



A Brief History of Lake Grove, Oregon

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The bobcat population probably outnumbered people for many years in the rural, wooded area once called “Cook’s Switch” and later named “Lake Grove.”

The arrival of the Southern Pacific Red Electric trains brought the new place name with it. The “Lake View Park” station was built in 1913. By the following year, when the trains began to run, the station name was changed to “Lake Grove” and this has served as the name for the area ever since.

This transportation system also brought a new mobility and facilitated development of previously remote areas such as Lake Grove. The 10-cent fare for the 30-minute trip from Portland meant families could come for the day to picnic and swim. Visitors with more leisure time pitched a tent by the lake and camped.

The Oregon Iron & Steel Company, who owned the lake and the land surrounding it, eventually realized its real estate potential. Atchison & Allen was hired as their exclusive marketing firm. The first residential development on the lake, Lake View Villas, was platted in 1912. The lack of good roads and the untamed shoreline made view lots more desirable than those on the lake. Atchison & Allen offered to throw in a lake lot for \$50 with a purchase of an acre view lot.

Lake View Park at the west end of Oswego Lake was created in 1913 as an outdoor sales “office” for prospective homebuyers. Atchison & Allen met passengers at the Lake Grove Red Electric station and took them aboard the “Lotus,” a jaunty launch with a striped awning, for a scenic tour of lakeside lots.

The Ladd Estate Company replaced Atchison & Allen in 1923. They built a sales office on Graef Circle so the park was offered to the community. After being turned down twice, Paul C. Murphy, as head of the Lake Estate Company, donated the park to the school board, who accepted it. It is now Lake Grove Swim Park.

As the population increased, the business community grew. People preferred to live near the train depot so businesses opened nearby. In the teens, Carter’s grocery store was the first to open. This building was demolished in the 1920s and Marston’s opened across the street from where Carter’s had stood. The Marston’s building still stands on the east side of Bryant Road near the railroad tracks.

In 1916, as the number of residents grew, a post office was opened in Lake Grove. Since the area was unincorporated, it was named "Waluga." It is often said that "Waluga" is a Native American word meaning "wild swan," but there is no evidence that the word "Waluga" existed in native dialects. In 1923, the post office name was changed to "Lake Grove."

Ward Smith remembered that in the 1920s, "A young man who worked for me in town and his wife opened a little grocery store on the corner of Quarry Road and Boones Ferry Road. That was the beginning of the Lake Grove business district. " His daughter, Gretchen Barber, added: "It was a darling store, completely surrounded by tall fir trees. All of Boones Ferry was a corridor of fir trees. It broke my heart when, little by little, they went down."

By 1921, the county road to Lake Grove from Oswego still was unpaved, but as roads improved, the population and automobile use increased, the business district expanded to Boones Ferry Road. By 1929, the Red Electric trains ceased operation and more automobiles took to the road.

One of the oldest remaining commercial buildings on Boones Ferry Road appropriately houses one of the City's oldest businesses. Naomi's Lampshades & Lamps was established in 1942.

A 1959 vote brought the Lake Grove part of Oswego Lake into the Oswego city limits. To reflect this change, in 1960 the City's name was officially changed to "Lake Oswego."

Lastly, road widening became a cause for celebration! "Boones Ferry Days" was a Lake Grove event held in the late 1960s. It celebrated "A modern new 4-lane highway" in other words, the newly widened Boones Ferry Road. Skydivers, carnival booths, prancing horses, unicyclists, square dancing, floats, bands, and celebrities were featured.

A pivotal period of Lake Grove's history spanned about fifty years, from 1912 to the 1960s. Although Lake Grove's unique story is a significant chapter in Lake Oswego's history, Oswego was founded in 1850, nine years before Oregon became a state, which makes it one of the oldest towns in Clackamas County.