

= Mountain Grove Campground =

The Mountain Grove Campground was a campground , active between 1872 and 1901 , that formed part of the 19th- to early 20th @-@ century camp meeting movement , where camping was combined with worshipping and listening to preachers . These meetings were often held by Protestants , in this case , Methodists . Mountain Grove Campground was a site and resort on the Danville , Hazleton and Wilkes @-@ Barre Railroad in Black Creek Township , Luzerne County , Pennsylvania , in the United States . It existed for approximately 30 years and was run by the Mountain Grove Camp Meeting Association . A businessman named G.M. Shoop was the original owner of the campground 's land . Many prominent citizens of the surrounding area were in the association . During the campground 's operation between 1872 and 1901 , it was renovated and expanded several times . While the camp meetings that were held there were intended for Methodists , non @-@ Methodists occasionally attended them .

= = Location and description = =

The Mountain Grove Campground was located approximately halfway between Bloomsburg and Hazleton . It was adjacent to the historical community of Mountain Grove , which had a population of 65 in 1880 , and was located on the Danville , Hazleton and Wilkes @-@ Barre Railroad . Most attenders came by railroad came from stations in Catawissa or Hazleton . The campground had its own railroad station and post office . The campground 's elevation was more than 1 @,@ 000 feet (300 m) above sea level and it was situated in a wooded grove immediately east of McCauley Mountain and in close proximity to Scotch Valley . McCauley Mountain protected the site from strong west winds .

Mountain Grove Campground was designed with a layout similar to a miniaturized version of Washington , D.C. It had a center avenue and five other avenues called A , B , C , D , and E. The center avenue ran from a large tabernacle to a living area for the preachers . There were also a many tents and sites of cottages in the campground and a large administration building on the site housed a number of offices . The campground had outdoor fireplaces , which encouraged picnics . The main hall , which was constructed in 1887 , was 26 by 60 feet (7 @.@ 9 m x 18 @.@ 3 m) and had two stories .

According to a local atlas , Mountain Grove Campground was semicircular in shape , with avenues radiating out towards the sides . An open space for worshipping was on the camp meeting site , and it was surrounded by more tents . When this area was filled up , more people would set up tents along the avenues that radiated outward from the camp .

The location of the Mountain Grove Campground was chosen was selected for several reasons . One of these was its proximity to the communities of Hazleton and Bloomsburg . By road , Bloomsburg and Hazleton were both 17 miles (27 km) miles from the campground . The campground was approachable by road from three directions .

= = Establishment and history = =

= = = Early history = = =

In June 1872 , G.M. Shoop , a businessman from Danville bought 28 acres of land on the site that would become the Mountain Grove Campground . He reported this purchase in a meeting held on June 20 , 1872 in Columbia County with a group of Methodists , including several ministers . In this meeting , an executive committee was appointed to arrange the camp meeting . The executive committee included Reverend S. Creighton , Reverend S. Barnes (the chairman) , H.E. Sutherland (the secretary) , Reverend B.P. King , Reverend E.T. Schwartz , M. Hartman , J.W. Cleaver , J.W. Eyer , and G.M. Shoop himself . Shoop intended to give the land to a local camp meeting organization once one existed . This idea was well received by the district superintendent of the

Methodist Church . A committee consisting of four pastors and five lay leaders was subsequently created for the camp meeting site . Craig Newton , a history professor at what would become the Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania , stated that the site purchased by Shoop would be an ideal location for a camp meeting site .

The Danville District 's presiding elder , Reverend S. Barnes , went to the Central Pennsylvania Conference in 1872 to make a report on opening the Mountain Grove Campground . He stated that the managers of the campground intended to " make it , perhaps , the best adapted and most attractive resort of its kind in all our Conference territory . " Camp meeting sites had long been supported by the Central Pennsylvania Conference . The Pennsylvania legislature chartered the campground in 1873 .

