

Blizzard Highlights

From all corners of the O'Neill region stories began to trickle in this week concerning experiences of people in the historic November blizzard of 1948. Pathos, melodrama and humor combine to make the storm probably the year's biggest news story.

Everywhere the picture was the same—mountains of snow, choked roads and highways, marooned travelers, hundreds of unexpected guests, frantic efforts to shelter livestock. There were hurried efforts to replenish food and fuel supplies, days of vacation for excited school children, lack of mail service for what might easily extend over a week. There were reports of heroism on one hand and smug contentment on the other.

Reams of copy would be required to tell the story in its fullest details.

The Frontier's alert correspondents have provided a word picture of the storm in several communities. The stories that follow have been dispatched to The Frontier by courier, wire and mail. It is only a partial roundup, but provides the first detailed storm news in the territory.

(Compiled from Special Dispatches)

The stork was active during the storm. Mrs. Wilbur Peters and Mrs. Neil Clarke, O'Neill women, walked through snow drifts to the O'Neill hospital where both gave births to sons.

The Clarke infant, Benny Lee, arrived Friday; William Dean Peters was born on Saturday.

Papa Peters, a Consumers Public Power district lineman, was out-of-town, boarded a Chicago & North Western train with a snowplow attached and rode into O'Neill ahead of the big bird.

Teresa Ann Rotherham entered this world early Saturday as the storm was subsiding. Her parents are Mr. and Mrs. John Rotherham, of O'Neill, and Dr. W. F. Finley had to negotiate snowdrifts higher than his head to attend.

On Saturday morning, Carl Hubel, Ewing's flying rancher, flew his ski-equipped plane to the Wilson Spangler place, east of Ewing, and brought Mrs. Spangler, an expectant mother, to town. She is now at the home of her mother-in-law, W. A. Spangler.

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Tri-State turkeys farms here reported fowl losses variously estimated from one to two thousand head. Clark Willson, farm manager, said the extent of the loss couldn't be determined until snow has cleared. J. M. Cokle, of the Cokle Hatchery, likewise has reported a turkey loss, probably greater. Losses for these firms will run into thousands of dollars.

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LYNCH—Rain Wednesday evening, November 18, turned to snow which was borne on a hard-driving wind from the northwest and brought to the Lynch vicinity one of its worst blizzards in years.

No school was held Thursday and Friday and train service on the Winner, S. D.-Norfolk branch of the North Western was badly interrupted.

Sidney Woolf, Glen Stewart and a third person were on a hunting trip and were caught in the storm along the Missouri river northwest of Lynch. They were marooned in the farm home of Hans Stuckstorf for 2½ days. Verne Stewart got through with a tractor on Saturday and freed them.

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EWING—An anonymous telephone call from a farm home brought word to Ewing that an automobile and its occupants were marooned on federal highway 20 northwest of Ewing. A group of men boarded Art Ruroede's truck, became stalled, walked the remaining distance a mile and found Mr. and Mrs. George Harris, of Riverton, Wyo., marooned in a new Buick. They had been to the Sioux City market with livestock, became stalled. Their gasoline held out until the early hours Friday. They remained in their car huddled together until Saturday. The rescue party found John H. Haun, 48, of Spencer dead in another car. (See story in column 2.)

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EWING—Mrs. Katherine Boies, who teaches in the old Letzel school, eight miles south of Ewing, sent her pupils home Thursday before the storm became too severe, remained in the building alone. Without food but warm, she was found Saturday.

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ATKINSON—Mrs. Alpha Kirkland, teacher in school district 119, and several of her pupils spent last Thursday night in the school building. One of the parents came to the school for his children, but decided it was safer to leave them there. Next day, Mrs. Kirkland and the children walked to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Barnes, where patrons came for them later in the day.

★
REDBIRD—Rodger Rosenkrans and his family were snowbound on the Niobrara river hill here as their auto got stuck in a snowbank. The family spent the night at the Nick Baker home. Next day Mr. Rosenkrans walked to his home near Dorsey, nine miles away, cared for his livestock, got help to free his car.

★
W. W. Waller, of O'Neill, was caught in the storm near Spencer. His family here did not know his whereabouts until Saturday. He walked five miles from the Ben Cunningham farm to where he could place a telephone call.

A traveling salesman, a Golden hotel guest during the course of the blizzard, early Saturday recruited several youthful snow shovelers to remove a mountain of snow around his automobile, paid the laborers \$10, discovered it was somebody else's car.

