

MEMORIES OF NEBRASKA BLIZZARD OF '48-'49

At the time of the storm, my husband Otis "Knotty" Knotwell and I and our 9 month old daughter, Carol, lived in Plainview in a small house with only one outside door.

On the morning of the storm Knotty had to pick up supplies in Norfolk. Before he left he brought home some groceries, including 3 gallons of milk, way more than usual, but as it turned out it was a major blessing as Carol and I were snowed in for 3 days while Knotty was snowed in in Norfolk for the same time. When he got home, he cleared the big drift in front of the door and the house.

Knotty was on the Nebraska State Patrol at the time and was stationed out of Norfolk. As a patrolman it was his duty to report road conditions daily. He gave the same report almost every day, plugged. It didn't matter how hard road crews worked to open Highway 20 running east and west through Plainview, because almost as soon as the highway was opened, it would quickly blow shut again. Knotty also made rounds with the road graders and snow plows. In convoy with road crews, the highway patrolman covered hundreds of miles across Knox, Cedar, Antelope, Pierce and Wayne Counties, serving as escort to the big machines which were unequipped with the two-way radios needed in case they became stuck or came upon stranded motorists.

The accompanying photos, belonging to the Knotwell family, show a snow blower attacking one of the massive drifts west of Plainview. Snow blowers had to be used often, as snowplows could not budge the weight of wet, heavy snow. Also a picture, the tremendous height of a snow drift located near Plainview is shown, towering above Knotwell's patrol car. The last picture is a snow drift which began one mile east of Osmond and extended over two miles in length.

Submitted by Beryl Knotwell
Wauneta, Ne