BAS 149 Butte Dogs Welcome to Butte, America’s Story. I’m your host, Dick Gibson.

“Butte has more dogs for a city of its size than any town in America. This is the opinion of every traveler who ever stopped off on his way east or west and of every citizen, be he dog fancier or dog hater, who has taken the time to think of something besides business. And it’s true.”

“You see dogs everywhere. On leashes and off leashes, on the run, on the sneak, on the yelp or on some other less fortunate brother dog’s neck.”

Although these quotes may sound like the lead-in to a story about dog problems, the Butte Evening News for February 20, 1910, was boasting of Butte’s prominence in the dog-raising world.

The Butte Kennel Club was organized in 1907 with James Keefe as its president and architect Herman Kemna among its first members. By 1910 the club had grown to 70 members, active in breeding and showing dogs across the nation. Bally Tip, Keefe’s Airedale, was touted by the Butte Evening News as “one of the greatest dogs in the country.” Airedales seemed to be a favorite in Butte, with more than 60 in residence in 1910 and at least six that had taken blue ribbons in national competitions. “Butte stands supreme” in the entire nation in terms of winning Airedales, the News bragged.

Keefe was proprietor of the Post-Office News Stand at 27 West Park. His home where Bally Tip presumably lived was at 313 S. Dakota, and Herman Kemna lived at 635 South Main. Both Keefe’s and Kemna’s homes are still standing. The most notable surviving home in Butte designed by architect Kemna is the 1910 California bungalow at 31 East Copper Street. Kemna owned at least two English bulldogs, Muriel and Black Butte. In 1907 he was planning to breed Muriel to a “grand sire” named Clyde Nestor, while Black Butte was soon to “appear at stud.”

The fancy house at 303 South Idaho (southwest corner of Idaho and Silver) once housed Butte’s Bachelors’s Club, and their mascot, Bach, an English Bull. Fire Chief Pete Sanger’s collie Flossie held forth at the Station on Quartz Street (today’s Archives building) as the Fire Department mascot. Flossie came to Butte direct from Scotland.

Dr. E.F. Maginn of 635 W. Granite (a home designed by Butte architect Henry Patterson and still standing) had “a string of silver cups long enough to go round a small hall,” won by his English Bull Terrier Monte Christo and other canines.

Butte was proud of its dogs in 1910.

As writer Edwin Dobb has said, "Like Concord, Gettysburg, and Wounded Knee, Butte is one of the places America came from." Join us next time for more of Butte, America’s Story.