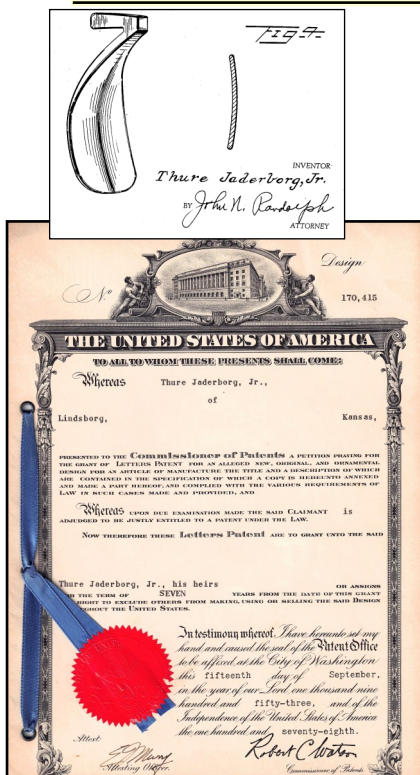


Vår Historia

SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

MAKING IT BETTER - PATENTED IMPROVEMENTS



**PUBLISHED
BI-MONTHLY**

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We didn't invent the chicken egg, but over time we have invented hundreds of ways of eating it. While this analogy might seem strange for a paper on patented inventions, it does fall in line with Thomas Edison's quote *"To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk."* Or in the egg's case, a pile of ingredients.

Lindsborg and the Smoky Valley was settled by people with good imaginations, some patented ideas made it to our history books, many are long forgotten.

United States patents originated in 1790, with the first patent awarded to Samuel Hopkins for his system of making potash. Today, patents are numbered in the millions and fall into three different categories, Design, Plant, and Utility.

One of Lindsborg's first was Peter Lindholm, who was granted a patent in 1886 for improvements on an adding machine. Fitting since during that time Lindholm was also McPherson County Treasurer. His version wouldn't get credited, two years later William S. Burroughs patented a new version that led to the nine-key that we have today. If that name sounds familiar, his grandson, also William S. Burroughs, became a famous author.

Before steam or gas-combustible engines became a thing, most everything was horse powered. In 1890

Oscar Johnson, along with Smolan's Nels Holtman, invented what was called a "horse-powered apparatus", that appeared to be some kind of farm spreader. Later, in 1899, Charles Ferm would develop a "horse draft equalizer" to help reduce horse-trampled crops. He was granted a couple of patents on this invention, the second being an improvement on his first. This placed one horse on the crop side, and three horses on the field side to get the planting or harvesting done.

Carl (C.R.) Sundstrom, a carpenter from Lindsborg, invented an improved wind-wheel, or what we call windmill, in 1891. It had the capacity to adjust angles for different wind speeds and had a brake if you wanted it stopped all together.

Then there was "Machine Girl"! Some may know this as the dial telephone, but in 1893 it was a prototype conceived by Frank Lundquist along with brothers John and Charles Erickson. Lundquist got the idea while in Salina at a hotel and took an interest in the telephone exchange system they had, not out of awe, but out of curiosity on how he could make it more efficient. At that time the Erickson brothers had been working on other projects like a gas-powered horseless carriage, an automatic piano player, and improvements on phonograph recordings, but after brainstorming with Lundquist on the telephone concept all other projects were pushed aside.

Lundquist went back to Chicago

MAKING IT BETTER – PATENTED IMPROVEMENTS {CON'T}

where he worked, and after hearing of the inadequate telephone exchange Almon Strowger had invented convinced the Erickson brothers to bring the prototype to Chicago. Through many patents and improvements the dial telephone along with an exchange (*trunking*) that could handle more than 1,000 telephones with just a couple of wires, was finalized in 1896. In 1901 the Automatic Electric Company was founded by John and Charles Erickson, Frank Lundquist, Almon Strowger, and Alexander Keith. The dial telephone rapidly grew and became worldwide, though it wouldn't reach Lindsborg until 1951. John Erickson was credited with 115 patents in his lifetime, his brother Charles 35 patents. Frank Lundquist had more than 100 patents as well, in 1911 he and the Ericksons sold the trunking system patent for \$650,000.

Farm Boy's Idea Worth \$650,000

Lad From Kansas Farm Developed Automatic Telephone From Examination of First Switch-board He Ever Saw--Another Receives \$25,000 for Radio Device--Let the Boys Tinker.

