



## WINTER OF 1948 &amp; 1949

I WAS A EWING, NEBRASKA HIGHSCHOOL SOPHOMORE THE FALL OF 1948, LIVING WITH MY PARENTS, VIC & OPAL MARQUARDT, AND BROTHER, SKIP, IN THE APARTMENT IN THE BACK OF OUR IGA GROCERY STORE. THE USUAL ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE FOR COUNTRY KIDS TO STAY IN TOWN WHENEVER THE ROADS OR WEATHER WAS BAD, AS SCHOOL WAS NOT CANCELLED VERY OFTEN DUE TO THE WEATHER. NOBODY HAD EVEN CONSIDERED SCHOOL BUSES----THEY WERE FOR CITIES. IT TOOK A FIRE OR FLOOD OR NO HEAT TO CANCEL SCHOOL. IF THE COUNTRY KIDS COULD NOT MAKE IT IN FOR CLASS THAT WAS THEIR HARD LUCK. THEY HAD TO MAKE UP THEIR WORK WHENEVER THEY GOT BACK IN TOWN, SO A LOT OF THEM STAYED IN TOWN WHEN A BLIZZARD WAS FORCAST, OR THERE WAS ENOUGH SNOW OR MUD TO MAKE THE ROADS IMPASSABLE. IN MID-NOVEMBER WE HAD HAD QUITE A BIT OF SNOW AND WIND, SO THERE WERE A NUMBER OF COUNTRY KIDS STAYING IN TOWN. ON THE SEVENTEENTH, SCHOOL WAS CANCELLED DUE TO A BROKEN WATER PIPE, SO A GROUP OF US (ANNA MAE HILL, SALLY CHRISTON, MARION HARRIS, CAROL WULF, PAT AND BERNADINE SANDERS, DAVE CLOYD, DONALD SPAHN, MAX ANGUS, JIM GOOD, MYSELF, AND OTHERS WHOM I CANNOT RECALL) DECIDED TO GO SLEDDING OUT AT THE YELLOW BANKS. IT WAS A CLEAR, CRISP MORNING WHEN WE HEADED EAST ON FOOT. WE GRADUALLY BECAME AWARE THAT THE SUN HAD DISAPPEARED AND THE WIND WAS COMING UP FROM THE NORTH. THEN IT BEGAN TO SNOW SO



HARD AND THE WIND BECAME SO STRONG WE COULD HARDLY STAND UP NOR SEE WHERE WE WERE GOING. WE HAD CROSSED WHAT WAS KNOWN AS FURLEY'S BAYOU AND THE ELKHORN RIVER WITHOUT REALIZING IT, UNTIL WE CAME TO A FENCE WE REMEMBERED AS BEING ON THE OTHER SIDE----BUT NOBODY RECALLED CROSSING THE BRIDGE. APPARENTLY WE HAD CROSSED ON THE ICE. BUT HOW TO GET BACK TO TOWN? WE COULD NOT SEE AND THE DRIFTS WERE GETTING SO DEEP IT WAS DIFFICULT TO WALK, AND THE YOUNGEST GIRL, BERNADINE SANDERS COULD NOT GET THROUGH THE SNOWBANKS. SHE WAS COLD AND WET AND CRYING. DON SPAHN REMOVED HIS JACKET AND WRAPPED HER IN IT AND CARRIED HER UNTIL HE COULD HARDLY STAND UP. THEN THE OTHER BOYS TOOK TURNS CARRYING HER & PULLING HER ON A SLED WHEREVER IT WAS POSSIBLE. WE WERE BECOMING QUITE PANICKY ABOUT BEING LOST IN A BLIZZARD, AND WERE DISCUSSING DIGGING A CAVE INTO A SNOWBANK TO WAIT IT OUT. SUDDENLY THE WIND LET UP A TINY BIT AND WE COULD SEE----BUT EVERYTHING LOOKED STRANGE UNDER THAT MUCH SNOW. THEN SOMEONE SPOTTED A PLUM THICKET WE WERE ALL FAMILIAR WITH AND WE GOT OUR BEARINGS ENOUGH TO FIND THE ROAD AND GET BACK TO TOWN. WHAT A RELIEF WHEN WE FINALLY COULD SEE RUROHDE'S FEED STORE AT THE EAST END OF TOWN!!! WE WERE GREETED BY A LOT OF VERY WORRIED PARENTS, WHO WERE GATHERED AT SANDER'S CAFÉ DISCUSSING HOW THEY WERE GOING TO GO SEARCHING FOR US. THE BLIZZARD LASTED FOR DAYS. THEN WE WOULD GET A DAY OR TWO OF



