

Updated on computer. See "Dancehalls"

MEMORIES OF DANCE HALLS AND DANCES

My earliest memory of a dance hall was Meyers in Whitelaw which was owned by my mother's uncle. While St. Michael's Church was being built, Mass was held in the dance hall. Some of my many aunts and uncles had their wedding dances there, so we got to watch people dance and try to do the waltzes and polkas.

see
Chair

The next recollection was of an uncle's wedding dance at Taus. The hall was above the tavern and had a stairway at either end of it. I don't think the dancers approved of our behavior. We would run up the north stairs, play tag among the dancers and get ushered out the south stairs.

Another memory was of a dance at the Union Hall in Manitowoc, sponsored by the Shipyards Union. I was about 16 and went with my sister who worked in the machine shop during the war. A fellow danced with me a few times and asked if he could walk me home. I checked with my sis and she said he was okay. We walked the five blocks, talked a few minutes at the door and he said, "Goodnight". I considered that my first "date".

In about 1939 or 40, five of us freshmen would watch for the announcements of wedding dances, usually held on Saturday nights. Four of the mothers knew how to drive and would take turns taking us to one of the closer dances, but we were expected to find a way home ourselves. Usually one or two would get an offer and the fellows were very gracious and would be willing to drop off the other girls enroute to the house of the girl he asked. Times were different those days. Most of the fellows were farm or country boys who were gentlemanly, like Walter, and nice to dance with and talk to.

The fellows dressed informally with shirts and pants (no jeans or shorts) and the girls generally wore blouses and skirts unless they were related to the bride or groom. Then they wore more dressy outfits. Sheer blouses, worn over lacy petticoats were coming into style, but the girl who wore one to a dance was considered very risqué!

I wasn't familiar with many dancing places in Two Rivers, even though I dated a number of "Carp Town" guys. Bucky's had an area where we could dance to a juke box, and for New Years Eve one year, my sister and I went to a hall on Hwy 42 just outside of town--I think it may have been called the 42 Club. Those days, the band played just about all night and many young people danced until the band quit! But it sure was hard to get up the next morning!

In Manitowoc, a dance hall we went to was the Opera House. That was convenient because, by then, I lived in an apartment there with my sister and was working at the Gamble Store. A fellow from Two Rivers that I danced with various times told me he was 19 (I was 18), but I found out later he was really 17, and I wonder, when I

see him around town now, if he remembers those days!

A popular hall was Martin Dukers at Silver Lake. My Irish red-headed girl friend and I would walk there from Manitowoc for the

~~for the~~ dances. Those days, wedding dances were open to the public as long as you could afford the 50 cents admission.

Another popular hall was Kubsh's at Kellnersville. My sis and I would sometimes take the Green Bay bus to Hwy K and walk the rest of the way to Kubsh's. One ^{time} the dance was over at 1 AM and we had no offer of a ride. While we debated whether to call a cab, a young man came over and asked if we needed a ride home. Even though we told him we lived in Manitowoc, he said, "Sure, we'll give you a ride home."

That was quite an experience because we found out there were already five guys in a two-seater coupe. We had to sit on laps! They were a bunch of Irish guys from Maple Grove who knew my Dad. There was a lot of joking and laughing all the way home, but they behaved. Later, one married my cousin.

Other halls in the area were Muench's at Alverno, Rudy Plocar's at Shoto, and others at Maribel, and Polifka's Corners. I'm sure many of you would be able to add to the list.

Often, the fellows would come to the dances in pairs and stand around the sides of the hall deciding who to ask to dance. My Irish girlfriend and I would choose who we would like to have ask us and we sort of took our time dancing in that area. We also also would tell each other jokes so we would look like fun girls to dance with. Well, it worked most of the time!

Branch also had a hall and that's where I met the man I married. It was the wedding dance of one of my cousins and Hugo was dating her sister. I went to the dance primarily to find a ride back to Manitowoc where I worked and lived. A guy who worked with my sister asked me to dance several times. He was there with Hugo, who wondered why he was dancing with such a kid (I had a pony tail and was wearing a pinafore skirt and bobby sox and probably looked about 16, (though I was 21). So Hugo asked me to dance, we had a soda together and found that we had a lot in common. When I asked Hank if I could catch a ride with him, he asked Hugo who said, "Sure."

Casually

Well, it was raining and I had on suede sandals, so I asked if he could just drive close to the door so ^{the shoes} wouldn't fade onto my sox. Instead, as gallantly as Sir Walter Raleigh, he scooped me up and carried me to the car! That made a good impression! I let him know on the way that I worked at the Gamble Store. The next Friday he came and "shopped" for about an hour until he got up courage to ask me out after work. Three weeks later, we got engaged, got married in June and had a happy and productive marriage (11 kids)----all because those great dance halls!!!