

Barton County Historical Society

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<http://bartoncountymuseum.org>

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The Village Crier

Barton County Historical Society

December 2012, Volume 21, Number 1

Museum Memos

This year marks exciting accomplishments and everyone deserves a standing ovation! With the leadership (and prodding) of Joe Boley and fueled by a grant through Golden Belt Community Foundation, we have new signs—everywhere! Our “stuff” has been reexamined and researched further in the process. Bushnell Memorial funds will provide another much needed building as well. Committing to our byway has continued and we have dreams and plans festering. And all this has continued while we have maintained a full schedule of programs, meetings, and activities. Grateful appreciation to everyone, especially our Museum Committee, who made this such a success story!

Keith and Elaine Mull, Marlene Ernsting, James Barnhill, and William T. King, have recently sent Contributor memberships for 2013. Your renewal for next year will be welcomed at any time now. Current dues and your expiration date are listed on this newsletter, but annual meeting may vote for increases-so we'll let you sneak in under the wire! We stretch each penny to make everything possible happen, your support remains critical!

The nominating committee will present the following candidates for a two year term: 2nd VP, Joe Boley, Treasurer, John Edmonds, directors, Karen Naylor, Marlene Ernsting, Barbara Logan, and Ken Shelton. Nominations from the floor for any office will be accepted at the annual meeting. Following the election, the new officers and directors will take office. They would welcome your suggestions for programs or projects. History happens every day so you can help make some.

Migrations-Stories Of The Crossroads will continue as we take another look at greyhound racing. Our editor/researcher, Karen Neuforth, has provided you with another excellent part of our little known past. Fascinating stuff!

We enter 3 parades each year: Ellinwood After Harvest Festival, Hoisington Labor Day, and Great Bend's Holiday Parade (just after Thanksgiving).

Holiday theme this year was movies about Christmas. Well, Miss Buttercup earned still another blue ribbon as we constructed the high heel, the leg, the lampshade and the light. Ralphie carried a bb gun-but managed not to put his eye out! Nearly all the parts were found in our own attic, of course! Maybe we will start calling it the treasure trove; it would really put a positive spin on at least one hiding place here.

It is hard to imagine that the coming year will be even better than this one has been, but thanks to everyone who contributes talent, skills, time, and effort, as well as membership contributions anything is possible! You are what make it all happen.

Remember “Ghosts” is nearly here. Check out our new signs while celebrating with entertainment, exhibits, activities, and COOKIES. And enjoy the whole season as we all count our blessings. I count each one of you as one of mine.

Beverly Komarek, Executive Director

GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST !!!



A Christmas train runs through a Christmas Village at the museum this year, courtesy of Rich Fox

Is it time to renew your membership?

Check the top line of your mailing label for a letter designation and date. If it is circled in red, your membership is now due.

S _____ \$15 Annual Individual Membership

F _____ \$25 Annual Family Membership

C _____ \$100-\$499 Contributor

X _____ \$500+ Benefactor

_____ Additional Donation

R is for Reciprocal and L is for Life members

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Calendar of Events

Dec 9 - Ghosts of Christmas Past, 1-4 pm
Dec 25 - **CHRISTMAS DAY**, Museum Closed
Dec 31 - **NEW YEAR'S EVE**, Museum Closed

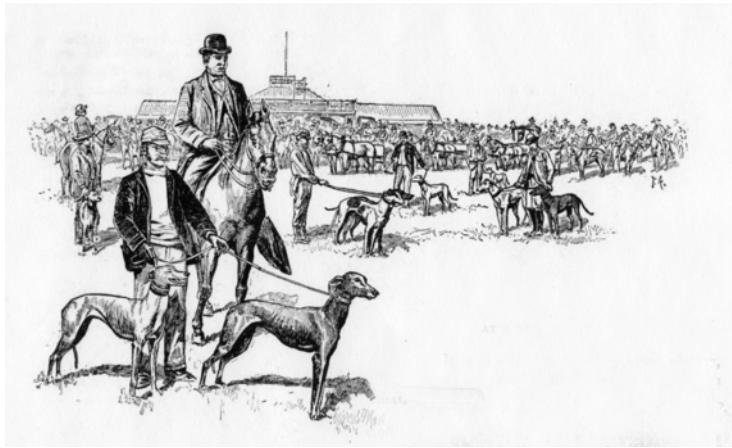
Jan 1 - **NEW YEAR'S DAY**, Museum Closed
Jan 14 - Board of Directors Meeting, 7:30 pm
Jan 16 - Museum Committee Meeting, 1:15 pm
Jan 28 - **ANNUAL MEETING**, 7:30 pm
Jan 29 - Kansas Day, 151 Years of Progress

Feb 13 - Museum Committee Meeting, 1:15 pm
Feb 25 - Program Meeting, 7:30 pm

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COURSING ON THE PLAINS

Karen Neuforth, BCHS Research Coordinator



Field Trials of the American Coursing Club at Cheyenne Bottoms (from Leslie's Popular Monthly, 1894)

“At 9 o'clock in the morning of a pleasant October day, the beaters are in line, and a long train of carriages are close in the rear; and as they march across the level stretch of country, with every mind centered on the one object that will cause the blood to tingle in the veins, the cry is given, ‘There he goes!’ and a long pair of ears rises like a phantom, and speeds away, challenging the dogs for a trial of speed.

