

Gypsy Grove

By Charles Brian Owen

One of the enduring memories of our neighborhood is that its old name is "Gypsy Grove", and that it once really was a Gypsy settlement. The property plats at the county tax office show the area from 31 1/2 St. to Maiden Lane, and from Guadalupe St. to King St. as "Gypsy Grove", as do two old maps dating 1890 and 1911 respectively, at the Austin History Center. One longtime resident remembers a long deceased landlady telling her that Gypsies definitely lived here.

The word "Gypsy" is an abbreviation of the word "Egyptian" and is a misnomer since these people, more properly called Rom (Roma, plural), came from northwestern India around one thousand years ago. Spreading out into different groups throughout much of the world, they speak different dialects of their language, Romani, which is linguistically related to Hindi. They are one of the most persecuted and least understood peoples in the world. Some of the more outrageous things that have happened to them include nearly six hundred years of brutal slavery in

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