Volume 11 – Issue 5 October 2026

# *Vår Historia*

## Smoky Valley Historical Association Newsletter

## Lindsborg's Frenchman

Despite Lindsborg being founded mainly by Swedes, there were a few in this town's early days that made a big difference and had an impact on its growth. The Shield brothers were two for example, and then there was one Frenchman named Stephen Albert LeBoyteaux.

Stephen, or S. A., was born in 1840 to Peter and Anna, living in a small town called Roann, Indiana. He was the youngest of four, which by the time he reached nine years old, all were orphaned. His father died when he was six, and mother at nine. The eldest sibling, Ruth was fifteen, so both Stephen and his brother Thomas were taken in by a blacksmith named William McShirley and family.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, both Stephen and his brother, Thomas joined the Union Army. Stephen *(allegedly)* fought in the December 1862 "Battle of Chickasaw Bayou" in Mississippi and suffered a bayonet to the face after several days of bitter cold weather and a bout of bronchitis. He was medically discharged but reenlisted in 1864. His brother Thomas died on the "Sultana" April 27, 1865, while on the Mississippi River in Tennessee.

Stephen's father was a farmer, so he was exposed to that work early on. After the war he started his own farm in Ashland, Ind. And met a girl named Odessa Evens. They married Nov. 1st , 1866 and a year later had their first daughter, Ida Belle. In 1869 they had their second child, only to see him live only three months. In 1870 they had Lillian Eudoras, then decided to pack up and make a geographic change.

I haven't made the connection to what led the LeBoyteaux family to come from Indiana to Lindsborg, Kansas, but in 1871 Stephen bought 160 acres about nine miles east of Lindsborg, and when city plots were made available in 1873, bought a couple of those to.

Stephen and Odessa had their final child in the family, Orville Victor, October of 1872. Other than farming their land, Stephen became involved with the development of townships, later becoming Treasurer for Smoky Hill.

Big things were happening during this time, Lindsborg was the McPherson County seat from 1870 to 1873, and the Swedish Community House, known as the "Arken", or simply "Ark", held all county business as well as city, school, and church on the upper level, until a schoolhouse and church was built anyway. The main level was general store and post office. Stephen filled in as teacher on occasion when Miss Agrelius was ill.

Up until late 1874, he partnered with Jordan in a land agency, something he himself would continue until 1880.



REAL ESTATE AGENTS.

LABOYTEAUX & JORDAN.

REAL ESTATE AGENTS, Lindsburg, McPherson county, Kans. Mill Sites, Coal Lands, Farms, Cattle Ranches, well watered, and Timber Land, for sale at all times. Also agents for Kansas Pacific Railway Lands. Correspondence solicited. Collections promptly attended to.

Stephen had a fine house and grove built on the town lots he owned. In 1871, Lindsborg only had two houses, one stable, and a well. The town centered around that one well, which would become the center intersection of Main and Lincoln St. It was reported in September that a hotel and county office (Ark) was under construction too.

# Lindsborg's Frenchman (con't)

As Smoky Hill Township Treasurer, Stephen not only helped get roads developed to one-room schoolhouses and farms, but in 1877 a more pressing matter was dealt with, issuing bonds to build a bridge across the Smoky. Lindsborg was cut off from McPherson during high river times. Who fought these bonds? Salina, of course. They didn't want their trade taken away, which also applied to bringing the railroad in. Stephen helped get that bridge built, and he was elected chairman of the railroad committee in 1878. Also, in 1878 he served on the Lindsborg Cemetery Committee.

At some point, Stephen had decided to become a barber, most likely running his shop out of his home on Main and Grant St. So, in 1879 he was a land agent, barber, and how about Justice of the Peace? Stephen was one of 36 signers on the petition to make Lindsborg a city of third class, and that July, not only did Lindsborg become an official city, but the railroad finally connected as well. Now, one could take the train from Lindsborg to Salina, then to practically anywhere. In Lindsborg's very first city election, Stephen, or S.A. LaBoyteaux, was the new Police Judge.

