

Vår Historia

SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



PUBLISHED
BI-MONTHLY



CONTENTS.

Wonderland	1
Wonderland, cont.	2
Wonderland	2
2018-'19 Program	3
Donations	3
SVHA Info	4

Many of you reading this is probably familiar with the Plaza Movie Theater, shown lower left. Though it closed 1983, it still harbors many memories as you walk past the Courtyard Gallery that keeps the building alive. Let's go back in time to where moving pictures were very new.

At the start of the 20th Century, "new" inventions were allowing films to travel, through Kinodromes, Vitascope, and synchroscopes. In those early years special showings were brought in to be played in Ling Auditorium, or sometimes photo play companies traveled around with their tent and set up near a business for a week or two. It also didn't take long for the Government to take advantage of these and send films nationwide to promote or spread a message. Teddy Roo-

LINDSBORG'S WONDERLAND

sevelt was the first President to have film shot to send out, even after his term ended in 1909.

February of 1909 Ed Weddle and Sidney Henman rented the Hagstrom building to make Lindsborg's first movie theater, they established the Wonderland Amusement Co. and had grand aspirations of expanding to other Kansas towns. The interior was gutted so the slant floor could be added, and Malm Bros. were contracted to design and decorate the interior.

Weddle and Henman traveled to Kansas City to purchase the most current projector, the Edison One-Pin, which promoted reducing flickering to a minimum. They fitted the theater with a stage at the rear with foot lights and Opera style seats, the kind you always feel rested in. The front of the

building was redesigned to add a ticket booth and easy entrance to get to your seats. In decorating the walls, Malm Bros. came up with an idea to sell advertising and paste their ads for patrons to view as they walked down the aisle. They also painted beautiful scenery reaching up to the ceiling. No expense was spared, the Wonderland had plush scarlet velvet and red and black deep pile rugs, it was lit with lamps adorning reverse painted sunflower shades.

March 20th, 1909 the doors opened and the first showing brought in 531 ten cent tickets and over 40 five cent admissions. The music which attracted

1912 Carry Nation Film

TO-NIGHT
(FRIDAY)
Wonderland Photoplay

The Life of
Carry A. Nation
HERSELF

In three reels, produced from book of her life written by herself.

The only moving pictures of the true life of Carry Nation in Her Famous Hatchet Crusade.

Admission 10cts.

She was the Gladiator of Vice, and Protector of Homes, Women and Children.

the crowd was super loud, provided by a 30 foot 2" gas pipe resting on a guys shoulder, while he beat it like a drum with two short pieces of gas pipe.

May of 1909 the boys brought in their first big act, the White Co. out of Chicago. This performance included Magicians, Illusionists, Ventriloquists, and Fire Kings. The stage behind the projection screen was used more in the early days, and provided pre show entertainment later in the years.

July of 1909 Mr. Packer set up a portable outdoor theater, called the Lyric Air Dome. It was located where the parking lot of First Bank of Kansas currently is, or 114 N. Main and was open for business by July. That summer the Wonderland closed due to heat, showing films in the Air Dome only. The next spring 1910 a permit was granted to Norland and Bengston to erect a proper air dome with the Palmquist Bros. building it. Weddle and Henman had sold the Wonderland to Oscar Norland and Roy Bengston in November 1909.

Not all shows were safe, as one 19 year old girl from Wichita found out while she was pretending to be a snake charmer, and was bit on

LINDSBORG'S WONDERLAND (CON'T)

the hand by a rattle-snake. It hung on for quite a few seconds and made the girl quite ill. Other hazards with these early theaters was the film, sometimes bursting into flames from the chemical emulsions used. These risks were offset by the magical photo plays brought in, the live entertainment, and seeing events that one could only read about in the newspaper, like the 1913 Olympics held in Stockholm.

Often college stu-

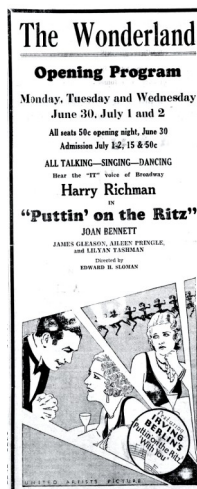


dents or volunteers would provide the music while films were playing, as these were still silent.

Oscar Norland had sole ownership 1912, but upon Bengston's return bought it back.

