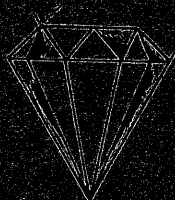


1899



1974

75th ANNIVERSARY

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3rd.

# LUDLOW FALLS CAMP MEETING



Sponsored by

Missionary Churches of Ohio.

## CAMP MEETINGS

### DENOMINATIONAL

The Missionary Church was formed in the midst of spiritual activities such as revivals, prayer meetings, testimony services, and camp meetings.

The first camp sponsored by our denomination was held in Fetters Woods, south of Elkhart, Indiana, in August of 1880. "They came from far and near in farm wagons, surreys, buggies, and on foot. The gathering by far exceeded the expectations of the people, many being converted and others sanctified wholly." (Gospel Banner) Holiness was the main theme and it was reported that "many entered into the higher life or blessed state of sanctification."

The Church History points out that there was considerable opposition on the part of some to the holding of the first camp meetings. What was the need of going into the woods to preach when there were so many churches? Was it not a loss of time and talent for a dozen preachers to be sitting in the congregation with the lay members while only one was preaching? Some objected to the waste of time and money in the case of those who came quite a distance to attend. Others believed the confusion would distract from keeping God's day holy.

Time has shown, however, that camp meetings have helped to encourage the faith of God's children and strengthened the Church. Many unsaved have been attracted and time for devotion and waiting upon God in these set aside days has produced the deeper life experience for many with hungry hearts.

## OHIO CAMPS

The Ohio District held its first camp meeting in Englewood in 1885. According to the reports in the Gospel Banner, Daniel Brenneman was present from Indiana with a delegation of eighteen, while Solomon Eby brought five others with him from Ontario, Canada. A relatively small number were saved, but many were sanctified and established in God's holy faith.

In 1897 the meetings were conducted in a community called Harshman, near Dayton. In 1898 they worshipped in a grove near Potsdam.

The Ludlow Falls grounds were used for an encampment for the first time in 1899. The meetings continued over two Sundays and they reported that thousands attended the services on Sunday. The tent could not accomodate the crowd so services were conducted at four differnt places simultaneously. Some have been skeptical of the reports of such large crowds. However, a long time residnet of Ludlow reported to the Dayton Newspaper recently that when the amusement park occupied the grounds prior to our purchasing it, "Every Saturday night you couln't tie a horse from the Y (the intersection of State Routes 48 and 55 south of the grounds) to the Horse Shoe Bend Road." The Horse Shoe Bend road is one mile north of the Y.

Very likely the following ministers would have been present as their names are listed in the 1899 Conference Journal. Daniel Brenneman was the presiding elder and S. Lambert the assistant. S. Longenecker was in charge of the Adams County churches. Aaron Peffley was minister of the Pleasant Grove - Harshman circuit. G. D. Waitman pastored Union Chapel, Stringtown, and New Carlisle.

W. J. Huffman was the minister on the circuit consisting of Potsdam, Phillipsburg, Wolf Creek, and Englewood. Joseph Sando was stationed at Bloomer. S. Lambert was in charge of Lightsville, Gettysburg, Fort Jefferson, and Laura.

During this camp a heavy rainstorm tore down the large tent over the heads of hundreds of people but no one was injured seriously. One of our laymen remembers hearing Rev. A. B. Yoder of the Indiana delegation say that he was on the platform when the tent came down so he didn't have far to crawl out.

The early camps were truly "family camps". Most of the church families were farmers by occupation and when possible the parents would take the younger children and leave several of the older ones to care for the chores. They brought bedsteads, water buckets, and basins from home. They slept in tents 12 x 14 which they rented. Mattresses were ticks filled with fresh straw from some farmer's field. Sometimes after a hard rain you could see a stream flowing through the tent. To the best of our knowledge the number of people who stayed on the grounds during the 1899 early "woods meetings" averaged 150.

A large tent seating approximately 300 was owned by the church and was erected each year. Seats were made of planks nailed to stakes driven into the ground, there were no backs. Kerosene torches mounted on trees around the grove provided light. The tent was lighted by lantern type fixtures filled with kerosene.

