

TWILIGHT TIME AT SKEDA, NATURE STUDIES AND FAREWELL INTERVIEW

(Harry Sjöman, Värnamo-Tidningen, October 13, 1951. Translated by Johan Larsson.)



Skeda at this time

The sun sunk slowly down in its golden bed way past Edh's forest and on the dark western sky many colors played their fantastic symphony. The water on Furen glitters like silver and in this giant mirror you now see the symphonies of heaven. Here in lacquer red and cornflower blue, pink and yellow ocher, brown and purple streaks on dove-grey fields - and as a boundary between sky and lake the long dark passage of wood.... the employee of Värnamo-Tidningen has ended up at Skeda in the sunset and the owner, district surveyor Helge Wennberg, has placed us at the parlor window, where we witness the fascinating celestial drama. This is everyday occurrence for the people at Skeda, but he who spend his days at the window to a backyard, becomes almost mute of admiration when these cascades of colors gush over him.

It is quiet and soothing out here. Helge Wennberg retired on last September this year from his position as surveyor in the Värnamo district and he can now devote himself to his hobbies undisturbed. He has transformed the old farm to a thriving garden of Eden and by piously thinning among bushes and trees he has obtained these brilliant views over the lake of lakes. Skeda has an old ancestry. In the 16th century Skeda was one of the manor Edhs outlying farms, but later the farm was owned by farmers and in 1941 it was bought by Mr Wennberg, who moved there five years later. The farming is leased out, but there is still a lot to do. When he bought the property there was no garden, but Mr Wennberg has used the enormous possibilities at hand. From the beautiful manor house the terrain slopes down towards the lake and here fruit trees and flower beds have been planted. Ideally you should probably see Skeda in springtime, when the oaks dress in green and when white seagulls sail over Furen, but even on an autumn evening like this one there is a lot to rejoice in if you have a sense for the beauty of nature.

Helge Wennberg was born in Skara on September 9 1886. His father was the District Judge C.G. Wennberg, serving in Skånings, Vilska and Valle districts. After his education and since

for one and a half year had served in Näs in Dalarna he came to the Judicial Board, where he worked during the years 1913-1918. He came to Värnamo in July 1920 and after the reorganization of the land survey he was ordained as the head of the Värnamo district. At that time it included the whole of Östbo and Mo district except the parishes north of Unnaryd and Stengårdshult. He was also the gager in the city of Värnamo until 1936, when a city engineer was employed here.

Much have been changed in Värnamo and in the districts during the last 30 years. You could almost call it revolutionary transformations in different areas. When Mr Wennberg started his function as a gager in the city there were only a couple of houses on the Hospital area. It was the houses of Factory Manager Åkerfeldt and Merchant W. Lagergren and a barn. Mr Wennberg has the opinion, probably shared by most of the townspeople, that this excellent housing area should have had a totally different kind of houses than what has developed. It was wrong from the beginning to build one- and two store houses here next to the city center. Through a more appropriate planning and the building of three store houses on the generous plots you could have had homes for thousands more people in these blocks. But done is done and cannot be changed within foreseeable future.

When Mr Wennberg now looks back on his 30 active years in Värnamo, he forgets all adversities and all hardship and remembers only the pleasant experiences. He gives the people here a good grade. Generally speaking he has always been able to rejoice in a frictionless cooperation with the residents of the district. He does of course not mention anything about himself always being the correct, fair and sympathetic official, but all who have known him and his methods, are certainly willing to undersign this. He remembers a funny episode. -When I should start the work with the division of the land gains for the lowered lake Kävsjön, one of the men from Kävsjö titulated me "baron", he says. I asked him why he used that titel and then he said: "Well, all the surveyors here have been barons." And he was actually right. Before Helge Wennberg the barons Åkerhielm, Gedda and von Otter had served here and people had the perception that all surveyors were barons. But Helge Wennberg has never been interested in titles and it was not long before he and the men from Kävsjö were the best of friends.

Speaking of surveyor titles one might recall how Sven på Savet at Åsenhöga solved that issue. There was an ordinance in his home municipality and Sven pondered on how to titulate such an authority. In his trips to Jönköping and Värnamo Sven had experienced that the title "coppersmith" was noble. So Sven said: -What does the coppersmith think of the woods in Kampelta?

Mr Wennberg tells about his work. One of the most time consuming ordinances he has had was the separation of homesteads in Hillerstorp's Skattegård. That ordinance took him 20 years to sort out, but it is quite complicated in Hillerstorp's village. There has admittedly been the land reform "storskifte", but not "laga skifte" and therefore all the houses lie as a mess on a very limited area. The villages of Hillerstorp and Bors should be the only villages in Östbo, where "laga skifte" has not taken place.

Helge Wennberg gives a warm acknowledgement to his assistants and mentions in particular surveyor Sture E. Johnsson. The cooperation at the surveyor office has always been the best. There has been mutual confidence and respect.

Skeda includes 86 hectare. This homestead in Rydaholm is bordering to Voxtorp and there is now a first class road to Värnamo. The house was built in 1906 and Mr Wennberg has restored it. He tells that about 60 percent of all farms in Rydaholm in the 18th century was in the hands of the nobles. While rich people nowadays buy industrial shares, the nobles of the past bought farms. That was a safe investment. Edhs manor included about 5000 hectare as late as in 1900.

You forget that time pass, when you visit Skeda. The atmosphere there is filled with peace and harmony. Helge Wennberg and his amiable wife have here created a charming home, filled with family heirlooms, and here they can live close to the nature of Småland. They do not at all miss the city noise. When we depart the dusk has become denser. The western sky has still some light from the sundown and in the east the moon rise above the forests. A dog barks somewhere, a car growls by, but nothing disturbs the calmness.



Helge Wennberg with his two grandson, Johan and Hans.