

LS 0039

Detta är Herbert Johnson, Lyford, södra Texas, som berättar. Han är född 1910.

Lennart Setterdahl: Vad var det för svårigheter som var de värsta för Er far när han började.

Herbert Johnson: Well. One of the first things there, I think we got, was, just in a yer, it was - what they call: the Mexican bandite trouble.

L: Det var 1915.

Herbert: That was during the war with Germany, and they clamed that the German agents terrorised up the Mexican people, that they can get Texas back and all, because originaly it was Mexican property. And so that was several nights, that all Swedes were get together at the Bakers and stayed during the night, when soldiers guarded them. We never did that, because; we just seem to think that it would not happened. But; one night, when the bandites came, they stole from my father, so when he got up in the morning, he got hes mill, but he had nothing to even hitch up the buggy with.

L: Det var en av de många svårigheter som den svenske immigranten hade när han kom till södra Texas och det var 1915.

Detta är Herbert Johnson, Lyford, södra Texas, som berättar.

Lennart Setterdahl: Ja, Ni; Herbert Johnson, Ni är född i Arkansas, var någonstans?

Herbert Johnson: Well. I was born just neer Texas canyon, near the Texas border.

L: Ja. Vilket år?

Herbert: 1910.

L: Jaha. Och Era föräldrar, det var? Vad hette Er far?

Herbert: My fathers name was Kristian Jonsson - and my mothers name was Alma Bohlin-Jonsson.

L: Jaha. De var födda i Sverige båda två?

Herbert: They were both born in Sweden. Yes.

L: Er far var född i Skåne och Er mor i Småland.

Herbert: Yes. That is what I can remember.

L: Jaha. Har Er far berättat någon gång om Varför han åkte över till Amerika?

Herbert: Well. He said; there was - in Sweden at that time, it was no opportunity in Sweden, he didn't see. There was no opportunities, so he came to New Jersey, and the first only job there, the only job he could do, was driving horses. He was a coachman. He drove the people

to the railroad-station and he took the ladies shopping and took them on parties. And he did that for about 4 years, until he and mother married. He wanted a farm.

L: Jaha. Var någonstans i New Jersey var detta?

Herbert: At East Orange, New Jersey. They met there. They were married in Chicago. They Moved to Arkansas, where I was born - and we moved to Oregon, and lived 4 years, and in 1914 we moved down to Texas, in the valley.

L: Jaha.

Han kom till East Orange. Vilket år var detta, ungefär? Var det i början på 1900-talet då eller?

Herbert: About 1800, about 18 02 or 03.

L: 19.

Herbert: 02, or 03; or something like that.

L: Jaha.

Och Er mor, hon kom också till East Orange.

Herbert: Yes. She came just a few years later.

L: Jaha. Har hon berättat någonting för Er om Varför hon reste?

Herbert: Well. It's also the same thing. She had an older sister whoover here and she was doing quite well, so she came over here, too.

L: Hon bodde i East Orange?

Herbert: Yes. She cooked in some homes, she was a very good cook.

L: Så Er mor tog en sådan plats också? Hon var kokerska och hjälpte till i hemmen, ja.

Herbert: Yes.

L: Men Er far, han tyckte om att vara farmare?

Herbert: Yes. He wanted a farm, to raise vegetables and things - and so. Then; of course; we finally went to Oregon, he raised apples out there, but he got sick and they told him to go to a warm climate, so then he went to Texas, to raise cotton and raise milk cattle.

L: Jaha.

Men innan vi går ner till Lyford Texas och livet där nere så ska jag fråga Er om; hur Er far och mor kom i kontakt med det hela. Hur fick han reda på möjligheterna att bli farmare i Arkansas? Det var alltså det första - Han gifte sig i Chicago med Er mor.

Herbert: Ja, 'di 'vart' gifta där. I Chicago.

L: Jaa. Och; sedan fick han ett erbjudande om att köpa mark i Arkansas kanske, eller vad berodde det på att han åkte just dit?

Herbert: I don't know how he found out about Arkansas, but I suppose he found out that about some of the vegetables they bought in East Orange came from there, so that he wanted to look in to it.

L: Var han intresserad av grönsaksodlingar och sådant? Eller Ville han helt enkelt komma dit.

Herbert: Well. when he went down there, they could grow anything down there, that You can think of, but he asked them; what they were doing with it: and they said: "Well. We can't sell it"! And so: he didn't thought that he knew what they were paying for vegetables in East Orange. He said: "Well. These people are just folish - they don't know How to sell it"! So; he went down there, and he found out, after he rased potatoes and watermelones and lots of things, that it was right! There was no market for it! So he, and mother, lost everything they had made working before they were married, just in a year, there in Arkansas.

L: Jaha.

Herbert: So, when he went up to Oregon, they were broke.

L: Hur stor bit mark köpte de egentligen?

Herbert: ?.

L: Hur stor areal köpte de i Arkansas?

Herbert: I imagine he had about 40 acres.

L: Jaha. Och; Det blev förlust.

Herbert: Yes, It was lost. All they had was me!

L: Jaha! Det kan man säga!

Så: Hur länge stannade de i Arkansas?

Herbert: About a year.

L: Jaha.

Herbert: And then they were about 4 years in Oregon. I don't know to much about that, because; he had to work for other people then, in the apple business.

L: Men Oregon; det är väl ett fint klimat där uppe.

Herbert: There was a fine climate, but there was something he was allergic to, in the poison(?) or something - and he got to left - and the doctor told him to leave there. And when he left there he was never bather at that any more.

L: Nähä.

Så: då kommer Texas in i bilden. Vem inbillade honom att det var så bra här nu då?.

Herbert: Well. I suppose there was some Swedish magazine, or something, that he read about it, because they came down there. There were some other Swedes, they wanted to go there. There was a Swedish community.

L: Åkte de ner och såg sig för på trakten först eller kom de direkt?

Herbert: No. They just went down there.

L: Jaha. Och Det var för att köpa mark och bli jordbrukare, eller farmare.

Herbert: Ja. Yes, that's why they wanted to go down there.

L: Och Var kom de någonstans först? Direkt till Lyford eller?

Herbert: Straight to Lyford.

L: Jaha. Det var 1914?

Herbert: Ja. Right the next year we had all the bandite trouble down there.

L: Ja, jag skulle just fråga Er om det! Men om vi nu ska börja med det första året när Er far kom. Det var många svenskar före på trakten.