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EWING—Kermit Jeffries, weather observer here, estimated that between 12- and 18-inches of snow fell in Ewing. Drifts ranged to 10 feet in height. The hotel and rooming houses were filled with travelers who were unable to get out of town. Water and telephone service was seriously impaired. Power failure caused grave concern. Nels A. Bergstrom, school custodian, was fearful water pipes in the building would burst if electricity had been off much longer. Businessmen fretted over dormant refrigeration plants and stokers. Townspeople stayed home and caught up on their sleep. Horses were drafted for emergency transportation but didn't like the idea.

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REDBIRD—Ray Wilson was out Saturday with his tractor, opening important roads in the vicinity following the raging blizzard.

(Continued on page 4)

TRAVELER DIES IN SNOWBOUND AUTO

Heart Attack Fatal to John H. Haun, 48, Spencer Trucker

Burial at Alford

A heart attack proved fatal to John H. Haun, 48, Spencer trucker, about 10 p. m. last Thursday while marooned in a snowbound automobile with two companions, Earl J. Rodman, of O'Neill, and Ray Funk, of Ewing.

Haun had been traveling West Thursday afternoon in his truck on highway 20 when his machine stalled near the Page intersection. While a blizzard raged, he joined up with Rodman and Funk, who were enroute to O'Neill from Ewing.

Later, the trio became stranded in Funk's machine.

About 10 o'clock that night Haun, who, according to relatives had a bad heart, suffered an attack and he died suddenly.

As the night progressed the storm grew more fierce. The two men kept the body in the car and at intervals started the engine to keep warm. About midnight snow had partially enveloped the machine and fumes filled the car. Unable to open a door, Rodman and Funk crawled out through a window.

Because the snow was deep, and the storm was raging, they crawled back into the machine where they remained until 8 a. m. Saturday.

Making their way to the Melcher farm, three-quarters of a mile away, help was summoned by telephone from Ewing.

By Saturday afternoon the body was removed by means of a truck and a jeep and the remains were brought to the Biglin Brothers funeral home.

Funeral services were held Tuesday at 2 p. m. at the Methodist church in Lynch with Rev. Chester Anderson officiating. Burial was in the Alford cemetery, near Monowi.

Palbearers were: Harold

Man, 82, Expires Near Chambers

CHAMBERS—Robert Shoemaker, 82, died last Thursday at 10:30 p. m. at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Charles Wright, located six miles southwest of Chambers.

Due to blocked road conditions, the remains were not removed until Sunday, when they were taken to Biglin Brothers mortuary in O'Neill.

Neighbors gathered Saturday and Sunday to shovel snow and enable the body to be removed.

Late Monday the remains were taken to Plainview pending funeral services. Burial was to be at Creighton.

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Snowstorm Paralyzes Region



BLIZZARD OF 1948... Oldtimers aver that last week's 48-hour snowstorm, the first of the season, rivaled the historic blizzard of 1888 in quantity. Ol' Dobbin was brought into action to free stranded automobiles and to negotiate the snow-clogged streets and highways. The top photograph (taken in front of the Golden hotel) shows tons of snow on the city's main

intersection at Fourth and Douglas streets. Bottom photograph (looking East on Douglas from same intersection) pictures a drift in front of the Golden nearly touching the canopy. A row of automobiles is buried under the ridge of snow in the background.—The Frontier Photos by John H. McCarville.



JAMES R. HOPKINS DIES AT INMAN

Lifelong Resident of Stafford and Inman Ill 3 Years

INMAN—James R. Hopkins, 64, lifelong resident of the Stafford and Inman communities, died at 2:30 p. m. last Thursday at his home in Inman. He had been ill for about three years.

Because of the storm conditions and impassable roads, the body could not be removed to Biglin Brothers mortuary in O'Neill until Friday, being transported on a tractor-drawn wagon.

Funeral services were delayed until Wednesday. Rev. R. M. Wingate, church pastor, was to have officiated in 2 p. m. rites at the Methodist church. Interment was to have been in the Inman cemetery.

James Ralph Hopkins, son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert M. Hopkins, was born at Stafford on June 30, 1884. He was born on the Hopkins homestead and made his home continuously in the Stafford and Inman communities.

On June 2, 1917, he was married at Luton, Ia., to Iva Morey Hopkins, and to this union was born six children.

