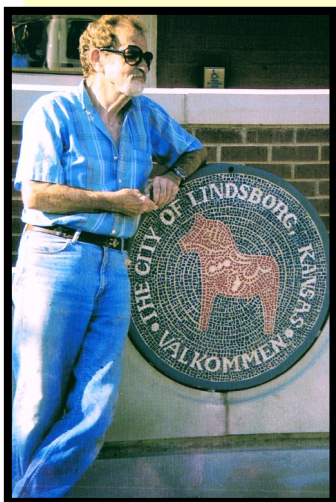


Vår Historia

SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

JOHN WHITFIELD'S LEGACY



PUBLISHED
BI-MONTHLY

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There aren't too many places you can go in Lindsborg and NOT run into or be near an art sculpture or mosaic created by artist John Whitfield. John's art expands much farther than Lindsborg though, and it would be improbable to list them all.

John C. Whitfield was born in Sialkot, Punjab, India December 13th, 1927 to Frederick and Beulah, missionaries from the United Presbyterian Church. John had two older and one younger siblings, all of which were born in Topeka, KS., as his mother, Beulah B. Chalmers (maiden), grew up on a farm near Tecumseh, just outside of Topeka. His father, Frederick A., was born in Handsacre, a village in Staffordshire England, where he grew up around a father that was a potter. Frederick and Beulah were married in Staffordshire England September 22nd, 1919, ending a three year stretch of Beulah's missionary work in Cairo, Egypt. Beulah had first served in Cairo in 1911 for one year and came back to America to teach as Dean of Women at the Kansas City University. Lieutenant Frederick Whitfield served in the English Royal Air Force during both World Wars, as a pilot in WWI and trainer in WWII.

John's first voyage to America was when he was just two years old, and those early years saw many more

trips. It wasn't until John was eleven years old, or 1939, that the family moved back to settle. The Whitfield's chose Manhattan, KS. His father, Frederick was on a one year furlow, Frederick, Jr. was in college, his sister Margaret was a senior in H.S., John and his younger brother, William (Howard), were in grade school. Margaret's artistic ability won her a \$50 prize her senior year when she entered two landscapes in Lindsborg's Midwest Art Exhibition, at the time she did not intend to attend Bethany College, so passed up the scholarship. As it would turn out she did attend Bethany one year, studying under Berger Sandzen.

John continued to travel with his family off and on until 1942, and at 22 years old, became an official US citizen in 1949, two years after marrying high school sweetheart, Evelyn Akers November 14th, 1947. After their marriage, John and Evelyn settled in Topeka, John spent most of the 1940s and 50s working at gas stations, either as an attendant or mechanic. Evelyn had attended Washburn and K-State



Evelyn Akers
Business Manager Topeka High School

JOHN WHITFIELD'S LEGACY {CON'T}

post H.S. and found clerical work after their marriage. John too had gone back to school in 1960, the first year he aimed toward an English Major, as he thought of becoming a writer, he was drawn though to building artistically and studied art, receiving a B.F.A. degree from Washburn in 1964.

Still in the 1950s, John and Evelyn had two daughters, Susan and Janice, so juggled family, work, art, and education. John would work at night and attend classes during the day.

In 1965 the Whitfields moved out to the family farm in Tecumseh, near Topeka. Evelyn shifted her career in 1968 when she became the business manager for John's studio and commissioned works. While John was developing his style in several art mediums, he also taught art at Washburn throughout the 1970s.

The Brunswick Hotel in Lindsborg was converted to an art gallery in 1970, and John was one of the many artists that had a piece on display, one of his metal sculptures.

In 1972, John had a coronary and was advised to slow down on large art projects. John was creating metal art, among other mediums, using random pieces and his own fabrication. His bronze work entailed fabricated copper with a bronze overlay, no casting was ever used.

John's work was highly recognized and shown in many states, and many times in Lindsborg. He became close friends to such artists as Lester Raymer and Ray Kahmeyer, and they would constantly ask when he was going to pack up and move to Lindsborg, in 1985 John and Evelyn finally did.