“The quick-sighted greyhounds in an instant jump to the limit of the slips, and the slipper races away with them for a few feet, and then the word is given by the judge; the cord is pulled, and away they go like a rocket, with the judge, reporters, and owners of the greyhounds close in the rear, while the spectators halt to view the race. There are only two greyhounds in the race at one time, and they are easily distinguished at a distance; and as the favorite leads up, the excitement begins. The red collar has turned the rabbit, with the white collar only a jump behind; and as he makes an unsuccessful effort to catch, bunny jumps nimbly to one side, and the greyhounds go on for a few feet, and while they are trying to regain their stride the jack-rabbit has gained on his pursuers, and away he speeds for safety. The dogs turn, catch sight of the fleeing game, and quickly settle down for another dash. The red is again in the lead, but the white is just getting to work, and

gradually draws up to his antagonist; is now at his flank, now shows a head in the lead, and in another moment is a full length in the lead. ‘A go-by! A go-by!’ is shouted from hundreds of throats, and the white scores two points. He is now at the rabbit, and another turn is made. The gamy red is handy by, and before the rabbit fairly gains his stride, he is forced to the tactics of jumping from side to side to avoid his stroke, and six wrenches are made.

“The wrenches allow the white dog to draw up, and he being but a point ahead, the interest deepens.

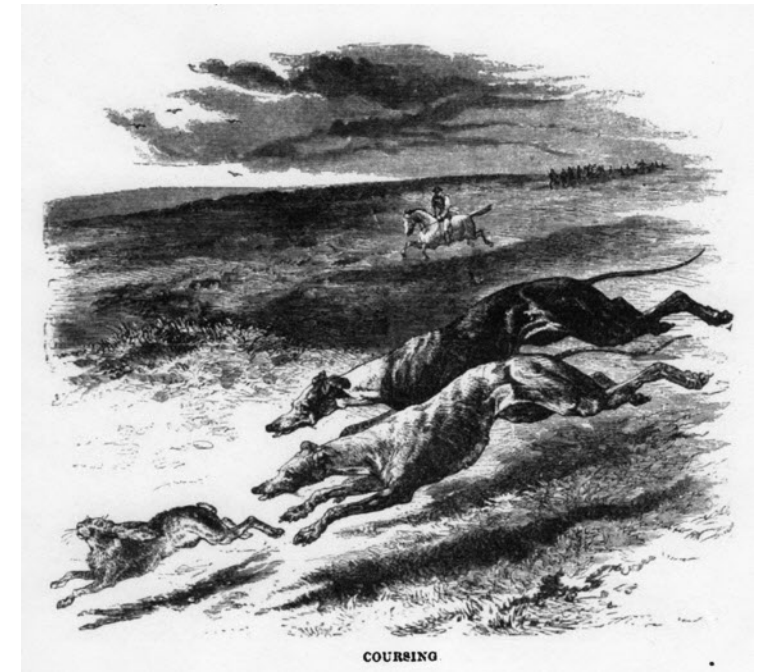
“Away they stride, like a double team, for nearly a quarter, with no appreciable advantage to either. The pace is too hot for bunny, and gradually they draw up, and a turn is made – another and another in quick succession. The red dog makes a terrific dash to catch, but only trips, loses his footing, and over and over he goes, but is up again without injury, and is soon taking part in the exchanges; but the white, seemingly cognizant of the fact that he has two points to make up, exerts himself to the utmost, and, with a most phenomenal burst of speed, makes a straight go-by and kills the rabbit. Up goes the white flag, and the wearer of the white collar is the winner by four points; and the judge hears the shouts from the spectators a mile away.” [*William Bruce Leffingwell, Editor, Shooting on Upland, Marsh, and Stream (Chicago & New York: Rand, McNally & Co., Publishers, 1890)*]

This was the scene every October from 1886 through 1895, along the west side of Cheyenne Bottoms, where the American Coursing Club's annual meets were held on the Carney Ranch. In an article authored by Charles Moreau Harger and published in Frank Leslie's *Popular Monthly* in 1894, the site was described as “... like the bottom of a giant platter, and covered as it is with a firm, smooth sod, it makes an ideal racing ground. While the grass is high enough to hide the game, there are no fences or copses to impede the view or bewilder dog or rider. The referees have an unlimited range for their telescopes, and

the true metal of pursuers and pursued is tested thoroughly and fairly.”