Another tent, not so large, was owned by the church and was used as a dining room. Food was cooked over wood or kerosene fired stoves and carried to the larger tent. Some years there was a charge for meals. One former committeeman's wife remembers, "You could buy 10 tickets for \$1.00." Several "senior citizens" have told of their services in the dining tent as

young people. Since the cooking and eating areas were in the open they attracted many flies. Flour sacks were torn into strips and attached to a stick and the young people would walk behind the diners waving their banners over the tables to keep the flies away.

From 1900 to 1919 the camp was conducted at seven different locations, namely: Phillipsburg, Greenville, Clayton (Salem), Tecumseh (Medway), Englewood, New Carlisle (at Village Park), and Potsdam.

Camp meetings created issues. Rev. R. P. Ditmer tells of one that occurred in his youth at the 1903 camp held at Potsdam. Farmers raising tobacco had become an issue. Rev. C. K. Curtis of Indiana had been engaged as the evangelist and he preached strongly against the practice. After the camp was over and men were cleaning up the grounds they were evaluating the merits of the workers. In the conversation it was told that they had paid the evangelist \$35.00 for his services. A local lay leader who apparently had not agreed with the minister said, "You had better given him that much to stay home!"

The meeting at Salem in 1904 was a fruitful one. A number of children were converted under the ministry of Ella Mae Talmadge and Margaretha Werner in a morning service and they were baptized in the afternoon of the same day. Two of the girls who have been faithful to the Lord over the years were Mrs. Roy Riffell (Naomi Lambert) (deceased) and Mrs. Milford Herkins (Mabel Miller). Edith Schryer, New Carlisle, remembers the meetings at Englewood in 1906 especially for several reasons. She had dishwashing detail, the campers had trouble with poison ivy infection, and on the last Sunday a number of people were poisoned by the food.

In 1920 the Church purchased the Ludlow Falls grounds and our camp meeting had a permanent home. On August 8, 1941 Rev. C. I. Huffman, Charles Miller, and Mel Wright drew up a report about the purchase and development of the grounds. We list the following information from it:

"During a camp-meeting held on the grounds in August, 1918 a move was started for the purchase of the grounds. In December, 1918, through a committee composed of Presiding Elder W. H. Moore, John Wissinger, Ora Hatfield, and Charles Botkin, the grounds acres, was purchased from Mrs. Eliza Smith for the sum of \$5500.00, of which a note of \$1900.00 was given for a period of two years. It was paid in full in 1920. The matter of improving the ground was taken up and as a result in 1921 the tabernacle and boarding house were built. Later the boarding house was enlarged.

Some difficulties were experienced in securing a supply of water. A well of 175 feet depth was drilled south of the boarding house which failed to produce any water. Another well was drilled between the tabernacle and road to the depth of 75 feet. This afforded some water but not a sufficient amount to supply the camp. In 1923 a strong spring of splendid water was secured as it issues from the hill some distance north of the ground. The spring and right-of-way were secured with a permanent lease."

At the time of the above report there were 24 dormitory rooms and 15 cottages on the grounds.

In conclusion we should mention that a number of changes and improvements have taken place since the 1941 report. However, since this sketch is to commemorate the "old-time" camp meetings, we will leave the responsibility of bringing the record up-to-date to another.

As a committee we believe that the Family Camp and the Youth Camp which have been operated together

since the 1930's have continued to make a tremendous spiritual impact upon our church in this generation. We praise God for giving our spiritual fore-fathers the vision of the value of camp meetings.

*Sketch prepared by Rev. Harold E. Bowman*

### THE COMMITTEE

*The Committee responsible for the planning of this 75th Anniversary Celebration consists of:*

*Rev. Harold E. Bowman, Chairman;  
Mrs. Willard Phipps, Secretary;  
Rev. Ralph C. Holdeman, Rev. Frank  
Riffell, Mr. Willard Phipps, and  
Naomi Hoke.*

*Some of the basic information contained in this historical sketch is taken from the History of the United Missionary Church, by Everek R. Storms.*



"And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; .. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Nehemiah 8:2-8