

1909 news: believe it or not

It was in 1909 that the behavior of some Monroe County area residents provided Bloomington Telephone readers with amusement.

There was, for example, the article about the feat of a man, who was daring or foolhardy, depending upon the reader's perspective. Early in June, Fred Hodge, a Monon engineer, related: "He was pulling north-bound plug run No. 12, and when a mile north of Gosport, he noticed a man waiting on the left side of the track about four feet from the end of the ties." Since he was about a mile ahead, Hodge didn't take much notice of him.

Just as the train caught up with the

Looking back

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hiker, Frank Dillard, who was riding in the engine cab, jumped down from his seat and exclaimed that he was sure the man had jumped in front of the train. After the train was brought to a screeching halt, the crew began to search for the remains of the "victim."

Instead of lying mangled beneath

the wheels, he was found perched on the cow catcher with his arms folded. Though his hat was gone and his coat slightly torn, he was otherwise intact.

What was he doing on the cow catcher? The Telephone ventured to suggest that the "hitchhiker" had, in fact, bungled his own suicide.

If the man-on-the-cow-catcher story didn't leave the Telephone readers scratching their heads, surely the case of the rain barrel contents did. Behind Billmeyer the fishmongers was found feminine clothing in the barrel in July. Speculated the Telephone, some "dark, deep tragedy and heinous

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