

# Vår Historia

## SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

### TWENTY MILES TO ANYWHERE



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

PUBLISHED  
BI-MONTHLY

1869

JAMES HOLLAND. W. H. GILMORE

**HOLLAND & GILMORE,**  
General Real Estate and Insurance Agents,  
Only Direct Agents for the Sale of the  
**Kansas Pacific Railway Lands,**  
In Saline, Ottawa, Dickenson,  
McPherson, Rice, Ellsworth and  
Lincoln Counties.

AGENTS FOR THE  
**ST. LOUIS AND LAWRENCE NURSERIES.**  
St. Louis, Mo.



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Daily, people are jogging, walking, or riding bicycles on Lindsborg's wonderful Välkommen Trail, or on the stretch south of town known as Meadowlark Trail. What many don't know is that those trails were once the liveliness of Lindsborg.

The railroad was everything. If your town didn't have a stop, it had little chance of survival.

Lindsborg's location is a direct result of railroad plans, and yet it still took a decade to get one connected.

The railroad was given land grants for Kansas west of Junction City around 1866, the drive west led to Abilene and Salina getting tracks and service the next year. The First Swedish Land Co. purchased over 13,000 acres from the Union Pacific Railway Co. in southern Saline and northern McPherson counties in 1868, and a company house was built near the bluffs which would later become Coronado Heights. That is where Lindsborg was named Feb. of 1869. Platting out the exact location was based on where the railroad projected to lay track, and they were fortunate enough to have access to a river too.

Salina was the closest railroad stop, so general store proprietors had to travel to get supplies.

The 20 mile journey to Salina was

a two day trip by oxen pulled flat wagon, if you were lucky enough to have a good team of horses, you might make it in one. Typically, trips were made once a week to get all towns people's needs, that also included mail.

Lindsborg waited no time pushing for a railroad, as did all towns in the Smoky Valley. Before long there was quite an extensive alphabet soup of railway companies forming. Salina pushed against this, knowing extending rail service would take away from Salina trade. In 1873 the Salina, Atlanta, and Raymond RR met in Lindsborg, also the Burlington & Missouri River RR had talks in Salina to run a line through. Neither of these came together, partially due to bond money scams. Hope was not all lost, most believed they would get a line, like stated in this 1874 land ad:

*"320 acres sloping prairie and bottom, 15 miles SW of Salina, 2 miles from Falun P.O., 3 miles from proposed route of Kansas Central R.R., 4 miles from Lindsborg, old county seat of McPherson County, the same from the Salina, Atlanta, & Raymond R.R. in a well settled neighborhood, \$1,200.00 cash".*

In 1877 Lindsborg's Dr. Curtis, Secretary for the St. Louis, Fort Scott, and Northwestern RR, stated that a contract for building the entire line has been signed. That wasn't entirely true,

## TWENTY MILES TO ANYWHERE (CON'T)

but it did get the Kansas Pacific Railway Co to offer to lay the line at least from Salina to Lindsborg, if we secured land passage. This line was dubbed "Bob-Tail" in reference to a Bobcat due to only going as far as Lindsborg.

The Salina & South Western RR, a branch of Kansas Pacific, ended up securing bonds to get the first leg, or to Lindsborg done early 1879. They started laying line June 12th with 125 men working, by the end of the month there were 500 workers, as the goal was to reach Lindsborg by July 1st.

July 4th, 1879 S&SW RR ran an excursion train to Lindsborg, the first one to see the town. They stayed through the evening before returning, and Lindsborg could finally take a deep sigh, she finally had a railroad.

Mr. Robinson of Salina bought and shipped the first car load of wheat from Lindsborg July 12th, finally, Lindsborg was not "twenty miles from anywhere". Nor were they a village anymore, Lindsborg started their first newspaper April '79, got a railway July 1st, '79, then petitioned to incorporate as a city of 3rd Class also in July '79.

The new line stopped in Assaria, so catching an evening ride from Salina would take one hour and forty minutes to get to Lindsborg, way faster than the oxen wagon.

If you wanted a round trip, better plan a full day in Salina though.

<b>TIME TABLE—S. &amp; S W. R. R.</b>			
Leave 6:30 a. m.	... Lindsborg. . .	arrive 9:30 p. m.	
" 7:12 a. m.	--- Assaria ----	" 8:48 p. m.	
Arrive 8:10 a. m.	--- Salina ----	leave 7:50 p. m.	

Trains had many advantages, one came September 10th, 1879 in the form of magnificently decorated white-enameled cars holding a European 7 elephant menagerie and circus. Just a couple years later it would carry the Handel Oratorio Society to locations that connected, in order to fundraise for an academy.

In 1887, the Chicago, Lindsborg, & Southern RR formed but didn't last long. It was replaced by the Council Grove, Smoky Valley, & Northwestern RR, which reformed in order to transfer to Missouri Pacific RR. That line completed Lindsborg connections with many other towns east and west in the Smoky Valley.

