



WEBFOOTER EXTRA

NOVEMBER 2024

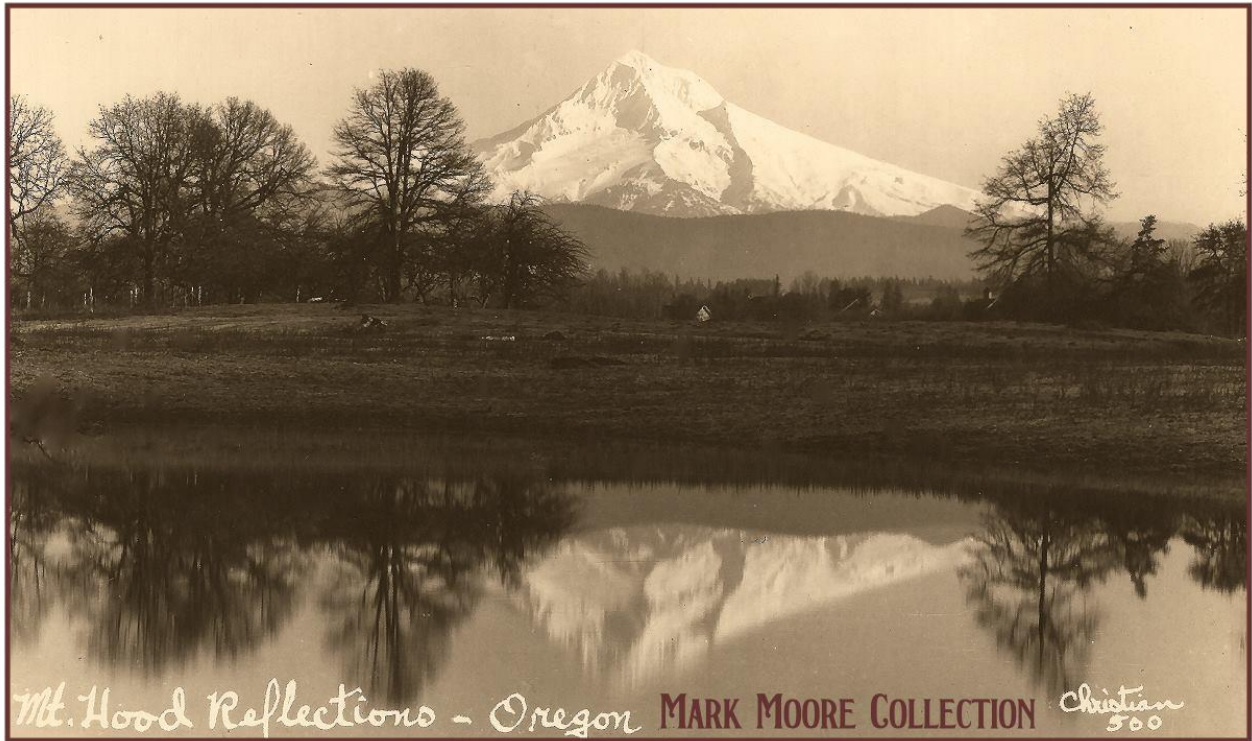
**REFLECTING ON BLUE LAKE
AMUSEMENT PARK**



Blue Lake Park advertisement, circa 1940s. Peter Bellant collection.

REFLECTING ON BLUE LAKE AMUSEMENT PARK

BY MARK MOORE



Real photo postcard of Blue Lake looking east toward Mt. Hood circa 1947. Christian photo.

To those of us who grew up in the shadow of Mt. Hood, we fondly recall picnicking and swimming excursions to Blue Lake Park which is located seven miles east of Portland, north of Gresham and Fairview. On hot summer days, thousands of people swarmed the lake to swim away the afternoons and dance away the nights.

On July 3, 1925, Blue Lake Park opened as a private park and it was managed by the Welsh family. It included attractions such as the Blue Lake Chateau Dance Hall, the Merry Mix-Up Swing Ride, a Concession stand and the Chateau Swim Pavilion. People began building summer cottages on the west and south sides of Blue Lake.

