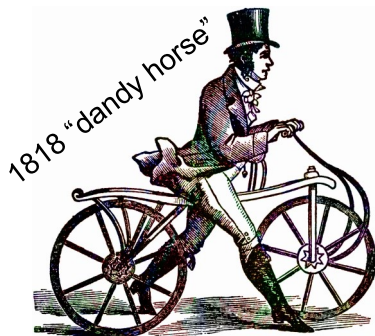


# Vår Historia

## SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

### WALKING ON WHEELS



Annie Londonderry



PUBLISHED  
BI-MONTHLY

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“Walking on wheels” is how bicycling was described in an 1879 Lindsborg Localist newspaper article. Velocipedes, penny-farthing aka high wheel, wooden-horse, swiftwalker, the bicycle has had many names in its origins, but the safety bicycle (*equal size wheels, chain driven*) invented 1885 is what opened the floodgates to bicycling for all.

During the 1870s and early 1880s, bicycling was purely designed for men, and professional men at that. They were expensive, ranging from \$12 to \$150 in 1881. In today's equivalence that would range from \$370 to \$4,611.00. There were also an estimated 330 different types of bicycles in 1881, and around 800 patents tied to them. One of the biggest contributions to bicycles came from America, and that was the rubber tire. England, France, and Germany supplied most of the innovations though.

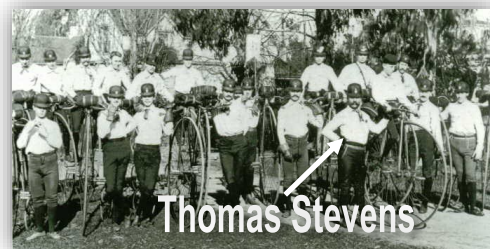
Lindsborg's first noted (*listed in the newspaper*) bicycle came in 1880 and it didn't mention who owned it, just the fact that Lindsborg now has a bicycle.

The League of American Wheelmen held their first annual conference 1881 in Boston, it was reported that there were 800 bicyclists, or wheelmen as they were called. The news was picked up by the AP and sent to every little newspaper in the

U.S., only they had a typo and put “8,000” instead of 800. That is one way to increase popularity nationwide. Chapters of American Wheelmen started forming in Salina and McPherson in the mid 1880s, and many doctors, teachers, and professors were buying a bicycle. I must point out that bicycling during this time was not just for recreation, but alternate transportation too. Prof. Eugene Everest of McPherson rode to Lindsborg, Lyons, and even Wichita on his high wheel frequently, and even won a riding contest in 1886 put on by the Kansas Wheelmen in Junction City.

Then there is Thomas Stevens from Tecumseh, KS. Thomas got the idea to ride across the USA from San Francisco to Boston, which was extended to riding all around the world. The trip started April 1884 and ended January 1887 and produced many books detailing his adventures. A decade later, June 1894, Annie “Londonderry” Kopchovsky made claim to have been the first woman to ride around the world, though that trip lasted a little over one year and was more of a publicity stunt. Both people are worth researching.

In Lindsborg, both Dr. J.B. Curtis and druggist Eben Carlsson had bicycles in 1885, but the explosion hadn't hit yet.



## WALKING ON WHEELS {CON'T}

Prof. Everest and two others rode to Lindsborg May 13th, 1886 to attend the Bethany Normal Institute commencement exercises. As mentioned earlier, riding long distances wasn't uncommon. Elmer Jenkins of Abilene rode to Boston, it took three months. John Eberhardt rode the 22 miles from Lindsborg to Salina in one hour and fifty minutes, setting a new time record for their club.

Both Austria and Britain incorporated bicycle units in their military between 1886 and 1888. France invented a folding bicycle for their infantry special unit also in 1886. It wasn't until the 1890s before US military formed a bicycle unit used for cross-country troop transport. These wheelmen would travel 800 to 1900 miles on their missions, the longest was from Montana to St. Louis and took 40 days. Though motorized transport replaced most military bicycle units, some are still active today.

The invention of the pneumatic tire was a game changer, especially on the safety bicycle. It opened up markets for both women and children. County fairs had incorporated bicycle races with the popularity growing. With new models constantly coming out, that meant used bicycle ads started appearing in the newspaper. One 1885 listing mentioned the high wheel was ridden "not more than 200 miles" and was purchased for \$130 but would take \$90. Still a lot of money for those times.

Bicycles were a nuisance to some, often scared horses or ran into pedestrians as steering was difficult and the early bicycles didn't have brakes. Lindsborg passed Ordinance No. 224 in 1892, prohibiting bicycles on sidewalks. Six years later this ad appeared as a reminder. In 1901 No. 385 passed which expanded fines and limited sidewalk fines to downtown, and 1905 passed No. 474 which added the first bicycle tags and lighting for night riding. There are most likely more ordinances pertaining to bicycles, but these three set the standard.

Most bicycle sales were by individuals becoming agents for a particular brand, like Prof. Eberhardt, who became an agent for Waverly bicycles. Elmer Allen had the first shop in Lindsborg in

1898. In 1896 two young lads named Willie and Manuell Hagstrom of West Kentucky built a safety bicycle out of cultivator wheels, they would have a huge impact on Lindsborg in the coming years. Willie, or William as he grew older, was more than a farmer, he was a dreamer that had the mechanical skills to make those dreams come to life. In 1900 he opened his first bicycle repair shop but quickly grew and moved a few times during the

first year. He became an agent for Schmelzer bicycles, which featured coaster brakes that same year as

well. By 1902 William had convinced his brothers to sell the livestock at their farm and join him, changing their name to "Hagstrom Bros." The brothers started a bicycle rental too, occasionally having one or two get stolen. Theft was a serious offence, landing Ernest Adams in prison for stealing a bicycle in Lindsborg.

