



**Oriental Gardens**



## Sylvan Lake & DISTRICT ARCHIVES

*Preserving the Past ~ For Future Generations*

### THE GOLDEN ERA OF SYLVAN LAKE'S FIRST DANCE HALLS

From the 1920s to the 1950s, summers in Sylvan Lake included dancing to the music of live bands. Dances started on the May long weekend and went until Labour Day in September. Many bands honed their skills while entertaining the large crowds who came to dance and enjoy the music on warm summer nights.

For many years, there were three dance halls along the beach. Dancers went from one hall to the other on the board sidewalks. They paid 10 cents each or three for \$.25 to jitney dance. Each dance (waltz, polka, foxtrot, etc.) consisted of three short melodies with a break between each set.

Sylvan Lake Hotel, renamed the Hazelwood, was a popular venue for dances. Soon, a second dance hall, the Oriental Gardens, opened. Alexandre Pavillion, near the current site of Chateau Suites, was later added to Sylvan Lake's first dance halls.

#### The Oriental Gardens

The largely forgotten Oriental Gardens stood next door to the old Sylvan Lake Hotel. When the old Sylvan Lake Hotel burned down in 1927, the Oriental Gardens were also destroyed. The Oriental Gardens hosted movies or "Talkies."



**Alexander Pavillion**



**Alexander Pavillion, Inside Prom Hall**

#### Alexander Pavillion (Prom Hall)

In 1925, Henry and Della Hussfeldt built the Alexander Pavilion. It was on the beach between 50th and 51A Streets. They named it after Della's father Alexander Loiselle, who was the first permanent settler in Sylvan Lake. It was later renamed the Ranch House, then the Prom Hall. The dance hall was in the back of the building with a tearoom on the front. The hall also held concerts, New Year's Eve Frolics, farm machinery shows, Spring Teas, weddings, roller skating, and the first picture shows in town. The building burned to the ground in a spectacular blaze on July 8, 1959.

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