

Camp Meetings in Oak Grove!



In the photo above, the Willamette River steam boat *Young America* approaches the river bank below the Oak Grove camp meeting site once located on the south side of Courtney Avenue.

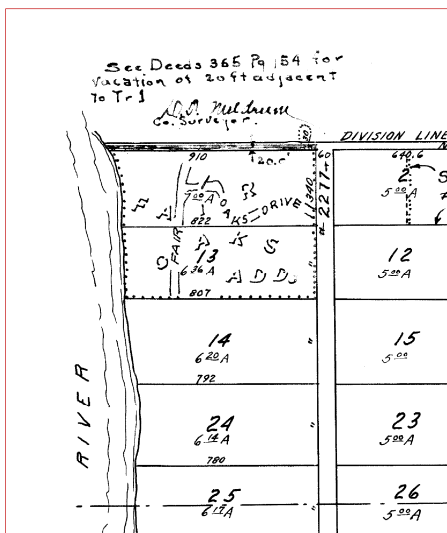
“In 1890 the German Methodists in Oak Grove-Milwaukie purchased a 5-acre plot above the river at Oak Grove for a campground. Steamboats made regular stops at the bank below the grounds to let off and take on passengers for camp meetings and after-church picnics.”ⁱ

The camp meeting came west with the pioneer wagon trains in the 1840s. Originally a chance for isolated pioneer families to attend religious events and spend a few days in recreational activities with other families, camp meetings evolved over time to include not only church services and revival events but also educational programs and youth camps. Newspaper accounts suggest Oak Grove’s German Methodist camp ground was still in use in 1920.

It appears remnants of the early Oak Grove camp ground still exist in several meandering streets which today somewhat follow early paths on the property. The actual German Methodist Church of Oak Grove was located at the corner of Courtney Avenue and River Road until the 1950s.

Further research by OLHD is expected to determine the extent of the Oak Grove Camp Meeting grounds.

A corner of the 1890 plat map for Oak Grove shows the “Fair Oaks Add.” that may have been site of the Oak Grove Camp Meeting.





A March 2015 photo at corner of Fair Oaks Drive and Fair Oaks Avenue showing two of the five stone pillars.

“Could these have perhaps marked entrances to the Oak Grove Camp Meeting site?”

There was a second camp meeting in Oak Lodge, the Jennings Lodge Camp Ground established by the Evangelical Church, which began in 1905, and operated continuously until the end of 2013. Altogether Clackamas County had some six or seven camp meeting sites. Only Canby Grove Camp still operates in 2015.

Join us in the search for more history of the Oak Grove Camp Meeting and share what you learn!

ⁱ Lynch, Vera, *Free Land for Free Men*, 1973, Artline Printing, Portland, Oregon, following page 548.