Nick and Maidie Welsh moved their family north from Eugene to the lake in 1928, when they joined relatives and other investors including Portland and Gresham businessmen wanting to create the Blue Lake Country Club. Nick Welsh planned to be the canoe and paddleboat concessionaire on the side while continuing his full-time work selling insurance. The Welsh family owned Blue Lake Park from the Depression through the 1950s.

Keep Cool

Visit the Beautiful

BLUE LAKE —PARK—

SWIMMING FISHING
BOATING CAMPING
DANCING

Here you will find a most delightful place to spend the week-end. Occupying over 25 acres, this Park includes every pleasure you desire. Ample space for camping, a modern dance hall, boating and swimming in a lake where the water is being constantly re-fed from the springs and has a temperature that is simply delightful.

To reach this park, drive east on Sandy Boulevard or Base Line Road and turn to the left on Fairview Avenue, which is a direct road to the camp.

Come today and bring the family. You will enjoy being here.

GRAND OPENING July 3rd-4th-5th

Swimming Races—
100-yard Dash for Men
50-yard Dash for Women

Boating Races—
2-oar Skiff Race
4-oar Skiff Race

Diving Contest

Prizes for the Winners

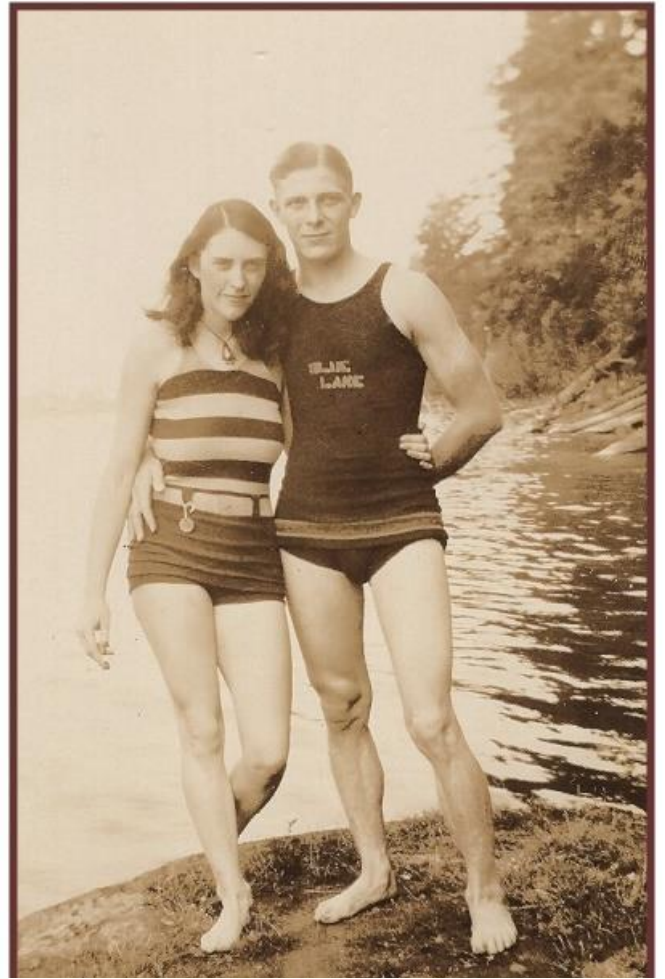
Entries for any of the events must be made the morning of July 3rd in person at the office on the grounds.

Also Many Other Novel Stunts
Be Sure You Are Here

Come and See Oregon's Newest
Playground

Blue Lake Park

Seven Miles From Portland
Drive east on Sandy Blvd. or Base Line Road and turn to the left on Fairview Ave., direct to the park.



▲ DANCE ▲

EVERY

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY NITE

TO

CLYDE BRANNAN and HIS BAND

PLAYING LATEST AND OLD FAVORITE
TUNES IN A MODERN STYLE AT

BLUE LAKE PARK

20 MINUTES FROM PORTLAND — EAST
TO 12 MILE ROAD — TURN LEFT TO END
OF ROAD — A BEAUTIFUL PARK BESIDE
THE CLEAR WATERS OF BLUE LAKE.

