

Barton County Historical Society

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<http://bartoncountymuseum.org>

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The Village Crier

Barton County Historical Society

June 2012, Volume 20, Number 3

Museum Memos

“Rolling Sculptures” joined us for the first annual June Jaunt and our summer open house. Thirty nine 4-wheeled vehicles of every description, each carefully restored and polished, lined up for a “jaunt” around Jack Kilby Square, and then out to Doonan’s Truck Museum for a reception. Led by the Legion Riders, Post 180, and guarded at every intersection by law enforcement’s finest, the journey was spectacular, and safe too! Many returned for the afternoon to place their vehicles on display. The Golden Belt Carvers set up shop in the cool of the conference room. They demonstrated their amazing skills and different approaches to wood. Everyone enjoyed visiting our new displays and all the other buildings. Johnson’s Smokehouse sandwiches sold out quickly.

The afternoon brought drawings for prizes donated by Montana Mikes, Auto Zone, Kansasland Tires, and Becker Tire. Coupons for ice cream cones from Sonic were given to participants. Everyone approved! We certainly appreciate this generosity from our local businesses. The special assistance from our own dedicated volunteers made it all happen. Well done!

Our little train, with new parts expertly installed by Aaron’s Repair and Supply, is moving forward—again! We hope to have it operational soon and promise to let you know when that happens.

We need YOU. An exciting project will grow when the human stories about Cheyenne Bottoms are told. How did Native Americans use this wetland? More information about hunt clubs? We are gathering some early activities of the Robl family in addition to Frank Robl’s priceless records. Now it is your turn. Do you remember stories told by a family member or friend about activities in the Bottoms? Do you have pictures or objects we could scan or borrow? Would you be willing to find some time to talk to us? Please tell us your story, show us your treasures, and help weave the other stories about the Bottoms—those involving the two footed ones. Call for your special time schedule.

Recent generous contributors have helped keep the

doors open. They include: Dr. Mike Allison, Doonan Peterbuilt and GMC, Leslie and Barbara Logan, Gordon and Sharon Jones, Delta Tau-Epsilon Sigma Alpha, Glenn A. Mull, Tom and Jan Crissman, Clark Rusco, Karl and Reta Brack, Ruth Cheely, Irving and Jeanne Gotsche, Lou Button, and A William Shafer M.D. We are grateful. - Beverly Komarek, Executive Director

Wish list: useable riding mower, volunteer help on weekends

JUNE JAUNT



Legion Riders from American Legion Post 180 in Great Bend lead the Rolling Sculpture parade.

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

June 1-3 - **June Jaunt**

June 13 - Museum Committee, 1:15pm

June 25 - Program Meeting, 7:30pm

July 4 - **INDEPENDENCE DAY** - Closed

July 9 - Board of Directors, 7:30pm

July 11 - Museum Committee, 1:15pm

July 23 - Program Meeting, 7:30pm

Aug 8 - Museum Committee, 1:15pm

Aug 26 - Annual Covered Dish Supper, 5:00pm

Sep 4 - **LABOR DAY** - Closed

Sep 10 - Board of Directors, 7:30pm

Sep 12 - Museum Committee, 1:15pm

Sep 24 - Program Meeting, 7:30pm

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TALKING DUCK & GOOSE LANGUAGE

Karen Neuforth, BCHS Research Coordinator

“I grew up with them,” Frank W. Robl told a *Great Bend Tribune* reporter in 1941. “Even talking duck and goose language.” He added that talking bird language wasn’t necessary for operating a bird sanctuary, but it helped.

Robl came by it naturally, for the tradition had been started by his father, Frank X. Robl, Sr., according to the elder Robl’s 1932 obituary, which described him as “widely known as a sportsman, and for his work in establishing a game refuge on his land near here [Ellinwood].”

According to the younger Robl’s account, the family had to drive wild geese and ducks from their farm fields after settling in Kansas in 1879. Shooting many of them, Robl said his father would keep and raise the wounded ones.