SUN, THEN ANOTHER BLIZZARD. THIS CONTINUED THROUGH THE END OF MARCH. THE RAILROAD CALLED FOR ROTARY PLOWS, THE FIRST THAT ANYONE IN OUR AREA HAD EVER SEEN. AND THE ARMY CAME WITH ROTARIES AND OTHER HUGE EQUIPMENT TO OPEN THE HIGHWAYS. MANY OF THE COUNTRY ROADS REMAINED BLOCKED FOR MOST OF THE WINTER, AND THERE WERE ONLY TWO WAYS FOR THE FARMERS AND RANCHERS TO GET GROCERIES, MEDICINE, OR SUPPLIES OF ANY KIND---- BY HORSE AND WAGON AND BY AIR DROP. TWO LOCAL SMALL PLANE OWNERS, MR. LATZEL AND MR DANIELS, FITTED THEIR PLANES WITH SKIS, AND THE BUSINES OWNERS WOULD SEND OUT TO THEM WHAT THEY ASSUMED THEY WOULD NEED. DAD SENT OUT GROCERIES TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS AND ALWAYS INCLUDED SOME CANDY FOR THE KIDS. OF COURSE THERE WAS NO WAY FOR ANYONE TO GET TO TOWN TO PAY DAD OR ANY OF THE OTHER BUSINESSMEN. HOW DID THEY MANAGE TO GET THE WHOLESALE HOUSES TO CARRY THE BILLS TILL SPRING? THESE WERE HARD TIMES EVEN WITHOUT THE BAD WEATHER. BUT IT WAS ALSO A TIME WHEN PEOPLE TRUSTED EACH OTHER, AND A MAN'S WORD WAS AS GOOD AS GOLD. DAD SAID HE NEVER LOST A CENT ON ALL THE HUNDREDS OF DOLLARS OF GROCERIES HE HAD AIR DROPPED.

"HUNDREDS" DOESN'T SOUND LIKE MUCH NOWADAYS, BUT BACK THEN IT WAS A SMALL FORTUNE. ABOUT THIRTY YEARS LATER, WHEN WE WERE VISITING AUNT MINNIE PORTER IN THE NELIGH NURSING HOME, I CAME ACROSS THE NAME, "LOUIS POFHAL" ON THE ROSTER OF PATIENTS,



SO I STOPPED IN TO SEE HIM AND TOLD HIM I WAS VIC AND OPAL MARQUARDT'S DAUGHTER. HIS FACE LIT UP LIKE A CHRISTMAS TREE, AND HE SAID, "VIC MARQUARDT WAS THE BEST FRIEND I EVER HAD. DURING THE WINTER OF '48 & '49 MY KIDS WOULD HAVE STARVED TO DEATH LIKE MY CATTLE IF HE HAD NOT SENT FOOD OUT FOR US BY AIR." YEARS LATER, AT OUR FORTY-FIFTH CLASS REUNION, JIM WEBER WAS LOOKING AT MY OLD PHOTO ALBUM OF THAT WINTER AND HE SAID HOW MUCH THEY ALL LOOKED FORWARD TO THE GROCERIES DAD SENT OUT, ESPECIALLY THE KIDS, WHO ALL LOVED THE CANDY. HE SAID THAT HIS FOLKS MUST HAVE BEEN MY FOLKS BEST CUSTOMERS, AS THERE WERE FIFTEEN KIDS IN THE FAMILY! FUNNY, BUT I KNEW JIM IN MY CLASS, AND HIS SISTER, BETTY JO IN SKIP'S CLASS, BUT I HAD NO IDEA THERE WERE ANY MORE OF THEM. I ASSUME THE REST OF THEM WERE STILL IN COUNTRY SCHOOL AT THE TIME.