Herbert: Yes. There was quite a few there. There was: The Gustavsons and Lagerströms and the Erik Andersons and Albert Andersons; and there was Carl Sandling(?) and there was Bakers and Bruno Anderson and Hedbergs, Lottrings and .... Of course, there was a preach about the name of Wickström, he was there, preaching for the Covernant church. And there was Wordhams. I don't know if they were Swedish, or not. Is that Swedish: 'Wordham'?

L: Nej, det hörs inte svenskt.

Herbert: Nej. And -

L: Och Wassbergs också, väl!

Herbert: Wassbergs was there, and Redlands, of course, they were more IN Lyford, the others was out in the country. And: then there was of course The Backlunds, that ran the country store there. And the Magnusons I believe I mentioned, and Rengrens, and there was the Fondells, too. They were down there.

L: Ni säger här; Out in the country. Var det Turner track då?

Herbert: Well The Turner track was about 5 6 miles west of Lyford.

L: Och det första settlementet?

Herbert: Yes. Well. Mr Redland was a business-man in the lumber business, so he settled in Lyford.

L: Det som Lyford är idag, alltså.

Herbert: Yes. that's the city were we live now.

L: Jaha. Hur länge hade de varit på trakten? De svenskar som kom före Er far?

Herbert: I think some of them came a couple of years earlier. The first ones came about in 1912.

L: Jaha.

Herbert: And there was a Swedish company, that - like I told You - that was my whifes uncles. Johnson & Wallin Land Company. They were the ones that developed the turner track, and sold out the land, and helped the Swedish emigrants get boarded down there. Oh, Yes. One I forgot; uncle Arthur Johnson, he was down there, farming too.

L: Jaha. Så de blev inte ensamma då.

Herbert: No. They had three church groups down there: they had the - what You call - The Mission Friends, The Free Mission, and then the Covornants; and then there was the (?), and then there was The Northen Methodists - The Swedish Methodists were down there.

L: Och de använde samma kyrkolokal?

Herbert: Yes, for a while there was a school which was used for church and they would rotate in the Sundays, You know. One would preach one Sunday and one the other furnaced the speakers.

L: Jaha.

Jaa, alltså, de andra svenskarna då på trakten. De var nästan så gott som nybörjare, de också, i fråga om farmning.

Herbert: Well. They came from various places: - like Bruno Anderson. I think he had been a baker, or something. He came from Canada. Bakers came from C I H Bakers, came from Canada. And of course; The Johnsons, Arthur Johnson, and those, came from Minnesota. And: of course: we were the ones a little different, comming from Oregon. And many of them, like The Hedbergs, came from Providence, Road Island. And The Lottrings and The backlunds and Magnusons came from Chicago, so they came from a little of all parts of The United States!

L: Jaha. Hade dessa varit jordbrukare förut, tror Ni, eller var de - ja - en; han var ju bagare!

Herbert: Some of them were not farmers, no. It was all new to them, and they had -

L: Vad trodde de om jordmåner och sådant. Det såg väl inte för fint ut förstås, i början.

Herbert: Well. They had some awful ruf times!

L: Det var igenväxt.

Herbert: There was a lot of brush there, to be cleared up, and of course in those days, everything was worked with horses and it was a slow process. We had some awful, dry years in 1916, - and -17, and some of them I remember left. A man with the name of Hammarbäck

left and went up in the central Texas, but he came back down. And there was some other, that came down, a little later on, like Nykvist and, of course, there was Robert Olson, and there was quite a few! When You start to think about it.

L: Jaha. Hur stor areal köpte Er far?

Herbert: ?.

L: Hur stor trakt köpte Er far? eller areal?

Herbert: Well. At the first; dad - course - dad wasn't able to buy anything. He rented land, and just cotton and he did it to about 1921. Then he bought the first 40 acres. About 1925 he built the first house, that we lived in - and from then we lived in our own home. But many of them rented, and some of them owned, that depends on.

L: Men nu, det första året, t ex. Den mark han fick, den var färdigröjd då och färdig att

Herbert: No, it had just been cleared! You would here the coyotes sing every night!

L: Jaså. Jaha. Jaså, de hördes av!

Herbert: Yes. And: in the daytime you will see two or three of them. They look like dogs. If you know what a coyote is?

L: Ja.

Herbert: And it was full of them. And it was so tuf then, that it was - it was really dry. And then; in 1917, then we moved within a mile of Lyford. That's were we farmed. It seems like there were getting a little more rain, because it was closer to the Golf.

L: Jaha. Men vem lärde Er far att bli farmare? För det var ju Helt olika. Bomull till exempel, det hade han ju aldrig kanske sett förut.

Herbert: Well. I guess, he had to take the advices of the neighbours what to do.

L: Och tro att de hade rätt!

Herbert: And a lot of them didn't do to good.

L: Nej. Det fanns inga möjligheter med irrigation, att få vatten. Det är saltvattentäkt.

Herbert: In the valley, of course, that has a quite bit of irrigation. It's very expensive! They had big bound issues, to pay for it. They part around life for the people just feel that they want to expend that money. They could have irrigate. The city of Lyford does have river water, for drinking perpouses.

L: Men på Den tiden fanns det ingenting sådant. Var och en fick klara sig själv med en brunn, så att säga.

Herbert: Yes. There was some of them, that had a very hard time, too, like Robert Olsons. I remember, but half of hes (?) was all in water, to hes house.

L: Så han kunde inte hålla någon boskap då, kor, eller

Herbert: Well. He had a deep well of pretty bad water, that the cows would drink, but when it came to taking a bath, or for using it for cooking in the house, it was just to bad.

L: Var det saltvatten då som kom upp.

Herbert: Well, it was a kind of salt, and some of that water had all kinds. It had selter in it, and iron and aluminum and lot of all kinds of minerals in it. Some were pretty bad medicine.

L: Så tvålen, den löddrade sig inte något vidare, i det vattnet.

Herbert: The land that we bought in 1921, it has a good well on it, that we still are using.

L: Jaha.

Vad var det för svårigheter som var värst, för Er far, när han började.

Herbert: Well. One of the first things that we got, just in a year, so we had that they caled the Mexican bandite trouble.

L: Det var 1915 det.