There are many stories within a story when it comes to the railroad. But a few highlights for the Smoky Valley include Governor Roosevelt, as Vice President candidate in 1900, making a stop in Lindsborg. Teddy Roosevelt and Dr. Carl Swensson

were acquainted and the 1900 stop wasn't the only one. Another story is the Orphan Trains, which ended 1929. The Smoky Valley provided families for many children during the early 1900s. And then there are the "box car children", families that worked for the railroad and often traveled as needed by living in a box car of the train they worked for. Lindsborg has a wonderful recollection of this thanks to the Opat family, who lived and wrote about it.

As with any good railroad story, there are also the not so good. The river banks near the tracks were often set up with gypsy or hobo camps, some quite harmless while others not.

Passenger trains lasted many years, one of the more unique ones was the "Doodlebug", a single gas-powered U P car that made trips between Newton and Salina 1900s - 1920s, stopping at McPherson, Lindsborg, and Assaria on it's way. Lindsborg lost passenger service in the mid 1960s, despite trying to fight it.

While automobiles got faster, trucks got bigger, and roads got smoother, the need for a railroad left many towns. In 1969 Union Pacific started talking about closing the station, and in 1972 did so. With many train engines retiring, Santa Fe's "Old 735"

came to Lindsborg (*not on rails and in pieces*) in 1975 to meet it's new home at the Old Mill.

During the 1990s many of the rails became abandoned, including both tracks in Lindsborg. In 1995 the stretch between Lindsborg and McPherson became abandoned as well, and citizens wasted little time in forming the Central Kansas Conservancy to convert it to a trail. It has been a long process, but so was getting the railways in. Land owner disputes have been an obstacle both times, laying tracks and later making a trail.

Currently, the CKC will have another two miles completed on the 13-mile Meadowlark Trail by the end of June. That will leave only two more miles to complete (which includes installing a rail flatcar as a bridge).

**Reduced Fares**

**West**

via

**Union Pacific**

For your vacation. — Take advantage of these attractive round trip fares to the cool mountain retreats, famous national parks or the shores of the Pacific.

Round trip fares from Lindsborg to

Denver, Colo.	\$23.10
Estes Park—Rocky Mountain National Park	\$22.60
Salt Lake City	\$30.00
West Yellowstone (Yellowstone Park)	\$30.00
Portland, Tacoma, Seattle	\$22.00
San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Diego	\$72.00
Spokane, Wash.	\$67.00
Victoria, Vancouver, B. C.	\$78.00

\$80.00 for circle trip including Denver, Salt Lake, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Tacoma, Seattle and back home. Side trip to West Yellowstone \$9.45 extra.

\$50.00 for circle trip including Denver, West Yellowstone, Salt Lake, scenic Colorado and back home. (A 4 1/2 day tour through Yellowstone Park including meals and lodging \$24.00 if you stop at hotel; \$15.00 if you stop at permanent camps.)

Drop in and let's talk your trip over. We can give you full information about fares and diverse routes. We also have some fine illustrated booklets descriptive of the West—from

A. E. Bachelor, Ticket Agent

Union Pacific Station, Lindsborg, Kansas

**Union Pacific**



## Upcoming SVHA Programs

June 8th, 2021

Historical Performance of Lucy Tayiah Eads

*"Chief Lucy of the KAW Indians" by Pauline Sharp*



August 10th, 2021

Another Kansas Explorer: Etienna Veniard de Bourgmont

*Rev. Richard Monson*



Location:

Robert and Cathy Ahlstedt "Cracker Box"

222 S. Coronado Ave. (Burma Rd)

Lindsborg, KS.

All programs  
start at:

7:30 pm

*Parking is limited, carpooling is suggested.*

*All programs are tentative, please call or follow our Facebook page  
for updates.*

*Refreshments will be served.*

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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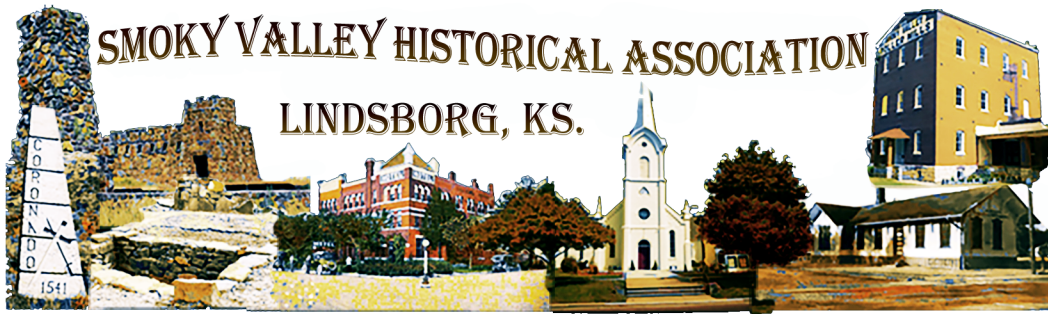


Smoky Valley Historical Association is a non-profit organization and is registered under 501(c)3

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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### Meetings

We have bi-monthly meetings from September thru May and held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. There are five meetings per academic year (Sept.-May). Program starts at 7:30 p.m. with topics of local historical interest. Location is listed on schedule page 3.

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:

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 PO BOX 255  
 LINDSBORG, KS 67456

**[WWW.SMOKYVALLEYHISTORY.ORG](http://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.*