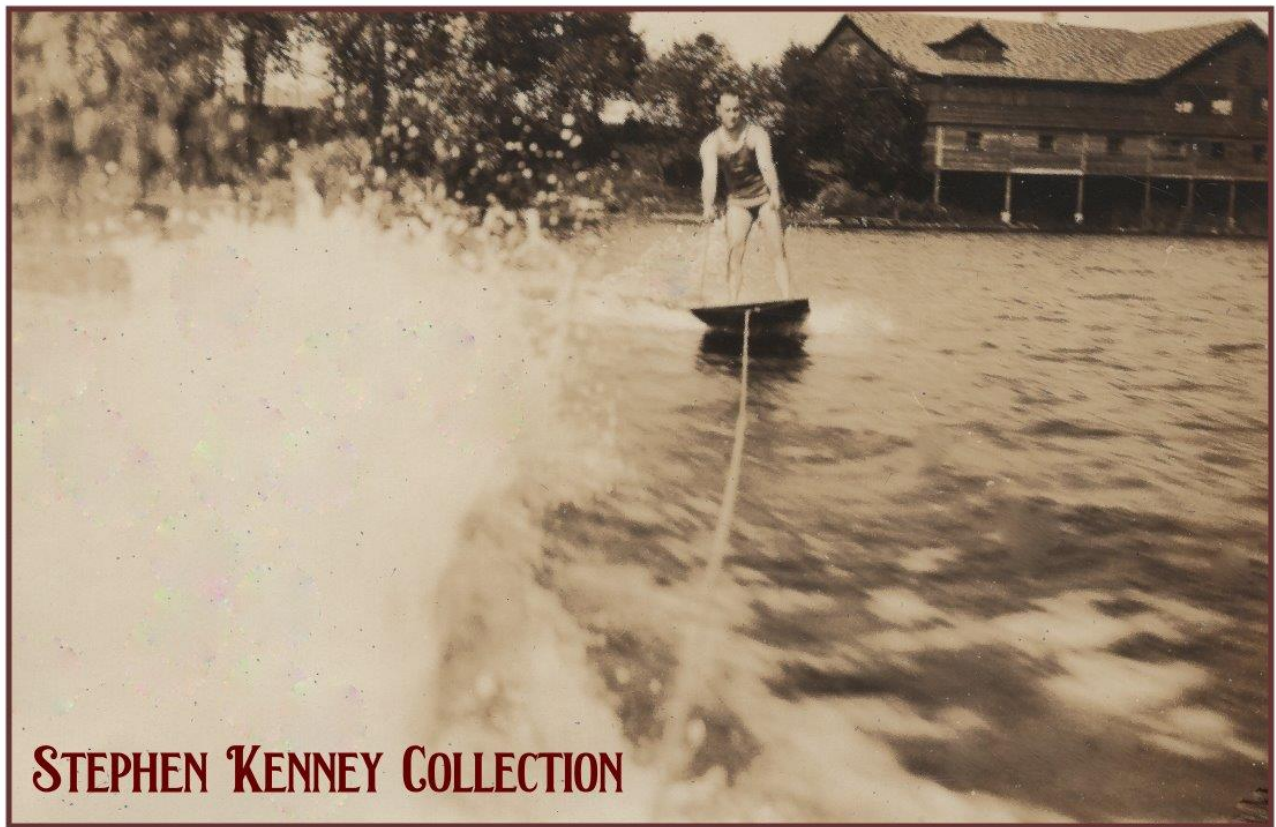
COME AND ENJOY YOURSELF!

— SWELL FLOOR —
MARK MOORE COLLECTION

Opening advertisement for Blue Lake Park from 1925.

Swimmers at Blue Lake Park. Mark Moore Collection.

Handbill for Dances at Blue Lake featuring Clyde Brannan and His Band circa 1930s.



STEPHEN KENNEY COLLECTION

Photo showing the Blue Lake Swim Chalet from the 1920s. It later burned in 1945.

While the Welshes oversaw the park operations, with plenty of help from family and friends, they operated amusement rides, including a Carousel, an Octopus, a Merry Mix-Up Swing and a Roll-O-Plane. Visitors could dance in the hall, dine at the restaurant, play bingo, spread out their picnic blankets, play baseball under the lights, operate paddle boats on the lake and swim. For a while it was a popular place for roller skating.