Herbert: That was during the war with Germany and they clamed that the German agents terored up the Mexican people, that they could get Texas back, because originaly it was the Mexican property. So, that was several nights that all the Swedes were get together at the bakers, and stayed during the night, while soldiers guarded them. We never did that, because, we just been seem to think that it wouldn't happen. But one night, when the bandites came and they stole all the harvest from my father, so when he got up in the morning he had hes mill, but he had nothing to even hitch up the buggy with.

L: Det var så pass nära!

Herbert: Yes. He had to go to the town and it was pretty a ruf time! But the Texas Rangers came in, and they hang a few of the Mexicans - and scared them so bad that they didn't trouble them for to long.

L: Hur länge höll det på, ungefär?

Herbert: Oh, probably a year.

L: Så pass länge! Så det var inte så säkert att gå ute på nätterna.

Herbert: Well. It was very uncertain, yes.

L: Jaha. Och de kom över via Rio Grande-floden ifrån Mexico.

Herbert: Well. At that time they didn't really have any immigration. The Mexican people just went back and forth, to cross the river, more or less, as they pleased.

L: Det var ingen kontroll över det.

Herbert: There wasn't any control, no. But; the Mexican people are fine people! There and down to the years they had been very helpful, and clearing the land and helping the farmers do all of their hilling and picking the cotton, and of course they're not doing that so much any more, but the younger people are going to college and they have been integrated in the society, to be a part of.

L: Jaa. Hur lång tid tog det egentligen att röja upp ett acre, eller ett tunnland, som man säger på svenska.

Herbert: Of course; Everything was - The prices were so cheap in those days. You could buy an acre of land in the brush for maybe 15 dollars, or 25 dollars. Then the Mexicans had to maybe work two weeks to just clear an acre - and you gave them 12 dollars for that. So he was making about 12 dollars in two weeks, too.

L: Kunde han klara av det på två veckor?

Herbert: Yes! It depends on, but on the average, he could grow up an acre in a couple of weeks. They were pretty smart! See. They knew how to dig the dirt away from some of those trees and set fire to the roots - and there was enough oil in those roots - so the fire goes right down, and burns among the ground. And some of the brush, and cactuses, of course, they had to grow up.

L: Vad gjorde de med kaktusarna. Det var väl svårt om de var stora.

Herbert: They were hard to get right up! They were so full of moisture. You just have to, practically have to let them rot.

L: De har inga rotsystem som

Herbert: They don't have too much of a root system, but they become so big and so full of sticks. And then - of course, there were so many little bushes that have thorns on it! It was a hard job for them to clear!

L: Jaha. Så kaktusarna, de får ligga och ruttna. Det är inte någon väg att gå.

Herbert: No, they are not very deep rooted.

L: De får ligga och ruttna.

Herbert: They have big trunks and there are a kind of full fiber. So even when they die, and dry up, they're hard to get off.

L: Hur lång tid tog det innan en god skörd bomull kunde fås? Ett par tre år, eller?



Herbert: Well. You; Of course, You rased a crop of cotton, and You rased that each year, but most of the farmers, they had a few pigs, so they had pork and bacon and they salted that down. And they had cows and they had chickens. And they farmed with mules. They didn't have the biologic gasolin, a lot of expenses like that. they were very echronomically. And if they had a bale of cotton and they got a little out of it, they did pretty well.

L: Om vi jämför. Ni har varit cotton-farmare. Ni vet vad det ville säga, ifrån början till slut!

Herbert: Yes.

L: Ja. Som när Ni växte upp och var med Er far. Hur gick det till efter att ett område var grönt, som man säger, och rengjort och klart. Plöjdes det då direkt med mulåsnor efteråt?

Herbert: Yes. A lot of it was worked in the early days. Of course; I cleared several hundred of acres of land in the 40s and then we were using big bulldosers and cutterpillers. And we had bulldosers together, and turned it up, and then we were roth plowing with the cutterpillar and all we worked with in was delouged roths, that was (?). There would be hard men to go and pick them up, and burne them. But about that time, in the early days, it was warm, and You couldn't go to the field and plow early. You had to wait until it got colder, because the mules juste couldn't stand it.

L: Vilken tid på året var detta, ungefär?

Herbert: That was early - before the tractors, You know.

L: Jaa.

Herbert: When we got tractors, well, course, they would work any time, they kept cool. You could plye Your land in August, or so. Right after You had cropped yourself - and cleaned it up, and moist it up; and in that way, then You got rain, You helped the moisture for the next year. So; that's why we making starting - making good crops. But, in the early days, if You didn't get the rain, when You were growing the crop, You were in trouble, because You have not been able to (?) the ground enough to hold the moisture. The ground there is almost like a sponge. If You can get it clean and if You can get it worked up, the rain is falling, You can hold it.

L: Jaha.

Herbert: And keep it there, until all the crop starts using it.

L: Så när Ni växte upp, på den tiden då man hade mulåsnor istället för traktorer, då kunde man inte börja plöja förrän i kanske oktober november?

Herbert: Well; In the middle of November, and December. A lot of people, they had the cows. When the cotton was picked, they were let the cows run out there and eat the grass, that was in the cotton. And they would tramp the ground down hard. And that's not why it's either. But; they didn't know them. And they wanted -they looked at the cows, the milk and the butter, and that. So that it's the way it is!

L: Jaha! Vad använde ni för plogar? Var det tvåskäriga plogar?

Herbert: There was what?

L: Tvåskäriga plogar? alltså: two thorows.

Herbert: Well. Pardon me. It was in the first, it was one, but now we use (?)aquipments, and a tractor.

L: Ja. Men på Den tiden var det bara en eller två.

Herbert: Yes. It was just two dist ploweds and mabee you would platt one rowe with a planter mule.

L: Använde ni två mulor, eller tre eller?

Herbert: Well. You would use two mules. Why You would use four mules, what You have - what You call a Buster planter. And that got two rowe (?) planter, that planted two rowes and use four on that.

L: Jaha. Så; marken plöjdes då i, låt oss säga: november. Vad hände sedan? Låg den nedbäddad då till fram emot sådden.

Herbert: Well. They didn't have a very good sisthem. They just had harrows and light dist to, You know, work it up and get it in shape with

L: När då? I februari mars, eller?

Herbert: Yes.

L: Och då sådde ni bomullen, ja.

Herbert: The cotton would be planted; somewere, it's around the 20th of February, and all in to March. And of course, in those days, we didn't have the grain. The only grain we rased was a sort that we planted, that we cut in to bungles and used to feed the cows, and we put it in to stacks, You kno.

