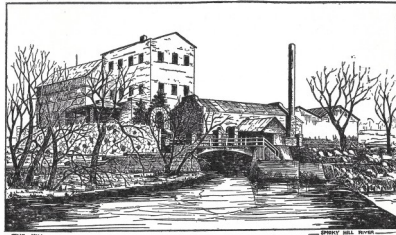


Vår Historia

SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



1963

It is the aim of the Smoky Valley Historical Association to;

1. act as a depository agent and loaning agent for historical items of the community;
2. help organize and perpetuate such permanent exhibits as the Old Mill and a drawing board dream — The Smoky Valley Village (of historical buildings.).
3. collect, preserve and diffuse information in the field of genealogy;
4. prepare a written centennial record of the Smoky Valley which will include all ethnic groups, churches, families, organizations and folklore.

**PUBLISHED
BI-MONTHLY**

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SVHA AND THE OLD MILL

The relationship between Smoky Valley Historical Association and Lindsborg Old Mill and Swedish Heritage Museum is stronger than ever, having six of nine board members directly involved with the Mill, one as staff, three as Old Mill board members, and two as weekly volunteers.

This relationship, however goes back much further. SVHA's predecessor, Lindsborg Historical Society, was organized in 1919, with one of the founding members being William Hagstrom, owner of the Smoky Valley Roller Mill. In fact, William gave the namesake to Coronado Heights along with Professor Emil O. Deere that same year.

In 1927 William sold the mill to the Runbeck Brothers who operated or leased it until 1955. Attempts were made April 1958 to donate the grounds and mill to the city of Lindsborg, with the stipulation that it become part of Riverside Park. That August there was talk of the Kansas State Historical Society possibly being interested, but the next month the mill was listed for sale.

March of 1959 the three Runbeck widows, Lucille, Delores, and Kathern, donated the grounds to the McPherson County Fish & Game Association.

This association created a Runbeck Mill & Park Committee, with Norman Bengtson in charge of mill restoration. Norman was the son-in-law

(Ingrid's husband) to Art and Lucille Runbeck. Much work went in to cleaning the grounds, and in 1961 a 4th of July celebration was held at the mill as a fundraiser, the fish & game association didn't have a lot of funds to work with.

February 1962 the park was deeded to McPherson County, and shortly after that Lindsborg residents started talking about reorganizing the historical society. With some coffee shop meetings and research of the dormant Lindsborg Historical Society, a meeting was established for November 5th, 1963 to officially organize Smoky Valley Historical Association. The reasoning for the name change was to include the surrounding communities of the Smoky Valley.

This reformation was posted in the newspaper as: *"The main objective is to preserve IN THIS AREA those properties and artifacts which rightfully belong here—buildings, records, pioneer items, etc. The association will store, catalogue, receipt, and loan out for exhibit all items acquired by it. It will act as an agent for the loan of items to be exhibited at the Old Mill. Since the Old Mill is on county property, this agency will assure us that items exhibited there will not be appropriated by the county, but will stay in this region."*

I had mentioned that the roller mill owner was a founding member of the 1919 Lindsborg Historical Society, well a Runbeck was a founding member of the 1963 Smoky Valley Historical Association too. Lucille Runbeck, the widow of Art Runbeck and renowned artist was at the formative

SVHA AND THE OLD MILL {CON'T}

meetings and was elected Curator. Her illustrations of the Old Mill, Coronado Heights, and a handful of historic buildings in Lindsborg became postcards for fundraising, plus membership cards and letterhead for SVHA.

For those that have ever lived in or near Lindsborg typically know first-hand about serving on multiple committees or boards, and sometimes there are a few organizations pulling together to accomplish a common goal. The Old Mill had both, the McPherson County Fish and Game Association had created the Runbeck Mill & Park Committee, then there was the Bethany College Museum Committee, and finally SVHA. SVHA council, or board members also served on the other two mentioned and vice-versa.

SVHA lined out historic tours of the Smoky Valley in 1964, starting at the Old Mill. Other celebrations like "Walpurgis Day" and "Valborgsmasseafton" were also sponsored by SVHA and held at the Mill.

July 11th, 1966, Bethany College President Andeen signed a contract to fulfill the Museum Committee's request, which was:

- 1) To grant the mounted animals to the Historical Society.
- 2) To draw up a contract with the Historical Society for the Indian Paint Creek Collection.
- 3) To make an agreement with the Art Gallery in relation to the pottery.

The pottery from the Indian Paint Creek dig had been on loan to the Birger Sandzen Art Gallery for safer storage.

