

Vår Historia

SMOKY  VALLEY
 HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
 NEWSLETTER

KAFFE, COFFEE, OR MOCHA—LET’S FIKA!



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That dark, robust beverage...coffee, some people hate it, others are obsessed with the taste. Coffee itself has a “rich” history, pardon the pun.

The original plant, or shrub is believed to have come from Ethiopia, or the “Horn of Africa”, or possibly across the Strait to Yemen. Medicinal properties have been documented as early as the 9th Century in Yemen, and during the 15th Century the plants and beans became a trade commodity, often shipping out of the Port of Mocha. This port contributed to many coffee related names, including mocha.

Sweden was introduced to coffee (kaffe) during the mid 17th Century, or around 1685. It didn’t become popular until King Charles XII visited Turkey and discovered their coffee and method of brewing it, bringing both back to Sweden. Stockholm opened its first coffee shop in 1710 and within a few decades had around fifty within the city. An elite group of politicians felt the popularity with this imported product was out of hand, and placed a ban on drinking coffee that lasted ten years. Over the course of another seventy years there would be four more bans, none lasting and each making the beverage that much more popular.

During King Gustav III reign (1771-1792) both tea and coffee was under observation. Two identical twins that were condemned to death were given an option to participate in a life-long

clinical trial. One brother was to drink three pots of coffee a day and the other three pots of tea per day. Both brothers outlived the King and both physicians supervising the study, so no one really knows how old the coffee drinking brother lived for. The tea brother died at 87 years old.

By the mid 1800s coffee houses were the place men could go and discuss the daily events. Women went about it differently by hosting a kafferep. Formal events held at one of the ladies’ home where the hostess was expected to provide seven different kinds of biscuits along with coffee. Six would mean you were slacking, on the other hand eight would just be showing off. Seven typical biscuits, or cookies are Brysselkakor, Chokladsnittar, Drömmar, Hallongrottor, Havrekakor, Nötkakor, and Schackrutor. The most important part of these gatherings was the connection with others. Over the years the tradition became less formal or exclusive, it became fika.

Fika is a concept, a state of mind, an attitude and an important part of Swedish culture. It’s important to make time to stop and socialize, it refreshes the brain and strengthens relationships. The practice of fika has placed Sweden at the top for highest coffee consumption per nation.

When Europeans came to America, they brought tea and coffee, taxation on importing tea (*England’s choice beverage*) became a problem so the folks in Boston threw a party in revolt and dumped barrels of tea back in the ocean. Over the years coffee became the favored drink, as the

KAFFE, COFFEE, OR MOCHA – LET’S FIKA! {CON’T}

Queen’s tea left a “bitter” taste, not in their mouth but in their heart. Don’t get me wrong, tea did make a comeback and is almost as important as coffee. In fact, fika can include tea or other beverages as it is more about the experience.

The problem with coffee beans is they go stale, especially after roasting. If stored properly, green coffee beans can stay fresh for three to six months, as to where roasted can only last days to a few weeks. One solution found was coating roasted beans with protein, particularly eggs. John Arbuckle joined his brother, Charles in his grocery business in 1865. Together, they patented an egg/sugar mixture to glaze roasted coffee beans with, which became the first commercially successful pre-roasted coffee to be marketed for sale. Arbuckle’s Coffee became known “the coffee that won the west”, as cowboys could easily grind and brew coffee at their campfire. They were also good at marketing, including a coupon for a free peppermint stick on each package.

Swedes also found ways to enhance the brew by filtering through protean, notably fish skin in the early days. Immigrants coming to America and particularly the Midwest used eggs, shell and all. “Egg Coffee” became a tradition in many church settings and Swedish festivals.

In Lindsborg, many retailers carried their own blends, like “Sundstrom’s Blend” at the J.O. Sundstrom Store. The first Lindsborg business dedicated to



coffee was The Union-Pacific Coffee Co. started by Rollin Wilber and Lester Davis in 1906. Eventually Wilber would sell out and move to Wichita, his partner changed the name to Davis Coffee House and

patented “King Oscar Coffee”, a Swedish blend established in 1899 and Lindsborg’s most famous packaged coffee. Though this coffee isn’t roasted locally today, it is still packaged and distributed in Lindsborg.

