

Townsend, Montana
March 17, 2008

Blizzard '49'
Nebraska Life Magazine
P.O. Box 819
Norfolk, Nebraska 68702

Dear Folks,

We enjoy the Nebraska Life Magazine subscription from our daughter as a Christmas Gift in '07 'Wanted' Blizzard Memories of 1948-49 recently caught our attention. Charlie has always had vivid memories and stories to tell of the '49' Blizzard. Finally in December of 1999 he wrote them down for his family to remember and a glimpse of the hardships they endured.

We are sending you a copy of his '49' Blizzard experiences as he lived and remembered them. You may choose the parts you would like for your January/February 2009 issue of your magazine.

We look forward to other folks sharing their memories of '49'. Thank You.

Sincerely

Charlie + Wilma Younkin
Charlie & Wilma Younkin

Alliance Facts
Alliance is the distribution point and outfitting center for millions of acres of cattle country.

Times

ALLIANCE AND

MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Official Paper of City and County

ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA, TUESDAY, JANUARY 4,

Blizzard Paralyzes City; Winds, Snow Isolate Area

Huge Drifts Stop Motor Traffic; One Man Lost

Capt. Wayne Deaver reported at noon today that it was impossible to land the ski-equipped plane at the Snow ranch because of a ground blizzard in progress there. Another attempt will be made tomorrow.

A report was received from the Snow ranch that hay stacks had been checked in the area where Claude Hannibal became lost Sunday but with no trace of him was found.

Plans were being made for a ground trip to the ranch but chances for its success today are slight.

All rural roads in this area were blocked by the fierce 48-hour blizzard which started Sunday evening. One man is reported lost. Some livestock losses have been discovered, and ranchers expect to find more dead cattle beneath drifts; horseback searches are being started from all ranches today in an effort to save livestock.

Claude Hannibal, manager of the Nebraska Hydro Gas company, became lost in the storm late Sunday night 25 miles south of Alliance and has not been found.

The local business man and Howard Smith, an employe, were making a gas delivery to the John Reed ranch when their truck became stuck on the Glen Younkin Snow ranch.

Brought In On Horseback

Ray Varley, a cowhand on the Snow ranch, found Smith Tuesday about two and one half miles from the ranch house. Varley brought Smith to safety on horseback.

Smith had spent approximately 36 hours in the cab of the truck. According to a telephone report from the Snow ranch this morning he suffered no severe injury.

"One of his feet was frosted a little," according to Varley.

A search was made from the Snow ranch yesterday for Hannibal with no success.

Hannibal Left Truck

Smith said that Hannibal left the truck to look for some fence posts, which he believed he could use to free the truck, which was "high-centered".

Smith said that he tried to discourage his employer from making the search. When he did not return in a reasonable length of time, Smith left the truck and attempted to find him. The blizzard was at its height and he had no success.

OTHER PEOPLE HAVE STORM TROUBLES—As Alliance and Western Nebraska begins to dig out from beneath the record-breaking blizzard and snowfall of the last 48 hours, other parts of the country are having their troubles also. In the New England states rivers overflowed their banks and made thousands of people homeless. (AP Wirephoto).

A search was made by Varley and Glen Younkin for Hannibal after Smith was brought in Tuesday.

Early this morning a concerted search was begun for Hannibal. A half-track began to work north from the Snow ranch and one of Dodd-DeBolt's biggest Diesel tractors set out from Alliance southward toward the ranch.

There are many hay stacks in the vicinity of the parked truck, and it was believed possible that the missing man could have found shelter in one of them.

National Guard Aiding

Capt. Wayne Deaver, commanding officer of the local national guard unit, Co. L, 134th Infantry, organized a rescue party this morning to search for Hannibal.

Capt. Deaver said that state highway crews were attempting to open the road to the air base. From there a ski-equipped plane would be flown to the Snow ranch which is 25 miles south of Alliance.

If a landing place could be found, it was planned to deliver 15 or 20 guardsmen, by shuttle flights, to the ranch to conduct a search.

Search For Cattle

A glimpse of conditions in the cattle hills was given by telephone reports received from ranches this morning by the Times-Herald.

On the Charles E. Murphy ranch south of Alliance 400 cattle being kept close to the buildings weathered the storm in good condition. Other cattle, scattered by the storm, were being checked on today.

"The only way we can get around to the buildings is by digging trenches," Mrs. Murphy said this morning. "One man is going out on horseback this morning to see if he can find cattle that were out in the hills. We don't know yet whether any of them are dead."