New Year's Eve.
— BALL —
THURS. NIGHT, DEC. 31, 1936
FREE FAVORS AND NOISE
MAKERS FOR ALL

Dance the old year out and the new year in to the strains of
Bill Fisher's Dance Band

BLUE LAKE CHATEAU

Don't forget the big dance every Saturday night. Out Blue Lake road on
Columbia River Highway

Advertisement from the New Year's Eve Ball at the Blue Lake Chateau for December 31, 1936.



**STEPHEN KENNEY
COLLECTION**

Photo showing the Blue Lake Changing Rooms and Boat Dock in the 1920s.

The area was home to seasonal villages of the Chinook tribe of American Indians for centuries. The Nichaqwli people, a Chinookan band, were primarily buried in the Interlachen ridge area around 1830. Smallpox around 1780 and malaria in the 1830s are thought to have contributed to the tribe's decline. In April 1806, William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition stopped at Blue Lake and met with the Nichaqwli people.



STEPHEN KENNEY COLLECTION

Photo showing the Blue Lake Diving Platform in the 1920s.



Photo showing the Blue Lake Changing Rooms in the 1920s.

The land was surveyed in 1855 and settled by European Americans. John and Rachel Crosby claimed ownership of 642.5 acres in 1865. Development of the park began in the mid-1920s.

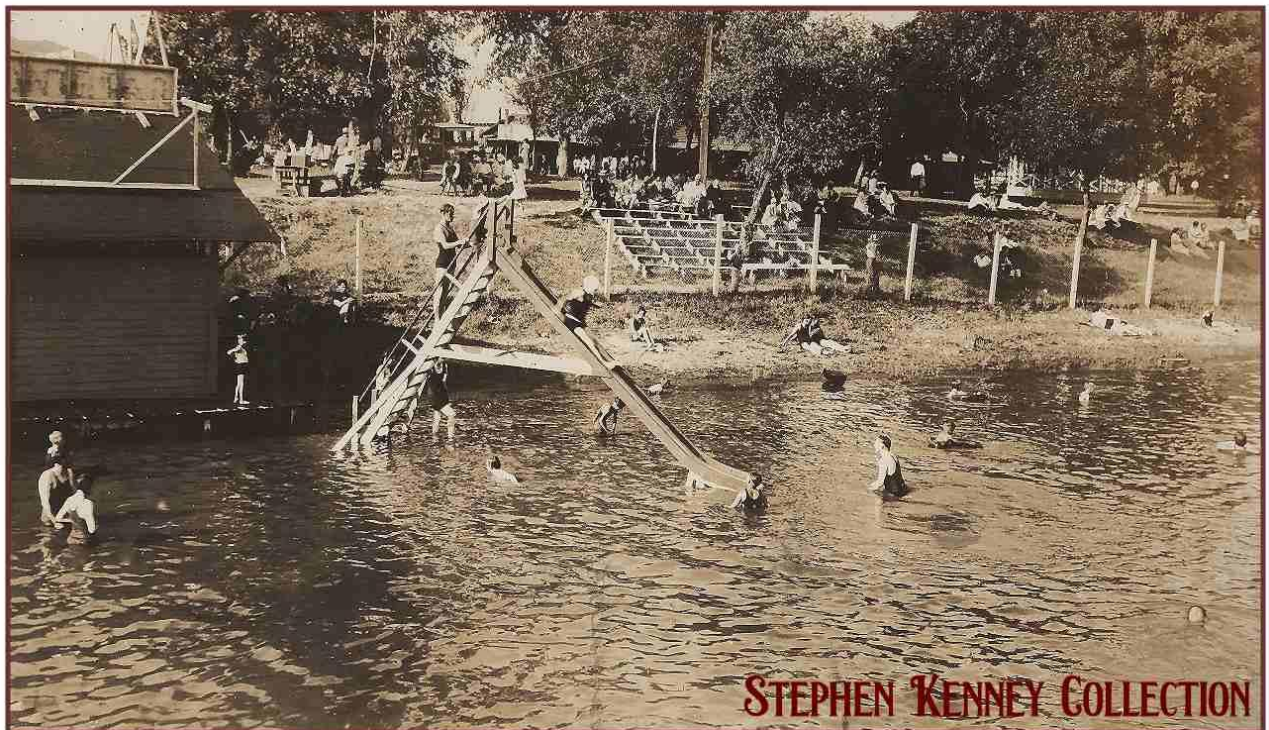


Photo showing the Blue Lake Swim Slide in the 1920s.

