

Coronado Heights Timeline

Prehistoric – Plains Indians freely roamed the Smoky Valley using elevated points, such as Coronado Heights to scan the horizon for unwelcome visitors and food.

1541 – The Spanish explorer Coronado and his party are thought to have visited the valley in search of the fabled seven cities of gold. In the minds of some researchers Spanish artifacts found in the valley years later are evidence of the Spaniard's visit. The butte we now call Coronado Heights would have been the most likely place for Coronado to survey the valley.

1856 – Salina became a colony located on the Saline River near the city's present town site. The railroad arrived in 1867, opening up the surrounding area for settlement.

1868-1869 – Swedes and other Europeans purchased land in southern Saline and northern McPherson Counties from the Kansas Pacific Railroad and Swedish Agriculture Co. They established farmsteads and communities including Falun, Smolan, Salemsborg, Assaria, Marquette, Freemont and Lindsborg.

1919 – The southern-most butte was acquired by the newly-formed Lindsborg Historical Society from the Firms and Elvings, Swedish pioneer families. The Society went to work making improvements, including the first road suitable for automobiles and a shelter house with a sandstone grill and chimney and wooden roof and walls. The butte was named Coronado Heights.

1936 – The Historical Society sold Coronado Heights to Saline County for \$1.00 so the Works Progress Administration could make further improvements to the park, including construction of the iconic castle, additional picnic areas, and restroom facilities.

1963 – The Historical Society reorganized as the Smoky Valley Historical Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

1987 – Saline County sold Coronado Heights back to the Smoky Valley Historical Association.

2014 – The SVHA was awarded a grant for needed renovations to the castle, which was completed 2017.

2019 - Awarded 3rd most visited park in Kansas for 2018.

2019 - Coronado Heights Park turned 100 years old!

We Coronado Heights

Coronado Heights is owned and maintained by the Smoky Valley Historical Association, a small, non-profit organization headquartered in Lindsborg.

We receive no Governmental, tax funds, or public assistance for the day-to-day upkeep and maintainance of Coronado Heights Park!

Won't you consider a gift of \$25, \$50, \$100 or more?
Donations can be made on our website at

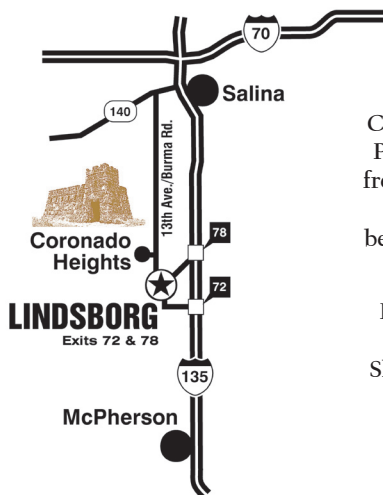
www.smokyvalley-history.org

or by mailing your check to

SVHA, P.O. Box 255, Lindsborg, KS 67456

Please include your name, address, and e-mail address

**We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit –
Your gifts are 100% tax deductible**



Coronado Heights Park is accessible free of charge every day of the year, between dawn and 10 p.m.

Patrolled by the Saline County Sheriff's Dept. and other agencies.

SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 255 Lindsborg, KS 67456

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"Actively Developing, Maintaining and Promoting Coronado Heights since 1919"



CORONADO HEIGHTS

Lindsborg, Kansas 67456

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Coronado Heights

A landmark in the Smoky Valley, Coronado Heights Park, is listed on the National and Kansas Registries of Historic Places. The park was voted as one of the 8 Wonders of Kansas Geography by members of the Kansas Sampler Foundation. The Swedish pioneers originally settled at the base of the bluff, but soon moved the community closer to the river. Anna Olsson, daughter of one of Lindsborg's founders, Rev. Olof Olsson, wrote in her memoir *Child of the Prairie* that looking from the top of the Heights, when homesick, one imagined seeing all the way to Sweden.



Geology, Geography, and Habitat

Dominating at 300 feet above the Smoky Hill River Valley, Coronado Heights, 3½ driving miles northwest of Lindsborg, is on the southern edge of a succession of seven hills known as the Spanish, or Smoky Hill Buttes. The Dakota Formation was deposited about 100 million years ago, during the Cretaceous Period. Erosion exposes 230 million years of ecological prehistory. Coronado Heights remains a natural habitat of wildflowers and grasses. Yucca, gooseberries, Prairie Racerunner lizards, sumac, sage and spiderwort flourish.



Painting "Coronado's Expedition" by Frederic Remington

Spanish Explorer Coronado

Legend has it the summit is where Francisco Vásquez de Coronado surveyed the rich valley before he abandoned his search for the legendary Land of Quivera and its seven cities of gold.



Development

The original road, built by members of the Lindsborg Historical Society and volunteers in 1920, is named Swensson Drive. A footpath was also formed and called Olsson Trail. Early on it was apparent the Heights was to be valued and accessible for everyone to enjoy.

Cover photo (2014) courtesy of Tom Jaderborg
Brochure updated January 2025

A Popular Destination for Generations

Coronado Heights is where Lindsborg townspeople and visitors alike go to observe the ever-changing Kansas weather. Artists and photographers have for years converged on the Heights for the exceptional panorama. The soft native Dakota sandstone is littered with names and dates from over the years. Hiking and biking trails wind around the bluff. Even though some have the mistaken idea Coronado himself built the Spanish-style castle, it was actually constructed in 1936 by Works Progress Administration workers. It is *the* place for watching a sunrise or sunset, flying a kite or model airplane, having a picnic, meeting friends, or showing visitors the primitive nature of the park and the breathtaking vistas of the Smoky Valley.

Park Hours, Law Enforcement, and Usage Policy

The park is open to the public between sunrise and 10 p.m. daily. The Smoky Valley Historical Association, owner of the property, has published the Coronado Heights usage policy on their website:

www.smokyvalley-history.org

For large (15+) gatherings and celebrations some restrictions apply. Inquire by e-mail at smokyvalleyhistory@gmail.com for specifics.

A gift to support
Coronado Heights
is an investment in the
History of Kansas
and the
Future of Kansas