28 Stuck In Drift

A housekeeper at the Maurice Peterson ranch southeast of Alliance said there are drifts up to the eaves of the house.

The men on the Peterson ranches are also out on horseback looking for scattered cattle. Twenty-eight head of cattle were found stuck in a single drift, some of them with only their tails, or the tips of their ears showing; these were dug out without loss. No dead cattle had been found.

John Reed, whose ranch is located five miles south of the Snow ranch, reported that he had found 12 of his cattle dead under a drift. Similar conditions prevailed on other ranches and farms.

At Rapid City, S.D. the airbase was still cut off early today; supplies of food and fuel were diminishing. A thousand families residing at the base were low on fuel, mostly oil, when the storm started to abate.

Eighteen Trains Stalled

Eighteen Union Pacific trains were tied up between Cheyenne and Sidney and relief trains were started out this morning. Several Pacific coast streamliners were held in the yards at Kimball.

Relief planes from army bases started out this morning to look for emergency cases in the Rocky Mountain area, where the storm

struck with great velocity Sunday afternoon and cut off all travel. Families were asked over the radio to signal to cycling planes if they were in desperate circumstances.

Hundreds of motorists were marooned in small villages where supplies were short and sleeping space limited. Supplies were being dropped from army planes today in several localities.

The Burlington started Denver-to-Chicago trains from Denver last night and incoming trains were expected early this morning, the first since Monday night. **end**

Trains, Buses Stop As Highways Blocked

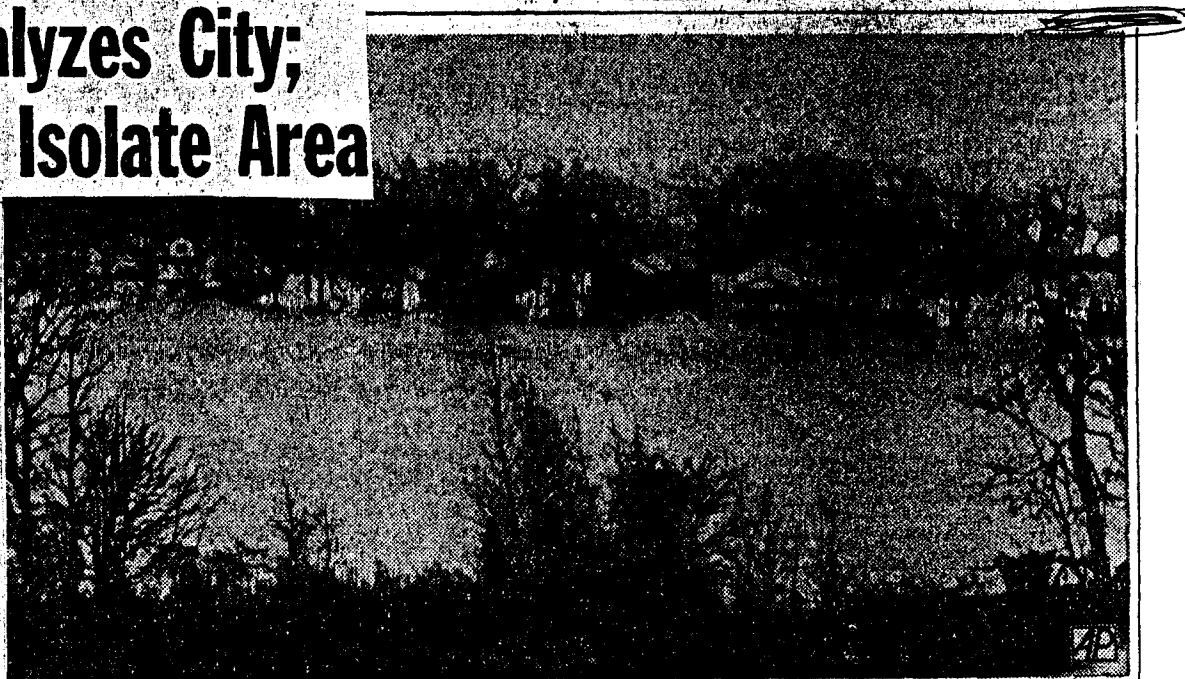
Late Tuesday night Alliance and Box Butte county began to dig its way out of one of the worst blizzards in history.

Forty-eight hours of 50-mile winds and heavy snows that finally totaled more than 20 inches, brought 15-foot drifts to city streets, paralyzed all commercial activity and isolated the community.

Highway and railroad traffic stalled late Sunday night shortly after the howling norther struck the territory with a wintry blast and rapidly drifting snow.