L: Jaha. Men Ni kunde inte alls ha vete eller råg?

Herbert: Well. They had some corn, but that never worked for good, for one thing that they didn't have a very good organized market for it.

L: Efter sådden, eller nu när bomullen var i jorden, så att säga. Då väntade ni på regn, naturligtvis.

Herbert: Well. Of course: in the early days, cotton is always been (?) by a lot of insects. We had, what You call, the bole-weavel, that stings the bole and leighs their egg in there, and that warm (?) he rocked that bole. And then we had

L: Det blir förstört totalt då.

Herbert: Then it became useless. And we had the flee-hopper. He is such a smaller animal. Now, of course, we know, when we have magnifying glasses, that this little fleehopper (?). So we go ahead and poison, and kill him. So that's the reason why

L: När ni sår utsädet då, eller?

Herbert: Well. That's when the cotton is about 6 weeks old, the flee-hopper starts hitting. And then we had the wurms, that come along and they didn't have any kind of poison, or anything to fight it with. Just what ever happened happened. Sometimes they would have to (?) into a good crop and sometimes they didn't make much.

L: Men; bålveln då, kunde han hoppa ifrån varenda planta?

Herbert: Well. He had a kind of wings, so that he just get up in the night air, I guess, and then blow from one field to another. So he got to be over the hole country. And - of course - we had dry wether in 1922. I remember: the Rio Grande river fled it over and covered everything in Lyford. So; they were running

motor-boats all over the country. And we had to leave our house! The water was about 5 6 feet deep were our house was.

L: Från Rio Grande?

Herbert: Från Rio Grande River. Because; they didn't have any flod control, or anything. And really any warning sistem! We didn't really know, until it just came apon us. That year, it came early enough to hit the cotton crop, and everything else, but, like I said, it didn't cost us much to live, so we got bye.

L: Jaha. Jaha. Men det var ett svårt år.

Herbert: It was ruf!

L: Vilket år var det?

Herbert: 1922. And there wasn't any Red Cross, or anything, to help anybody. Everybody just had to make out the best he could.

L: Jaha.

Hur länge växer bomullen innan den blir färdig att plockas?

Herbert: Well. You plant it in, say, the 1th of March, and about the 1th of July, it will be started to pick. You can pick the earliest the 20th of June, sometimes. But we do not any more because, with mashines, we have to let over half of it be open. But in the old days, when You had hands, and they wanted to start working, they could go in and mabee You'd pick the cotton two times, three times, or even four times!

L: På samma planta?

Herbert: Yeh! You just run to pick what is open! And the bole that had opened, You just naturally have to leave. So You would pick that cotton, and most everybody did that, because; if it would rain on it, it would have make a bright white cotton, You know, a kind of doll, and lower grade.

L: Det är inte bra om det kommer regn när man ska plocka.

Herbert: Yes it rains, see. Some cotton falls, from the ground, in to the dirt. So people like to do that. But now, of course, we just have to - have to just sit around. Because; we can't just run these mashines up and down the rowe. But about two times a year, that's all.

L: Vilka öppnar sig upp först? De som är i toppen eller de som är i - eller är detta olika?

Herbert: Well. That's the plants growes, it put some boles at the bottom. And then it forme squares first, little squares, and they bloom, and then the bole formes. And then, as the bole gets older, then it just cracks open, and the cotton is there. So The both at the bottom open first. And then the once at the top is opening later.

L: Och När det är riktigt moget att plocka. Är det lätt att få av då?

Herbert: Yes, it picks of very easy.

L: Insekten tar bara bomullen?

Herbert: They take just the cotton.

L: Ingenting mera.

Herbert: Yes. Of course, a little later on, they do what You call; pull. They pull it with (?) And then the gin have to clean it out. But in the early days the gins, they didn't have equipments to do that, they had to bring cleaned cotton to the gin.

L: Är det ett svårt eller ett hårt, arbete, för händerna?

Herbert: Well. Those little (?) sometimes, they became dry. They get very sharp pointed. You have to be careful sometimes, wear gloves, or they'd stick in their fingers and get pretty sore. And of course, It was crawling on Your knees a hole lot too, You know, that kind.

L: De växer så lågt.

Herbert: Yes, they will be a few inches of the ground, You see. And the plant might be 15 inches, or two feet, to feet high. And even then, You've had to bend over. And sometimes the Mexicans, they would take an piece of an old tire, or something, and make, what You call, knee-creepers. And they strapped them on to the knees and creep on the ground with that. And they could pick about 75 80 pounds in the sack, and then they goe to the wagon and that would be weighted, and we paid them by the weight.

L: Hur mycket kunde de plocka på en dag?

Herbert: Well. It depends on how fast their fingers were. I had one man, and hes wife, who picked 1 000 pounds between them every day. But they had some that couldn't pick even 200 pounds a person. They just - You had to have fast fingers!

L: Men det är mycket det. Det är väl lätt, bomull, är det inte det?

Herbert: Well. Sometimes, after the cotton was open and You picked it pretty fast, it seems to weight more, but it could dry out and get lighter, You know. And then, of course, the hand put complain about it. Course the cotton seed was still in it, and that had weight to it. If You pick a bale of cotton, we usely took about 1500 pounds for a bale - and that was the raw cotton, and when You took that to the gin, You had 500 pounds of the lynte cotton, and about 1000 pounds of sead. And very often, in those days, we were taking the sead home, and put a little (?) and some kind on, and fead it to the cows. The cows really liked to eat that. It was like sugar to them.

L: Så det kan användas, ja.

Sedan när bomullen givit sig av, då är det fram i augusti någon gång, eller hur länge kan den hänga på innan den ramlar ner? och bli förstörd?

Herbert: Well. Of course, it depends on how much wind You'll get and how much rain You'll get. It is not two years a like. But, sometimes, it will hang around quite a while.

L: Men vad är det nu för skillnad? Var bomullen bättre när den blev plockad för hand, eller med en maskin?

Herbert: No. Our mashines are so good now a days. We get just about a good grade with the mashines. They're real good.

L: Men; plockar de inte av en del som inte är moget och på så

Herbert: No. They do a pretty good job! We've been picking with mashines now for about 15 years. We havn't had a picked hand bole cotton in 15 years. And one mashine can do about as much work as 18, i mean about 18 men. Pick about that much cotton.