Survivors include: Widow Sons—Kemp, of Buhl, Ida.; Donald, of O'Neill; Larry, of Inman. Daughters—Mrs. Ellen Maxcy, of Bayard; Mrs. Virginia Perry, of O'Neill; Mrs. Jeanette Barnes, of Cody. Stepdaughters—Mrs. Edna Woods, of Palmer; Mrs. Estella Smith and Mrs. Willy Morey, both of Sioux City. Sisters—Mrs. Mary Allen, of Long Beach, Calif.; Mrs. Edith Ladwig, of Sumner. Brothers—Walter and Ted, of Buhl, Ida., and Harvey, of Papillion. He also leaves 23 grandchildren.

Union Thanksgiving Services Scheduled

Union Thanksgiving worship services were to have been held Wednesday night, November 24, at First Presbyterian church. Rev. M. H. Grosenbach, of Wesleyan Methodist church, was to deliver the sermon.

RETURN BODIES OF 3 WAR DEAD

Plan Final Burials for European Theater Casualties

The remains of three men who lost their lives in Europe during World War II and are to be given final burial here arrived in the U. S. last week aboard the Army transport Carroll Victory.

They are: 2/LT. JAMES A. MACK. T/5 LEONARD D. LAWYER. T/5 MELVIN S. THORIN.

Lieutenant Mack's next-of-kin is Fred R. Mack, of Atkinson; T/5 Lawyer's next-of-kin is John C. Lawyer, 7575 North Heppner Ave., Portland, Ore., and T/5 Thorin's next-of-kin is Florence P. Thorin, of Chambers.

After leaving the Kansas City, Mo., American Graves Registration distribution center at a late date, the Mack body will be forwarded to the Seger funeral home in Atkinson; the Lawyer body to Biglin Brothers in O'Neill, and the Thorin body to Barnum's funeral home at Neligh.

American war dead originally interred in France, Belgium and Holland were among those being brought back to the U. S. aboard the Carroll Victory. All being returned have been requested by next-of-kin.

EDWARD SEGER, 34, ATKINSON, DIES

World War II Veteran Expires at Hot Springs Hospital

ATKINSON—Funeral services were held Tuesday, November 23, at 9:30 a. m. for Edward Seger, 34, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Seger, of Atkinson.

He died Friday, November 19, at the Veteran's hospital in Hot Springs, S. D., where he had undergone surgery.

Hospital attendants held little hope for his recovery from the beginning of his illness. The late Mr. Seger was born in Atkinson and lived most of his life here, except for the nearly three years he spent in the Army during World War II. After his discharge, he had made his home here and was active in all civic affairs.

He was a member of the order of Knights of Columbus. The order held a rosary service Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock and another was held Monday evening at the Seger family home.

Funeral services were held at St. Joseph's Catholic church with Rev. A. A. Lehmann in charge. The remains were accorded full military rites by Farley Tushla post of the American Legion during the burial.

Survivors include: Parents—Mr. and Mrs. Paul Seger; brothers—Joseph and Leo Seger, both of Atkinson; sisters—Mrs. Margaret Langer, of Denver, Colo.; Mrs. Raymond (Mary) White, Mrs. Judd (Gertrude) Bond and Mrs. Harry (Katherine) Bose, all of Martin, S. D., and Mrs. August (Agnes) Leininger, of Kadoka, S. D.

The pallbearers were: William Morgan, George Verzal, John Flannery, Russell Heuten, Charles Ankeny and Roy Mack.

Unseasonal November Blizzard Claims One Life; Train Marooned 24 Hours

Residents in the O'Neill region this week are occupied with the massive task of digging out from under the worst November blizzard on record.

O'Neill and its surrounding territory lay in the direct path of a furious and costly storm that swept in from the northwest, claiming at least one life, taking a toll in livestock and fowl, and completely paralyzing the area for three days. Some communities and many families will be isolated indefinitely if more snow comes.

Riding on a strong northerly wind, the snow began falling early Thursday. The storm gained momentum as the day progressed with the temperature dropping steadily from the 30-degree mark to a low of 18.

The winds mounted and at times gusts attained a velocity of 50-mile-per-hour, according to estimates at the Municipal airport.

By nightfall, O'Neill and several other communities were virtually isolated. Ice accumulated on telephone and power circuits and many lines were severed.

All communications were paralyzed. Snowplows didn't attempt to go to work while the storm was at its height.

Hundreds of travelers became marooned in O'Neill including about 50 passengers aboard the eastbound Chicago & North Western train number 14.

