

Secret Town – Original Town Sites

Recreation

The Grove Theater was the newest and largest of the seven theaters in Oak Ridge. It opened on September 30, 1944 and seated 1,000 people. The first movie shown on the big screen was Hail the Conquering Hero, starring Eddie Bracken, William Demarest and Ella Rains. Admission tickets were 35¢ for an adult and 11¢ for a child.



Grove Center also had a bowling alley, as did Jefferson, Happy Valley, Central and Midtown. Jefferson Circle Skating Rink was a popular site for residents, and roller hockey became an active sport. Since the tennis courts were the only paved surface in Oak Ridge for a time, they became the center for social dances. An orchestra and a community playhouse were soon in full swing, as were the Music Society and Community Art Center.

Central Recreational Hall in Townsite was a popular hangout for teens. The juke box played loud and long, and drinks and ice cream were served at the snack bar. Midtown Community Center opened with a three-day open house that concluded with a dance. The building continued to be city-owned, becoming the Wildcat Den High School Student Center and later the Senior Citizens Center. The building is currently occupied by the Oak Ridge Heritage and Preservation Association.

The Pool opened on August 3, 1944. Ben Martin, who was the head football coach for the Oak Ridge High School Wildcats, was

also the Pool Director. Built by the Corp of Engineers when they concreted the bottom and sides of a small pond, the pool was the largest spring-fed pool of its kind anywhere when it was constructed. A water show opened The Oak Ridge Pool with fancy diving, sprints and relay races, and life-saving and correct swim stroke instructions.

Getting Around

The bus system in Oak Ridge provided plant workers with service from the city to the plants, school bus service, and a general city-wide transit service. More than 350 buses were used in the city area, and 400 buses were used to transport non-residents to work. Bus services were free during the war years.



Over 160 miles of boardwalks were built so people could move around. Still, the mud was a constant problem and boots became a primary means of footwear.