WE DID NOT SEE THE GROUND AGAIN TILL SPRING. THEN IT WARMED UP RAPIDLY AND WE RECEIVED A LOT OF HEAVY RAINS, AND EVERY CREEK AND RIVER AND LAKE AND BAYOU FLOODED. EWING WAS LIKE AN ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF AN OCEAN FOR WEEKS. WHEN IT QUIT RAINING, IT REALLY QUIT, AND MANY OF THE FARMERS DRIED OUT THAT SUMMER. THERE WERE SUCH HUGE CRACKS IN THE GROUND THAT I COULD PLACE MY FOOT INTO THEM. ON JULY 4<sup>TH</sup>, SOME OF US WENT FOR A HIKE, AND IN A SHELTERBELT UNDER A LOT OF LEAVES WE FOUND THE REMNENTS OF A SNOWBANK! I HAVE PICTURES WE TOOK THAT WINTER



OUT BY THE RANCH WHERE I WAS BORN, (NOW THE PRUDEN RANCH, I BELIEVE) AND YOU COULD JUST SEE THE TOPS OF THE JACKPINE TREES MY DAD PLANTED WHEN HE WAS FIFTEEN YEARS OLD. AND A PHOTO OF BERNADINE SANDERS AND ME WITH OUR TOES ON TOP OF A TELEPHONE POLE. GRANTED, THOSE POLES WERE PROBABLY NOT AS TALL AS THEY ARE NOWADAYS, BUT THAT WAS STILL A LOT OF SNOW. THERE WAS NO SUCH THING AS TELEVISION IN OUR AREA BACK THEN, SO FOR ENTERTAINMENT THAT WINTER, WALDO (DOC) AND LEONA DAVIS, WHO LIVED IN THE BACK OF THEIR THEATER, WOULD RUN THE SAME MOVIE OVER AND OVER FOR US AND NOT CHARGE A CENT EXCEPT FOR THE FIRST TIME WHEN A NEW ONE MIGHT COME IN. DORIS AND ART SANDERS WOULD TRIP THE NICKELODEON SO WE COULD DANCE IN THE CAFÉ, WHERE THEY ALSO LIVED IN BACK, OR JUST LISTEN TO THE MUSIC WHILE WE PLAYED CARDS OR MONOPOLY. MY DAD WOULD LET US ROLLERSKATE UP AND DOWN THE AISLES OF THE GROCERY STORE. THE BOYS SCOOPED OFF A PLACE ON THE ICE OF FURLEY'S BAYOU WHERE WE WOULD DRAG FALLEN LOGS TO MAKE A BONFIRE AND HAVE HOTDOGS AND MARSHMALLOWS AND WARM UP WHEN WE WENT ICE SKATING. BUT I NEVER DID MASTER THE ART OF ICESKATING. I WAS MORE COMFORTABLE ON ROLLERSKATES. I COULD GO BACKWARDS AND TURN AROUND WITH ICESKATES, BUT WHENEVER I TRIED TO GO FORWARD I WOULD FALL ON MY FACE. SEEMS LIKE THE PROTRUDING BLADE WAS ALWAYS IN THE WAY. DORIS SANDERS AND LEONA DAVIS AND



GRANDMA MARQUARDT ALL TRIED TO TEACH ME HOW TO CROCHET  
THAT WINTER. I DID FINALLY FINISH A DOILY, BUT I DON'T THINK ANY  
TWO STITCHES WERE THE SAME SIZE, SO IT WAS PRETTY LOPSIDED.

By Marcia Joan Marquardt Huddleston

Laurel, Nebraska

MARCH 3, 2008

Marcia Joan Huddleston

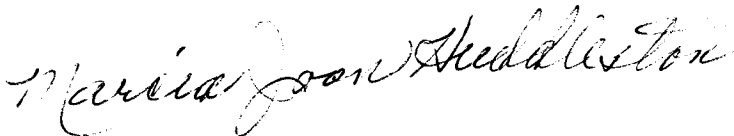
Laurel, NE

Blizzard '48/'49  
Nebraska Life Magazine  
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A couple of weeks ago I submitted my recollections of the blizzard & included several photos. I later realized that although I had my name on the backs, I had neglected to include a self addressed stamped envelope. I am enclosing one here, in hopes it will connect with my article & photos. We really enjoy your magazine, although we have only been receiving it for a short time. It brings back a lot of memories.

One thing I did not mention in the article I submitted was the disappearance of a lady from O'Neal whose parents lived in Ewing. I do not recall her name, but her mother was married to one of the Pruden's in Ewing, & they died never knowing what became of their daughter. At the time, there were all kinds of speculations: Did her husband do away with her & bury her under the new cement in their basement? Did she go to the priest & did he help her escape from a bad situation at home? But would she abandon her children? Did a trucker give her a ride to another place? Supposedly in the spring someone found a woman's overshoe with foot bones in it in the Elkhorn River. Hopefully someone from the area who was more familiar with the story will write about it. Several years ago it was on one of the TV shows, "Cold Case" or "Unsolved Mysteries" or some such program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marcia Joan Huddleston". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Marcia Joan (Marquardt) Huddleston