

Approved: 1/24/96
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ben Vidricksen at 9:00 a.m. on January 23, 1996 in Room 254-E of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Hank Avila, Legislative Research Department
Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes
Martha Ozias, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Anita Cheatum - Kingman
Jeannette Siemens - Pratt area Chamber of Commerce
Ray Koerner - Greensburg

Others attending: See attached list:

Senator McKinney from Greensburg introduced the guest speakers.

SB 440 - DESIGNATING A PORTION OF UNITED STATES HIGHWAY 54 AS THE CANNONBALL STAGELINE HIGHWAY

Anita Cheatum gave a brief history of Donald R. Green, a flamboyant stagecoach driver of the late 1800's. This driver operated a fast stagecoach line from Kingman to Coldwater by the way of Pratt and compared the speed of his coaches with the Wabash Cannonball. History records numerous anecdotes during the brief years of the Cannonball Stageline's existence and residents of this area are requesting this legislation to stimulate a resurgence of interest in the cultural history of rural America.

Jeannette Siemens addressed the Tourism Impact that this highway designation would have on that particular area of the state, citing figures from the Visitor Information Centers on the growing number of visitors to that area. A brochure for the Cannonball Stageline Highway is in the making as well as planned activities that have the potential to grow into regular events.

The economic impact to the state was discussed by Ray Koerner. Plans are being made to solicit area businesses for the cost of the signs thereby making the labor to put up the signs the only cost to the state. It was projected that the Cannonball Stageline Highway would increase the tourism business in area of Kingman, Pratt and Greensburg.

(Joint Attachments 1)

The conferees answered questions from the committee and there was some discussion.

Senator Papay made a motion that SB 440 be passed favorably. This was seconded by Senator Jones. Motion carried.

The Chairman requested introduction of a bill concerning mixing strips. A motion was made by Senator Papay to have this legislation introduced and it was seconded by Senator Jones. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45.

The next meeting will be January 24, 1996.

DONALD ROBERTSON "CANNONBALL" GREEN
1839 - 1922

Born in Kentucky in 1839, Donald R. Green became a colorful and flamboyant stage driver in the late 1800's. To quote Bob Getz in his January 10 column in the Wichita Eagle, "You usually have to be fictitious to get as colorful as Cannonball Green."

Green had many adventurous occupations beginning at the early age of 15 when he left Kentucky and went to California but he is best remembered as a stage coach driver which he learned in Montana after he had married Margaret Ellen Browning in Kentucky. The couple passed through Fort Scott, Kansas, when he had a mercantile business. From there they went to Montana and again came back to Kansas. By 1884, the Wichita and Western Railroad, later the Santa Fe, had come as far west as Kingman and Green saw an opportunity there. He ran his first stage line from Kingman to Coldwater by way of Pratt.

He claimed to have such a fast stage line that "even Father Time could not keep up". Because he compared the speed of his coaches with the Wabash Cannonball, he named his line the Cannonball Stageline. He used matched teams of horses, many of which had been wild broncos, and changed teams every eight to fifteen miles. A passenger could get from Kingman to Coldwater, a distance of 100 miles, in just one day on the Cannonball Stage.

It was a privilege for a newcomer to the west to ride on the driver's seat with Green as he was a "prairie textbook". He taught those who were used to plentiful trees how to twist the prairie grass into stove-wood lengths if they could not find enough buffalo chips to use for fire. He also warned them of grass fires and blizzards and how to prepare for each. He could also tell newcomers how to build dugouts for homes or how to build a sod shanty.

The story is told about how it came about that one of his children was born on the streets of Kingman. It seems as tho he was going to move his house from one location to another. The house had been loaded onto a trailer when a daughter was born. In those days neither the new mother nor baby were disturbed for at least two weeks so the house set in the middle of A Street until such time mother and baby could be disturbed and the move of the house could be finished.

The railroad caught up with Green and he moved further west, building a prairie mansion north of Coldwater near the town of Reeder. The Green family lived in high style as by this time the Cannonball State Line had prospered and grown to 70 Concord coaches and nearly 1,000 horses. The colors of the folders and the brochures inside represent the colors of the stage coaches. Donald Green dressed his six foot plus frame in fine broadcloth suits, wore a top hat, and a diamond pin in his tie. His wife had a private coach and wore diamonds. Many fine parties were held at Fairlawn, the prairie mansion.

