

Vår Historia

SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



JOHN RUNDSTRÖM, M.D. A. J. E. LINDBERGH, M.D.
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THE PIONEER DOCTOR WHO COULD SING

Just months after Lindsborg was given its name in 1869, a doctor, his wife, and newborn daughter made their way from Mississippi to settle on a plot of land a couple miles north-west of what would become Lindsborg.

John Rundström was born in Röstanga, Skåne, Sweden November 17th, 1835. He was formally trained as a Swedish Physician, educated at Uppsala University Faculty of Medicine. Shortly before coming to America in 1866, John married Maria Cornell in Sundsvall, Sweden.

In America, John and Maria located down in Mississippi, where their first daughter, Inez Coelina was born October of 1869. As soon she was able to travel, the family came to Kansas where Dr. Rundström had learned about a new Swedish settlement. He bought an 80 acre plot and continued his profession as a Physician from his homestead. There was a stone fort on it, built somewhere around 1865 to fight off Native Americans, but served well as a house. He would have a two-story house with a tower built around 1883, using supplies imported from Chicago. The tower was designed to oversee his vineyard and other crops, as he added another 120 acres to his farm.

The fort was one mile west of the church that Pastor Olof Olsson was building, and the Rundströms quickly

became friends with the local Swedes. The Olsson family, along with a large group of Swedes, arrived just four months prior to this location.

Major Holmberg, who came to the area south of Lindsborg in 1868, was quick to set up a general store, post office and be appointed Justice of the Peace, his store was named Sveadahl. Holmberg's intent was to make this a town, so when Kansas Governor James Harvey appointed Dr. Rundström as Special County Clerk, along with John Johnson and Samuel Shields as County Commissioners, to establish townships and set up an election for McPherson County, Sveadahl was chosen as the temporary seat for the meeting. At that first election, March 24th, 1870, Dr.

Rundström was also elected County Coroner. Maj. Holmberg was not well liked, within a few months the county seat was officially moved to Lindsborg, where it stayed until 1873.

November 22nd, 1873, John and Maria welcomed Ellen Johanna to the family, giving four year old Inez a baby sister.

Pastor Olof and his wife, Anna Lisa were musically inclined and wanted to bring that to the church, the problem was, no other Swedes could read music, that is until Dr. John Rundström came.



JOHN RUNDSTRÖM
Co. Clerk Coroner
(Spec.) 1870 1870-1872

THE PIONEER DOCTOR WHO COULD SING {CON'T}

The Olsson's had numbered each note as a way to teach the congregation the songs, but Dr. Rundström thought it might be better to just teach them how to read music. He built a blackboard and helped teach, along with Mrs. Olsson, how to read music. Dr. Rundström had a natural bass singing voice, pastor Olsson was an organist and Anna Lisa also a gifted vocalist. Soon, the Bethany Choir was organized. Pastor Olsson had also attended Uppsala University, graduating 1863, it is not known if Olsson and Rundström had known each other from the university in Sweden or not.

Both girls were baptized February of 1876. It appeared that Maria traveled back to Sweden, and a church register lists her death as April 18, 1877, no other information was available. In 1888, Dr. Rundström sold a horse and donated the funds to Bethany College in order to start the "Maria Charlotte Rundström Prize", a scholarship awarded to a lady student who in judgement Bethany faculty felt best deserved it. This was an annual scholarship that lasted for many years after.

Dr. Rundström was an advocate for Bethany Academy, and was a member of the choir in the first Messiah performance. His friendship with Carl and Alma Swensson mirrored the relationship with the Olssons. After becoming a single parent to his two daughters, they received the best education and utmost attention, the girls were his true legacy.

The doctor practiced out of his home, and made house calls, sometimes as far away as Marquette. During his early years, he would ride bareback on an Indian pony for these house calls. When he would get to the patient's home he would hold the reins and close the door on them. People like Daniel Gottfrid and Ernst Skarstedt kept journals and shared their experiences about Dr. Rundström. Skarstedt had mentioned that the doctor was a mystic, interested in hypnotism. Skarstedt almost accepted an offer to be hypnotized but got nervous and declined.

Physicians in the 18th and early 19th Century were also botanists, as plants became medicine. Dr. Rundström was no exception, and he also became fascinated in insects and minerals. The Bethany College museum housed some of the minerals donated by the doctor and he spent the summer of 1884 collecting insect and plant specimens for Washburn College Biological Survey of Kansas.

1879 was a big year for Lindsborg, first railroad to town, incorporated as a third-class city, and the arrival of Carl Swensson. Dr. Rundström had recently officially became a U.S. citizen with his naturalization, and decided to build a drugstore next to the Union Hotel. He quickly expanded by buying out P.W. Lindstrom's drug business, then in 1881 buying and moving to Peterson & Anderson's drug store on Lincoln St. It was in the back section of the Carlson block on Main and Lincoln. Dr. Rundström was also the first to get a permit to prescribe and sell alcohol in Lindsborg. Dr. Curtis and others were right behind him though.

With patent medicine becoming more accessible, Rundström and Dr. Curtis's father, S.Y. Curtis, joined in advertising certain medicines. Interesting, since their drug stores were a half block from each other.

As Inez and Ellen grew older, Dr. Rundström made a decision to build a home in town, in the Normal (college) edition. He had previously spared no expense on the farm house, and found himself in quite a bit of debt. He had also started buying land in Sharon Springs, KS in 1887 and set up a practice there. By 1890 he sold the old farm to his previous servant named Mary Anderson. In 1895 Rundström got a degree at Central Medical College in St. Joseph, MO., adding to his medical education.

Some of his other properties were abandoned and later foreclosed, but Dr. Rundström felt the need to travel, which took him to Tustin, Michigan where his daughter, Ellen and her family had lived before moving to Minnesota. By 1909 the doctor was in Saint Peter, MN, where Inez lived. He became a Director of the Eureka Development Company, which had purchased 3,000 acres of land in Cuba. Dr. Rundström had bought 40 acres himself. It is believed he spent a few years in Cuba, but ultimately retired back in Saint Peter, living with his daughter, Inez.

Dr. John Rundström died October 24th, 1921 at the age of 85. He was placed to rest at the Resurrection Cemetery in Saint Peter, Minnesota.

His oldest daughter, Inez became a Professor of Mathematics and had a ladies dorm named after her with 47+ years with the college.

His daughter Ellen married Dr. Olof Werner and had five children. Ellen was a music teacher and the entire family had musical talent. Each child being able to play instruments. The girls truly were his legacy.



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fort turned barn



Farm House Built 1883

Upcoming SVHA Programs

May 13th, 2025

Civil War in Kansas

Dr. Merle Hodges



July 8th, 2025

Lindsborg's Elmwood Cemetery History

Judy Pilewski



Sept. 9th, 2025

The History of Bee Keeping

Eric Peterson



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: _____

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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!



SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Meetings/Programs

Smoky Valley Historical Association hosts bi-monthly meetings on the odd months, held on the second Tuesday, unless otherwise noted. Programs start at 7:30 pm with topics of local historical interest. Location is listed on page three along 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 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 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.

Contact info:

Email or visit our website:

smokyvalleyhistory@gmail.com
www.smokyvalley-history.org

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

"History preservation and education"

TACK SÅ MYCKET!



SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
 LINDSBORG, KANSAS 67456



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.