Troops Stranded

Train No. 43 due in Alliance at 7 a. m. Monday was stalled at Anselmo and later was taken into Seneca. A second section of Westbound 41, carrying a load of troops headed for the west coast, was already held at Seneca.



Claude Hannibal Found Frozen At Haystack

One man froze to death and a number of other people have been rescued from the big blizzard that swept through this district for 48 hours Monday and Tuesday.

The body of Claude Hannibal, Alliance business man, was found muddled at the edge of a haystack near the Snow ranch 20 miles south of Alliance.

George Younkin and his two sons, David and Charles, found the Alliance man late Wednesday afternoon, nearly 72 hours after he had disappeared in the blizzard.

Thursday morning a plane piloted by Vernon Munger of Alliance was flown to the ranch to bring back Hannibal's body.

Hannibal and Howard Smith Sunday evening were returning from making a bottled gas delivery to a ranch south of Alliance when the blizzard struck. The truck became stuck on a high center and Hannibal went to find a fence post to be used to get the truck loose.

Disappeared in Storm

Smith, an employe of Hannibal's Nebraska Hydro-Gas company, refused to argue Hannibal out of going but the man could not be dissuaded. He disappeared in the driving blizzard and when he did not return Smith ventured out to try to find him but was unsuccessful.

Smith climbed back into the cab of the truck and remained there for 36 hours. Ray Varley, a cowboy from the Snow ranch, found him in the cab and took him to the ranch on horseback. He had frostbitten hands and feet but was not seriously hurt.

When Hannibal's body was found at the edge of a haystack he was only a half mile from the place where the truck had stalled. He had evidently tried to burrow beneath the stack but was so exhausted he could not do so. He was warmly dressed with overhauled heavy wool clothes and mittens.

Was Too Exhausted

It is believed that he wandered in the blizzard for some time before he came up against the haystack and by then was too weary to crawl inside to safety.

This is the only known fatality of the blizzard but a number of other people have told of miraculous escapes from the howling wind, driving snow and sub-zero weather that locked Western Nebraska in a blizzard grip from Sunday night until late Tuesday.

All day Thursday rescue planes equipped with skis performed errands of mercy.

Art Johnson of Berea brought two injured people to Alliance from isolated ranches.

Frosted Hands

One was Frances Schmitz, 28, of Hemingford. Sunday night Schmitz and a companion named Ball were caught by the blizzard and managed to get to the William Enyeart home five miles west and three miles north of Hemingford. When the two arrived at the ranch Schmitz's hands were badly frost-bitten.

A telephone call was made to Hemingford for medical help but an attempt to break through county roads was unsuccessful even though a tractor and grader were

shape and the ski plane was called into service Thursday after Dr. G. R. Christenson, of Hemingford, warned that the man must have medical and hospital attention at once.

VFW Aided

Johnson took off from Berea in his ski-equipped plane, flew to the Enyeart place and returned. He landed at Fourteenth and Emerson where a jeep manned by the Veter-

ans of Foreign Wars took him to the hospital.

Today physicians said Schmitz will probably not lose his hands.

Another emergency call came Thursday from the ranch of Mrs. Scott Clingenpeel, seven miles west and a mile south, near the old city airport. Mrs. Clingenpeel had been on horseback seeking strayed cattle when the horse fell, fracturing her leg. Clyde Trenkle and his wife tried to carry the woman to the ranch house but couldn't. They then got her on the horse and took her to the house.

An emergency splint was applied and Johnson landed in a nearby field. Within two hours after the accident Mrs. Clingenpeel was at St. Joseph's hospital and was safe.

Carried Food

Other planes did errands of mercy Thursday and Wednesday. They flew from a frozen lake southeast of the air base, carrying food and other supplies to isolated ranches in the hills.

An instance of the part planes have played in the serious emergency was given Thursday by Al Atkins of Alliance, state brand inspector. His son Robert lives on a farm three miles east and a mile south of Bayard. His supply of insulin was gone and a plane flew low and dropped a packet containing the drug.

Reports of lost persons who were later located filtered in to the Times-Herald and the Alliance police station, local disaster headquarters, throughout Wednesday and Thursday.

Linemen Found

Two linemen of the Northwest Bell Telephone company, Robert Peltz and Steve Thorn, both of Rapid City, were reported safe in a farmhouse between the Highway 87 and 19 junction and the 16-mile corner.

The two linemen arrived at the Dunlap store Sunday night when the blizzard first started and continued on to Alliance. They were unreported for three days.

Bill Sherlock and two of his young sons were caught by the blizzard west of Alliance Sunday and made their way successfully to Cook's ranch.

