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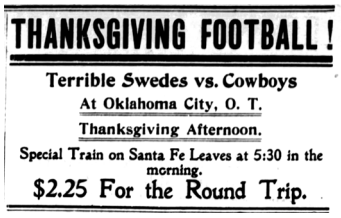
Vår Historia

Smoky Valley Historical Association Newsletter



THANKSGIVING FOOTBALL !

Terrible Swedes vs. Cowboys
At Oklahoma City, O. T.
Thanksgiving Afternoon.
Special Train on Santa Fe Leaves at 5:30 in the morning.
$2.25 For the Round Trip.

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CONTENTS.

Football	1
Football	2
Photos	3
SVHA Programs	3
Donations	3
SVHA Info	4

Gridiron Football in Lindsborg

Once again, football season is in full swing, and fans take it for granted that the games will be played, with teams ranging from youth to pro athlete.

That wasn't always the case, American football had to make drastic changes in order to be allowed in most schools.

December 1891 the Western Interstate University Football Association formed which included Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska. That next fall Bethany College joined in with the other post high school institutions and added a football program. No games were scheduled, but by April of 1893 a match, or exhibition game was played against McPherson College, which Bethany won 28-8.

The real season started with the October 28th game against Kansas Wesleyan University (KWU), and it was an eye-opener for Bethany, losing 0-42. November 13th a match game against the two was set, no score was reported but it was stated that the Bethany team has improved. Improve they did, the December games included Bethany's first team defeating the Johnstown Hayseeds 42-0 and their second team defeating Lindsborg City 18-0.

Deaths and serious injuries were being reported all over the country, and Emporia State Normal School was one of the first in Kansas to ban the sport. On Thanksgiving Day 1893, six players nationwide lost their lives. The demand for more safety fueled the bans. For Bethany and KWU the ban came shortly after their October 13th, 1894 game where Bethany won 24-12. There were 700 people in attendance, showing how popular the sport had become. Banning collegiate football didn't stop the sport from happening, and November 1895 Lindsborg public schools prohibited football from being played on school grounds.

Spring of 1899 Bethany rumored that the ban was lifted, so a team was assembled and practices started, one month later the Board reinstated the ban. Later that year, it was reported that there had been 15 deaths and 200 serious injuries during the season.

Finally, seven years later, Bethany lifted the ban March of 1901, thanks to the newly established Bethany College Athletic Association, which dedicated funds to build a new athletic park. October 7th, the grand opening and first game against the Kansas State Agricul-

GRIDIRON FOOTBALL IN LINDSBORG {CON'T}

tural College team (K-State) was played, admission was 25¢. That was the only game for 1901, but it started the era of the "Terrible Swedes".

Famed KU Quarterback, Benjamin "Bennie" Owen, was hand-picked by Dr. Carl Swennson to come coach the Swedes, after his success coaching the Washburn and Michigan teams. The 1902 season resulted in eight wins, one loss, and one tie, and total scoring was 371 to 22 for the year. Scoring was different back then, as stated in the 1893 rulebook: *Score obtained by touchdown (6), goal from field kick (5), touchdown failing goal (4), safety by opponents (2).* An interesting example of this was the 1902 Bethany-Ottawa game of 17-5, where Ottawa's only score was a 50 yard field kick. Two major upsets were Bethany winning 105-0 against Hoisington and later in the season 72-0 against Washburn-Medics.

The 1902 season gave boys from the public school football fever, and some made a dummy stuffed with hay and hung it from a tree limb to practice tackling. Thanksgiving Day Bethany played the Haskell Indians in Kansas City, with a 11-0 win. Special train runs were scheduled for the longer distant games.

December 1st, 1902, President Swensson and his wife hosted a dinner for all the football players and volunteers to show their gratitude for the sport at their home. Lindsborg photographer B.G. Gröndal made a large team photo labeled "The Champions of the Southwest" and mailed it out to every college in the league, on the back had the year's stats to show off a little.

The 1903 season resulted in seven wins, one loss, and one tie. One post season loss (0-23) against LaHarpe happened November 19th, Bennie himself played QB. The Thanksgiving game changed and was played in Oklahoma against the OU Cowboys, with Bethany winning 12-10.

In 1904 Bethany won all seven games on the schedule! One of the greatest plays was October 22 against Fairmount, Quince Banbury recovered a Fairmount fumble and ran it back 84 yards for a TD. That score ended with 17-0.

October 21st, 1904 Lindsborg High School played McPherson HS in an exhibition game. The first mention of high school football for Lindsborg.

Fun fact, Bethany College basketball and baseball were both labeled "Terrible Swedes" during (and after) this time.

June 1905 Augustana Synod banned football at all Swedish Lutheran Colleges, and Bennie Owen announced he had taken a coaching job at Oklahoma University! That September, Bethany announced the ban and the cry rang out as the "Terrible Swedes" era had just ended. Or had it? A few local business men, alumni and current Bethany players banded together and formed "The Lindsborg Terrible Swedes". Since this new team was not collegiate, all games were played on just about any day but Saturday.

The new "Terrible Swedes" fulfilled the Thanksgiving game against OU, now coached by Owen. Lindsborg lost 0-29, but 3,000 were in attendance, 500 from Lindsborg alone! Special train runs were scheduled for this, and the Bethany band and rooters were there to show support.

Lindsborg High School finally got a trial schedule for football in 1908, while Bethany staged a demonstration and march that October. The student body paraded not only down Main St yelling for the return of football, but also marched to as many Professors' homes as they could. The townspeople were in favor of this march, as they wanted football back too.

LHS continued to play football, including a Thanksgiving game against Canton in 1912. In 1946 they went undefeated and they had many winning seasons.

Finally, September 1915 Bethany reinstated their football program! Students were lined up ready to play. They have never faced another ban since.

In 1920 another Lindsborg team formed, the Bethany Academy squad. October 9th they played their first game against Marquette HS, who by the way dominated high school football for the past five years, resulting in a 0-21 loss. To be fair, Bethany Academy only had one practice as a team prior to the game. Their name changed to the "Bethany Preps", and they won the next game 27-0. The next year A. Anderson ran 80 yards for a TD against Gypsum City, giving the Preps a win 13-0.

Skipping ahead, I can't talk football and not mention the "Kessinger Years". Hall Of Famer Ted Kessinger came to Bethany College prior to the 1976 season and coached until 2003, a full 28 seasons. During that time the team never saw a losing year, overall with 219 wins, 57 losses, and 1 tie. In 1979 Kessinger stated he had a squad of 109 players, which meant 1 in 4 Bethany male students were on the football team! Football is a staple in fall entertainment, so either hit the gridiron or hit the stands.

1903

FOOTBALL!

WASHBURN

vs.

THE TERRIBLE SWEDES

Saturday, Nov. 14.

The game that decides the College Championship of Kansas. Tickets and carriage spaces on sale at Stansfield's.

Upcoming SVHA Programs

Nov. 12th, 2024 **Lindsborg Pioneer Doctors: Who Were They?**

Tim Stewart

Jan. 14th, 2025 **Swedish Kurbit Painting**

Carla Wilson

March 11th, 2025 **Kansas Crimes of the 1800s**

John Burchill

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 deductable.

Please mail to P.O. Box listed above.

Thank You!

SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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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:

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or mail to:

Smoky Valley Historical Association
PO Box 255
Lindsborg, KS 67456

"History preservation and education"

TACK SÅ MYCKET!

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.

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

"like" us on facebook

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