Marquette had Gus Miller, who named a special blend “King Gustaf”, King of Kings just to compete with King Oscar. He also had “Swede Blend”, “Miller Blend”, and many others.

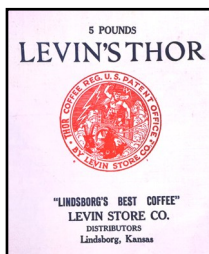
Lindsborg
HOME OF THE FAMOUS
King Oscar Coffee
 Sold in the United States and Europe
 Reg. U. S. Pat. Office
L. H. Davis
 SOLE DISTRIBUTOR
 Lindsborg, Kansas

McPherson was also a rival in the early 1920s with “King Gustav”, a custom blend at Lindbloom & Roseberg’s store.

Roasting coffee locally meant importing green coffee beans from the various countries you wanted to blend from. To do this legally, businesses needed to obtain a government license so the proper taxes could be issued. The Lindsborg Tea and Coffee Co. failed to do this in 1918, along with about 250 others nationwide. Each business was ordered to shut down for one week and file for their license. If not, they were liable to a \$5,000.00 fine and up to two years imprisonment. A small testament to how valuable coffee was. The Lindsborg Tea and Coffee Co. roasted and packaged several variations of coffee, including names like “The Pride of Lindsborg” and the one shown, “Prairie Queen”.



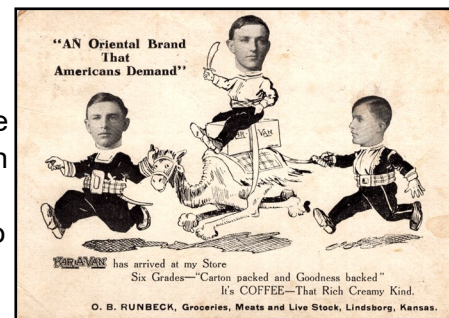
Another local favorite was from the Levin Store Co., simply titled “Thor”. Levin’s coffee had a 1921 patent trademark, mainly the name and logo as the blend varied for different brews. A poem was written in Swedish for Thor coffee and used in advertisements, one restaurant had a mural painted on the wall proclaiming that “We are serving Levin’s Thor Coffee”. You could say that every business in Lindsborg either roasted, distributed, served, or just drank coffee.



Which brings us back to fika. It is no surprise that not only does Lindsborg have restaurants that serve coffee, but also have two coffee shops. Both offering a quaint setting and all the necessities to fika.

Fika in Sweden is important enough that even manufacturing plants like Volvo stops for fika breaks. All Swedes (and anyone wanting to participate) consider it important enough to make time to stop and socialize, with a beverage and snack in front of them.

Where did the name “fika” come from? Some say it is a word play on kaffe, or coffee in Swedish. You can have a fika anytime throughout the day, or you can simply just...fika. So, bring the fika spirit into your own life by creating fika moments, just don’t do it alone...let’s Fika!



OLOF B. RUNBECK – FATHER OF THE RUNBECK BROTHERS



Want to help update the Lindsborg Business Directory?

SVHA has started the project of updating and expanding the Lindsborg Business Directory. This directory was created in 1994 by the Lindsborg 125th Anniversary Committee and updated by SVHA in 2005. At that time, many blanks were left for future updates, and more resources will lend to going even further back in time as well as filling in the past 20 years.

If you have ever owned a business (or commercial building) in Lindsborg, please scan this QR Code and take this quick survey. Our intent is to have this completed by the end of 2026. Thank you!

Ruth, Jean, Eldora

Upcoming SVHA Programs

May 12th, 2026

Women Instrumental in Developing Bethany College

Ryon Carey and Denise Carson



July 14th, 2026

The Real Ike - Fact and Fiction

Mark Teasley



Sept. 8th, 2026

Kansas Horse Thieves

John Burchill



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

Membership options: \$25, \$50, \$100, Other \$

Name, Address, City, State, Zip Code, Phone, Email, Date form fields



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!

Memberships are renewed in the first quarter of each year



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.

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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.

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TACK SÅ MYCKET!



SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
LINDSBORG, KANSAS 67456

Smoky Valley Historical Association
PO Box 255
Lindsborg, KS 67456

"History preservation and education"



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.