

Winter 1948 and 1949

I have a lot of treasured memories of the Nebraska Blizzards. I am not sure of the correct dates.

It was a Thursday morning, I think in November, very early in the morning dad left with three of his hunting pals to hunt ducks north of Ericson on the Cedar River. The forecast the night before was for snow flurries. They arrived just fine, but by noon it was really snowing and blowing and they were getting wet so they decided to head home. Shortly they were stuck in the sand and snow. As luck would have it they were by a vacant farm house which had a kitchen range, the type that opened in the front, so you could put the long branches they had gathered before the snow had completely covered them. It is a good thing they did not stay with the car because ^{the} only thing out of the snow when the blizzard was over was about 3 inches of the radio antenna. They were able to get warm and dry in the vacant house, but with only one package of rolls and a few candy bars they knew they could not stay there and weather the storm. It continued snowing and blowing all night and the next day. They remembered seeing a ranch house a short distance away. So, after noon on Friday they decided to walk to the ranch house. They could only see a few feet in front of them but were able to follow the fence line to the ranch.

We lived in Dannevirke and ran a country store there. When Dad didn't come home Thursday evening and with the wind and snow we were very concerned. There was no phone service where Dad was so there was no way to let us know he was safe. When the snow finally quit we had 18 inches of snow and drifts 10 to 12 feet high. My mom and siblings tried to keep us from the thought that Dad maybe under a snow drift somewhere.

Wednesday of the following week, six days since Dad had left home, Dad called from Greeley where they had a phone service. What a happy day!!

Following are some of the happenings after our Nebraska Blizzards.

The drifts were as tall as our house but they were hard as a rock so you could walk over them. Mother had 500 laying hens so it was quite a chore keeping water and feed to them over the drifts. Also, we were milking several cows and had a few feeder cattle. There was a 10 foot high drifts between the barn and the water tank. My brothers got tired of carrying water to the cattle as they wouldn't walk over the drift. We dug a trench through the drift to the tank however the cattle were afraid of walking through the trench. So my brother put a basket over the gentlest cow's head and walked her to the tank, as cattle will do the rest of them followed.

Enclosed is a picture of one of the other necessary trenches.

The roads were another story. Where there were cuts in the hills they were completely drifted full, some of them probably 30 to 40 feet deep. The county hired men and boys from nearby town of Elba to open them by hand. They would start real wide at the top of the drift throw the snow up as far as they could, then start another tier. They had to handle the snow as many as five times before they got down to the roads and then it was barely wide enough for one vehicle. Where ever possible they made roads through the fields and hay meadows. I am sure it was almost May before we could drive the six miles to the highway by the county road.

School was another story. It was so bitter cold no one wanted to send their children to school. So we wouldn't have to go to school until late in the spring, the school board decided to have school if only one child could come. I was in 7th grade so I ended up being the one chosen. Our teacher lived a mile from us. She would walk to our house come in and get warm, then she and I would walk the mile and one half to the school house. We would stoke the furnace and

then set on top of it and have classes from 9:00am to 2:00pm. We would then walk home. We did this for 3 weeks. I managed to freeze my cheek bones which was very painful.

I hope there is some of this you can use. It has been fun remembering those times. I realize it has been almost 60 years ago so I am a little fuzzy on the facts. There happenings may not have been in the same blizzard seems like we had a lot of them.

One thing I remember Mom saying is "Only thing good about the Good Old Days is I was young."

Sincerely
Anna Mae Julesgard

Elba, NE

I enjoy your magazine
Anna Mae

