



ORENCO, EST. 1906

This historic community was established by the Oregon Nursery Company, from which the name "Orenco" was derived.

The Oregon Nursery Company was the largest nursery on the west coast.

President Malcolm McDonald and Secretary/Treasurer Archibald McGill moved the nursery from Salem to a 1,200-acre site here in 1906.

The nursery company was one of the largest employers in the northwest, and was one of the first to create a profit-sharing plan for company employees.

McDonald and McGill were very community-minded, and implemented a program of selling company land to employees for construction of homes.

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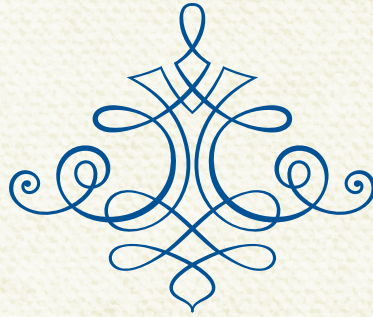


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ORENCO HIGH SCHOOL



FROM ORENCO HERITAGE SERIES BOOK ONE, BY LOU HANBERG

THE TOWN OF OLD ORENCO

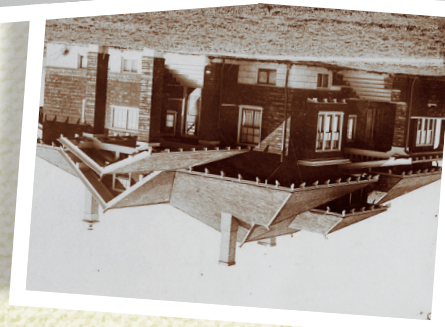
1907: Company Secretary/Treasurer Archibald McGill builds the first house in the town of Orenco. The 5,600-square foot Arts & Crafts-style structure is tucked away on a wooded estate but can be glimpsed from the MAX train. In 1912, company President Malcolm McDonald constructed an even larger home in the same style. This style carried forward into many of the workers' homes in Orenco, evident in the low-pitched roofs, wide eaves, exposed rafters and numerous multi-paned windows.

1908: The nursery company successfully lobbied the Oregon Electric Railway to construct its new connection from Portland to Forest Grove through nursery property instead of a more southerly route. Orenco Station was established just east of where the modern station lies, and served an important role in shipping nursery stock and transporting workers and commuters. Today, the MAX light rail line travels the same route.

1912: McDonald built his nearly 7,700 square foot Arts & Crafts style home on 90 acres at the eastern edge of Orenco (see map description 10).

1912: One hundred and twenty elms were planted, lining the streets of Orenco. The trees can be seen along Birch and Chestnut Streets, and 228th, 229th, and 230th Avenues. In 2013, the Orenco Elms were included in the Oregon Heritage Tree program administered by Oregon Travel Experience, a division of the Oregon Travel Information Council.

1913: Orenco is officially incorporated as a city and McDonald is elected mayor. The population was approximately 300-500 residents, many of whom were immigrants



MCGILL HOME, 1911



ORENCO TRAIN DEPOT, 1908



the original town, one church, the general store, the drug store and many original homes are still standing.

From Hungary. The city covered 640 acres and had all the amenities of a modern 1913 city, with a general dry goods store, two grocery stores, two churches, a barbershop with billiard tables, a drug store, a hotel, several boarding houses, hard-ware store, lumber yard, blacksmith shop, livery stable, ice cream parlor and a print shop. The city had no saloon; however the squatter's log house south of Orenco was known as a bootlegger's place. Of the original town, one church, the general store, the drug store and many original homes are still standing.



ELMS PLANTED IN ORENCO IN 1912 (BELOW) ARE PART OF THE OREGON HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM (BOTH PHOTOS LOOKING WEST ON BIRCH STREET)



ORENCO'S MAIN (ALDER) STREET WITH DRUG STORE AND MERCANTILE

The Orenco Nursery Company developed a highly versatile dessert and cider apple, the "Orenco apple." Highly desirable for its flavor and high sugar content, the nursery planted one million Orenco apple trees in the 1910s with plans to export the apples to Europe. Onset of World War I derailed that plan, however, and the Oregon Nursery Company suffered severe economic setbacks as a result. The Orenco apple tree is still highly regarded for its resistance to disease, and is available from many heirloom fruit tree growers.

1914-1915: At its peak, Orenco was referred to as the Garden Spot of Washington County. By 1924, however, the nursery and town were in decline due largely to the depression and World War I.