Green usually had drivers for his stages but he often rode as a passenger himself. One trip found him with Carry Nation as a fellow passenger. Ms. Nation did not like the cigar that Green was smoking so she grabbed the offending cigar and threw it out the window. Green immediately had the stage stopped and he bodily removed her from the coach and left her standing alongside the trail in the dust of the stage.

Towns were vying for Green's attention, giving him free town lots if he would bring one of his stage lines through. One day he came upon a couple of surveyors who

were planning to begin their own town two miles east of Janesville. Striking a deal with them, he teamed with them to began the town of Greensburg. But to become an official town, they needed a post office, which the government refused stating Janesville already had the office and two miles was not enough distance apart. So -- one night a group of men visited the Janesville postmaster, stuck up a card game with him providing a good jug of "corn cheer". Around midnight the postmaster was sleeping peacefully in a corner of the post office. D. R. Green helped load the post office onto a sled and the next morning the postmaster found himself in business two miles east in Greensburg.

When Kiowa County was organized in 1886, Green was elected to the state legislature. It was there that he acquired the nickname of Cannonball. During the first legislative session, the Speaker of the House asked Green to step out into the aisle so that he could be better heard. Green answered, "If Mr. Burton will take a match and clean the wax out of his ears he can hear me." He was then introduced to the assembly as the owner of the Cannon Ball Stagecoach Line and his fellow House members thereafter called him "Cannonball Green" and the name stuck.

But the railroads were fast catching up with Donald "Cannonball" Green.

In 1889 the Rock Island Railroad had gone as far southwest as Pond Creek, Oklahoma, and Green entered into a contract with the railroad to meet their train and take 600 settlers on southwest. What the railroad failed to tell him was that all 600 people would arrive on one train. Even though he had rounded up all the stages, carriages, and wagons he could find, there was no way he could handle the mob that detrained that day. All he could do was stand by helplessly and he never recovered from the criticism he received.

In 1893 Green made the Cherokee Strip run into Oklahoma and took a claim three miles northwest of Pond Creek. He moved his family to that claim but he suffered many financial losses, eventually losing all he had accumulated except for a pair of mules and a cow. But he never lost his determination to succeed. He stayed in politics serving as county treasurer in Grant County and later as school appraiser in Caddo County.

The last few years of his life were spent in California where he lived near by a brother. He was still a town booster and served on the Long Beach city council. A few years before his death, he entered a stage driving contest in San Francisco and won by cutting a figure eight on the smallest space of ground.

Donald Robertson "Cannonball" Green died in 1922 at age 85 in California. He is buried in the Maple Grove Cemetery, Wichita.

Undoubtedly the most enduring legacy of Green's life was secured during the brief years of the Cannonball Stageline's existence. A permanent route westward had been established. Just as the railroads had earlier followed the trails blazed by the stagelines, the highways of later days kept largely to these same paths. Today it takes little imagination when traveling 54 Highway to recall Cannonball Green, resplendent in his frock coat and Stetson hat, "hightailing" it westward down the Cannonball Highway.

To quote from a resolution by the Chamber of Commerce and published in the Kingman Journal upon the death of Green, "When the early history of Kingman County and Western Kansas is finally written D. R. (Cannonball) Green will appear a most vivid and interesting character.....Possessed of many manly qualities, unbounded enthusiasm and an especial gift for providing just such transportation as the early days of Kansas needed, his life was a highly useful and important one to the early settlers of Kansas who found him a friend when friends though few were much to be desired."

History of D. R. "Cannonball" Green

Donald R. Green was originally from Kentucky but learned to drive a stage coach while living in Montana. Hearing about how people were moving westward through Kansas during the late 1800s beyond where the railroads ended, he saw a financial opportunity.

Beginning in Kingman, west of Wichita, he soon had a reputation for moving people faster than any other stageline. Remembering the legend of the Wabash Cannonball train and comparing the speed of his stages to it, Green named the stageline "The Cannonball" and claimed that even Father Time could not keep up with him. Using two teams of horses, he had relay stations every ten to fifteen miles, thus being able to travel faster than his competition.

His stageline first went from Kingman to Coldwater, a 100-mile trip. This trip would include Pratt, west of Kingman, and the round trip could be made in 2 days. Ever looking for new opportunities, Green teamed with other men to found the city of Greensburg.

Green was elected to represent Greensburg and Kiowa County in the state legislature. It was during this time that the nickname "Cannonball" was tagged on him.