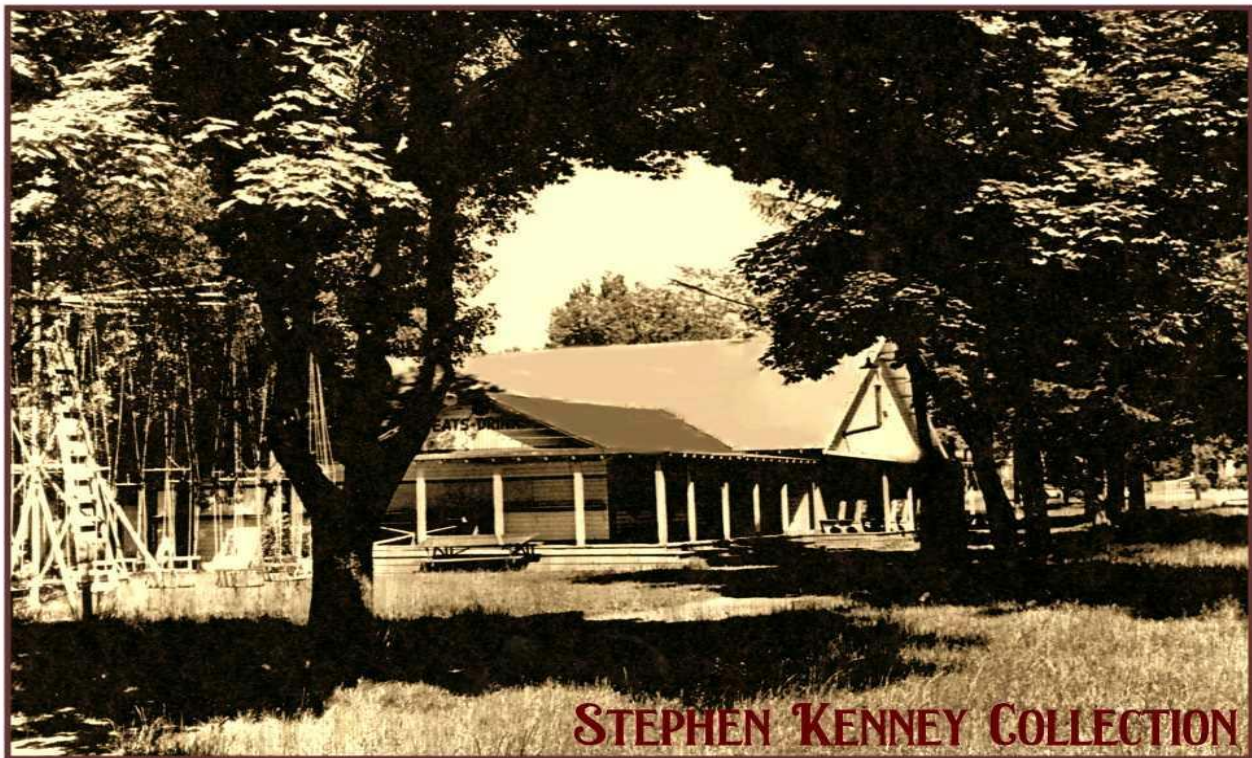


Photo showing the Blue Lake Chateau Dance Pavilion and Merry Mix-Up Swings in the 1960s. The original Blue Lake Chateau burned in 1928 and the building above was built to replace it.

When the Depression struck, plans for the country club soon fell apart. The Welshes weren't wealthy, but they managed to buy the original 35 acres. The park that Nick Welsh developed on the north shore of the lake was popular through the World War II era, but attendance plummeted just before the 1948 season, when the infamous Vanport Flood struck the region. In addition to the flood fallout, liability insurance premiums increased rapidly, becoming a burden on a park that had to make nearly its entire profits during a short summer season.