Jim Monahan was taking a school teacher to her school Sunday night and were lost near Ashby but made their way to a ranch and were reported safe.

No further word has been received from the J. B. Johnson ranch between Antioch and Lake-side where Curley Planansky and Patricia Wightman of Alliance have been staying since they were caught by the storm Sunday night.

Rescued by Cowboys

The two were returning from Ellsworth when the blizzard struck. Planansky struggled through the snow to the Johnson place and according to reports, "collapsed" when he reached the place. Miss Wightman was rescued from the stalled car by men on horseback.

Late Wednesday night an attempt was made to drive an ambulance to Hemingford to bring back several people. Led by a jeep and VFW men the ambulance could get only two or three miles north on Highway 19 and had to turn back.

However the state highway men broke out the highway all the way to Hemingford Thursday and the David Walker ambulance made it through to Hemingford. The rescue crew brought back Carl Sorensen, aged Hemingford man who had broken his hip, and a baby who died after premature birth. This was the child of W. L. Klester.

Baby Dies

Monday a tractor manned by Merle Rosenberger and Hollis Hedgecock dragged Dr. Christenson's car to the Klester farm, four miles north of Hemingford where the baby was born prematurely.

The child was brought back to Hemingford but died Monday night.

Another report of a Hemingford casualty concerned the 6-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Harmon who live five miles south of that village. The boy broke his arm Sunday and help did not reach him until Thursday evening. However it was only a "green fracture" and the boy is not suffering from the accident.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Taylor of Bushnell, Nebr., visiting at the home of his cousin, Bob Sumner in Hemingford, were rescued during the storm when a leaking gas tank filled the home with fumes. The couple suffered no ill effects.

Couple Ate Corn

An unidentified couple were rescued by plane on Highway 87 south and west of Hemingford last Wednesday. They had been in Crawford and were on their way back to Scottsbluff when the blizzard struck. It was reported they ate field corn for two days before a plane from Scottsbluff came to rescue them.

Here in Alliance jeeps furnished by Viggo Laurson, local Willys dealer, have been on a 24-hour duty basis throughout the storm. They have taken fuel, groceries and other supplies to people in the city who have not been able to get out of their houses.

Brake Air Base Road

The VFW also manned a four-wheel truck and broke a trail to the air base so the body of Claude Hannibal could be brought to the David Walker Funeral Home.

Jim Motley, nationally famous heavyweight boxer, was another hero of the storm. Tuesday it was reported that a family on the Ben Nelson place south of the Kellogg elevator were out of groceries. Big Jim Motley took a pack of groceries on his back and broke a path to the house. He was several hours making the two-mile round trip.

The rescue crews of the VFW and National Guard are still on duty and under the direction of Norman Watson and Capt. Wayne Deaver, are standing by to give aid wherever it is needed.

ARDMORE BUSINESS BLOCK IS BURNED

Fire swept almost a full business block of the small town or Ardmore, S. D., Wednesday, destroying six buildings.

Efforts to fight the fire were futile because water over the entire town had been shut off due to a broken main. Charles Leonard, editor of the Hot Springs, S. Dak. paper said today.

Defective electrical wiring caused the fire to break out in a saloon and dance hall at 9:45 a. m. Wednesday. The fire spread to a grocery store, a restaurant, a warehouse and a service station. It did not reach a hotel located in the same block.

The H. A. Hartman family, who lived above the grocery store, escaped without injury. Calls were made to surrounding towns for fire equipment and aid, but because of heavy snow in the area no help could reach the town.

The entire south side of Ardmore's only business block was burned with the exception of the hotel. All of the buildings were of frame construction. An estimate of the loss has not been made.

CLAUDE HANNIBAL FUNERAL NOT SET

Funeral services for Claude Hannibal of Alliance will be announced by the David Walker Funeral Home. The family is awaiting the arrival of relatives from other parts of the state.

Mr. Hannibal, who died in the blizzard early this week, was born Oct. 25, 1914 at Bismark, Mo. His mother, Mrs. Lena Ramsey, is living in Hannibal, Mo.

He was married May 26, 1943 at New Orleans. The couple has two children, Claudia Marie, 4 and Joseph Allen, 1.

The couple and the little girl came to Alliance two years ago and set up the Nebraska Hydro-Gas Company. Previous to that time they had lived in Shreveport, La., and other southern points.

Mr. Hannibal was a member of the Presbyterian church. During the war he was an employe of Pan-American Airways and the Lyke Steamship lines.

Charles A. ...
was ...
George ...
at such a busy time

