

Bypaths of Kansas History

FASHION NOTE FROM WHITE CLOUD

From the White Cloud (Doniphan county) *Globe*, February 25, 1897.

In many places the ladies are adopting what they call "bad weather skirts," and claim they are just the thing for mud. The only difference between these skirts and the regulation skirts is, they are short and only come to a couple of inches below the shoe top. The ladies claim that when they cross muddy places the skirts are held up this high and they might as well be made that way. White Cloud ladies could adopt this reform and be right in it as far as mud was concerned as there is mud on all the streets and also a good portion of the time from November to April.

OH WELL, HISTORY CAN'T ALWAYS BE SERIOUS—

From the Kansas City (Mo.) *Journal*, April 6, 1903.

FRISCO FAST MAIL CAN'T BEAT THE JACKRABBIT.—The engineer of the Frisco fast mail, which leaves at 2:10 a. m., wants a faster schedule. He would like permission to run speedier when south of Olathe, on a certain stretch of track there. He is held down to something like sixty-five miles an hour by the present schedule, and for several days he has been begging for a chance to let out a few kinks, and cut loose. The official board has deemed the present speed fast enough, but the engineer has appealed so often for more, that it has started an investigation, with rather strange developments.

It seems that a jackrabbit has caused the demand for increased speed. Jackrabbits, and especially Kansas jackrabbits, are noted for their speed. In fact, though it has often been suggested that some railroad name a train for them, no line has ever had the courage to do this, because they are too rapid, and though trains are called "meteors" and "comets" and "cannon balls," none yet has been named a jackrabbit. So it will be understood that a jackrabbit could cause the Frisco serious worry.

This particular jack, it seems, has been in the habit of coming out of his burrow, just south of Olathe, when he hears the flyer coming, early in the morning, looking up and winking at the engineer, and then, throwing back his long ears, racing alongside the track. He seems to know that the engineer may not run ahead of his schedule, so he keeps up only a fair lick of speed, but at that he often gets on the track in front of the locomotive, and, putting up one foot to his face, spreads out his toes and makes a sign perfectly familiar to all small boys, which is expressive of the highest scorn and derision.

This defiance has worked on the minds of the engineers, and they have tried to run down the jack, with no effect, however. Every morning Mr. J. Rabbit bobs up out of his hole, looks at the engineer and winks. Then he frisks his tail, settles back his long ears and begins to burn up the earth back

of him. Only once has he failed to make the run; the morning it snowed recently, he came out as the train approached, but, seeing the white blanket over the earth, he shook his head and went back. He wouldn't risk possible tracking to his den.

Whether or not the Frisco will grant the demand of its engineers is a problem. Perhaps it will try to win immortal glory by letting the engineer beat the jackrabbit out—if he can. More likely it will be content to rest under the aspersion that it cannot beat a jackrabbit, secure in the knowledge that nothing else can, either, and that it can make one put up a very pretty race.

However, exception must be taken to this "nothing else" assertion. The Frisco's flyer doesn't run through Arkansas, but if it did it would there meet an animal equal to the jackrabbit, if not a bit faster. This is the razorback hog. The razorback is so called because the hip of his roof is so thin that it is like a razor in sharpness, and the hogs are reputed to saw down oak trees with it when wishing to feed off the acorns. Heaps of sawdust are pointed out in Arkansas as evidence of this. The razorback consists of $\frac{3}{4}$ snout and $\frac{1}{4}$ body, and he has legs that fold up under him like a jackknife when he runs. He humps his back up in the middle with a toggle-joint effect and throws these legs so fast that the hind ones often overlap the front ones, and he is going so rapidly that he goes the other way! He can outrun a bullet and a deer is simply a byword down there.

A man in Arkansas once tamed one of these beasts—that is the only doubtful incident in this story—and trained him to race. He used a straightaway course, and the first time he held the watch on the hog his hair stood on end, it was so rapid a pace. The man matched his hog against a crack race horse down there. The only stipulation was that the race must be made over this particular course. When "time" was called, the horse went away at an awful clip, but the hog grunted and turned over and went to sleep again. When the horse was in the stretch, the hog's owner came out to the home end of the course with a big pan of bran mash. He rapped the side of the pan with a pot-iron spoon and yelled "He-r-r-e-e, sukey! Sukey!" The hog grunted, turned over, arose and shook himself. Then there was a long crack split through the atmosphere, a cloud of dust hid the landscape, and when that horse went under the wire the hog had eaten all the mash and was smoking a cigar and picking his teeth in full content.

They are talking along the Frisco of bringing that hog up to Olathe to beat that jackrabbit.

THIS WAS SPEEDING IN 1909

Page 211 of the police docket of Coldwater, September 8, 1909, reports Gerry Williams pleading guilty to "running an automobile on streets on night of Sep 7 at more than 8 mi per hr," and was fined \$10 and costs amounting to \$4.25, by Police Judge Jay T. Botts.

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