents and clergy decried the camp and quickly mobilized to stop it. They wrote zoning laws that restricted the Bund's land to farming and residential use, and stalled the group by arresting two members for clearing land on a Sunday, a violation of the state's blue laws.

The Bund, which had nearly two dozen camps across the country, tried to push back, but its leaders gave up and eventually the land was sold. It was the first time a town stopped the Bund from building a camp. The documentary was shown last month at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, and First Selectman Ed Edelson worked with a representative from Sen. Richard Blumenthal's office to secure a showing at the U.S. Capitol on May 8.

A contingent of people who worked with Sniffen and Edelson to organize the November screening are expected to attend the showing in Washington.

Closer to home, the documentary will play at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Bethel Cinema in Bethel as part of the Connecticut Film Festival series.