As the railroads caught up with him, Green would move further west and in 1889 he made an agreement with the Chicago, Kansas and Nebraska Railroad to take passengers to the unassigned land in Indian Territory. This was to be the salvation of his by then failing logging company but it turned into the

downfall instead as the railroad did not let him know in time that nearly all the passengers would arrive on one train and he could not possibly take care of them all. His reputation suffered immensely.

In 1893 he made the run into the Cherokee Strip and staked a claim northwest of Pond Creek. Never as successful at farming as he had been as a stage coach driver, he lost his great financial status but never his flamboyancy and determination.

D. R. "Cannonball" died in 1922 at the age of 85 years in Long Beach, California.

When Woody Hockaday began marking major roads, he followed the former Cannonball Stage route. In later years, this route became U.S. Highway 54.

Following the Cannonball.....

KINGMAN --

Many of the brick buildings still stand as they did when "Cannonball" Green started his route westward.

KINGMAN CO. MUSEUM (Former City Building): On National Register of Historic sites. Houses a collection of memorabilia from Kingman County. See artifacts about Clyde Cessna, founder of Cessna Aircraft, who was born in this county. Only known hose-drying tower west of the Mississippi.

KINGMAN CO. COURTHOUSE: Designed by George Washburn and built in 1908. On National Register of Historic sites.

POST OFFICE: On National Register of Historic Sites due to mural inside.

Historic Sites.

FORMER SANTA FE DEPOT: Now owned by Central Kansas Railway.

KINGMAN COUNTY STATE LAKE AND BYRON WALKER WILDLIFE PRESERVE: 8 miles west of Kingman. Bison south of the highway. A nature lover's paradise with walking trails and acres of wildlife. Fishing and hunting.

CUNNINGHAM --

"SANTA FE" DEPOT/MUSEUM: Displays of artifacts of Cunningham plus railroad memorabilia. Open when American flag is flying or by appointment.

CAIRO -

No, not Egypt. And pronounced Kay-ro. Remains of Lighthouse Service Station on the highway.

PRATT --

Many brick streets and buildings.

HEADQUARTERS OF KANSAS FISH AND GAME: East of Pratt on Kansas. Wildlife museum.

PRATT COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM, 208 South Ninnescah. Open every day.

TWIN "HOT" AND "COLD" WATER TOWERS: On North Main.

PRATT COMMUNITY COLLEGE, 348 NE Highway 61

CULLISON --

Four exits lead into this town.

WELLSFORD --

A typical Kansas grain elevator. Methodist Church, built in 1911.

HAVILAND --

BARCLAY COLLEGE: A four year, fully accredited private college. The college holds an annual auction featuring quilts, artwork, food, and other donated items.

ANNUAL ANTIQUE THRESHER & ENGINE SHOW: Interesting old machines demonstrated.

GREENSBURG --

Founded by D. R. "Cannonball" Green.

THE BIG WELL: Built by the Santa Fe Railroad to provide water for the trains; it also became the main source of water for the town. You may go to the bottom of the well - 109 feet deep and 32 feet wide.

KIOWA CO. HISTORICAL MUSEUM: Located at the corner of Main and Highway 54. Open week-ends 2:00-4:00 p.m. - free admission.

LAMKIN MUSEUM: Located at 419 W. Morton. Privately owned museum with items from the past as well as rocks and geologic specimens. Free admission but tours by appointment only. Phone 316-723-2409.

OLD TIME SODA FOUNTAIN in the drugstore.

KIOWA COUNTY STATE FISHING LAKE: 6 blocks north on Bay to just across the railroad tracks, then west.

ANTIQUÉ SHOPS

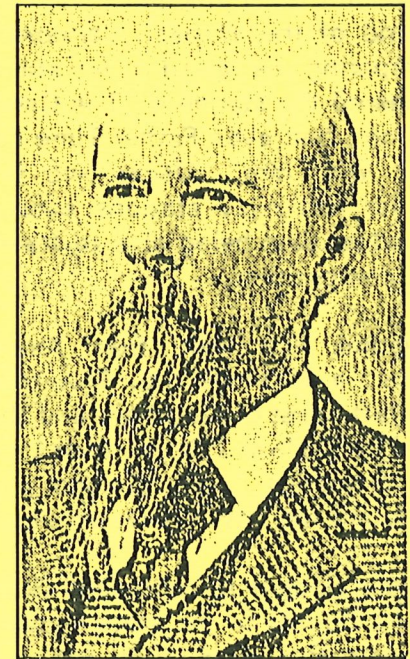
Beyond Greensburg --

THE ROUND BARN: Located 3½ miles south and 1¼ miles west of Mullinville. Is actually not round but polygonal, having sixteen sides. Built in 1912 for Henry Fromme at a cost of \$8,000. 28 horse stalls and circular alleyway big enough for a grain wagon. Sixteen sided granary in the center of the first floor. Worth your time to go visit.

