

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 34: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE PINE GARDENS, BADWATER

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian



The Pine Gardens Dancing Pavilion, located on Badwater Lake, just across Highway M-12 about a mile north of the Twin Falls bridge over the Menominee River, opened September 1, 1924, with an estimated 1,000 couples from Michigan, Wisconsin and beyond in attendance. Joe Andrews built the 80-foot by 100-foot structure at a cost of \$25,000 in conjunction with his amusement park. On November 1, 1924, construction began on a \$12,000 addition measuring 50-feet by 65-feet which included a modern grill and dining room. The Pine Gardens Dancing Pavilion was destroyed by fire on June 8, 1931. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

[NOTE: Dates, placed chronologically, are highlighted in boldface red letters for easier reading, and names of individuals and places are highlighted in boldface black letters to facilitate finding information.]

The 34th installment of Menominee Range Memories, a series of articles by William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation historian, now

available on the Dickinson County Library's website, is titled "The Roaring Twenties – The Pine Gardens, Badwater."

During the Roaring Twenties, new music and dances were fast-paced and energetic. They were an escape from the horror of World War I, and an opportunity to release pent up emotions created by the restricted lifestyles forced on the public by the war effort.

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Within weeks of the Armistice, both Europeans and Americans were dancing again with renewed enthusiasm. In Paris, the wartime ban on public dancing was still in effect at the end of **1918**, but that didn't stop the French from dancing. By **1919** dancing in Paris had fully returned to its pre-war frenzy.

However, on the dance floor back home dances such as the **Grizzly Bear**, the **Turkey Trot** and the **One-Step**, popular before the war, were now out of fashion.

Having been introduced only months before World War I started, the newer **Foxtrot**, had not had time to catch on, and escaped the pre-war stigma to become the favorite dance of **1920**.

But most dancers still loved the simplicity of the **One-Step**. They liked the dance, but not the old-fashioned name, so many continued to dance the One-Step, calling it by its fashionable new name, the **Foxtrot**.

In the early 1900s both the **waltz** and the **tango** were considered scandalous dances because they involved physical contact between partners during the dance. Once the dance crazes which took off in Paris were demonstrated in America, they were embraced by the public and close dancing became a social norm.

While the new dances appealed to the youth, they were not so popular with the older, more conservative generation who saw jazz in particular as decadent.

Ragtime – which had been popular during and after World War I – was suited to the new music tempos and so it flourished.

Free from the restrictions of tight corsets and the large puffed sleeves and long skirts that characterized feminine dress during the late Victorian era, a new generation of

dancers swayed, hugged and hopped to the new, lively dance rhythms.

Dancing the latest crazes was passed on from one dancer to the next. It was in dance halls across the country that free form social dancing had its beginnings.

The dance that epitomizes the **1920s** is the **Charleston** which is still a symbol for the Jazz Age. Introduced to the public in the **Ziegfield Follies of 1923** by the all-black cast Afro-American Broadway musical "Running Wild," the dance was featured with the song "The Charleston" by composer James P. Johnson, and soon the musical and dance became a big hit.

The **Charleston** is characterized by outward heel kicks combined with an up and down movement achieved by bending and straightening the knees in time to the music. The Charleston, danced to ragtime jazz music in a quick-paced 4/4 time rhythm, quickly become a worldwide craze.

The **Charleston** was particularly popular with the flappers, rebellious young women of the 1920s known for wearing short dresses, bobbing their hair and listening to jazz music – all considered scandalous.

As the **Charleston** craze began to fade, flappers with their knock knees, crossing hands, and flying beads also danced the **Black Bottom**, first introduced in a 1926 Broadway production.

Dancing began to actively involve the upper body for the first time as women began shaking their torsos in a dance called the **Shimmy**. Young people took to throwing their arms and legs in the air with reckless abandon and hopping or "toddling" every step in the **Foxtrot**, and soon every college student was doing a new dance which became known as the **Toddle**.

The African American **Texas Tommy** had traveled from **San Francisco** to **New**

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York City in **1911**. Harlem dancers kept the essential concept of the Texas Tommy – a turning two-step with swingouts releasing the woman to a single handhold – and simplified the footwork from three different steps to just one.

It was renamed the **Lindy Hop** by “**Shorty**” **George Snowden** in **1928**, in honor of **Charles Lindbergh**’s first solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean in **May, 1927**. The Lindy Hop was soon captured on film when Snowden, his fellow Savoy Ballroom dancers and **Chick Webb**’s band performed it for the **1929** sound film *After Seben*, but the Lindy Hop didn’t become widespread until the 1930s, and eventually evolved into **Swing** dancing.

