

# Vår Historia

## SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



1910 Art "Runny" Runbeck and Anton "Boots" Anderson

**PUBLISHED  
BI-MONTHLY**



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### "POPPOP" EPH MALM

Erik Efraim Malm, better known as "Eph", is sometimes shadowed behind his brother GN Malm in the history books, but Eph's life was full, yet nearly cut short.

Eph was born 1877 near the town of Hjo, which sits on the banks of Lake Vättern, Sweden. According to Eph's memoirs written in 1953 for his granddaughter Ingrid's school project, he started school at age five, but ultimately only reached a 4th grade education. These memoirs were published 2009 as "Poppop's Letters", and gives a detailed accounting through various stages of his life up to the point of writing. This story here will expound upon a trying time that was mentioned in his memoir.

Eph's parents, Pastor Per August Malm and Mathilda, came to America in 1889 (*3 brothers and his sister stayed behind, though two would join them within a year*). Eph was just under 12 years old when he went on this adventure, and besides the trunks with the family possessions, Eph brought his guitar. Two Irish girls close to Eph's age taught him a little English, and Eph played for them while they danced.

Because Eph could play guitar and sing, he became quite popular enroute to America.

Pastor Malm had a job waiting in Saronville, Nebraska. Saronville was named after Saron, Sweden. Eph learned more English in the little bit of school he attended, but his father also taught religious courses. While not in school, Eph worked for a painter named Larson, and learned about varnish, or "hard oil" as they called it back then. This training proved useful a few years later.



**Malm Family**  
Standing from left: Mathilda Bathsheba, Gene, Per David  
Front: Father Pastor P. A. Malm, Efraim, Mother Mathilda Malm

In 1893 Pastor Malm accepted a job in Burdick, KS., and arranged for Eph to spend the summer working for a farmer still in Nebraska. Pastor Malm already knew Dr. Swensson in Lindsborg by then, and was preparing to send Eph to Bethany Academy that fall. Eph enjoyed his time at Bethany, until he realized what his father's intentions were, which was to

follow in his footsteps as a Pastor. He pleaded with Nat to put him to work as he didn't want that path, so Eph traveled back to Nebraska where Nat and his wife lived. Fate would have it that 1894 weather caused bad crops and dust storms, preventing outside painting.

## POPPOP EPH MALM [CON'T]

Dr. Swensson had been trying to get Nat to Lindsborg, so Eph and his brother came to Kansas. The Malm brothers fit in very nicely with Lindsborg. While business grew, both Eph and Nat joined the Oratorio Society, as both sang tenor. When Ling Auditorium was nearing completion, both brothers were on committees to plan the big dedication.

The winter of 1899 Eph and a friend set out to Colorado to try mining, fortunately they both returned the next March, just in time for outdoor painting to pick up. Eph's health started to deteriorate at the start of 1901, first with Rheumatism then a few months later, turpentine poisoning. June of '01 Eph went to the Augustana Hospital in Chicago for treatment, but that August was sent to Hot Springs, Arkansas to see if the baths could draw the poison out.

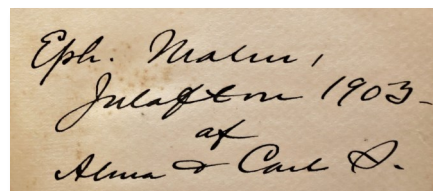
Symptoms kept worsening, Nat visited frequently to see how Eph was, and to report back to family and the community, sometimes saying he "feared the worst". It was reported early October that his symptoms resembled Bright's Disease, which is similar to what we call kidney failure. With no success, Eph was escorted home late October, still too weak to walk. In February 1902, Eph miraculously took his first steps outside, with a smile and greeting to anyone within hearing. He had lost eight months of his life, much of it in severe pain or complete unconsciousness.

April 1902 Eph went back to work, and got a look at the new store Nat had opened. Feeling ambitious, Eph pushed his body too far, and June of that year got a strain, or hernia. Once again, Eph was back in Chicago at the hospital, this time for three weeks as he healed from surgery. It was this trip though, where he met Lillie Anderson, soon to be his wife.

1903 came, and Eph was fully recovered and healthy. Maybe with a new lease on life, he took on jobs others balked at, like painting the Swedish Lutheran Church steeple (*twice*). During the annual 4th of July parade Lindsborg was famous for in those days, Malm Bros. had a float of a donkey pulling a chariot. Eph dressed in a Roman toga for it, which after the past couple of years he was a gladiator in real life.