Note: even though SVHA's name changed in 1963, some organizations or people still called SVHA "Lindsborg Historical Society".

Box by box, the museum was moved to the Old Mill, headed up by Malcolm Esping and SVHA Secretary, Elizabeth Jaderborg. The loan contract signed in 1966 was renewed in 1976, then in 1980 Bethany President Hahn declared all contents included in the loan now be considered owned by McPherson County Old Mill Board.

SVHA was instrumental in starting and filling the Old Mill Complex, or Heritage Square. Lester Raymer painted a watercolor of the projected complex, each historic property placed there was cleaned, restored, painted, then donated to the county's Old Mill Board.

Mary Borg was elected to the SVHA council January 1967. That April the first historic building was

placed in the new complex, old Kentuck schoolhouse. McPherson Historical Society joined SVHA in that donation. Both the Swedish Pavilion (*main building*) and Bethany Academy were set in the complex September 11th, 1969.

The 1970s were about the mill complex, mill and dam restorations. SVHA council created more committees to oversee these projects.

The Pavilion Committee was made up of Mary Borg, Ed Almquist, and SVHA President Chris Swenson, which Chris was also an original member of the Bethany College Museum Committee. The Membership Committee had Carol Pearson, Mary Borg, and Gene Nelson, a future SVHA President.

Sitting on the Old Mill Committee was Dr. Duane Fredrickson, Mary Borg, Joel Woodard, Malcolm Esping, Chester Bruce, and Mayor Hugo Lindahl.

After the Old Mill was officially listed on the National Historic Register in 1972, funding was easier to get. In 1973 \$10K was pledged from the Julia J. Mingenback foundation, with the stipulation that another \$30K in new commitments be acquired by the end of the year. Another \$5K was given by Far-Mar-Co, Inc. of Hutchinson for the rebuild of the dam to its original height. SVHA raised more than \$1.5K in membership drives and Lindsborg contributed \$5K. These funds escalated the mill restoration project in 1974.

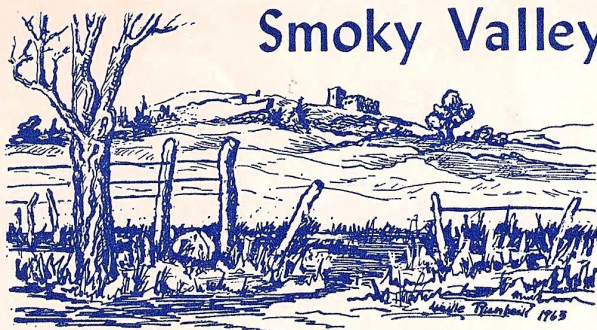
The Swedish Pavilion was placed on the National Historic Register in 1973 and fully renovated in preparation for the 1976 rededication by King Carl XVI Gustaf, where SVHA President Howard Patrick presented a scroll for the King to sign.

April 1st, 1981, the Runbeck Roller Mill produced flour for the first time in 26 years! By this time Chester Bruce was SVHA President. Many people devoted time and resources to this project, but standout SVHA council or members were Mary Borg, Malcolm Esping, and future SVHA President Dr. Fredrickson.

Once completed, SVHA focused on upkeep and for many years decorating Heritage Square for the Christmas season. There was a time when the relationship between SVHA and McPherson County Old Mill became estranged, outside of the continued volunteer work with members, but after the 2021 county release to the current board our relationship has again meshed.

The daughter of Ridge and Delores Runbeck, Dorothy Runbeck-Stout, had also placed her faith in SVHA to help keep the Old Mill going for many years to come.

Please, support both organizations!



Smoky Valley Historical Association, Inc.

102 South First P. O. Box 255
Lindsborg, Kansas 67456

1960s letterhead using Lucille Runbeck's 1963
illustration of Coronado Heights

Cousin
Ruth, Jean, Eldora

Upcoming SVHA Programs

Sept. 8th, 2026

Kansas Horse Thieves

John Burchill



Nov. 10th, 2026

250 Years of the Domesticated Turkey

Frank "Bob" Reese



Jan. 12th, 2027

A Brief History of Bee Keeping

Erik Peterson



All programs
start at:
7:30 pm

Location:

Messiah Lutheran Church—Fellowship Hall
402 N. First Street—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

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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.

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
 PO Box 255
 Lindsborg, KS 67456

"History preservation and education"



TACK SÅ MYCKET



**DOROTHY STOUT AND
 MOTHER, DELORES RUNBECK**

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.