1927: Oregon Nursery Company closed.

1938: The town of Orenco was officially dissolved.



BARCLAY HOUSE

1 • 22945 NW CHESTNUT

This house was built circa 1912 and is an example of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century American Movements style. Henry Culver purchased the lot for this house in 1910 from the Oregon Nursery Company for \$150, then sold it to his brother John nine months later for \$175. Both brothers immigrated to the United States from England in 1907. John had this home built for himself and his wife, Maud, who also was English. John Culver was a merchandise salesman. The Culvers lived in the house until 1914.

The house is now referred to as the Barclay House, honoring the family that has owned and cared for the house for many years.



WILSON HOUSE

2 • 22920 NW CHESTNUT

This bungalow was constructed in 1914. Jacob Wilson and Belle Holcomb Wilson were early residents of the house. Belle Wilson owned farmland outside of Orenco, on her own and together with her husband. This home retains original materials, notably the three 12-pane casement windows in the dormer above the front porch.



BUNGALOW HOME

3 • 22930 NW BIRCH

This bungalow home was constructed circa 1920, and still displays much of the charm and character of the original Orenco homes. Little is documented about the people who resided here. This property includes five outstanding examples of the Orenco elm trees that were recently added to the Oregon Heritage Tree program.



ORENCO GROCERY/ MERCANTILE

4 • 22930 NW ALDER

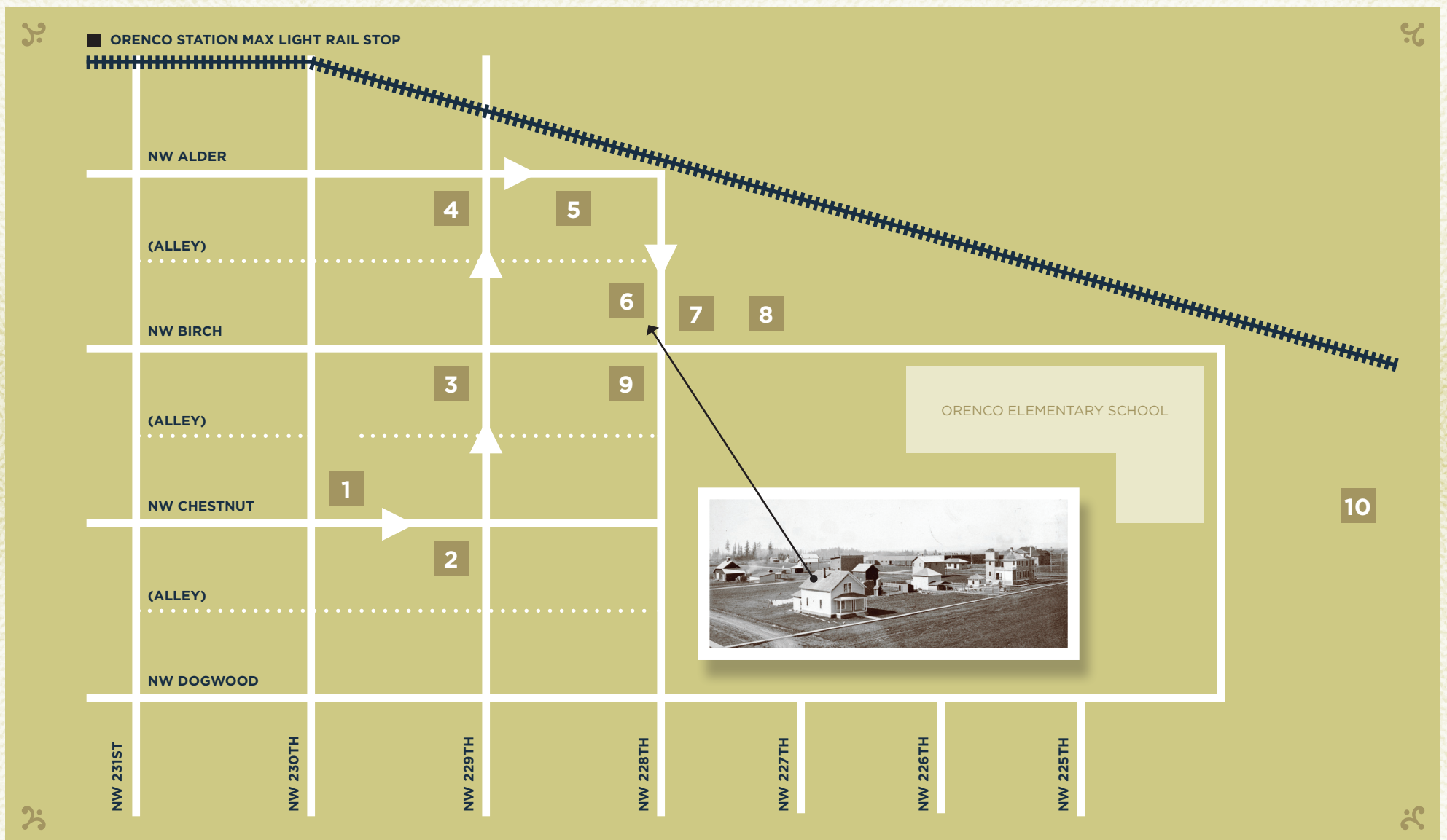
This building was constructed circa 1908, reflecting the late nineteenth/early twentieth century American Movements style, with Italianate detailing visible in the decorative scrolled brackets on the front of the building. The mercantile was built by the Oregon Nursery Company, and was owned and operated by several area residents over the years. The ground floor served as the town's mercantile, with a butcher shop and confectionary in the annex, but also housed the town's post office off and on from 1930 to 1955. The upper floor of the mercantile was a community hall used for many purposes, including a roller skating rink.