L: Jaha. Den marken som Ni nu har odlat, den har inte varit i irigation, eller vatten?

Herbert: No, not around Lyford, no. In a little part behalf, and of course they rase more cotton an more crop, but then their taxes are higher, and the expences are higher, so that; many times, they really are not as well, as we are.

L: Nej. Vad händer t ex om - vattendjupet är ju väldigt lågt i Lyford. Ni ligger ju väldigt lågt med havsnivån.

Herbert: The ground is a kind of a roly, so as te water comes through, there gets trapped in some places.

L: Har det inte hänt att det kommer upp salt ur marken? Så att marken blir förstörd.

Herbert: Yes. The last two years we were worried about it. The preashure of this water on the top, were it setles, the salt would be pushed up on the high ground, around it.

L: Om det nu skulle komma salt på marken. Vad händer? Går det att få bort saltet på något sätt?

Herbert: Well. It will continue, but You can get a drane in there, when You got sweet water rain on that, and when You get drane in it, so that - that wash the salt out there and You can recover, and reclame it, and it will be all right again.

L: Med det menas att marken måste dräneras.

Herbert: Yes. You have to drane it. When You drane it in the (?).

L: Jaha. Men det förekommer inte mycket att ni har dränerat marken, väl?

Herbert: Well. It's such an expensive product! To do that. It costs a lot of money. And, course, they're trying to get the federal guberment to help with it, and I think they should, because, our soil or something, that we need a reserve for the future generations.

L: Jaha.

Om vi jämför med en jordbrukare uppe i Minnesota, eller Nebraska, Dakota. När han har gjort sin höstplöjning under hösten så bäddar han ner jorden så att säga tills nästa vår.

Herbert: Ja.

L: Och så har han inget mera att bekymra sig om, för att vintern tar ju hand om att frysa bort en massa ogräs och odjur och ohyra och sånt. Men: i Lyford här, som ni är farmare i, Ni har en annan metod. Därför att Ni har ju sommar hela vintern!

Herbert: We have to work the winter long, because, we have all kinds of weeds that come up and take the moisture. That is the idea of keeping up clean, so that the weeds do not take the moisture. And the moisture stay in the ground for your crop! And so, we have to disc it until it's on the cotton now, we use a chemical, that we put in the ground, that kills the ground for weeds, but will not affect the cotton. So that we can get away from a lot of hand work, as far as holding the cotton cleaned. And we have some chemicals, that we use on the grain, to spray on the ground, to hold the weed down. But they blow away in about a years time, and then it is not there, and the weeds starts comming. So we have to do that every year.

L: Men vad förekom när Ni växte upp? Kunde Er far också köra med mulåsnorna i januari februari innan sådden skedde, så att det blev ogräsfritt?

Herbert: Well! Yes: We had to do that! It was slow and you couldn't farm very many acres. But; we had to do that. We had to work the ground, right on up to the time we planted it.

L: På så vis så blev det egentligen dyrbarare för er att vara farmare nere i Florida, än om ni skulle ha varit uppe i de norra staterna.

Herbert: Well!

L: Bränslekostnaden till exempel och att köra traktorer och om man ser det så.

Herbert: It's expensive, but of course, we do make better crops. Corse; down the valley, over the years, we growed any kind of vegetables, that You can think of: water melons, cantalopes and cabige, beats, coulored flowers. Just: anything You can think of can grow in the valley; of course: we had citrus trees, and I had citrus up to about 1952, but the trees froze. Every noon You get down to about 24 or 22 degrease, and that kills the trees and ruined them so bad. And a tree would take about five or sex years to grow. And Then You've got an acre of land, You put enough trees on it, You have several hundred dollars invested in the trees. You have to work there for five sex years - and lose it one night. It just doesn't pay, fruit does just not make enough much money. But there is a lot of orange, and grape fruits and lemon in the valley.

L: Jaså. Ni odlar apelsiner och grapefrukt.

Herbert: Yes. I had good grape fruits. They were ruby red. They were delicious grape fruits. The best You could find, anywere. And I had lemons and oranges.

L: Jaha. Betalade detta sig bättre än vad bomullen gjorde?

Herbert: Well, it would! You didn't lose the hole thing over a night. You take 5 or 6 years to get back in business by planting new trees!

L: Så träden frös bort helt och hållet!

Herbert: Yes, just absolutely killed. And, You see, the orange trees, is - the way You do that. You have a sour orange roth and You graft in a sweet orange would in to the sour orange, You graft in the grape fruit, or the lemon, or what ever You want. Because; the sweet roth, it (?) and the tree want (?) but the sour roth is real strong, and makes real good systems. So that's the reason You graft in the sweet orange wood, or in the sweet grape fruit. And when You get a freeze, it usely kills it down, below that graft. And so that You got is a sour tree!

L: Och det går inte att ympa om, så att säga?

Herbert: Well. When You have that big one, and You try to put a graft in that, it doesn't work very good, because this fresh, sour shut, it grows so fast, that it croud it out. You have to grub it up and start all over again.

L: Jaha. Så Ni gick över till bomullsodlingen.

Herbert: Well. We've had milk cows, and we've had pigs and we've had beef cows, and I had tomatoes, and unjons, and beats; and all. Those vegetables, it's just a real gamble, sometimes You might make it - most time You just flod up tons, and tons of tomatoes and unjons. You couldn't sell them.

L: Nähä.

Så Ni har provat på lite av varje då.

Herbert: I have tried everything.

L: Jaa! Men fruktodlingen - med apelsiner, grapefrukter, citroner och vad det nu månde vara. Får ni inte spruta ogräsbekämpningsmedel mera på dem än på bomullen?

Herbert: Well, of course. The main thing that we used to have down there was - You'd have a ruster scale, that will be on the fruit and make the fruit look bad. It wouldn't hurt the fruit, but it made it look bad. And we used to take care of the plantens, fly over the (?). That really wasn't very expensive. That wouldn't have been a problem. A big problem was losing the things over a night in a freeze. Lots of farmers was trying to get stoves out in there, and windmills, to blow the wind around. But when You have ten acres of orcheds, or twenty acres of orcheds, You can't just do it. It doesn't work.

L: Nej.

Har väderleken förändrat sig över årens lopp? Ni kommer ihåg från 1920 naturligtvis rätt så bra, och framåt. Var det varmare förr om åren, eller bättre vintrar då?

