

HIPPIES AND DRAFT-DODGERS

The 1970's saw an influx of a new type of Texadan - young settlers who occupied old homesteads and abandoned cabins, or leased (or bought) properties for a nominal sum. Many sought to "get back to the land" and raise their families free of repressive social conventions.

Labelled "hippies" or "draft-dodgers" there was initial skepticism amongst some. However, many newcomers received a warm welcome and a lot of help settling in. Many remained on Texada, contributing their vision and talents to the community through the years.

Texada's natural features offered several locations where one could retreat from the big world and "live off the land" (= cheaply) by planting gardens, fishing or hunting, harvesting on the beach or in the forest, and chopping firewood.

The beauty of Davie Bay attracted a whole community of settlers and eventually hosted a school (1979-1983). Other newcomers settled in old farm buildings along Central (High) Road at various isolated spots - such as the "Slow Farm".

The "Slow Farm" was a collection of original farm buildings near Raven Bay Road. A sign proclaiming "SLOW FARM" in "drippy yellow paint" alerted motorists that there were animals grazing and children playing nearby.

Tarn Wilson's new book *The Slow Farm* [www.ovenbirdbooks.org] is a vivid and engaging account of Texada's "back-to-the-land" lifestyle as seen through the eyes of a little girl who grew up here (1971).



We accompany Tarn and her little sister, Rima, as they explore the beach and forest - first around their purple-doored cabin at Pocahontas Bay then later at the Slow Farm. Tarn's reminiscences of (big city) Van Anda life include milkshakes at Mary's Cafe, truck repairs at Cecil May's garage, a smoky afternoon at the Texada Arms pub and visits to the Hagmans'.

Tarn Wilson's book is an interesting narrative that reminds us of a significant (but sometimes overlooked) demographic in island history - the people arriving in the 1970's who found a peaceful refuge and a welcome home on Texada.

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