People saw the new dances in **Hollywood** movies and practiced them to music from phonograph records or to radio broadcasts before going out on the dance floors of nightclubs or school gymnasiums. Dancing was a major form of entertainment and an important part of every party.

During the Roaring Twenties dancing was extremely popular on the **Menominee Iron Range**. The following is a partial listing of some of the dancing pavilions and dance halls popular during that era, and the dates indicate approximate beginnings:

Liberty Theatre/Dance Hall, Channing (1921); **Marion Hall, 207 East Hughitt Street, Iron Mountain** (1921); **Chicagoan Lake Resort, Chicagoan Lake, Iron County** (1923); **Lake Mary Resort, Hamilton Lakes** (1923); **Hemlock Hall, Breitung, Kingsford** (1924); **Pine Gardens, Badwater Lake** (1924); **The Green Lantern, Aurora, Wisconsin** (destroyed by fire October 4, 1925); **The Nightingale, Badwater** (1925); **The Northern Ballroom, 100-102 West Brown Street, Iron Mountain** (1925); **Spread Eagle Dance Pavilion, Spread Eagle,**

Wisconsin (1925); **The Winter Gardens Ballroom, formerly the Northern Ballroom, 100-102 West Brown Street, Iron Mountain** (1927); and the **Eagles Ballroom, North Side, Iron Mountain**.

An article in the **August 2, 1924** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* announced that **Joe Andrews**, of **Iron Mountain**, was starting construction of an amusement park located at **Badwater Lake**.

The park, according to **Andrews**, would be the best-equipped in the Upper Peninsula. Representatives from **Chicago** and **Cleveland** manufacturers were already at the site making ready for the shipment of several “riding devices” which were to include a modern roller coaster over 3,000 feet in length at an estimated cost of nearly \$20,000.

Otto Brumsted, of **Iron Mountain**, was in partnership with **Andrews** and had “considerable experience in the management of amusement parks and other places of public recreation.”

A dancing pavilion, scheduled to be completed by **September 1**, was to be built at a cost of \$25,000 just across Highway M-12 about a mile north of the **Twin Falls bridge**.

“We plan to give **Iron Mountain** and the neighboring towns a first class amusement park,” **Andrews** stated. “**Badwater lake** is daily growing more popular, not only with residents of the Iron Mountain district, but among tourists as well. It is our intention to provide a place where our people and visitors can enjoy good, clean and healthy recreation.”

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Construction work had been started on the dance pavilion at the new amusement park according to an article in the **August 9, 1924** issue of *The Iron Mountain News*.

The pavilion was 80 feet by 100 feet in size, covered by “a carload of roofing materials.”

By **August 25, 1924**, work on the new dancing pavilion to be known as the **Pine Gardens** was progressing rapidly. The structure was “virtually complete,” and carpenters had worked all day on **August 24** laying the hardwood dance floor and preparing the walls for wainscoting and plaster board. The bell-shaped orchestra stand was nearing completion, and work on the restrooms and coat-check room had been started.

The **Pine Gardens** opened as scheduled on **Monday, September 1, 1924**, when an estimated 1,000 couples attended the affair, sponsored by the **Iron Mountain American Legion Auxiliary**.

People from several states attended the dance while touring the Midwest with license plates from **New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, California, Washington** and **Wisconsin** viewed on “machines” [*automobiles*] which were among the hundreds of automobiles parked for blocks along the road leading to the big pavilion.

The orchestra stand was of a “special design” similar to a “phonograph sound box” which sent the music to all corners of the big hall.

Music was furnished by **Heyn’s Sing College Orchestra**, consisting of six college students. The group had recently

broadcast its programs live from a **Cedar Rapids, Iowa**, radio “plant,” and was under contract to play at the **Pine Gardens** for the following three weeks.

The hardwood dance floor was bordered by “an attractively decorated space for observers.”

Nightly dances were scheduled except for Monday, and a Sunday afternoon matinee dance was to be arranged.

A contract totaling \$35,000 was let to the **C.B. Brenning Company**, of **Rockford, Illinois**, to install equipment in the new **Pine Gardens Amusement Park**, according to an article in the **October 17, 1924**, edition of *The Iron Mountain News*.

According to **Joseph Andrews**, work was to be started immediately. Six acres of land were to be cleared to use as an amusement park. The equipment to be installed included a merry-go-round, a seaplane and a whip which was “a riding device somewhat similar to the roller coaster.”

On **November 1, 1924**, work on a grill was to begin. The estimated cost of this 50-foot by 65-foot addition to the **Pine Gardens Dancing Pavilion** was \$12,000, and the dining room, according to **Andrews**, would “be one of the most modern” in the Upper Peninsula.