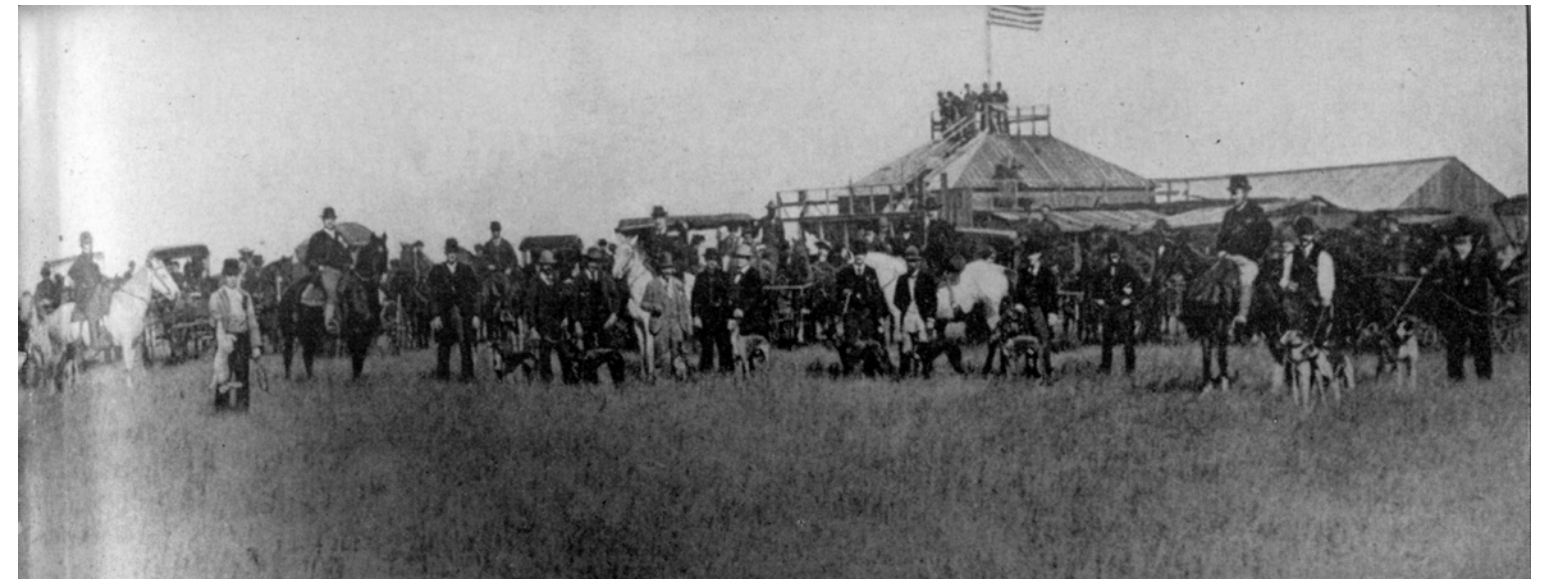
While public coursing (the name for this type of greyhound racing) had first been introduced in California in the 1860s, the first organized meets were established here in Barton County by the American Coursing Club, beginning on October 19, 1886. Soon, the meets just north of Great Bend were bringing in dogs, owners, and breeders from all across the United States, plus the British Isles and Europe. Local residents involved included A.S. Allen, J.W. Brown, Ira D. Brougher, A.J. Buckland, J.V. Brinkman, W.W. Carney, E.L. Carney, C.F. Culver, A.C. Fair, Irwin Clark, D.C. Luse, G.N. Moses, Judge B. Ogle, E.L. Parvin, Richard Plager, E.A. Rowell, A.C. Schermerhorn, W.E. Stoke, George Spencer, Dr. S.J. Shaw, C.P. Townsley, David Taylor, R.P. Tyler, Edwin Tyler, W.W. Winstead, L. Wever, and Louis Zutavern.

Another major reason for the choice of Cheyenne Bottoms as the site for these meets was the abundance of jack rabbits. For months ahead of the events, ambitious boys brought in captured hares “of all sizes and conditions and states of fright”. Harger's article in *Leslie's Popular Monthly* painted this picture: “As they lie at rest, their grayish-brown coats blending with the hue of the buffalo grass, their limbs tucked under their bodies, the long, darkly veined ears lying along the back, almost from the lazily blinking eyes to the stump of a tail, one would scarcely think the jack rabbit capable of great speed. They are cunning, too, and will, if they think themselves



undiscovered, let the hunter stumble over them before moving; and many a one has waited until it was too late. Once started, however, and thoroughly frightened, as they are sure to be at a field trial, there is fun ahead before the race ends.

“They are odd creatures, long, slender and muscular – the equals of the hounds, according to their size. Their ears reach half the length of their bodies, and when raised to their full height give an impression of weirdness. Their hind legs are twice the length of the fore, giving a kangaroo effect. ...Their speed is something marvelous. No prairie animals except the antelope and coyote can exceed it.”



The American Coursing Club grounds and pavilion, Carney Ranch, Cheyenne Bottoms

(from the Annals of Kansas, Kansas State Historical Society)