The park began to flourish again in the 1950s, but Nick Welsh dreamed up a new plan to sell his property to be developed, most likely as houses. The public outcry was intense. People wrote letters to every newspaper editor around, demanding the land be preserved for public use. Officials convinced the Welshes to sell 60 acres for a park, for \$240,000, far less money than the family would've earned through private development. The county demolished the dance hall, sold the rides and opened it as Blue Lake Regional Park in 1963. The former county park came under Metro jurisdiction through an intergovernmental agreement with Multnomah County in 1994 and Metro assumed ownership in 1996.

Today, Blue Lake Park is a 185-acre park at the north end of Fairview, between Sandy Boulevard and Marine Drive, that attracts about 350,000 visitors each year, with most of them coming during the summer. The park is for day use only, and most visitors come from the Portland metropolitan area, plus southwest Washington and other parts of Oregon. Today's Blue Lake Nature Park still has plenty of picnicking, summertime swimming, boating and other fun things, but it's no longer the amusement park that it once was.

STEPHEN KENNEY COLLECTION



JOHN F. KENNEDY
The President of the United States

Multnomah County Annual

SIXTY-FIRST DEMOCRATIC PICNIC
BLUE LAKE PARK, SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 1961

Sponsored by the
MULTNOMAH COUNTY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE

In 1961, President John Kennedy visited Blue Lake Park as the headliner for the annual Democratic Picnic which was held at Blue Lake for a number of years. Program cover for this event.