Bengston owned it from 1913-1940, and helped it grow when Paramount came in with a contract, that was a game changer with big films and sometimes guest live appearances to promote a film. The air dome closed sometime around 1913, and in 1918 a wind storm came up and blew the remains down, the rest of the fence was torn down leaving a vacant lot. Popcorn was introduced Sept. 1919 thanks to "Boots" Anderson securing a "Butter-Kist" popper.

The biggest change though came in 1930. During the month of June, a complete remodel took place. New lobby, projection room, leather seats, masonite walls, new carpet, and a Phonograph, yes, sound was being added! The first "talking" movie



was Puttin' on the Ritz. Can you imagine, 20 years of picture shows with no sound? The dramatic impact silent film, along with piano or live narration had was undeniable though.

Roy Bengston sold the Wonderland somewhere around 1940 to George Hartmann and Earl Jameson from KC, who changed it's name to the Plaza, fitting in with the chain of theaters they were building. For the next decade the theater was the place to be, as television hadn't been introduced yet. In 1950 it once again sold to Commonwealth Amusements, who had it until 1955. They sold it to Al Lambert of Smith Center who also only kept it 5 or 6 years, selling to Dickinson Theaters, who over a course of 15 years kept it going under different managers.

April 1975 Lindsborg's Smoky Valley Development Co. bought it to get local ownership back, but proved to not be financially sound and closed it. Wayne and Malita Forsberg bought and transformed it in 1983-'84, opening the art-mall 11-11-1984. ☺☺☺

Coronado Heights Timber Pens



Still Available!

\$30.00 +tax

Available at:

Old Mill Museum 120 E. Mill St.—Lindsborg, KS. And SVHA meetings



SVHA 2018 - 2019 Program Schedule

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

- Sept. 11, 2018:** History of the Hospital – at Present and the Future.
Larry Van Der Wege, CEO, Lindsborg Community Hospital
- Nov. 13, 2018:** Lindsborg, KS - Celebrating 150 Years.
Susan Achenbach and Betty Nelson, *and others.*
- Jan. 8, 2019:** Kanopolis Dam's Affect on the Smoky Valley
Brock DeLong, Park Ranger
- March 12, 2019:** Tuttle Creek Dam: How did it affect Lindsborg area people?
Kevin Larson, Teacher, Pastor
- May 14, 2019:** Broadway RFD – Oldest Outdoor Theatre in Kansas
Eric Lundstrom

President, Tim Stewart - 785/819-4806

Program Chair, Elly Ostlind - 785/212-0516.

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

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

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Memberships are renewed in the first quarter of each year

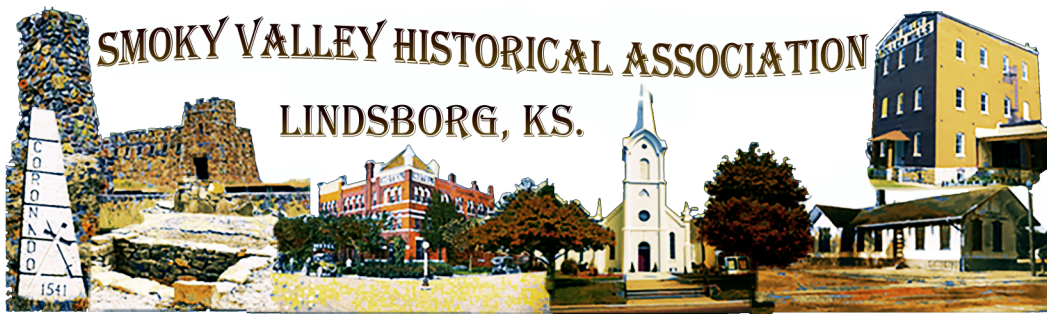


Smoky Valley Historical Association is a non-profit organization and is registered under 501(c)3

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

Lindsborg, KS 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.

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.

Is a member of the
SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, Inc.
which has headquarters in Lindsborg, Kansas

Was born in a log cabin	()
Was born in Sweden	()
Great-grandparents came from Sweden	()
Forefathers were here before the Swedes	()
Great-grandparents homesteaded in the Valley	()
Attended one-room school	()
Attended Bethany	()
Has worked at The Old Mill in operation	()
Has sung in the Messiah Chorus	()

TACK SÅ MYCKET!



SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
LINDSBORG, KANSAS 67456