

Vår Historia

SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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"THOR" AND THE LEVINS

Many of you have seen or maybe heard about Levin Store Co. through postcards, photographs, or even trade tokens. But how many of you knew about their coffee? King Oscar kind of stole Thor's "thunder".

John A. Levin (1850-1923) was born in Smaland, Sweden with the name Johan Peterson, like many others during immigration, it was changed due to the abundance of similar names. John and one brother ended up in St. Paul, MN where they started a grocery business.

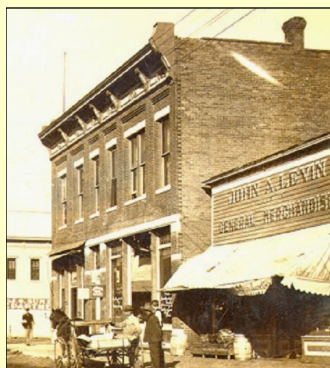
By 1894, John had relocated to Lindsborg while his brother headed west. Carl Ueble had operated Ueble's Bargain House in a small wood frame before moving to the vacated Metropolitan Hotel on south Main in 1891. When John ar-

rived he worked out a deal in Oct. 1894 to buy 1/2 interest in the business, renaming it Ueble and Levin. Ueble had lost his wife in 1893, but remarried five months later. Maybe for this reason, he wanted to retire from the trade, so in Nov. 1895 John Levin bought it out fully, renaming the business "John A. Levin Variety". Ueble had utilized the hotel by offering rooms and a restaurant to the general goods store, Levin didn't want all that, so a few years later purchased the wood stand next to the Farmer's State Bank. He moved

early Feb. 1900 and it stayed for over 50 years.

The Levin store would be a family affair, as all four boys would work there and carry it on after John's passing.

Let's face it, Swedes are coffee drinkers, always ready for "fika", King Oscar, sold at Davis Coffee House, was the best known, but not the only. There was Sundstrom Blend, King Gustov, and starting 1921, Thor. Today we can boast about having Blacksmith Coffee, roasted and packaged in Lindsborg. To me Thor had the most dramatic logo, can't speak for it's taste though.



WHEN ELECTRICITY CAME TO LINDSBORG

When Lindsborg News editor, Anna Carlson, quoted in 1902 that Lindsborg needed a Commercial Club, Water works, and electric lights, the town listened.

Unfortunately, it wouldn't happen in Bethany College President, Carl Swensson's lifetime. Dr. Swensson met an untimely death Feb. 16th. 1904 while on a trip in California. He wouldn't get to see the majestic Old Main fully lit up nor any other house or business in the rapidly growing town of Lindsborg.

March 6th, 1905 saw the passing of both bonds for water and lights. The News reported 355 citizens showed up to vote, compared to the usual 65 or 70. In order to "sell" it, the Commercial Club pulled up statistics from around the country mainly concerning fires and safety. In May the Mayor expressed that the intention was to run the power and water plant so as not to be a burden on taxpayers, and that Lindsborg was now a city of the 2nd Class, having more than 2000 citizens. By August 1905 the Lindsborg Telephone had three "hello" girls, or Operators. Boilers for the light and water plant

were in place and tested, and the fire company received its hose and nozzles for the updated hose wagon. This project also included fire hydrants throughout town adding to the water lines making Lindsborg a very progressive city.

It was reported on Sept. 15th that the electric lights were turned on for about an hour Tuesday at noon, but the real excitement came when the electric street arc lights were tried at nighttime, with a full moon in the background.

The next week Bethany College had been fitted up with electric light fixtures and was awaiting the power to be turned on. Out of the many post cards of Old Main, my personal favorite is the one featuring gold foil in the windows to simulate lights. Gröndal and others captured photos of the fully lit college Old Main as well.

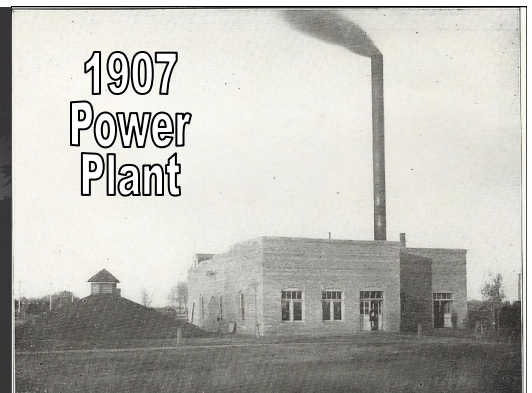
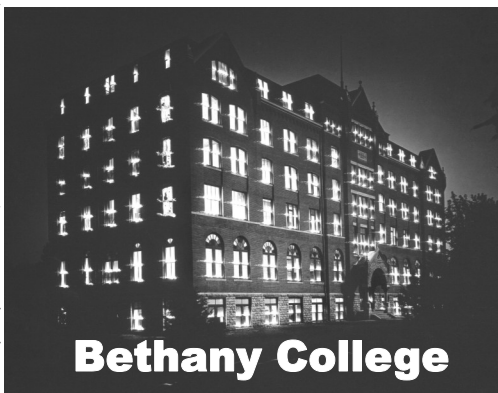
The water pressure exceeded their expectations too. At the farthest location, Bethany College, fire nozzles could shoot 75' in the air. They were able to shoot water over the six-story "old main" and for fun, setting an empty barrel on the ground to see how far they could send it sailing (it was reported around 100'). As houses and businesses got connected, tests would be preformed to see if the electrical current could handle it, one night in October it was noted that the power would run all night as a test, waterworks were running day and night by this time.