A professional architect was hired to design the Mountain Grove Campground . Major financial contributors to the campground included a Colonel Jackson from Berwick and the Low family from Lime Ridge . It was under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church 's Danville District . The campground was initially laid out hurriedly , being constructed in less than two months . It opened for the first time on August 14 , 1872 . By this point , approximately 70 small and hastily constructed cottages (referred to as tents) had been built . Between the 1872 camp meeting season and the 1873 camp meeting season , the buildings of the campground were significantly renovated . Three more acres and a hotel were also added to the campground during this time , on land bought from George W. Klase . The purpose of the purchase was to stop the sale of alcoholic drinks within two miles of the campground . Between 1873 and 1874 , further additions were made to the campground . In 1875 , a special train started to run past the campground three times a week during the camp meeting season . By 1881 , the special train ran past the campground once per day . In 1884 , the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Philadelphia and Reading Railway began selling special fair excursion tickets for the campground . The campground was extended to 34 acres by 1885 . The Lehigh Valley Railroad began doing so as well in 1887 .

In the beginning of the operation of Mountain Grove Campground , the majority of people traveling there were worshipers . In the 1870s and 1880s , the campground was one of the three largest camp meeting sites that residents of Columbia County attended . In 1875 , approximately 2500 people attended the camp meeting . In 1881 , it was decided that all the profit generated from the campground would be dedicated to expansion and improvement of it . In 1891 , the duration of the camp meeting was increased from seven to thirteen days . However , some people traveled there for a vacation . Within 20 years of the campground 's opening , the majority of the people going there were there for a vacation , and trains carried bands and other entertainment @-@ related items to the campground . However , people still continued to go there in large numbers for camp meeting . Local newspapers also began to advertise the campground as a resort instead of a camp meeting site . This began with an advertisement written by John R. Rote , secretary of the Mountain Grove Camp Meeting Association , in the Columbia County Republican on July 9 , 1891 .

The Mountain Grove Campground was affected relatively little by storms , as compared to other camp meeting sites in the area . However , in 1889 , attendance of the camp meeting was significantly affected by inclement weather .

= = = Expansions and renovations = = =

Between the 1872 and 1873 camp meeting seasons , the cottages , also known as tents , in the Mountain Grove Campground were renovated . The renovations included enlarging the tents to dimensions of 9 by 18 feet (2 @.@ 7 m x 5 @.@ 5 m) . Roofs with singled combs were also installed during this renovation . The stairways on the cottages were also improved during this time .

Between the 1873 and the 1874 camp meeting seasons , the Mountain Grove Camp Meeting Association added more tents to the campground , increasing their number to almost 200 . They also built a boarding house above the dining hall and a tabernacle was constructed across from the auditorium .

Several more expansions and renovations were made to the Mountain Grove Campground in the

1880s . In 1883 , the boarding house was expanded and in 1885 , a number of water pipes were renovated and some buildings were repaired and repainted . The main office of the campground was built in 1887 . More renovations were done in 1889 and 1892 , by which time there were 240 tents .

In the 1900 , a final attempt to increase the attendance of the camp meetings at Mountain Grove Campground was made by the Board of Managers . As well as general renovation , this included an addition of a building called the Preacher 's Home , which was situated behind the auditorium . The purpose of this was to attract preachers to attend , thus inspiring locals to attend as well . This plan was not successful .

= = = Decline and later history = = =

As railroads began to become more common , attendance of the Mountain Grove Campground began to decline . The attendance of the campground dropped severely in 1891 . On July 9 , 1891 , the campground placed an unusually large advertisement in a local newspaper . Attendance continued to drop in 1892 . The decline continued , despite efforts by the campground directors to increase the number of Chautauqua speakers and religious speakers . Attempts were made throughout the 1890s to stave off the impending failure of the campground , but were largely unsuccessful . Later , the Board of Managers decided that they would open the campground specifically for special events , such as the Bloomsburg Methodist Church 's plans for an eleven @-@ car special train to carry picnickers and a band there . By the mid @-@ 1890s , it was permitted for visitors to bring their own supplies , rent multiple tents , and decide whether to stay for one or two weeks . A short branch line of the Danville , Hazleton , and Wilkes @-@ Barre Railroad was then built to allow easier transport of visitors ' baggage to the campground . Baggage carrying was also done for free and the attendance fee was also reduced . Only one of the twenty @-@ five prominent local families who attended the camp meeting in the 1880s still attended it in the 1890s .