Not all inventions were glamorous, take Charles Norlin and Frank Lindstrom, both of Marquette, who in 1894 patented an improved clothes line, it used counter-weights on a pulley system to keep the line taut. You know how that Kansas wind blows clothes around.

Another one that is somewhat unusual, August Miller of Lindsborg patented a unicycle (velocipede) in 1896 that had a wheel with flapper spokes, so you could ride it on both land and water. When switched for water, pontoons were mounted on each side of the wheel. Needless to say, it didn't catch on.

During the early 1900s Marquette had a series of patents issued too. Frank Darwin improved the railroad switch for switching from main to side tracks, Albrecht Haertlein improved the harvester threshing machine, and Walter Ferguson patented an iron lantern holder for wagons. One note to mention is Darwin filed and signed the patent, but was representing seven more businessmen, including Haertlein on the railroad switch.

Many times "two heads are better than one", Lindsborg businessmen George Goodholm and Jacob Train pooled together to patent a new tool used for cutting pipe and stripping wire. In 1909

Bethany College professors Thure Jaderborg and Emil O. Deere invented a unique light source for rifle sights, or illuminated sights. This would aid in better aiming at dusk or nighttime. I don't believe they had the ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset rules back then for hunting.

The Hagstrom Brothers were probably the second most famous inventors (*behind Erickson's*). William, Emanuel, and Gustaf also liked to tinker and build their ideas, and had a particular interest in gas-combustible engines. William was credited to introducing both the automobile and motorcycle to Lindsborg in 1902. But that's not all, William co-patented a telephone party-line system in 1906, and when the brothers decided to build a manufacturing plant many more inventions came out. Some of their patents included the power adj. lamp cord, a spark plug, and a tire blow-out patch. Frank Fagerberg, foreman of Hagstrom Bros., patented an engine primer in 1913, with half credit to the Nygren Bros. of Bridgeport. In 1915 Nygren Bros. bought the Hagstrom plant and continued to manufacture all Hagstrom products along with a bailing hook they had patented themselves in 1910.

Hagstrom's weren't the only ones enhancing (*keep in mind spark plugs were invented 1860*) and patenting spark plugs in Lindsborg. Charles Nelson patented his in 1911 and B & B Mfg. Co. patented and produced the Bathurst Air-Cooled in 1922.

As I quickly run out of room for this newsletter, I wanted to run through some interesting patents, all Lindsborg inventors. Axel Carlson patented a crazy-looking safety razor with multiple razor blades in 1911. That same year Frederick Erickson patented a useful grave-digging shovel. Julius Brandt came up with a nifty ball and catcher toy, a cross between the ball and cup and paddle ball. In 1913 Oscar Norland patented a variation on the adjustable pipe wrench.

Skipping ahead a little, Robert Johnston patented an "Article Exchange Mechanism" in 1932, this is a device to carry mail and packages under an airplane and release it over a ground station. Kinda sounds like what drones are doing today, except they gently release it on the ground. In 1953 Thure Jaderborg, Jr. patented a neat shoe horn, following in his father's footsteps with having at least one patent.

To finish this partial list off, in 1961 Ralph Turnquist co-patented a "Turbojet Engine Fuel Distribution System"! For every concept that is patented, hundreds are not, so keep imagining and tinkering. You just might have the "next big thing".



← The late Norman Malm (1928-2011) provided this January weather recap in cartoon form.

All past newsletters are available to download through our website!

www.smokyvalley-history.org



Upcoming SVHA Programs

March 11th, 2025

Kansas Crimes of the 1800s

John Burchill



May 13th, 2025

Civil War in Kansas

Dr. Merle Hodges



July 8th, 2025

Lindsborg's Elmwood Cemetery History

Judy Pilewski



All programs
start at:
7:30 pm

Location:

Messiah Lutheran Church—Fellowship Hall
402 N. 1st Street—Lindsborg, KS.

Please cut along the dotted line

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

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

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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 to P.O. Box listed above.

Thank You!



SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Meetings/Programs

Smoky Valley Historical Association hosts bi-monthly meetings on the odd months, held on the second Tuesday, unless otherwise noted. Programs start at 7:30 pm with topics of local historical interest. Location is listed on page three along with schedule.

Come join us!

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 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 the SVHA.

Smoky Valley Historical 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:

smokyvalleyhistory@gmail.com
www.smokyvalley-history.org

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

"History preservation and education"

TACK SÅ MYCKET!



SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
 LINDSBORG, KANSAS 67456



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.