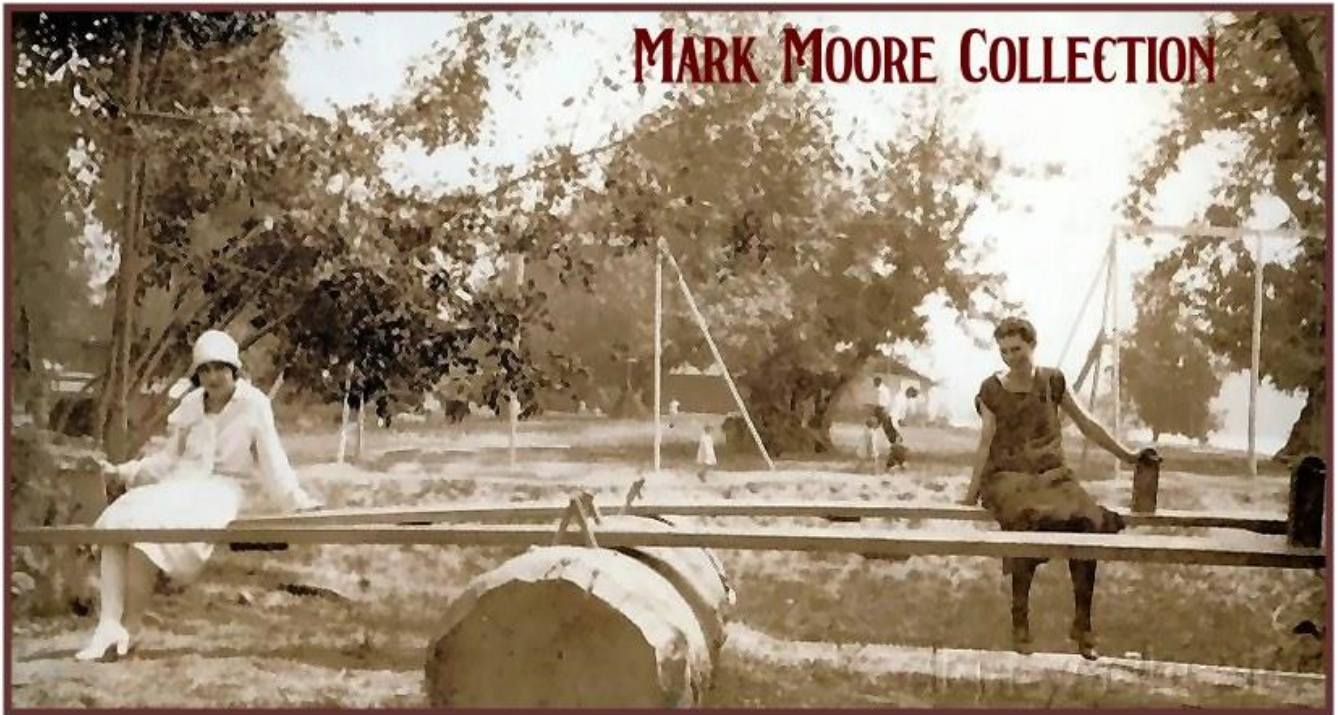


Photo showing the Blue Lake Teeter Totter in the 1920s.



Photo showing the Blue Lake Carousel dated August 11, 1947.

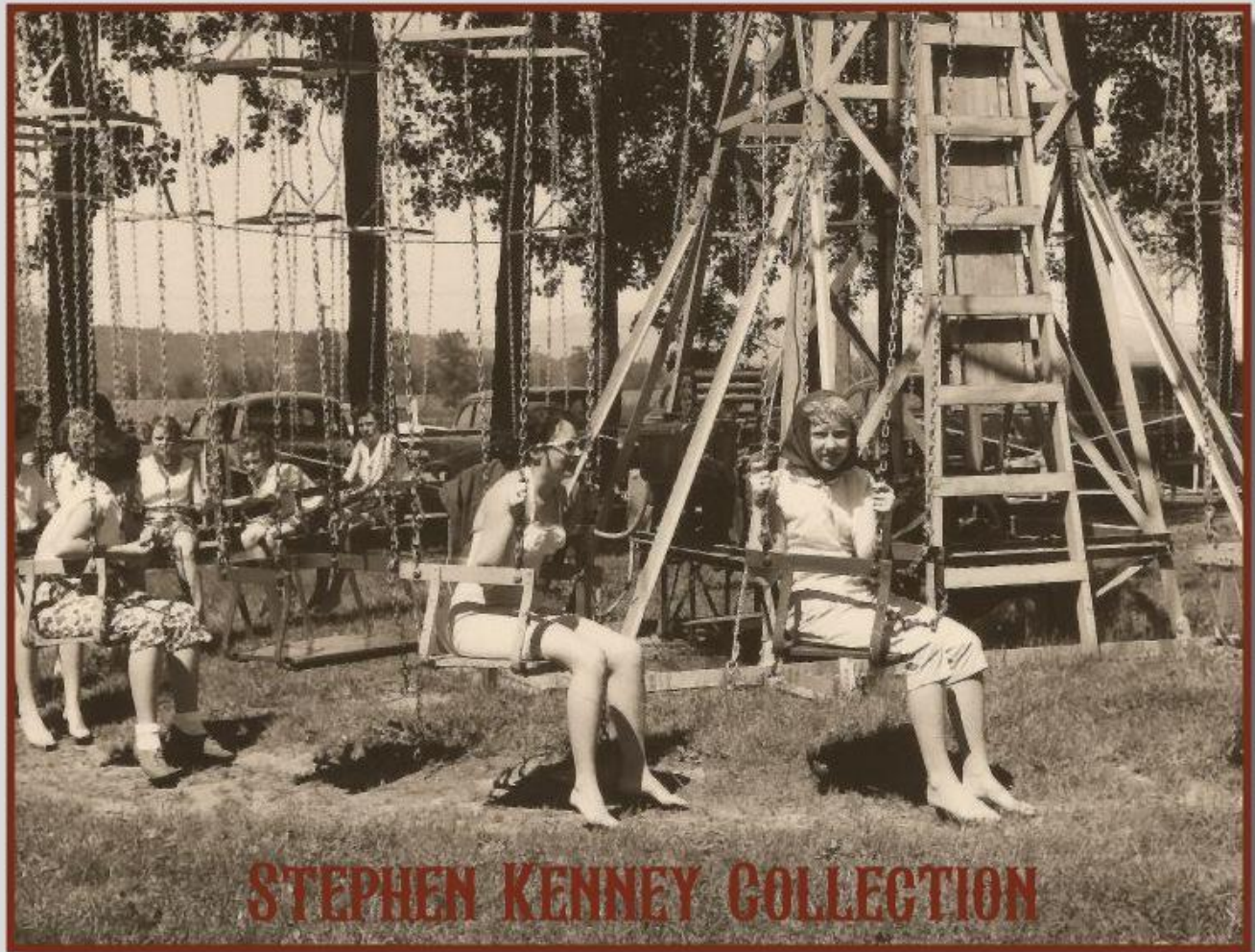


Photo of the Merry Mix-Up Swings at Blue Lake in 1959.



