

## **Ottumwa Entertainment and Dean's Band**

I was speaking with mom today about this week's story. While talking about possible topics I asked her about music and acts she had scene. This led to her telling about some of the acts that came through Ottumwa. It was an impressive list. She then told about an interesting opportunity that came Dad's way.

The Coliseum in Ottumwa used to be a big draw. It was common for up and coming stars and stars on their way down to make a stop at the Ottumwa Coliseum. In those days they didn't call them concerts these were called Country Music Shows. Some of the acts that went through Ottumwa included George Jones, Johnny Cash and Conway Twitty before he went country. He at first had a rock band.

Hearing about these acts that came through Ottumwa led me to find out a brush Dad had with fame that I had never heard of. Dad used to play regularly in a band when he was young. He would sing and play guitar. Other members of his band included Jerry Byers and Bob Arona. Mom say's that Jerry Byers would have been a big star. He even played at the Grand Ole Opry. Unfortunately he died of lung cancer at the age of 29. He didn't even smoke. One time when Conway Twitty was in Ottumwa at the Coliseum, Dad's band was playing between acts. He was impressed with Dad and asked Dad to join his band and travel with him. Dad did not pursue this. The rest is history.

I also asked Mom what were some of the shows they saw when traveling together. In Vegas they saw Red Foxx, Don Rickles, Elvis Pressley and Wayne Newton. In Davenport they saw Dolly Parton. Mom said Wayne Newton was by far the best show she ever saw. It was a special night when they saw Elvis. It was Elvis's daughters 8<sup>th</sup> Birthday and she was in the crowd. Mom even got to see a different side of Elvis. She was outside the back of a Casino and Elvis came out in sweats and a cut off shirt. She didn't say anything to him. Then some women saw him and started screaming. He immediately went back inside.

This week we found out a little about Dad's musical history, a couple brushes with fame and Ottumwa's musical history.