ORENCO DRUG

5 • 22870 NW ALDER

This was the original Orenco Drug Store, located on Alder Street (formerly known as Main Street) between the Orenco Mercantile and the Orenco Hotel. Constructed circa 1910, the building had a false front, which has since been removed to reveal the gabled end. The building's first occupant was Dr. W.B. Cunningham, who lived and practiced medicine in a tent until the building was erected. In 1915, the property was purchased by Dr. Frederick K. Anderson, who advertised the "Orenco Drug Store, Dr. Anderson proprietor."



BERRY HOUSE

6 • 1255 NW 228TH

Built circa 1909, the house is a 1.5 story bungalow in the vernacular style. The house was constructed by the Oregon Nursery Company for Mrs. Anna Berry, a long-time employee and bookkeeper for the firm. According to 1910 Census records, Mrs. Berry had two boarders, one of whom was Laura Cavers, age 23. Miss Cavers was a recent graduate of the University of Oregon Law School and was head of the collection department for the nursery company. The house is prominent in the foreground of the photo inset on the map, which was shot from the second floor of the Orenco Public School.



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

7 • 22785 NW BIRCH

Constructed in 1911, this was the first church in Orenco, and known since its beginning as the Orenco Presbyterian Church. The congregation began meeting two years before the building was built. At the first meeting, Oregon Nursery Company executives Archibald McGill and Malcolm McDonald each offered \$1,000 if the community would build a church. In addition, both men donated land for the building. The church was designed by architect F.W. Foley, and constructed by W.A. Simmons and I.D. McNish of Portland. It is a fine example of Craftsman style building with Tudor Revival detailing.



CHURCH MANSE

8 • 22735 NW BIRCH

The manse was constructed in 1914 as the residence for the pastor of the Orenco Presbyterian Church (adjacent). The manse was designed by F.W. Foley, the architect for the Orenco Presbyterian Church. The property on which the manse sits was donated by nursery President Malcolm McDonald and Treasurer Archibald McGill.



MCGEE HOUSE

9 • 22810 NW BIRCH

This 1912 bungalow is notable for its fine Craftsman details including the exposed rafter tails with ornamental detailing, and the porch columns which are square tapered pairs and triplets. The home was constructed for John McGee, his wife Valda and daughter Helen. John McGee was sales manager and treasurer of the Oregon Nursery Company. McGee was also politically active and held elected positions within the township of Orenco, including mayor and justice of the peace in 1925. Valda McGee served as the first postmistress for Orenco.



MCDONALD HOUSE

10 • 22180 NW BIRCH

Oregon Nursery Company President Malcolm McDonald built his nearly 7,700-square-foot Arts & Crafts style home on 90 acres at the eastern edge of Orenco. McDonald hosted company picnics and banquets for visiting businessmen on the grounds of his home. In 1953 the property became a golf course. It was bought in 1970 by the Hillsboro Elks Lodge 1862. In 2013 a large portion of the property was purchased by the City of Hillsboro Parks & Recreation Department, in partnership with Metro and the Trust for Public Land. Much of the site is in the planning stages for development as a regional nature park to frame the home and extensive wetland and upland areas.