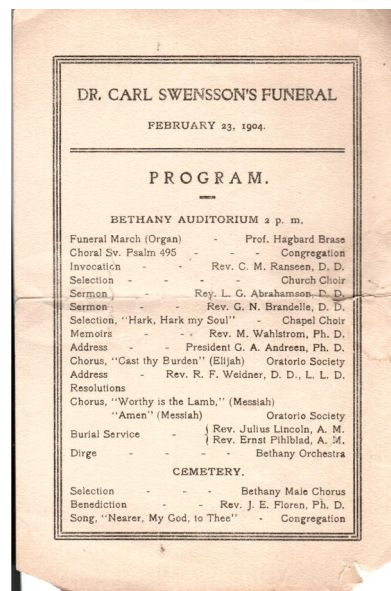
Finally, toward the end of October 1905 there was a water works celebration and Fall Festival, celebrating the accomplishments of the past two years. November saw an arc light go to the river bridge and power to the mill, more churches were

getting power, and mid-December, a time whistle was put in, it was set to blow at 7am, Noon, 1pm, and 6pm. It was stated to be accurate to the minute.

As a special treat, the city announced that the electric street lights would be kept lit all night Christmas Eve and thru Christmas morning, and encouraged store owners that have electric lights to also light them up Christmas morning.

The Lindsborg Power and Light Co. was originally located where Dauer Welding currently sits, on 1st and Union streets. A marker is on the walk path that once was RR tracks. It remained there until 1987, and was way ahead of most towns the size of Lindsborg.





SVHA 2018 Program Schedule

Once again our Program Chair, Elly Ostlind, has put together a spectacular and informative schedule this academic cycle, here are the final two.

- **March 13, 2018**—Woodturning of Preservation Woods, presented by John Buckner, North Newton, KS. The artist responsible for our collector ink pens turned out of Coronado Heights castle 80 year old timbers.
- **May 8, 2018**—"The Orphan Train" presented by Shaley George, Curator of the National Orphan Train Complex, Concordia KS.

Programs will be held 7:30 pm at:

Bethany Home Activity Room, 321 N. Chestnut, Lindsborg.

Refreshments will be served after the presentations. Hope you can join us!

Please cut along the dotted line

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

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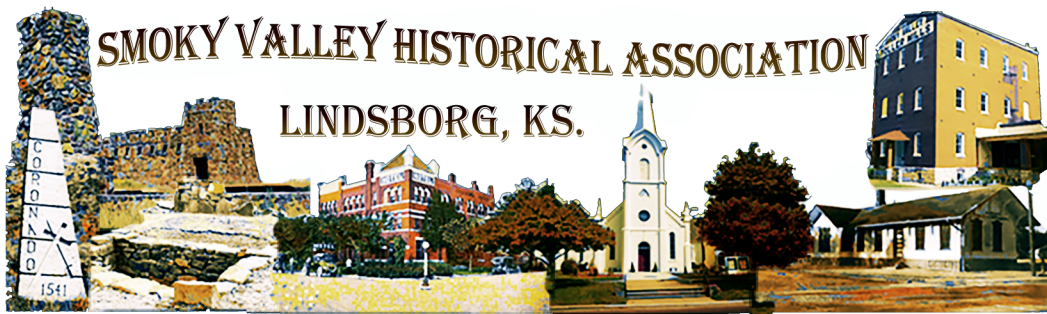
Memberships are renewed in the first quarter of each year



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!



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Interested?

We have two BOD positions open. Email to info@lindsborghistory.org

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 Us

You can e-mail us at:

info@lindsborghistory.org
 or mail to:

Smoky Valley Historical
 Association, Inc.

PO Box 255
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 Historical



TACK SÅ MYCKET!



SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
 LINDSBORG, KANSAS 67456

Meetings

We have bi-monthly meetings from September thru May and held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Bethany Home. All meetings are in the Activities Room. There are five meetings per academic year (Sept.-May). Program starts at 7:30 p.m. with topics of local historical interest. 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.

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.