The newly remodeled, enlarged and repainted **Pine Gardens Dance Pavilion** was formally opened for the **1925** season on Monday evening, **April 13**. The public was invited to inspect the complex on Easter Sunday.

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The new **Pine Gardens** fountain grill contained twenty-two booths and a soda fountain. Another smaller addition to the grill room contained a kitchen where light lunches would be prepared.

There was a counter at which fountain drinks were to be served to those not wishing to enter the grill room.

The entire interior had been redecorated and repainted using a pale blue and dark green color scheme.

The **Pine Gardens** was the largest dance pavilion in Upper Michigan. The

main hall was 80 x 140 feet with a 60 x 115-foot dance floor which could accommodate more than 800 couples.

Other conveniences included electric lights, a special air power pumping system which supplied running water direct from a well. No storage tank for gravity flow and surplus supply was required.

Among other new attractions for the **1925** season was a large area which had been brushed out for use as a free picnic grounds. Benches and tables were to be built.



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and dining room. The Pine Gardens Dancing Pavilion was destroyed by fire on June 8, 1931. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]



The Nightingale Resort and Pine Gardens to the left in background, circa 1925-1930 [Hazel (De Gayner) Dault]

The **Easter Ball** on **Monday, April 13, 1925**, opened the season. Bus service to the **Pine Gardens** was available from 7:30 p.m. on.

Some fifteen hundred couples attended the season's opening ball, according to the **April 14, 1925**, edition of *The Iron Mountain News*. **Eli Rice**, a colored singer, and his **Dixie Cotton Pickers** provided the music, and the orchestra was engaged for two weeks. The pavilion was booked with a Chicago circuit of orchestras for the entire season into November.

A brief article in the **April 16, 1925** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* noted that "waltzing, which, according to male

dancers, is listed among the 'lost arts,'" would be the feature at the **Pine Gardens** dance the following evening with **Elie Rice** and his **Cotton Pickers** furnishing the music. "Lonesome and Blue," one of the hits of the 1924 dance season, would be "the number featured by the colored tenor in accordance with a number of requests."

Earl Park's Tunsmiths opened their second week at the **Pine Gardens** on **Sunday, May 10, 1925** with a large crowd in attendance.

In the **May 12, 1925**, edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, it was announced that a **Wurlitzer orchestra** costing approximately \$2,000 had been installed in the **Pine**

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Gardens' grill room. The instrument contained pipes, drums, piano, cymbals and other orchestral effects and was installed by the **McLogan-Pearce Music Company**.

Shortly after midnight on **June 2, 1925**, five people were injured in an automobile accident on the **Twin Falls** road four miles north of the **Pine Gardens**.

Leo Preisler was driving **Arthur Starrs'** sedan when the party met a Ford coupe driven by **Henry Hood**. Preisler remained on the proper side of the road until the cars were just a short distance from each other when Hood suddenly swung to the wrong side of the road. In an effort to avoid a head-on collision, Preisler pulled over to the extreme left, and the front of the coupe hit the Starr vehicle directly in the center and then turned over.

According to Hood and his passenger, **Leo Perron**, the blinding lights of the **Starr** sedan caused him to pull over on the other side of the road. **Hood** claimed to have had his dimmers on, stating it was impossible to see against the blinding lights.

Miss Iola Linderman, of **Channing**, a passenger in the **Starr** sedan, was in a serious condition at her home, suffering from the loss of blood and a possible skull fracture.

Starr, who was an occupant in the rear seat of the sedan with **Miss Linderman**, was also badly hurt, suffering several cuts in the scalp and on the leg and also a severe sprain in his right arm. **Priesler**, and **Miss Dulcine Gohr**, who were riding in

the front seat, suffered only minor cuts and bruises.

Hood and **Perron**, both **Iron Mountain** residents, were also injured. Perron suffered from deep cuts caused by flying glass and was confined to his bed at his home at **606 Van Buren Street**, being unable to walk. Several stitches were required to close the large cuts in his head, under the chin and on the right arm from where a large piece of glass was removed.

All of the injured members were given first aid treatment at **Iron Mountain's General Hospital**. Both cars were damaged beyond repair.

The first unit of the **Pine Gardens** playground, a chair plane with a capacity of 30 persons, was in operation by early **June, 1925**. This concession was operated by a **Chicago** firm and was of the "usual sea-plane type operated at large fairs and carnivals."

Manager **Joe Andrews** was supportive of benefits for local organizations. On the evening of Wednesday, **June 10, 1925**, a booster dance was staged for the benefit of the **Iron Mountain Baseball Association**. The hall was donated to the team for the evening with entertainment furnished by the **Marigold Entertainers**, a famous Des Moines broadcasting orchestra. This was the second benefit dance staged at Pine Gardens to raise money for the team.

