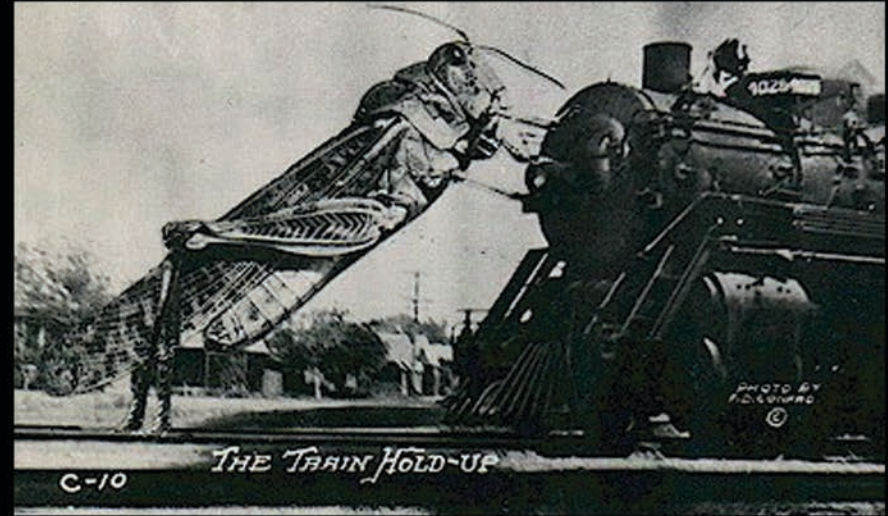


# Grasshoppers on the tracks

These early C&NW railroaders had other things to contend with besides snow and floods such as the "Grasshopper Plagues" of the early 1870's in Harrison and Pottawattamie counties. The grasshoppers would collect on the warm rails in such numbers that the engine drive wheels would slip and when the supply of sand was exhausted, the train would be stalled. Tom Burling often told of this occurrence on the Honey Creek grade between Honey Creek and Loveland, Iowa. When they would reach Missouri Valley, they would have to fill the sandbox again to get them over the "Mud Creek" grade between Woodbine and Dunlap.

Source: "The Burlings of the Northwestern," A.H. "Buzz" Burling



Exaggerated postcard from the early 1900s.



In 1868 the C. and N. W. railroad was completed to Council Bluffs and Dunlap located. Twenty acres of the estate of father Dunham's was donated for the consideration that the railroad would make Dunlap a railroad division. A round house was built and Dunlap became an active business center. Mother Dunham having been deprived of a comfortable house and ample funds at hand built the present house on the Pioneer Stock Farm.

July 1873, 1874 and 1875 the migrating grasshoppers were plentiful almost clearing the country of vegetable matter and sometimes stopping the railroad trains.

Source: The Dunlap Reporter, Sept. 27, 1928

During those early days, grasshoppers were present in hordes. There were so many that they caused the rail to become slippery as the train wheels passed over them causing the train to stall. To eliminate the problem, the early engineers made torches of oily waste. These were attached to poles on the engine "cow catchers." The torches were lighted and as the engine advanced, the flames would burn the grasshoppers off the rails.

Source: Dunlap Pioneers and Progress Centennial