The storm continued unabated through Friday evening. On Saturday the skies cleared and the tremendous uncovering task was begun.

Many oldtimers, including P. J. McManus and C. E. Stout, veteran businessmen, and The Frontier's Romaine Saunders, said they had never seen so much snow in the city in November—if ever.

Automobiles parked along the north side of Douglas street in the heart of the business district were buried under mountains of snow.

Scores of automobiles were stalled on O'Neill streets and highways, and many of them will be snowbound for days to come even if the vicinity is so fortunate as to be visited by a full-fledged thaw.

Had the mercury tumbled to a subzero mark, many observers predict the loss of life and suffering would have rivaled the famous blizzard of 1888.

The storm extended from Newport on the West to Pilger on the East. While winds howled and Holt countyans huddled in the safety of their homes and close to their fires, a championship football game was in progress Friday night at Springview between Ainsworth and Keya Paha county high school, won by the Springview team, 6-0.

Westbound highway 275 travelers entering the storm area were dumbfounded as well as inconvenienced.

From North-to-South the storm reached from central South Dakota to southern Kansas. Grand Island, like O'Neill, was a focal point of the storm.

Nebraska's death toll was six. John H. Haun, 48, Spencer truck operator, died in an automobile stalled on federal highway 20 near the Page intersection. (See story in column 2.)

O'Neill was without light and power for 2½ hours Saturday evening. Because main transmission lines were severed, the Consumers Public Power district plant here was overburdened. Power was fed to several towns which earlier had been without electricity during the evening "peak period" and O'Neill went into a blackout. Most stores closed shop. Restaurants served meals by candlelight. The break in the high voltage transmission line was near Belden.

Northwestern Bell Telephone company circuits to Norfolk and Omaha were severed in the Clearwater and Neligh areas. During the height of the storm there was no means of communication out of here except for high priority emergency calls routed over a single circuit through Winner and Sioux Falls, S. D. By late Tuesday only partial repairs had been made and calls to many points were not being booked. Western Union telegraph circuits were likewise unserviceable. Chicago & Northwestern and Burlington telegraph circuits were "dead" for several hours.

O'Neill was without rail service for 24 hours. Eastbound passenger-mail train number 14 on the North Western system was held at the station here for 24 hours, between 1 a. m. Friday and 1 a. m. Saturday. A westbound snowplow train freed the marooned number 14. Subsequent trains until Monday night were running up to seven hours behind schedule. Meanwhile, an east-bound freight left O'Neill last Thursday on the Burlington system and none other has been at the station since. H. A. Yocum, station agent, said the system's rotary snow plow, which is expected to be needed to clear the tracks between O'Neill and Sioux City, was diverted into Kansas for mainline duty there. A conventional snowplow broke down enroute to O'Neill Sunday.

Highway 275 was cleared almost immediately to Ewing and by late Saturday was cleared to Norfolk and beyond. Highway 20 West of here was blocked for a relatively short time.

Highways 20 was closed until noon Monday. The biggest problem was a long drift near Royal. Highway 108 to Page was not yet opened by Tuesday night.

The first bus between Norfolk and O'Neill after the storm left Norfolk at 1:45 p. m. Sunday. The first Norfolk bound bus left O'Neill at 9 a. m. Monday. Bus service to Bonesteel, S. D. was resumed early Monday.

Achievement Day Program Dec. 7

This year's achievement day program, to be held on Tuesday, December 7, promises to be new and entirely different, consisting almost exclusively of extension club talent. There will be a style review of accessories and clothing made of old leather, felt, fur, feed sacks, etc.

Samples of home cleaned fur and leather goods will be shown. Also planned are comedy skits and musical features. The Clay Creek Musical Clackers will be there. Plans are being made for a speaker from a Sioux City department store to illustrate "Color in the Home." The use of the projector recently purchased by the various clubs will be demonstrated.

Frontier Again to Press Early

The Frontier again this week went to press late Tuesday in order to provide its readers with the news before the national holiday—Thanksgiving.

While many rural mail patrons are still without regular mail service, The Frontier's early publication will get this week's news—especially the blizzard news—to many of them on Wednesday instead of Friday.

BENEFIT GAME SLATED
A benefit basketball game, sponsored by the O'Neill Lions club, is scheduled Wednesday, December 1, at the O'Neill public school gymnasium. The teams competing will be the New York Broadway Clowns and the Johnson Jukes (of Sioux City). The game will begin at 8 p. m.