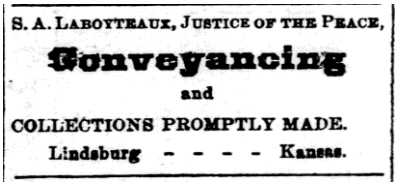
1879 4th of July had a lot to celebrate, not just for the country, but for Lindsborg's growth. Stephen was on the planning committee, in which a parade was planned along with speeches and of course a picnic. It had been raining a lot leading up the celebration, and the river became too high to have this on the riverbank as planned. Stephen and his wife, Odessa offered their grove on Main and Grant St. For those that are wondering just what a "grove" is, it is an open, shaded wooded area cleared of underbrush. Oftentimes, fruit trees would be planted along with flowers. There were no convention halls to hold gatherings in back then.

One of the vegetables that came out the LaBoyteaux garden was rhubarb, and after Lindsborg's first newspaper, the Localist, opened he proudly brought in a prize stalk to show off, it weighed a whole pound for one stalk. By this time, Stephen had pretty much retired from farming, though they still owned the quarter section east of town. His health had started failing when it came to working the ground.

Stephen sold his barbershop business in 1879 to John Nelson, now focusing on his newly elected position and other duties. As Justice of the Peace, he often used his house and grounds as the location to marry young couples. Another use of the "grove".

Of all the houses now standing in Lindsborg as of 1879, it was believed that the LaBoyteaux house was the oldest. He was first on the list to buy city lots in 1873, and it was believed that he had already built the house on that plot of land. In 1880, Odessa put the farm up for sale, with conditions. It sold in April for $400.00, but a few years later showed that it still belonged to the LaBoyteauxs.
Being a land agent, Stephen had experience handling the legal aspect of property transfers, and made that one of his specialties.


S. A. LABOYTEAUX, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE,
Real Estate and
Loan agent.
COLLECTIONS PROMPTLY MADE.
Lindsburg - - - - Kansas.


S. A. LABOYTEAUX, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE,
Conveyancing
and
COLLECTIONS PROMPTLY MADE.
Lindsburg - - - - Kansas.

January 1880 both the City Marshal and Justice of the Peace resigned…on the same day! I don't know what caused that, but the LaBoyteaux family made plans to move back to Indiana that fall. In October an auction took place at the grove, selling off all furniture and items not wanting to move with.

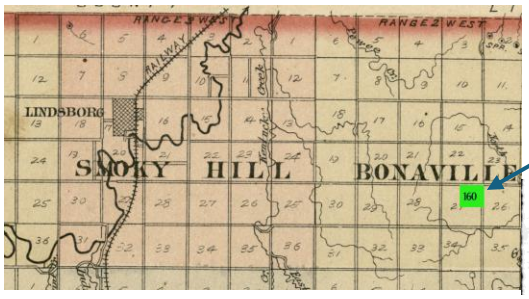
While back in Roann, Indiana, Stephen was appointed Postmaster but still retained ownership of the town plots and somehow regained ownership of the farm, which was actually in his wife, Odessa's name. Mrs. Sandin rented the grove house in 1882, with the intent of making it a boarding house. This is most likely where the rumor started about having a hotel at that location prior to the Lindsborg Hotel.

In 1885, the farm once again sold, and more importantly, the town property, lots 17 and 19 on Main and Grant, sold to the Milliner Sarah Jenkins for $700.00. Sarah had her shop downtown but had been buying and selling properties on the side. Two years later, April 1887, she sold the lots to the newly formed Lindsborg Hotel Co. for $1,575.00. The $15,000.00+ hotel built there would eventually be named Hotel Brunswick.

Stephen and Odessa's eldest daughter, Ida Belle, came back to Lindsborg in 1886 to teach public school, for how long I do not know. Lillian became a nurse, and Orville a newspaper printer.

Stephen died February 19th, 1925, in his hometown of Roann, Ind. His wife, Odessa, followed him in death in 1932.

"Don't forget to check our website in the Vår Historia section for additional photos and clippings!"




LaBoyteaux farm

1878

—Any one wanting to get shaved or get their hair cut, can get it done in first-class style at S. A. LaBoyteaux.

—**Public Auction.**—I will sell at public auction on Tuesday, October 5th, 1880, at my residence, in the city of Lindsburg, the following described property to-wit: One team of horses; one new bain lumber wagon; garden implements; one large iron kettle; all of my household and kitchen furniture. TERMS OF SALE: A Credit of nine (9) months will be given on all sums over $5, by purchaser giving note with approved security bearing ten per cent. interest from date if not paid at maturity. All sums of $5 and under, Cash. Sale to commence at 10 o'clock a m.

