

Ala Rendezvous

During my interview with my grandmother, Mrs. Lillian Rock, I found out some interesting facts I didn't know.

My great-grandma, Delma Rock, built, owned, and ran the Rendezvous nightclub. It was constructed in 1930-31 and is located on what is now the Diorite Road, in Greenwood Location.

When an appeal was made for workers to help build the Rendezvous, my great-grandma was swamped with replies from men willing to be hired. The pay was a dollar per day and men were delighted to have a job.

After the building was completed in the late summer of 1933 or 1934, a grand opening was held and it was a major event. They had a band playing for entertainment and the place was packed!

My grandma described the interior of the Rendezvous proudly exclaiming, "There was a small bar in front. They used to be ten deep to get drinks. Beers were only a nickel, a shot cost fifteen cents, and a glass of wine could be bought for ten cents. There were hands waving like crazy to get the bartender's attention."

There was a checkroom for people to put their coats and other articles. They would take their coats and fold them neatly and put them in a box. The boxes were numbered and the people got a tag with the number on it. This all cost ten cents.

Dances were held at the Rendezvous and my grandma quickly pointed out the fine accommodations by saying, "There was a huge dance floor. It was hardwood. Along the dance floor, on three sides, were tables and chairs. At the far end there was a stage, right in the center. It was the bandstand. There were three rows of tables on one side and two rows on the other side. On the south end there were two rows. They could seat about 400 to 500 people."

A big arch was between the front part and the ballroom. On each side of the big arch was a wall and then two smaller arches. In front of one of the walls, between the arches, was the jukebox. "There were huge thick, thick, velvet drapes on the arches. It was deep, deep, dark, maroon. It was beautiful!" exclaimed my grandma. They drew the drapes shut when there weren't any dances, to shut off the area.

This was the Big Band Era. One of the most well known band leaders was Frankie Yankovich. "We always had a huge crowd when he played." she explained. Another one was a Swedish band with Ollie Scrodholts. "The place used to be just loaded," she emphatically added. It was a big job to clean up after a dance. They first used to take up all the chairs and tables and sweep. Next they put them back. After that they'd do the dance floor. They never swept the dance floors. They would use a special type of broom. It had a big bar on the bottom and it was covered with thick flannel. They would go over it a few times. Just before a dance, they would toss around a special waxing powder. This would be rubbed into the floor. "It made the floor just beautiful!" my grandma pointed out with pride.

The Rendezvous is still standing today and is located near U.S. Highway 41. Even though the outside looks different and there is a different owner, it is still in business.

My grandma has lived all of her life in the Upper Peninsula. She and her family used to live in the town of Ishpeming. She has since moved to Greenwood Location, a block away from the Rendezvous.

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