Plywood
Mill
Families
The story begins in December 1939 when Charlie Lind quits logging, invests in a coop plywood mill in Anacortes, Washington, and moves there with his wife and daughter. Many of the investors in the veneer plant are Scandinavian immigrants, and Charlie and Tilda feel at home.

Not so Angie. She leaves a one-room school in the middle of the sixth grade and enters a large elementary school where she is intimidated by the sheer number of unfamiliar faces. Angie struggles to find her place and come of age at a time when the world is falling apart.

You say the story is about a young girl growing up during the war years in an immigrant family. And so it is. But it’s also a story about family and community and all of those who came to this country before us. And about how they deal with the good and the bad times, the bad times being more difficult than many of us today have known. The Angie theme is an important one. It’s just not the only one! And in a sense it’s Angie who keeps the story from becoming too serious, who holds the space so that the larger story can be told.

Rosanna Mattingly PhD. Meta Writing and Education Services.

Even Seagulls Cry, a sequel to Where the Huckleberries Grow, stands alone as a story. It offers a glimpse into life on the American Home Front as well as a personal view of Finland’s struggle during their Winter War and World War II.
Charles (1888-1980) and Tilda (1896-1967) Lind

Charlie came from Molpe, Finland, emigrating in 1907. Tilda came from Närpes, Finland, emigrating in 1912.

These were two of the 46,000 Swedish Finn immigrants that came into this country and approximately 120 in the plywood mill and Anacortes. They didn’t know each other in Finland, but met here and were married in 1917, first living in Seattle. They moved to Hoodsport, WA and worked for the Phoenix Logging Company from 1924-1939 in various logging camps. After the logging operation closed opportunity to move Anacortes in 1939 became an option when he purchased a share in the plywood mill. They had other Swedish Finn family and friends that moved north as well from the same logging camps, e.g. Charles and Ida Carlson (uncle and aunt), their son, Art Carlson (Agnes’ first cousin) also were shareholders. John Carlson (and Anna) also worked with them in the woods and came from Molpe where Charles Lind grew up. The opportunity to do something different than being in the woods appealed to the family, and with two girls, settling down in a community seemed to be the right idea.
Families

Moving to Anacortes:

• With the start of the plywood mill, there was a large influx of new families. Many had to rent apartments or live in boarding houses before they could establish a new residence.

• Moving was often interesting:

  Blaine Tillson came up to work in the mill from Olympia when it first started in 1939. Bob Tillson remembers when their family moved from Olympia in 1941 having a truck with all of their belongings and a cow in the back. Coming through Seattle, they broke down on the Aurora bridge. To say the least, this proved to be an interesting adventure. The cow stayed with them at their house on 24th St.
Group of Families Move from Rochester, WA to Anacortes

There were several families that came to work in the early years of the plywood mill from the small community of Rochester, Washington, a heavily Nordic community. These include:

• Leroy and Ruby Erickson
• Harold and Gertrude Fors
• Emil and Naima Sandvik
• Alf and Gunhild Bowman
• Al and Edith Kangas
• Julius and Olga Isaacson, along with son, Andy Isaacson
• Viking Fagerness
• Leonard Strand
Plywood Families:

George and Ruth Nelson along with Emil and Lydia Sundman visiting at Ruby and Leroy Erickson’s home on 12th Street, late 1940s
Verhoeff, Lyman - The Plywood Industry and our Family

Working in plywood mills was a way of life for the Verhoeff family. Lyman and Dora Verhoeff sold their ranch in Westcliffe, Colorado, to move to Washington, where the climate was more like Dora’s home in England. After moving to Washington, Lyman traveled the state looking for the right cooperative lumber mill to “join.” He came to Longview, Washington, staying in the Monticello Hotel to investigate the mill here, but settled on the Anacortes Veneer Cooperative, located in Anacortes. The mill was looking for investors; for $1000 now and $1000 later (to be withheld from your paycheck), you became a shareholder and employee in the operation. Your investment would be “paid off” after about a year and a half, as wages were higher than other, more traditionally owned operations. Dora and Lyman both purchased shares. When the mill began operation in 1939, Lyman was the first treasurer of the cooperative. He later served as president. Officers of the mill also worked in the plant, as documented in the following *Saturday Evening Post* article. Lyman, his brothers Jacob and Lester, as well as his son Leonard, and nephew Elton, were all workers in this mill through the course of many years. Lyman’s son-in-law, Clayton Dell Orto, also worked in the industry in Everett, though he lived in Anacortes. He was a co-worker with my Grandpa O’Donnell.

Grandpa, J.H. “Harlin” O’Donnell, purchased a “working share” in the Everett Plywood and Door operation in Everett, Washington, and worked as a watchman for many years. He started working there when he moved to Washington from Missouri in 1951, and continued to do so until his retirement in 1966. Grandpa bought and sold many shares in this lumber operation, as well as the Stevenson Mill, located in Stevenson, Washington, in the Columbia River Gorge. He delighted in sharing stories with his grandchildren about buying and selling these shares. When Grandma and Grandpa came to Washington, they made a very comfortable living from the mill and purchasing and selling mill shares.

My father, Leonard Verhoeff, worked in the mills primarily in the winter time as a means to care for his family when he was not commercial fishing in Alaska and Puget Sound.