However , one of the last camp meetings there , in 1900 , was referred to as " interesting and profitable " , although attendance had significantly dropped between 1898 and 1899 . When the campground closed for the season in 1901 , no plans were made to reopen it in 1902 . The campground directors then attempted to sell the land to the Pennsylvania Railroad , but they were unsuccessful . In 1903 , a farmer bought the land and the tents , buildings , and platforms were all purchased by various individuals . These items had all been sold within 18 months of the abandonment of the campground . The last sign of the campground 's existence was its boardwalk , which eventually rotted away .

The area where the Mountain Grove Campground used to be currently contains sump holes and scrub .

The Mountain Grove Campground was stated in the 1950s by Charles A. Johnson to be a " new @-@ fashioned camp meeting " . The newspaper editor James C. Brown stated that it was " one of the most delightful resorts in Pennsylvania " .

= = = Campground visits and attendance = = =

Camp meetings at the Mountain Grove Campground was held for seven to ten days each August . Several thousand people would attend the camp each year . By 1878 , campground attendance on Saturdays had reached 4000 to 5000 people . The percentage of attendees who stayed for the whole duration of the camp meeting , as opposed to only part of it , also decreased during the 1890s .

= = The camp meetings = =

Camp meetings at the Mountain Grove Campground began at 7 : 30 p.m. on a Wednesday night with a bell that summoned the attendees to a welcome sermon . From Thursday through Saturday , days of camp meeting consisted of a prayer period at 8 : 30 a.m. , a sermon at 10 : 30 a.m. , a

service for children at 1 : 30 p.m. , and a second sermon at 3 : 30 p.m. A third sermon would be delivered by a minister from another district at 7 : 30 p.m. On Sundays , the day began with an " experience day " at 8 : 20 a.m. Other than that , Sundays were similar to other days , except that an acclaimed visitor would give a sermon at 3 : 00 p.m. The three days after that followed the same schedule as Thursdays through Saturdays . The camp meetings were closed at 12 : 30 p.m. on Thursday .

Following the increase in the length of the camp meeting to 13 days , the schedule was adjusted . Thursday was designated as a temperance day . The following days were , in chronological order , designated as a Chautauqua Day , a missionary day , a Sunday School and Epworth League day , and eight days of other religious events . The meetings concluded in the campground 's auditorium .

The Mountain Grove Camp Meeting Association added a Chautauqua Day to the camp meeting in 1885 , and it became highly popular . It occurred on the first Thursday of the meeting . A number of people , including Lyman Abbot , frequented the Chautauqua Days as a speaker . To keep them from interfering with other camp meeting activities , the day was moved to the Tuesday before the official start of the meeting in 1886 , but in 1889 , it was moved to the first Wednesday .

= = Financial information and leadership = =

The Mountain Grove Camp Meeting Association was formed after a decision by a nine @-@ man committee . It was decided on August 19 , 1872 that the company would be a joint @-@ stock company . Its capital stock in 1873 was \$ 14 @,@ 000 . G.M. Shoop was a significant stockholder in the company . He was the manager of the campground and the association secretary during the 1870s . High @-@ ranking members of the Mountain Grove Camp Meeting Association during the 1870s included Presiding Elder Barnes , Reverend S. Creighton , and the businessmen and politicians B.G. Welch , Mordecai W. Jackson , and A.J. Ammerman . The newspaper editor E.M. Wardin was also prominent within the association . In the early 1880s , the businessmen E.M.M. Low , Z.T. Fowler , and Lloyd T. Sharpless also became prominent in the association . The campground typically grossed approximately \$ 4000 per year during the 1880s .

In 1885 , the Mountain Grove Camp Meeting Association created a Chautauqua department . W.M. Gearhart was the initial president of this department and S.C. Jayne was the initial secretary .