Alma and Dr. Swensson gifted Eph a book for

Christmas 1903. It was inscribed by Dr. Swensson, and no one could fathom that just two months later Dr. Swensson would pass away while in Los Angeles.



Eph also painted the steeple of Freemont Church the next spring, but it was that October 5th, 1904 that Eph took his real challenge, by marrying Lillie. They attended the 1904 World's Fair for their honeymoon, and like many others there, had their first ice cream cone. One of the great inventions offered at the fair that year.

Eph and Lillie had two sons, Lloyd and Bernard. The business continued to grow, and Eph became an even better salesman, demonstrator, and trainer for the stencil business, which transitioned to working for the Acme White Lead and Color Works company, all using Nat's "Decorator System". Eph had a very successful career until his retirement in 1942, but in some ways Eph was just getting started.

After leaving Acme, Eph worked his farm, volunteered painting at the church and Old Main (Bethany College), and then showed up in the park where he heard there was to be a hospital meeting. Before he left he was the Treasurer for the Lindsborg Community Hospital Association. Ultimately, Eph solicited more than \$100,000.00 to build Lindsborg's first real hospital, one that stood until 1992. Eph had one more passion throughout his life, fishing, in his youth as food and later years strictly relaxation. Eph passed away in 1961, having lived a very full life.



**Available at: Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum—120 E. Mill St.**

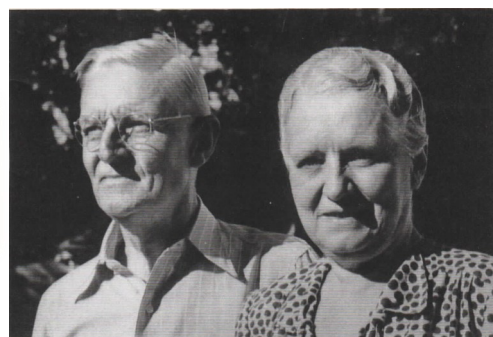


back row: Nathaniel, Gene, Per David, E. Ephraim  
front row: Per August, Bernadette, Martha Ida

**Eph and Lillie  
Malm →**



← Ephraim standing  
right side



## Upcoming SVHA Programs

**Jan. 11th, 2022**

**Notorious Saline County**

*John Burchill, KWU Salina*



**March 8th, 2022**

**The 1706 Excursion of the Spanish into Kansas**

*Mike Wallen, Lindsborg*



**May 10th, 2022**

**Lindsborg Doctors, the First and Other History**

*Betty Nelson, Lindsborg*

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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



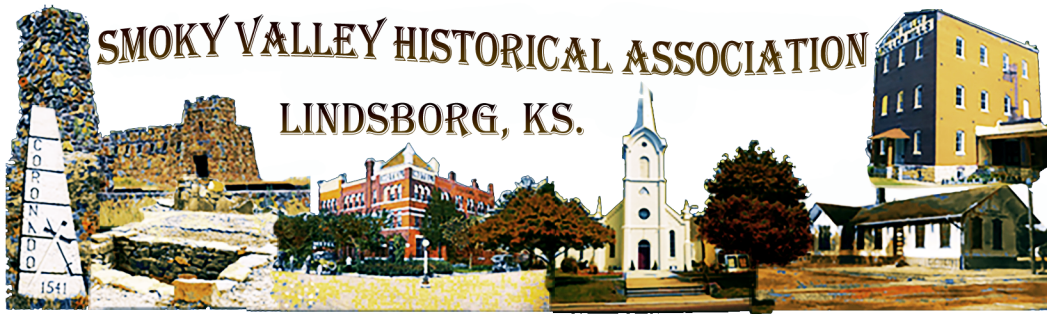
Smoky Valley Historical Association is a non-profit organization and is registered under 501(c)3

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

Please mail to P.O. Box listed above.

**Thank You!**





## SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*We currently have one Board position open*



### Meetings

We have bi-monthly meetings from September thru May, which is our academic year, and held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Program starts at 7:30 p.m. with topics of local historical interest. Location is listed on page 3 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 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 the SVHA.

### **Smoky Valley Historical Mission**

*The purpose of this association shall be to collect, arrange and preserve historical data, books, pamphlets and manuscripts 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 us at:

[info@lindsborghistory.org](mailto:info@lindsborghistory.org)

or mail to:

**SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**  
 PO BOX 255  
 LINDSBORG, KS 67456

**WWW.SMOKYVALLEYHISTORY.ORG**



TACK SÅ MYCKET!



SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
 LINDSBORG, KANSAS 67456

*Check our Facebook page for the most up-to-date information concerning the Smoky Valley Historical Association.*



*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.*