RIDE THE CANNONBALL ROAD

with

D. R. "Cannonball" GREEN



Highway 54 from
Kingman to Greensburg

SENATE TRANSPORTATION

DATE: 1/23/96

ATTACHMENT: 1-4

Looking for old Cannonball's family

Cannonball Green. Ever heard of him? Amazing. I cannot believe I'd never heard of Cannonball Green until a Kingman woman told me about him recently, sent me some nearly mythically outrageous biographical material about him, and wondered if I'd be interested in helping find some of the man's descendants.

Cannonball Green was one great Kansan and all-around legendary kind of guy.

He stole a post office. He tossed Carry Nation out of a stagecoach. He founded (and probably sometimes confounded) Greensburg. He helped put many of south-west Kansas' towns on the map. He ran a stagecoach line so wild and woolly it begs to be made into a movie.

He made a small, flashy fortune and lived near Coldwater in a "prairie mansion." He wore diamonds. He decked his wife out in diamonds. He harnessed his wife's teams of horses in gold and diamonds. He wheeled. He dealt. But he was an honest, civic-minded

opportunistic.

He himself drove stagecoaches like tornadoes. He served in the state Legislature. He lost his fortune. He started over. In his 70s, the story goes, he won a stagecoach-driving contest in San Francisco, cutting the neatest figure 8 with an eight-horse team. He was serving on the city council in Long Beach, Calif., before he died in 1922, at 83. He is buried in Maple Grove Cemetery in Wichita.

Donald Robertson "Cannonball" Green is what you might call a forgotten Kansas legend.

Self-made men just don't self-make themselves like that anymore.

You usually have to be fictitious to get as colorful as Cannonball Green.

Coming out of Kentucky by way of Montana, Cannonball charged into Kansas when the railroad west stopped at Kingman, and he started a little stagecoach line that he built into not only a giant line but a line whose reputation was so colorful and excit-

ing people thrilled to ride it.

The route ran out of Kingman through Cunningham, Pratt and Greensburg on west.

And Cannonball Green, a huge man with a thick gray beard, drove coaches himself with apparently unparalleled speed and skill.

One account from that time, the late 1800s, said his "driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously."

Carry Nation rode his stages to and from Medicine Lodge regularly. Once when Green was driving along and smoking one of his ever-present cigars, Nation got a little carried away, it seems, grabbed the offensive cigar and tossed it off the stagecoach.

Cannonball huffily brought the horses to an immediate, screeching or whinnying halt, picked up Nation, a formidably large person herself, put her off, and left her standing on the roadside in his coach's dust.

And when the budding little townsite of Greensburg, named after him, needed a post office to qualify as an official town, the story



BOB GETZ

goes that Cannonball not only persuaded most of the residents of the tiny, nearby town of Janesville to move to Greensburg, but he then "quietly went to Janesville one dark night, loaded up the post office on a sled, complete with postmaster who was asleep in the building, and dragged it to Greensburg."

Cannonball had built his "Cannonball stage line" into a dominant 70-coach, 1,000-horse, 1,500-mile operation when, in 1837, the railroad pushed on westward out of Kingman and "chewed him up."

Yet well into this century, residents of Kingman, Pratt and Kiowa counties still referred to their stretch of U.S. 54 as the

Cannonball Road, and some still think of it as that, cringing when it's called the "Yellow Brick Road."

Now several residents in the area have worked, rather informally, with the towns and Legislature, to get the Kingman-to-Greensburg stretch officially designated the "Cannonball Road," complete with signs and a special roadside historical marker.

Anita Cheatum of Kingman said the group behind this project hopes to have it all happen this year.

"We want to have a big, formal opening," she said. "We're going to have an actual stage run. And we might make it an annual thing."

But, she believes, it just won't seem complete, truly official or simply right if they don't have any of Cannonball Green's descendants attending. And Cheatum (phone 316-532-2142) says she knows some of Cannonball's relatives are still around here somewhere.