Photo of the Swimming Pool at Blue Lake circa 1960.

Sources for this article:

- Metro Website
- The Oregonian
- PdxHistory.com
- Wikipedia

Announcing the Opening of
BLUE LAKE PARK
 SUNDAY JUNE 27

Portland's newest, largest and most beautiful playground. Offering the greatest number of diversified athletic and recreational sports of any spot in all OREGON.

3 BIG DAYS—July 3, 4, 5
 Surf-Board Races, Baker's Imperial Band of 60 Pieces, Dancing All Day and Evening, Beautiful Bathing Beach, 2000 Feet Long. Location—Out Sandy Blvd. to Fairview, Turn North Toward Columbia River. Adm. FREE
 --Autos 25c

Boating
 Bathing
 Canoeing
 Dancing
 Handball
 Basketball
 Tennis
 Horseshoes
 Camping
 Picnicing
 Fishing
 Hiking

Advertisement for Blue Lake Park in 1926.

SWIM

at beautiful

BLUE LAKE

More Than a Million Swimmers Prefer to Swim at Blue Lake!

SPARKLING CRYSTAL WATER
 From Underground Springs



Bath House Open 10 A.M. to 10 P.M.

Admission
 Adults 30c
 Children under 12 20c
 Tax included
 No Extra Charge for Swimming

BOATING » CANOEING
 PICNICKING

Food and Refreshments Served on Grounds

RIDES AND CONCESSIONS

DANCE

SUNDAY NIGHTS
 Wes Lang and His Band
 8:00 to 11:30 P.M.

Blue Lake Park

Four Miles North of Gresham
 on Fairview Road

Ad from Goin' Places Magazine 1944.



BLUE LAKE CHATEAU
 Dance Here Every Saturday Night

Matchbook cover for the Blue Lake Chateau Dance Pavilion. Mark Moore collection.



WEBFOOTERS POST CARD CLUB

PO Box 17240

Portland OR 97217-0240

SALEM COIN & STAMP SHOW

DECEMBER 7 - 8, 2024

OREGON STATE FAIRGROUNDS – COLUMBIA HALL
2330 17TH STREET NE – SALEM, OREGON – 503-947-3247

MARKET STREET EXIT AT I-5 – MILEPOST 256
GO WEST AND TURN RIGHT ONTO 17TH

FAIRGROUNDS ON THE RIGHT – ABOUT A MILE – WATCH FOR SIGNS

HOURS: DEC. 7 – 10AM TO 4:30 PM

DEC. 8 – 10AM TO 3:30 PM

EARLY BIRD ADMISSION BOTH DAYS AT 9:00 AM FOR \$50

\$5 PARKING – \$3 ADMISSION CHARGE

OVER 80 TABLES – COIN AND STAMP DEALERS FROM AROUND THE U.S.
A.N.A & P.N.N.A. INFORMATION – ANACS REP. TO SLAB COINS

TYPE AND PROOF COINS – GOLD AND SILVER – MINT AND PROOF SETS
TOKENS – CURRENCY – STAMPS – ANCIENTS – BOOKS

EXHIBITS – HOURLY AND END OF SHOW RAFFLES

YOUNG COLLECTORS FREE GRAB BAG

SQUISHER PENNY MACHINE DEMONSTRATION

APPRAISALS DONE ON SUNDAY, DEC. 8 AT 1:00 PM

SPONSORED BY: SALEM NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

FOR INFO – CALL DANNY B. @ 503-510-6931

EMAIL – SDBISGAARD@GMAIL.COM

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