I will also offer my city residence for sale on said day, TERMS, One-third cash, one-third in six months, balance in one year. S. A. LaBoyteaux.

John Wickstrom, Auc'r.

# Upcoming SVHA Programs

**Nov. 10th, 2026** — **250 Years of the Domesticated Turkey**

*Frank (Bob) Reese*

**Jan. 12th, 2027** — **A Brief History of Bee Keeping**

*Erik Peterson*

**March 9th, 2027** — **Hans Hanson Family**

*Allan Lindfors*

All Programs Start at:
**7:30 pm**

Location:
**Messiah Lutheran Church – Fellowship Hall**
**402 N. First St. – Lindsborg, KS.**

## Smoky Valley Historical Association
P.O. Box 255
Lindsborg, KS. 67456

☐ $25 ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ Other $ _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

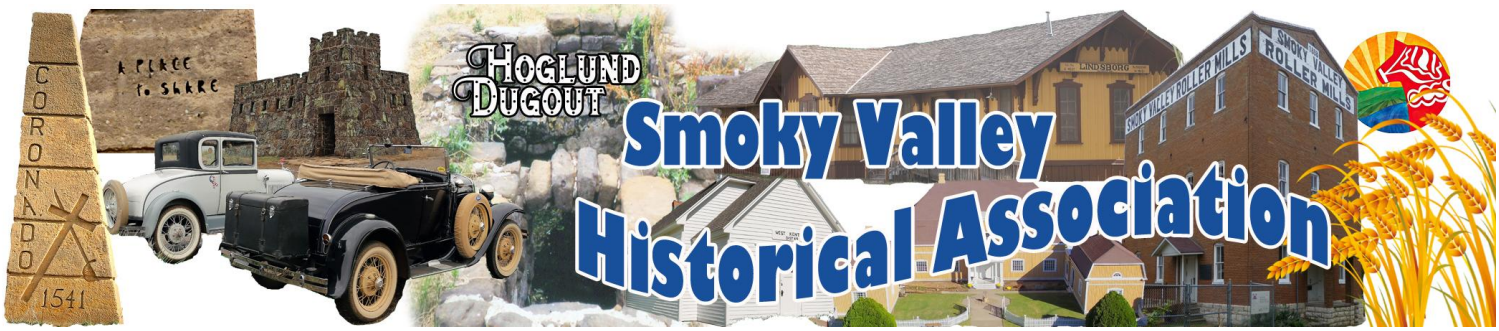
Phone: _____ Email: _____

**Memberships are renewed in the first quarter of each year**

Smoky Valley Historical Association is a non-profit organization and is registered under 501(c)3

All Membership Donations, Bequests, Trusts, and Legacy Donations are tax deductible.

Please mail or scan QR Code. **Thank You!**




## Smoky Valley Historical Association Board of Directors

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## Vår Historia Features!

**All previous newsletters are posted to our website in the "Newsletter" page. Also, the current issue features photos and newspaper clippings pertinent to that issue, and sometimes the only place to see them.**

**www.smokyvalley-history.org**

## Funding

Membership contributions are the SVHA's major source of on-going funding. A free-will donation in any amount will secure your membership in the Association for the year.

***Memberships are renewed in the First quarter of each year!**

Grants, such as those awarded by the Kansas Humanities Council, are also available from time-to-time to further the mission of Smoky Valley Historical Association.

## SVHA Mission

*The purpose of this association shall be to collect and preserve historical photographs, manuscripts, and other items pertaining to the early history and settlement of our community in general and the City of Lindsborg in particular; to preserve and beautify places of historical interest in our city, its vicinity, and properties entrusted to the association; and to promote the study of history of our settlement and its cultural growth by lectures and other available means.*

## Contact info:

Email or visit our website:

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www.smokyvalley-history.org

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PO Box 255
Lindsborg, KS 67456
"History preservation and education"

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Smoky Valley Historical Association Lindsborg, KS

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Thank you for your contributions and supporting the historical preservation of Lindsborg and the Smoky Valley of Central Kansas.

Our pioneers left their legacy long after they were gone, so can you. Managing estates, bequests, and gifts through retirement plans can help keep our preservation ongoing and long-lasting.

**All donations are tax exempt, we are a 501-(c)3 organization**