The following news articles were taken from the *Anacortes American, Bellingham Herald*, and *Saturday Evening Post*, documenting the history of cooperative mills in Washington State.
Heglin, Warren (1924-1992)

Warren was born in Burlington, Washington to Walter Heglin (1889-1966) from Sundsvall (Alnon), Sweden and Matilda (Quist) Heglin (1897-1983) of Swedish descent. The family moved to Anacortes when Warren was young. He went to Anacortes high school, joining the navy during his senior year but before graduation. He served on a destroyer escort in the South Pacific and elsewhere during WWII. After the war, Warren returned to Anacortes and purchased a share in the plywood mill. He married Arlene Rodin Lindell from Anacortes in 1946. Warren spent many years loading box cars with plywood along with Dean Wenner, becoming a pipe fitter at the mill during the 1960s. After the mill closed, he started working as a pipefitter for Mt. Baker Plywood in Bellingham, retiring in the early 1980s.
Lindell, Austin (1903-1979)

Austin was born in Bristol, Tennessee in 1903 to Emil Lindell (1865-1942) from Sweden and Barbara Tipton (1878-1960) from North Carolina. The family moved to Wilbur, WA in 1904. Austin married Iva Brenchley (1906-1996) in 1922. The family moved to Anacortes in 1940 when Austin purchased a share in Anacortes Veneer. He worked there until he retired in 1965.
Erickson, Leroy (1913-1999)

Leroy was born in Rochester, Washington to Jonas Erickson (1877-1948) (Swedish Finn from Esse, Finland) and Margaret Forsman (1891-1976) (born in Kotka, Finland of Norwegian descent but raised by a Swedish Finn family). He married Ruby L. Erstrom (1917-2003) from Rochester, WA in 1940.

They both grew up on farms the Rochester/Independence area.

Leroy and Ruby purchased a share in the plywood mill in 1938/39. Leroy’s brother, Ed Erickson, worked the share for about 1 ½ years before Ruby and Leroy moved to Anacortes after their marriage. They first lived in the Esly Apartments (#18) on 4th and Q on the way to Cap Sante and their neighbors were Bill and Hanna Onas who also had purchased a share in the plywood mill. They paid $18.50 per month for rent.

Leroy and Ruby purchased their first and only home in April 1941 (1605 12th St.) for $2,750. It was originally built by Orville and Lillian Buchanan in 1932.

Leroy worked around the lathe for making veneer for the first few years. He then moved over to the Hardboard plant which was built in ________. He retired in 1979 after 39 years working in the plywood industry.

They were active in the Anacortes Lutheran church, Runeberg Lodge, Masons/Eastern Star and the Elks Club. They loved boating/fishing/crabbing in the islands around Anacortes as well as camping.
Lindell, Ernest (Slim) (1901-1959)

Ernest was born in Bristol, Tennessee in 1901 to Emil Lindell (1865-1942) from Sweden and Barbara Tipton (1878-1960) from North Carolina. The family moved to Wilbur, WA in 1904. Ernest moved to Olympia about 1923 and married Goldie White in 1925. Ernest worked in the Olympia plywood mill for a number of years before moving to Anacortes, where he became one of the original shareholders in the late 1930s and Superintendent of the mill. They later moved to Multnomah County, Oregon where he worked in the plywood there.
Chisholm, Alex (1885-1970)

Alex was born in River John, Nova Scotia in 1885. He emigrated to the United States and ended up in Wilbur, Washington. In 1917 he married Barbara Lindell Tipton (North Carolina) who had moved to Wilbur with Emil Lindell and family.

Alex and Barbara Chisholm moved to Anacortes in 1939 from Seattle when the Plywood Mill (AVI) started. They first lived at the foot of 34th St. in a house that belonged to the mill. They purchased a house up on the hill in Anacortes and moved there around 1940.

Alex worked at the Plywood mill for a short time as a night watchman.
Lindell, Frank (1909-1982)

Frank was born in Wilbur, WA in 1909 to Emil Lindell (1865-1942) from Sweden and Barbara Tipton (1878-1960) from North Carolina. He moved to Seattle Washington in the 1930s. He moved to Anacortes in 1939/40 and worked Anacortes Veneer. He was not a shareholder. He married Evelyn Dagner in Anacortes in 1940, moving to Vancouver, WA in about 1956 when he started working for Vancouver Plywood.

Family included Dennis (1944) and Craig (1946).
Lindell, Emil (1865-1942)

Emil was born in Orebro, Sweden in 1865 and emigrated to the U.S. in 1887 through Baltimore, MD, settling in the North Carolina/Tennessee area. He married Barbara Tipton in Unicoi, Tennessee in 1896. The family moved to Wilbur, WA in 1904. Emil moved to Olympia in the 1920s where he grew raspberries on a small farm. He was an original shareholder in Anacortes Veneer, Inc. and moved to Anacortes in the late 1930s from Olympia. Likely he moved there because his son, Ernest purchased a share in the mill and became the mill superintendent.


Alex Chisholm Austin Lila Effie
Charlie Alfreda Frank Barbara
Emil Bessie Kenneth Ernest

Lindell/Chisholm Family – 1938
Picture taken in Seattle

Emil Lindell is standing, front left
(Need more family stories)