And they need not fear. To attend, they don't have to be able to drive a stagecoach at all, let alone like the biblical Jehu, son of Nimshi.

Tourism Impact
Cannon ball Stageline Highway
Jeanette Siemens
Pratt Area Chamber of Commerce
Executive Director

I would like to address the implications of this designation on visitors to our area.

Even though our family feels that Pratt is our home, my husband and I did not grow up there and had heard the expression, "Take the Cannonball" but were not familiar with the story of Cannonball Green. When I began learning more about this colorful character, I became rather fascinated by the story and the history. I also began to notice other people that were not the "old timers" in the community were reacting the same way. I think that reaction supports the travel demographic data which indicates that there is a resurgence of interest in not only rural America, but also about our cultural history. This interest is not shown only by our citizens, but by the growing number of international visitors to the United States and our area. Pulling figures from a couple of months last year, February and May, not the biggest travel months of the year, the South Haven Visitor Information Center, reported 5,823 visitors in Febr. Seven hundred eighty four were from Kansas, 4,869 from out-of-state, and 170 international visitors. In May 10,032 visitors stopped. One thousand one hundred twenty-one were from Kansas, 8579 from other states, and 332 were international visitors.

Rural communities are struggling with not only growing, but in many instances, sustaining population. We are all looking for ways to become more viable. Each one of our communities, Kingman, Pratt and Greensburg, has limited things to offer visitors. All have well researched, complete and marketed historical museums. The Big Well in Greensburg is a known tourist attraction. Pratt has the Wildlife and Park Museum, a one of a kind, that attracts many visitors. Kingman has the only hose drying tower west of the Mississippi. These along with other ementies of our communities are all excellent attractions, but on their own, limited to the numbers of interested people. With the designation of the highway and the cooperative efforts of all these communities in marketing ourselves we can become more noticable to visitors. We can offer one more GOOD reason for visitors to "linger a little longer" in Kansas and in our area. We are in the process of putting together a brochure for the Cannonball Stageline Highway and plan supporting activities that have the potential to grow into regular events.

For rural areas to survive we need to work together and enhance each others efforts. This is an opportunity for just such enhancement not only to these communities which we represent, but to other rural communities adjacent to our counties. This could also unlock the door to future cooperative ventures.

Besides these benefits, D.R. Cannonball Green was a true part of our history. He helped establish life in our communities. He helped us survive and grow. It's only correct that this be a part of today's life.

We appreciate your consideration and support of this bill to designate this portion of Highway 54 as the Cannonball Stageline Highway.

Economic Impact
The Cannonball Stageline Highway

The first question will be how much will this cost the State of Kansas? We are planning on this not costing nothing but the time and labor to erect the signs. Witch we have talked with Deb Miller head of KDOT and she says that would be OK. We will be soliciting privet business for the cost of the signs. We plan on Having 12 made, they are to be put up in this order. Two in Kingman, two in Pratt, and two in Greensburg. We are also looking at putting up a Historical Marker in the roadside park that is being planed for in Cunningham. This will also not cost the State anything but labor to put up the sign. We are figuring the cost of this at \$3,000.

The other side of the coin is how much will this benefit the communities that The Cannonball Stageline Highway will be running through? The Greensburg Chamber of Commerce had their annual chamber meeting Saturday January 20, as there guest speaker they had Max Ary. Max was head of the Travel & Tourism Division last year and he was in Favor of the name change. Max said that tourism was the fourth largest business in Kansas. It is a 4 billion dollar industry. He projected that tourism will surpass the oil and airplane industry in the next few years. Studies have found that the more you can put your place of business before the tourist the more chance you have of them stopping and spending that dollar. We have maximized that idea by putting several towns together along this route as you can see by the letters of support. The one figure I have to help support this idea is the 1995 business report from the Big Well at Greensburg it has a \$1.43 sales per visitor at a rate of 57,614 visitors at the well. If The Cannonball Stageline Highway increased the amount of visitors just 1,000 people, look at what that would do for Greensburg. That doesn't count what it would do for the other towns.

Mr. Vidrickson and other senators of this committee if this bill passes we have already found a stage coach and are planning quite an occasion to kick this road off. We would like to have breakfast at Kingman, lunch at Pratt, and a supper at Greensburg. We would like to invite you at this time to plan on ridding the stage coach a portion of the route.

We the committee of The Cannonball Stageline Highway would like to thank you for you time and interest. At this time we would like to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you

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