Herbert: Oh, I don't think that it has been.

L: Var det frost också då, på den tiden?

Herbert: Oh, yes! We had cold wether, in 1925, we had about 4 5 inches of snow. Well, in 1923 we did, and in 1925 we did. So; I don't think it has been any marked change in the climate, or in the rain falls, with that weat years and in that dry years.

L: Så det har inte blivit någon märkbar förändring till kallare väder då?



Herbert: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. We've had some mild winters lately and we had some severe winters. But, You see, when You grow the grape fruits, You might raise them five years old and have them five years. So that they'll only freezes every ten year. So You know, You will see wat's happened.

L: Jaa. Hur många år tar det innan ett träd blir färdigt. Sex år?

Herbert: About sex years, yes. Before raises enouth through, to get any money out of it.

L: Ja. Hur många år kan ett sådant träd stå i marken?

Herbert: Oh. Well; it's frozen down here, so I don't really know! But I would say that a tree would be good for 35-50 years!

L: Så pass länge. Jaha. Hur långt ner fryser det? Ända ner till gränsen mot Mexico?

Herbert: Well. As You go south in Brownsville, it's a few degrease warmer there, then it is in Lyford - and of course; if You go down to Mexico down there, You will meet a place there it never freezes, down, around mabee near Tan Peco.

L: Så de är säkra på bra väder.

Herbert: Yes, they would be.

L: Jaha. Jaha.

Om vi går över ifrån jordmånen till boskapsuppfödningen. Vad är det för svårigheter med att föda upp boskapen, till exempel kor. Vad är det för sort som används här nere?

Herbert: Well. There is business for exempel: that the nation is wide. It just - in the early days - the farmers just had some cows and milked them right out in the open and it wasn't really clean, You know. They were separating, they were selling the cream. And each farmer had hes own rules about how clean it was. But then the law came in - and You had to had screened - and concret places, for the cows to be and of course, You had to use milking mashines and so: that we did out most of these farmers, and adventurely, the biggest areas are having to close to. I remember Kelvin Nelson, one of our church members there down at Sebastian. He tried to go into the business in a big way. He just couldn't make it.

L: Jaså det blev ingen förtjänst på det.

Herbert: No. He had just to much expenses.

L: Jaha.

Herbert: And You tired down bad and laber was hard to get. If You have 75 cows, which needs to be milked, and Your hired hand doesn't come, because he is drunk, and You have to do all the work, You get tired there.

L: Jaa.

Herbert: And the beef cattle. Of course, there is quite a few beef cattle down there now, but they are having a hard time of it.

L: Jaha. Vilken är den svåraste perioden under året att få fram biffdjuren, så att säga. När det finns sämst med bete. Är det under högsommaren det? När det är torrt och när gräset växer sämst? Vilket växer bäst under den här tiden?

Herbert: Well. It grows best in the warm wether, but if the moisture is down there, it will grow all the year round.

L: Men nu är det väl gott och varmt! Det är 75, 70, 75 grader.

Herbert: ja.

L: Men: i juli augusti, då är det ju så varmt.

Herbert: Well. If it is a warm wether, it grows best now. You could have grain growing now, and plant it and try to combine it now, if it don't freeze, You could do it. But You wouldn't make half as much grain if You would make growing it, and combining it in June. It seems to stimulate the groth, and the production.

L: Ja. Jaha. Men det är inga svårigheter med att föda fram korna över vintern utan jättfoder eller sådant. De kan leva på gräset som finns?

Herbert: The cows? Oh yes. And that's what they are doing in the country here now. The American people, they wanted grain seed with lots of fat on it, real tender. 25 years ago, we didn't have that. All that we raised was just raised on the grass and that dry seed and it was not in good need, but we didn't know that - then! And it's getting so expensive, that we've may have to go back to that, I know we will!

L: Använder ni korn här nere också? Eller majs, då, för att få fram djuren till köttproduktionsstadiet, så att säga.

Herbert: Ja.

L: Ni importerar alltså majs från de norra staterna. Lönar det sig?

Herbert: Well. I think, here in the valley now, most of our milk comes from Wisconsin, and up the country! We don't even

L: Det finns inga mjölkkor här?

Herbert: No. No milk cows down here, for the simple reason that, actually, cotton is making more money then ruring with anything else.

L: Det tar över allting.

Herbert: I've found, that'll be true.

L: Ja om vi nu lämnar det jordiska, om jag så får säga! och går över till det religiösa området.

Herbert: Ja.

L: Missionsförbundet; de hade sin första kyrka i Turner Track i Stockholm, heter ju platsen ja.

Herbert: Well. That seems to be the impression at some hand. I know, the land company promised that the first organization, that puts in a church in their place, in Turner Track, that they would give them 40 acres a land. They were given 40 acres a land, were the church was, to the Mission Friends, they called them. They did join the Covenants until, i think, in 1934, something like that. They were independent.

L: De var helt fristående då.

Herbert: And of course; The Lutherans in somewere were unhappy about it, because they thought that They were first, but I don't know what all is about.

L: Nej. Men alla tre samfunden: Metodisterna, Lutheranerna och Missionsvännerna, de kom bra överens.

Herbert: Oh yes! They had many picknicks together and lots of doings together. We had Thanks Givings doings together, You know, once a year, in the old school house out there. And this was a good fellowship and relation.

L: Och det var kyrkogården för alla tre också här nere, på samma ställe?

Herbert: Yes. They would meet, and then the Methodists, I think, they first, they started meetings on the Sunday afternoons. In 1924, the Lutherans built their church in Lyford, i Think they finished it about 1925. Dedicated about 1929 for the Augustana Lutherans. Then they were separated from them on. And most of them at that time, like C. A. Jonson; and Frank Carlson, who came from Minnesota, a little later, that made up the (?). Then there was a family about the name of Källkvist, that came down later, and they made up, what we called: the Augustana - or The Swedish Church down there in Lyford.

L: Jaha. Det var rätt i samhället där?

Herbert: Yes. There were several - I forgot. I forgot to mention Moseson, that came down. They are relatives of Sweden. I think one was a riksdagsman, or a rektor, in a college over there - one of the brothers. And Moseson had relatives in Canada. And there was also the Carl Person and Leander Persons. I'm sure I'll forgot some. But there was quite a group of people!