A new lunch stand had been erected "on the outer grounds" for the benefit of tourists.

On Saturday, **June 13, 1925**, the **Ohian Marigold Serenaders**, a famous **Des Moines** broadcasting group considered

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“exponents of artistic jazz,” opened a two-week engagement at the **Pine Gardens**. Advertised as “The Red-Hottest Band that has ever played at the Pines,” the group had played for the baseball booster dance.

In the **June 25, 1925** edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Gas Stations Are Flourishing Here: Large Number But All Are Thriving Upon Heavy Traffic,**” mention was made of the popularity of **Pine Gardens** and **The Nightingale**, located next door, as follows:

“The youth of the neighboring towns and country places congregate almost

nightly at **Pine Gardens** and **The Nightengale** [*sic* – *Nightingale*], largest dance halls in the upper peninsula, and the number of cars parked outside these two large neighboring amusement places is scarcely fewer than the number of dancers inside.

“**Crystal Falls, Iron River, Ironwood, Escanaba, Channing, Witch Lake, Sagola, Humboldt, Champion** and **Republic** are represented, as well as the city and villages of **Iron Mountain.**”



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Cavi's Elks Band, Iron Mountain, Michigan, circa 1925-1930: (left to right), Frank "Spud" Valenti, trombone; Fred Caviani, accordion; Ernie Houghton, piano; Arvid "Hut" Nordstrom, drums; Donnell Anderson, banjo (?); Oscar Peterson, trumpet; Patty Flaminio, saxophone. In addition to the Cavi's Elks Band, there is mention of the Cavi 4, Cavi 5 and Cavi's Cats as bands in contemporary newspapers, all probably under the direction of Fred Caviani. This photograph was taken by the Portrait Art Shoppe which was located at 313 ½ South Stephenson Avenue, Iron Mountain, in 1925. Mrs. Beatrice J. Archie was listed as the proprietor in 1924 and K. Beatrice Johnson was proprietor in 1926. Beatrice Johnson was listed as an Iron Mountain photographer in 1930. [William J. Cummings]

On the evening of Saturday, **December 12, 1925**, the annual firemen's ball was held at **Pine Gardens**. Cavi's Cats provided the music which included "the graceful, sweeping curves of the quadrille to the shuffling, sliding, slipping antics of the Charleston."

advertising the Carolina Collegians, a presentation band from the Ringling Theatre in Baraboo, Wisconsin, on Sunday evening, September 4, and the Annual Anniversary Ball to be held on Monday, September 5 – Labor Day, featuring the Chicago Blew Blowers. Ladies were admitted free, while gentlemen paid \$1.00 admission. Bus and taxi service was also available on Sunday and Monday.



The above Pine Gardens advertisement appeared in the Saturday, September 3, 1927 edition of The Iron Mountain News



A fire of unknown origin which began at about 3 a.m. on Monday, June 8, 1931, leveled the **Pine Gardens Dancing Pavilion** with a loss estimated at from \$30,000 to \$35,000.

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All that remained were “two battered, brick chimneys rising out of the smoldering ruins, the charred spires of what once were two wooden pillars and the short concrete posts which supported the floor of the dance hall.”

Diligent work by the Iron Mountain Fire Department and volunteers saved **Joe Andrews'** new residence, located near the pavilion, although a small section of the roof was burned away and the north wall was seared by the heat.

Pine Gardens was open on Sunday evening when one of several free dances given during the past few weeks was held. Two orchestras were on hand and a capacity crowd attended.

Joe Andrews and his wife locked up the pavilion at about 2:30 a.m. the morning of the fire. Some men from the orchestra staying at one of the **Nightingale** cottages across the road came to the Andrews' home to advise them there was a fire.

Mrs. Andrews called the Iron Mountain Fire Department, but within 15 to 20 minutes the flames and smoke were pouring from every corner of the building. The fire department concentrated on protecting the Andrews' residence.

“The intense heat of the fire was evidenced by a mass of molten glass which marked the location of the corner of the building where the soft drinks were stored.

“Around the glass, still glowing red with the undiminished heat, lay the twisted wreckage of what were once the counter fixtures, and other equipment in the soft drink annex on the south side of the pavilion. Only a few blackened bits of metal represented the somewhat elaborate array of booths in the annex.

“The wood stove, used on cool evenings, lay bent and glazed in the smoking embers, while loose bricks, baked white, were scattered over the ground. A small supply of coke stores at the east end of the building still burned brightly at 8:30 o'clock this morning, but the rest was only dust and charcoal.”

The Pine Gardens pavilion had enjoyed a consistent patronage, particularly for its Sunday night dances. Almost any Sunday night would find the parking space about the pavilion crowded with cars, and a crowd of dancers inside.