Other stores in town started carrying bicycles too as the popularity grew in Lindsborg. Sears had the \$8.98 Ladies Edgemere bicycle in 1902 and had been offering bicycles since their first catalog in 1894.

As the motorized vehicles took over society's main transportation, bicycles continued to grow in popularity. There is a sense of freedom when riding, and learning to ride is something you never forget. What once was railroad tracks are now bicycle and walking paths in many places. Lindsborg has the Vålkommen and Meadowlark trails, and if you need a bicycle you can rent one through the bike-share program using the Movatic smartphone app. Then there are the quadricycles at the Hemslojd if you prefer four wheels. Whatever the reason need be, get on your bikes and ride.

**BICYCLES**

I am prepared to build a first class wheel for general use from \$18 up.

**RACERS** for \$45, equal to the best \$100 wheel on the market.

**PUNCTURINE** is a guarantee against all leaks and punctures of any kind.

All kinds of repair work done.

**Elmer Allen.**

With Bengtson & Lewin.

**SICK BICYCLES**

Get just the right treatment if you bring them to me. Finest tools and materials. New cones and cups turned. Shotguns rebored. Dead shot on leaky tires. Don't be afraid to bring your high grade wheel to me. Shop at Train Bros.

**William Hagstrom.**

**Notice To Bicycle Riders.**

Your attention is carefully called to Ordinance No. 224, "an ordinance prohibiting bicycle riding on sidewalks." The penalty is \$5.00 for each offense. This ordinance will be enforced to the letter from date.

AXEL WALLERSTEDT,  
City Marshal.

Go to **Lander & Nelson....**

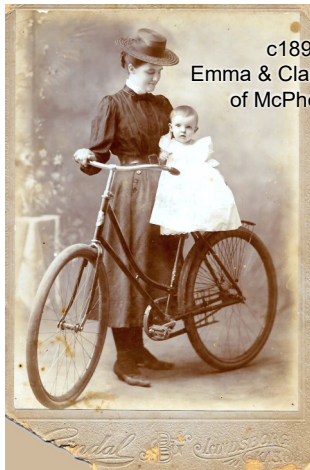
John Deere Sulky Plows.  
X Ray Sulky Plows. ✕  
Osborne Sulky Rakes...  
McCormick Sulky Rakes.

Winona and Crescent Wagons, Racine and Parry Buggies, Sampson Windmills.

**Pumps, Hardware, Stoves and Tinware.**

**Lander & Nelson....**

Lindsborg, Kansas

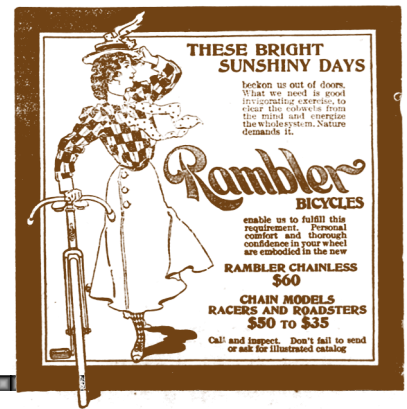


c1898  
Emma & Clara Nelson  
of McPherson



Let me tell you what I think of bicycling... I think it has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world. It gives women a feeling of freedom and self-reliance. I stand and rejoice every time I see a woman ride by on a wheel...the picture of free, untrammelled womanhood.

Susan B. Anthony, interviewed by Nellie Bly, *The New York World*, Feb. 2, 1896.



## Upcoming SVHA Programs

**July 9th, 2024**

*Celebrating Fred Briggs Coronado Heights contributions at 7 pm, please join us!*

**Pioneers On The Prairie—A History of Marquette, KS**

*Allen Lindsfors*



**Sept. 10th, 2024**

**G.N. Malm Stencils**

*Brian Freeman*



**Nov. 12th, 2024**

**Handel's Messiah**

*Dr. Mark Lucas*



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**



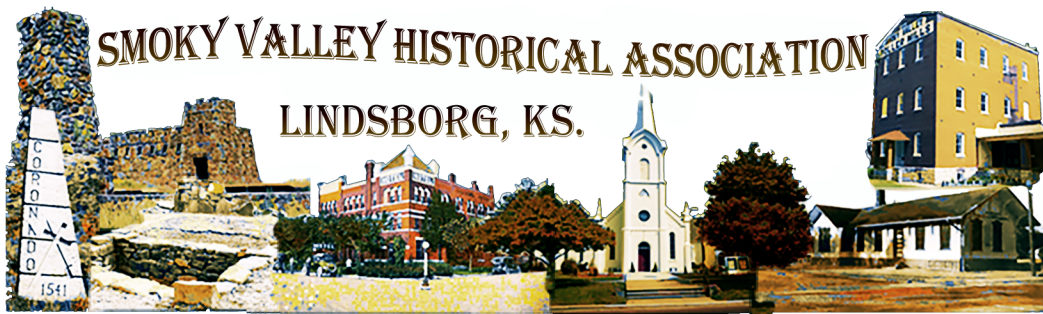
Smoky Valley Historical Association is a non-profit organization and is registered under 501(c)3

All Membership Donations, Bequests, Trusts, and Legacy Donations are tax deductible.

Please mail to P.O. Box listed above.

**Thank You!**





## SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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:

email us at:  
[smokyvalleyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:smokyvalleyhistory@gmail.com)

or mail to:

**SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**  
 PO BOX 255  
 LINDSBORG, KS 67456

**WWW.SMOKYVALLEYHISTORY.ORG**



SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
 LINDSBORG, KANSAS 67456

**Bumper Stickers**  
**Available at Old Mill!**

### 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.*



*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*