L: Utav dem som kom ner till Lyford. Det var ingen som kom direkt ifrån Sverige, som Ni kan komma ihåg?

Herbert: I don't really know. here was a lady by the name of Amanda Jonson. Her mother was down there in the south end. She married a man by the name of Otto Jonson. And I think that he had come från Sweden, in fact, I think, after she died, he went back to Sweden a while. And then he came back to Birmingham in Alabama, and died. It was Otto Jonson. I haven't thought of them, until just now.

L: Det ställe därute som heter Stockholm. Vad berodde det på att de kallade det Så; Stockholm? Har Ni hört kring anledningen till det?

herbert: Well, The Turner Track, it was referred to Stockholm and on the highway sign it still says: Stockholm. On the highway sign. There is nothing left out there. Some time there was a school house, the Swedish Mission Church was there. There was a store and by the store, that Mr Backlund lived in, who ran the store. There was a cotton gin, out there - but the only thing left out there is a cemetery, that's built up now.

L: Så det är allt som är kvar. De var alla svenskar som bodde här ute?

Herbert: It was definitely a Swedish community.

L: Och det var svenska, talat varje dag.

Herbert: Yeh. They talked Swedish.

L: Som Era föräldrar. Använde de svenska i dagligt bruk?

Herbert: They became quite Americanised, so they didn't use too much Swedish, except in the church, of course, that's what I heard it, and among the neighbours.

L: Det var svensk predikan varje söndag?

Herbert: Yes, until 1935, in the Mission Church. In the others; I don't know. The Methodists, I think, they had a man, by the name of Julius Olson, he was a pastor there and I think he started the English there. And - I forgot about Erik Olson, and the Carl Persons, they were down in there too. It was a big group!

L: Vad tyckte de äldre när det ändrades om till engelska? Tyckte de om att det blev predikan på ett annat språk?

Herbert: Well. I think they were hurt themselves by speaking the Swedish, as long as they did, because a lot of the young people, they didn't pick it up and they married some that couldn't speak it, so the church particularly lost out, quit a bit.

L: Ni tror att de slog över för sent.

Herbert: Well. They were a little late in doing it, yes.

L: Jaha.

Herbert: I didn't mind! Because: I understood, I still enjoy a good Swedish sermon. But from the stand point of holding on to the young people, it hurts the churches.

L: Men vad hände då i Lyford och områdena där omkring? Pojkarna gifte sig med svenska flickor, naturligtvis. Det blev på det viset, om det fanns

Herbert: Well, it went some, that way, but there was a certain amount a dent and -

L: För; det var ju omöjligt att räcka till för alla, som man säger!

Herbert: Yes.

L: Vad hände i ett sådant fall då, när en svensk ättling gifte sig med en annan nationalitet; t ex med en tysk? eller en polack, eller skotte, eller irländare.

Herbert: Well. I can think of a family; like the Svanbergs down there. They had several girls, and several boys. And everyone of them, they married either Germans, or something else. And, course, they placed out.

L: Vad hände? Gick de senare till den svenska kyrkan då, eller gick de till fruns församling?

Herbert: Well. The Svanberg girls, as far as I know, they went to the Little German Lutheran church. The Svanberg boys, they are all in English now, The Augustana Lutheran Church. So that, The boys, The Svanberg boys, their whives came with them to their church. There are quite a bit of Germans in that Augustana Church now, too, anyway.

L: Men om vi säger; före 1930. Det var helt på svenska. Så hände det att en familj gifte in sig i en annan - i två familjer - med olika religionsuppfattningar. Det var inte gott för henne att komma in i en svensk kyrka då! Hon förstod ju inte vad hon sa, eller han; eller? Hur det var.

Herbert: It was a problem. I still have to laugh, when i think of. we had an Augustana preacher down there, by the name of E. P. Rodin. And he sat up - he was up in the central of Texas - and he were preaching. He realised they were losing the young people, so he tried to change over the Sunday nights to English, and he got bye with that. Then he had two Sunday nights a month, and then three, and then four. Then he had a Sunday morning. So; one of the older Swedish ladies, she said: "What are You trying to do! You try to get it all English"! And he said: "Well. Mother. Don't You think that God understands English". She said: "OH, I think he understands English, but I know, he doesn't like it"!

L: Era föräldrar. De tänkte aldrig på att åka tillbaka? De ångrade sig inte efter att de flyttat ner till Texas?

Herbert: No. They never regretted. I don't regretted. We have a good life here, of course: we're tasted to Sweden, You know, in sentimental reasons. But; we have a good life here!

L: Hur många syskon var ni i familjen?

Herbert: You mean; my parents?

L: Ja.

Herbert: I don't - I

L: Era bröder och systrar, som Ni hade, alltså. Ni hade en broder ytterligare; Calvin.

Herbert: I have three brothers: Walther, and Paul and Calvin. Walther is about sex years younger, and Paul is about 12 and Calvin is about 17 years younger.

L: Jaha. Och en broder är farmare också här i Lyford.

Herbert: Yes. Calvin is a farmer, and Walther, course, he's a president of the First National bank out there. And Paul, and hes family, that he's a vice president of a bank in (?).

L: Jaså, två bankmän.

Herbert: Yeh. There are two bankers.

L: De var inte intresserade av farmarlivet?

Herbert: Well. You couldn't say: they were not interested. But the opportunities wasn't just there.

L: Så Ni var äldst. Ni övertog faderns gård.

Herbert: Yes. I took over the farming. My father died in 1929, when I was 19, so that just was me to take over. I've would have liked to be a lawyer particularly, I think, if I had the opportunity. But the farming has not been bad, so I can't complain.

L: Och Er andra bror? Köpte han sin egen gård då? Alltså: Calvin.

Herbert: Yes. He had bought quite a bit of hes own land. And he, and hes whife there, invested in other business too, so.

L: Han stannade kvar på trakten.

Herbert: Yes. They lived in Lyford.

L: Ni gifte Er med en flicka ifrån Lyford?

Herbert: No, she was from Minneapolis, Minnesota.

L: Minnesota - ja. Jaha. Och Hon är utav svensk ..

Herbert: Yes. She was from the first Covernants there, in Minneapolis.

L: Jaha.

Herbert: Gus Jonson were the pastor for many years.

L: Jaha, och Skogsberg och -

Herbert: Skogsberg, and Paul Reese, a pastor of America.

L: Sedär ja.

Herbert: - there - in Minnesota.

