

Chris Amundson

From: Sandra
Sent: Thursday, January 08, 2009 9:00 PM
To: camundson@nebraskalife.com
Subject: Your latest issue on the Blizzards

I had forgotten that you requested stories and photos of the blizzards. What a delightful surprise to see all the stories - what memories this brought back. Although I was quite small (born in '46) my mother told me many stories about those horrible times. We lived in Hastings at that time, on the second floor of my grandparents house. The only store in the area was small corner grocery store about 15 blocks from us. There wasn't any traffic to speak of and the only street cleaning I can remember was done by an old fashioned maintainer.

When work was to be done on a street you had to stop and take out the bricks and stack them off to the side and then dig a hole with manpower and shovels. If you didn't get the work done in one day, you put out smudge pots. These were round iron pots with oil and a wick and you lit it and it was supposed to burn all night and let you know where the hole was. However, when the blizzard came everything was covered up.

My Mom needed food and milk for me, so my uncle (home on leave from the Navy) and my mom started out walking to the store down the middle of the street. He had the old corn scoop shovel and off they went. As they got near the grocery store my mom started to talk to him about what they would get, but then realized he was not answering. As she looked around, she could not find him, he had vanished.

Then she heard him calling for help - he had walked right over the whole that had been dug for repair in the street and fallen in! He placed the shovel against the wall of the hole, backwards, and stepped on the shoulders of the metal part of the shovel. She grabbed his hand and between them they managed to get him up out of the hole.

we have always had a laugh over how my uncle disappeared that day.

I just finished reading the article by Roger Welsch and our Nebraska weather. If you are depressed or not satisfied with your life - read Roger, it will perk you right up. It is wonderful to read someone that likes living here. I have lived in Iowa City, Iowa (ok, but glad to come back to Nebraska) and I have lived in Marysville, Kansas (again ok, but I always loved to come back to Nebraska). If the Powerball comes to my life, I shall still live in Nebraska. With the economic times that we are having, it is somehow comforting when you hear that it is not affecting us as much here as in other areas. I listen to KVNO in the mornings on the way to work and when they give the weather, and it does not sound the best, it helps when they say "Hey, what do you expect? It's Nebraska! It's what happens when you live on the Great Plains."

Now I would like to tell you about my Mother - I don't want her story to die with me.

In the 1940's (about 1943) she graduated from high school. She lived on a farm about 5 miles from Edgar, Nebraska with her parents and older brother. There was really nothing there for her and the morning after graduation she packed her belongings in a paper sack. One change of underwear and one extra dress. One pair of shoes, only to be worn for "good". She had a job to go to at the only cafe in town and lived in a room above the cafe with her best friend. They got room and board and a little extra week to work in the cafe.

All meals were served and it opened early to hungry people! You had to be able to do the cash register, wait tables, cook meals, do dishes and clean the place up at night. The ice cream came in on the only bus that came through town. Tall metal containers in khaki insulated sleeves. Very heavy and you had to lift them off, bring them in and lift them over the side to put them in the freezer. Hard dipped ice cream was all that was available.

She worked at this for about a year and saved everything she could. While this was happening, my great uncle was in town with my dad. He pointed out my mom to my dad and told him - "now there is a good looking woman that you should know - she would be good for you". When my dad was in town he would try to talk to my mom but then one day she disappeared.

Unknown to him, mom had saved up enough for a one way ticket to Hastings, Nebraska. She knew that the big city was where she needed to be if she wanted to succeed in life. She had no job and no place to live but she had faith and will to succeed. Off she went, again with her sack of belongings.

When she got to Hastings she started walking the streets looking for work. She lost a heel on her shoe and stopped at a shoe repair to get it fixed. When she asked the owner if he knew of work or a place to stay - he did! An older woman a few blocks away had a room to rent and Skaggs grocery store needed a checker. With her newly fixed shoe she went to the woman's house to see about the room. The lady would rent to her on faith for one week, if she helped cook and clean for her. Then off to Skaggs for a job - and she was hired. Things were looking up.

One day my grandmother sent my dad to Skaggs for some hamburger. When he went through the checkout line, there was my mom to wait on him. He had found her again! It wasn't long before they were engaged.

And that is how I came to be - the first child, the first grandchild and the first great grandchild!

Thank you for listening to one of my stories about our lives. My sister and I are nine years apart (she is the younger) and I have tried to write down as much as I can for her about our lives before her memory.