Even during the '60s, John painted watercolors (*just for fun*), made intricate metal birds, or commissions to design and make wedding bands, which he truly enjoyed. He also specialized in liturgical pieces, like the cross and bust pictured here. There are many churches and hospitals



that display a sculpture by John Whitfield, whether in bronze or concrete. One of the largest is titled "Vital Balance" and was originally placed at Topeka's Menninger Foundation 1983, in 2012 it was relocated to their new hospital in Houston, TX. This two-ton bronze abstract sculpture stood 21' tall.

When Smoky Valley Historical Association re-acquired Coronado Heights in 1987 from Saline County, John offered to design and build a monument. It was 18' tall and constructed out of concrete and rebar. The original quote for materials, (*as there was no charge for labor*), was \$470. Several volunteers helped build it, and the actual cost was \$983.67. SVHA had a dedication and picnic for the volunteers September 18th, 1988. On the back, John had written "A Place To Share", a fitting title. This past spring a large project to straighten and secure the monument was completed.

Mosaic city symbol, "St Lucia" at St Bridget Catholic Church, inverted cross marking the first church location, Rune Stones at Riverside Park, "Florence Nightengale's Lamp" at the hospital, or the Valkommen Trail marker, these are just a few legacies left by John Whitfield in Lindsborg.

John was at one with nature, loving all animals, plants, and flowers, and their uniqueness. His sculptures are also one of a kind and into each he put a piece of his life, a design he created and brought to life with his own hands.

Both John and Evelyn were good cooks, and dinner was family time, a time for conversation and good food, often made with middle eastern spices that John was born in to.

John passed away May 14th, 2011, and his wife Evelyn passed January 2nd, 2018. His legacy, house and private chapel, are kept alive through their daughter Susan Whitfield-Harding though.



LOCAL CHARACTER: Lindsborg artist John Whitfield constructed a private chapel next to his home out of odds and ends, including jukebox parts.



Constructing "A Place to Share" monument at Coronado Heights



Constructing the 1st Church Marker

Upcoming SVHA Programs

Sept. 13th, 2022

Bethany College: Latest Updates

Dr. Beth Mauch, President



Nov. 8th, 2022

The Santa Fe Trail Lives On! 1821-2022

Linda Colle, Santa Fe Trail Association



Jan. 10th, 2023

Swedish Heritage:

Gotland Sheep Inspiring Swedish Textiles in the Smoky Valley

Dr. Anna Erickson and Laura Hultquist



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

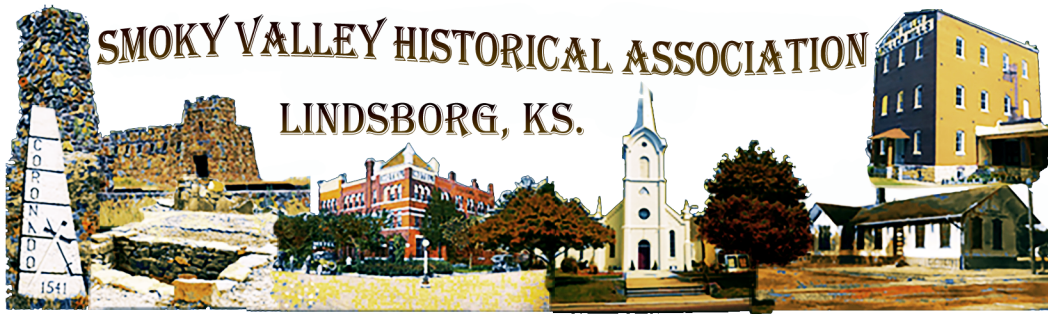


Smoky Valley Historical Association is a non-profit organization and is registered under 501(c)3

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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We currently have one board position open



Meetings/Programs

Smoky Valley Historical Association hosts bi-monthly meetings on the odd months, held on the second Tuesday. 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 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.

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:

info@lindsborghistory.org

or mail to:

SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
 PO BOX 255
 LINDSBORG, KS 67456

WWW.SMOKYVALLEYHISTORY.ORG



TACK SÅ MYCKET!



SMOKY VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
 LINDSBORG, KANSAS 67456

Bumper Stickers
Available at Old Mill!

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