L: Kom han ner någon gång till Lyford? Gus Jonson, alltså; Han var ju en av de

Herbert: Gus Jonson! Yes! He was in the valley for several times. I've met him down here. He was a very fascinating man, and to here him preach in Swedish, it was a treat. Because he was

a master at using words! If You have ever heard him, or heard any of hes records. But hes Swedish was really something. And hes English was good too.

L: Jaha.

Er fru kom hit ner på besök till Lyford. Det var på så vis Ni träffades?.

Herbert: You mean me, and my whife?

L: Ja.

Herbert: Yes. My uncle was down farming - and it was her two uncles, that had a land company, that developed the Turner Track. And so: her mother and her brother and her dad had been down here on trips and one time she came to the school, about 1921, or -22. And so we met when we were about the 5th grade. The 5th grade in school.

L: Jaha, på så vis.

Herbert: So; I remember from that. And then, later on, then - in about 1943, her mother wanted to come down here and visit her brothers, so she draw her down here. She was an invalide in a weel-chair, so she had to have my whife with, to take care of her. And that was when we met again - and we were married in the next year.

L: Hur lång tid tog en bilresa upp till Minneapolis 1925 t ex?

Herbert: That has really fascinated me. These early, like: Jonsons, and Carlsons, and from Minnesota; in a Model T. They didn't have any road signs. They didn't have any motels. I'd often wundered what kind of trips they had. In fact; I remember (?) told that when hes parents, they came from California, to Lyford. And when they got the case that there were no roads down into the valley, so their car had to be loaded on to a train car and hold to the King range and unloaded at Lyford, any cars, that came down, that was - And then I think around the early 1920s, there was a road, that You could get up through Alice, to get out of the valley. But I've often wundered, how they made it, in those old Model T:s, so far.

L: Ja det tog mera än en vecka förstås en sån tur!

Herbert: Oh. I imagine it took that much, at least. And they must have had a camp out, I don't know. And; without any road maps, it wasn't easy, I'm sure.

L: Det fanns inte Tripple A på den tiden.

Herbert: No. I remember, one time, my father and me, we sold a car. We got up at four o'clock in the morning. We had to go about 18 miles in a lumber vagon and deliver that car. And then we stayed during the hot part of the day in Holland, and then came back late that night, in that lumber vagon.

L: Förekom det att folk åkte mycket ifrån de norra staterna, ner till södra Texas, på semester som man säger, under vintern, för att få ett varmare klimat?

Herbert: Now, that's a big business in the valley.

L: Ja - men hur länge har det hållit på, om man räknar bakåt.

Herbert: Well. I guess it started, mabee 15 years ago, pretty big. For the valley, there are an awful lot of motell-rooms all over Holland and Brownsville, all the way to Mac Allen. I belong: to The Gideons. And we place bibles, You know, in each room, and we're having an awful time keeping up with the new motels, that are goeing in, and getting a bible in each room.

L: Jaha. Men före andra världskriget, om vi säger 40-talet, då var det inte så många resenärer som kom hit förstås.

Herbert: No. No there was a few that stagred in, but not the big volume that we have now.

L: Det är efter andra världskriget, så att säga.

Herbert: And a lot of them are retired people who have Social security, i Think. Mabee Social security - I don't know. But it's a big business, among the elderly people.

L: Jaha.

Det är ingen av er som kom hit från Chicago, Minneapolis och även från Kanada, som har åkt tillbaka, eller ånkrat sig, eller på så vis?

Herbert: Oh I suppose in Lyford it is always a regress. But; I think the most of them are happy.

L: De flesta har stannat?

Herbert: Ja. Exept now, the young people again are having to leave us, for because the farms have bigger, and bigger tractors. So: this farms are now getting into the 100s of acres.

L: Men det är väl omöjligt för en ung pojke att köpa eller att ta över en sådan gård?

Herbert: It's just almost impossible.

L: Han får ärva den av sin far?

Herbert: If he had a father, or uncle, or somebody that will help him.

L: Så : Vad gör de yngre? Ättlingarna av de gamla svenska immigranterna? Var tar de vägen. Tar de sig till storstäderna och söker arbeten, eller?

Herbert: Well. Like my two boys, they're in Austin, both of them, in the business here now.

L: Jaha. Så de fick åka upp 150 miles norrut.

Herbert: Ja. That it is amount go. And my brother, who was in Harlington, all hes three children are in Huston. So; that's the way it goes.

L: Men Er äldsta pojke. Är inte Han intresserad av farmarlivet?



Herbert: Well. No, I don't think he is really interested. The youngest one has problems with the dust, he gets very unpleasant.

L: Då är det omöjligt ja.

Herbert: Otherwise I think they might have enjoyed it.

L: Som Er far nu, under de åren då han var jordbrukare här nere, kunde han också spanska språket, som Ni kan?

Herbert: No, he didn't learn the Spanish, but course, i grow up, when I started the school, I could speak very very little English - mostly Swedish. And so I had to learn English, to keep the teacher happy, and learn Spanish if I want to play. Because about 80% of the children on the school-ground were, what we call, Mexicans, they spoke the Spanish language.

L: Och de använde det för jännan.

Herbert: Well, they still do. Spanish is spoken most of the Swedish young people. Some of them learned to speak it very, very well.

L: Det har Ni haft användning för senare när Ni har anställt mexikaner.

Herbert: Well. I used it, up until lately now. The younger Mexicans have gone to schools, but the older ones, if You wanted to tell them what to do on the tractor or something, You practicaly had to speak Spanish to them, to work with them. So; we spoke Spanish practicaly entirely, there were weeks when I spoke more Spanish then English. Much more.

L: Är de bra arbetare, mexikanerna, är de att lita på?

Herbert: Well - yes. I would say. They are hard workers. Course; 50 years ago, perhaps we probably thouth they were dum, because: all they could do was magnilaber. But now, their grand-sons and grand-daughters are getting to college degreases, so that shoes that the potentialities were there! They just didn't have the opportunity.

L: Är de mekaniskt intresserade eller har de talang för motorer och sådant, så att de kan laga och reparera?

Herbert: Oh yes. They are mechanically implained. They can build and make the mechanical work and then they have the opportunity to developpe themselves, they're good, in fact, I know.

Slut på intervjun. Det här samtalet var med Herbert Johnson, Lyford, Texas. Och det är idag den 28 november 1974.

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