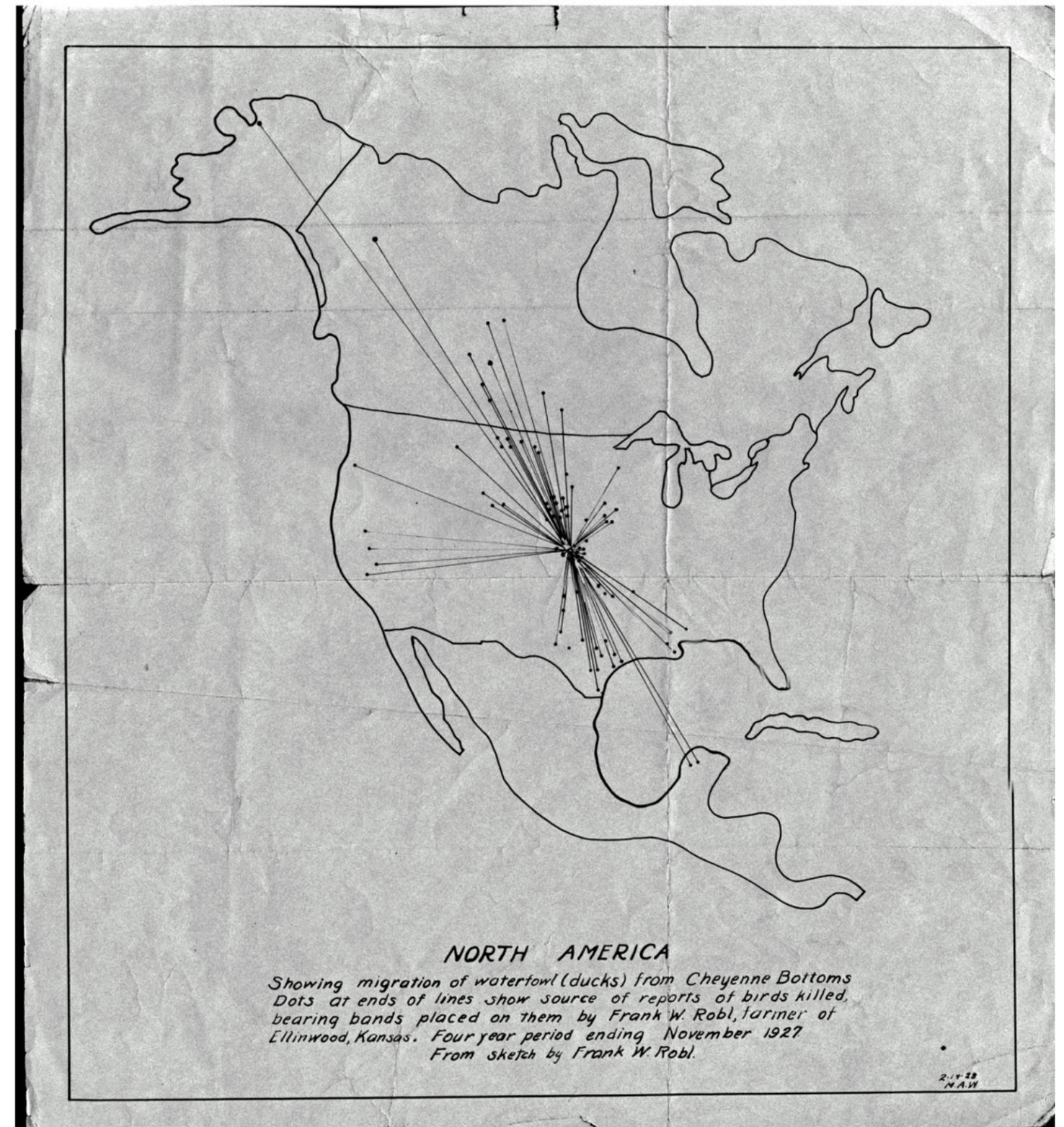


From the time Robl received his first federal banding permit until his death in 1976, he banded more than 25,000 ducks, 500 geese, 1,350 starlings, and 700 crows. At one time, he estimated that he had banded more than 70 species of birds, all of which he could identify.

The birds that visited the Robl refuge, some of them repeatedly, were fed, protected and doctored, if necessary. For instance, Robl even made an artificial leg for a crane. “And he walked very stately, too,” reported Robl. It was not unusual for some birds to make the place their permanent home: one Hutchin’s goose lived there from 1907 until her death in 1932.



Family photos from 1910 and 1911 show ducks, geese, cranes, and other waterfowl, not to mention a variety of wild game around the Robl homestead. In 1923, Frank W. Robl began banding and releasing birds that migrated through the family’s refuge. Within five years, he was getting reports of those birds from as far away as Alaska and Canada, Mexico and Central America. Using Robl’s data, Fish and Game wardens were able to raise the interest of the Biological Survey and other agencies, beginning the long process that would eventually result in Cheyenne Bottoms becoming an internationally recognized wetland, vital to migratory birds.



“To make a refuge of your lake is very simple - you use an ear of corn instead of an ounce of shot,” he told the newspaper reporter. We cannot even begin to describe the value of the work that Robl and his father did in helping to encourage the preservation of the birds and other wildlife that use what is now called the Central

Flyway and document their migrations.

The Barton County Historical Society is fortunate to have a significant collection of Frank W. Robl’s papers and more information is constantly being added. Do you have anything that can contribute to helping us preserve and tell this story?