

Om Detta Landet

It was 1905 when the folks settled in Worcester, Massachusetts. Dad worked 12 to 16 hours a day for a small wage, but money went farther then. They lived in a tenement, one of them "pa Francis street" and had several boarders. Algot (John) went to Kindergarten, Edith was a sweet little lady - they were soon joined by Olga, ^(Wanda) June 30, 1907, and baby brother, Frank, March 13, 1909. Shortly thereafter, they moved to Chico, California, where Dad worked for Diamond Match Co. Here they enjoyed beautiful sunshine and Mother said they could almost see their gardens growing. They were doing quite alright when they heard of two enterprising young realtors, Lannerberg & Anderson, who were forming a Swedish Colony in Washington. What could be nicer than to live again in the company of people who understood you? Little Sweden, and it would be called Vänersborg (friends village). Dad traveled north to Washington and found to his dismay a struggling pioneer settlement situated in what had once been beautiful timberland, but fire had passed over the area a few years earlier leaving only stumps and ghostly snags standing. It was a sight, but the realtors put up a big front at Headquarters hotel where they lodged their potential buyers - fed them in grand style, and assure the devoutly religious, met them with their open Bible. Dad had decided this was not for him and was on his way back to California when he encountered Lannerberg in Portland - he didn't even wait to hear Dad's argument, but invited him to have dinner with him and then convinced him that this was indeed the Utopia he'd been searching for.

Dad went back to Chico, quit his job and brought Mother and the four children back with him to Vänersborg in 1911. At that time they ferried across the Columbia to Vancouver and from there took a street car to Pitten (near Hockinson). Here they boarded a horse-drawn wagon - the mud came up to the hubs of the wheels and the horses struggled, and it was night. Mother had her misgivings and wondered what sort of life they were beginning. They stayed at Headquarters till a shack could be built for them on the ten acres they bought with their savings. Dad worked the logging camps around Dole and the boom town of Yacolt. He was gone for weeks at a time and Mother tended the animals, garden and family, washed clothes for the bachelors, baked bread and churned butter for them. Helen was born in 1912, then in 1914 along came Henry. He was a big boy of 11 now, and was Mother's right hand man - Edith and Olga tended the babies while Mother did the chores. Their house was small but Mother liked its convenience. The community was pretty well established, there was a sawmill that provided the settlers with rough lumber, Högberg's store, two churches and a one room school attended by 5 to 40 pupils. One of their favorite teachers was Esther Newquist, and another was Kate Roper who came there with four children of her own - Jim, Renee, Bud & Honey - they were good friends of John, Edith, Olga & Frank. John, Cliff and Paul Kullberg, Pete Forsgren, Art &