

Hamlet of Oregon



The Oregon tannery (Fox Lair) was built in 1877 by Stephen Griffin, and was one of the larger tanneries in the Adirondacks.

Throughout the 1800's tanneries meant work for builders, lumbermen, tanners and others. There were tanneries in North Creek, Griffin, Wells, and Hope Falls, just to name a few.

In 1880, Griffin bought the tannery at Moon Mills (Griffin), 8 miles west of Oregon and by 1882 he had made a fortune and retired to Glens Falls.

At the tanneries, huge mills processed the bark of Hemlock trees which contained tannates useful for changing animal hides into tanned preserved leather. The yellowish tannic acid was collected into vats, where the pelts were then soaked. With the advent of tanning chemicals and the depletion of local hemlock and animal resources, the tanneries were no longer profitable. The North Creek tannery was the first to go. It suffered a fire in 1890 and eventually sold its remaining facilities in 1891 for a low price.

Shaw & Co. were the last owners of the tannery in Oregon. On a Saturday night, March 28, 1892, a fire started near the engine and entirely destroyed the building. The damage was placed at \$50,000 with \$20,000 in insurance. It's not known exactly how large the tannery was during its heydays, but after the fire about 50 men were left unemployed. It was the last working tannery and its loss was keenly felt.

Oregon Tannery



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Oregon Tannery



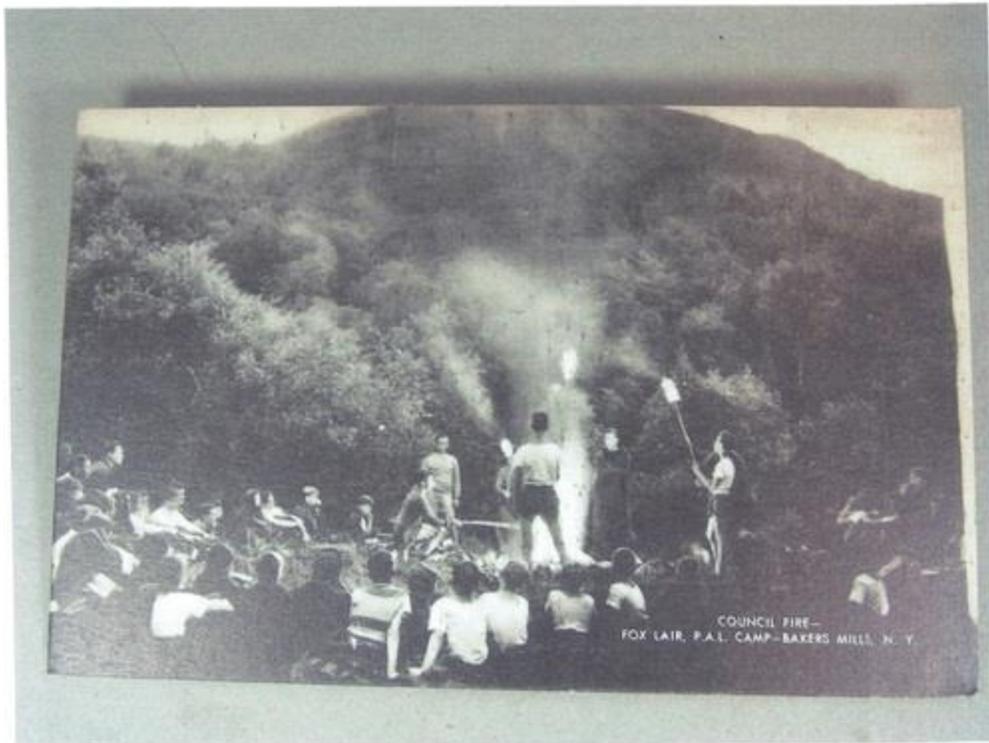
Oregon Tannery - Men who worked there

Griffin Tannery Settlement Before Fire



In 1880, Griffin bought the tannery at Moon Mills (Griffin), 8 miles west of Oregon

P.A.L. Camp - Fox Lair



The Richard Hudnut estate at Fox Lair located north-east of the ruined tannery.

Richard Hudnut inherited a family business from his father, Alexander Hudnut, who was a chemist.

But it was Richard who expanded the business to include a fashionable line of perfumes and cosmetics, and salons located in London Paris and New York.

His incredible fortune allowed him to acquire several homes and furnish them according to his exotic tastes.

He began to purchase the Fox Lair site (north-east of the ruined tannery) around the turn of the century.

It took ten years to acquire the entire estate.

The 270-foot long main house was three stories high with a huge double staircase and a veranda across the front.

The mansion was definitely not done in rustic style. Hudnut furnished it with European furniture and had a Japanese teahouse and a nature house built near the river.

There were forty servants on staff, a full golf course along the valley, and a host of barns for carriages and animals.

Willett Randall was hired to catch and tend to a pair of foxes which were kept as symbols of the estate.

There was a large aviary to grace the porch, and a collection of other rare and exotic animals in the barns.

Every summer afternoon, dancing pigeons put on a show for famous guests who came from around the world.

After Richard Hudnut's death, the estate was given to the New York City Police Athletic League for a camp, then finally to the state itself. The buildings were all burned so the land could become part of the forest preserve.

Fox Lair - PAL Camp - CA 1940's



Fox Lair - PAL Camp - CA 1940's

Hudnut Estate



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Willett Randall



Follow the blazed trail by the
Yule-tide light; it will lead you
to my Wildwood home - and there
you will find us - the fawns and me!
beside the blazing campfire -
waiting for you!
Willett Randall
"Somewhere in the Adirondacks"
Christmas 1939

Willett Randall was hired to catch and tend to a pair of foxes which were kept as symbols of the estate.

Oregon - Harrington School

Oregon - Harrington School - Route 8, West of Bakers Mills

Located on the Sacandaga River west of Bakers Mills, this school was built at the time the Oregon Tannery was operating.

Was used a few years after the tannery burned and at that time usually called the Harrington district. The building has been gone for many years.