

Finley, N. D.  
March 7, 1966

BLIZZARD OF MARCH 2, 3, 4, 1966

Here it is Monday afternoon about 2:15, March 7, 1966. I thought I would try to record a few of my impressions of the big storm that passed through our area this past week. Today we have a south wind, fairly strong, and a temperature of 20 degrees, now after being 10 below zero when we arose this morning. I see that there is a field blowing dirt south of us about a mile or so. Yes the winds of last week swept all snow off the field and letting the dirt show through. Sunday, with the beautiful bright sunshine and calm winds it was hard to believe the fury of nature we had experienced the few days before. The temperature on Sunday rose to around 10 above zero here in our area I believe. I will go back to Wednesday when we first realized we were in for a storm.

The boys came in from school only a few minutes earlier than usual. They were breathless and quite anxious because they were sent home early because of a storm coming. Being unfamiliar with how fierce a blizzard could be, they had visions of tornado type storms and looked out windows to see if they could see it coming. I had heard earlier on the TV that the Fargo schools were being dismissed earlier, but didn't really think that the storm would reach here as usually our storms approach from the west rather than the southeast. Anyway I explained to the children that it was a snow storm and there was nothing to be afraid of. So they went about their playing. I put in a call to Glenn at work and told him that the boys had been sent home early and that he had better bring some milk when he came home. Yes, he said Arlene had called Dick quite a bit earlier in the afternoon and said their school had been dismissed and it was snowing like everything in Hope already. I think the boys had been home from school about 45 minutes when we could see the storm had started a mile south of us already, as we couldn't see the house over on the highway south of us. Then it started to blow pretty hard and snow, and before Glenn got home it was really nasty outside, although he had no trouble getting here. But I was really glad to see him safe in the house.

Of course when we went to bed on Wednesday night we expected that the storm would be mostly over and Glenn could do some shoveling to get out the next morning. But that was not the case at all. On Thursday morning it was just terrible, we could hardly see the barn across the yard from the house. And all day we watched a big drift build up on the north and northeast side of our house. The wind was in the northeast most of that day, but then started to turn to the north. At times we thought conditions were improving and the storm must surely be about to blow out. But listening to TV and radio weather reports we were informed that another blizzard was coming on the heels of that one. So all night the wind raged and the snow blew. On Friday instead of conditions being any better it was much worse. On Thursday we didn't see how it could be worse, but we found it could be. I don't know just how high the winds were clocked here at the base, but it surely must have been from 60 to 80 miles an hour most of the time, the way it felt. We could only see a few feet away from the house. The snow blew in around the windows in our upstairs rooms. It took only the tiniest crack for that wind to drive the snow in. As the snow continued and the wind changed to the north more straight it ate away the drift that had formed by the house until we only have a small drift on the north side of our house.

On Friday we started rationing the milk so that we would have enough for Barbara to drink until the middle of this week if it would be necessary. The older kids could get along without milk and the milk doesn't sour so that we could have kept it for Barbara. We decided it might be quite some time before a milk truck could get to Finley after the storm did subside, so that even if we could get to Finley, they might not have any milk anyway. Of course we knew we could get some from our neighbors, Mickelsons, down the road. Friday night the weather report gave us hope that it would start improving in Fargo by midnight, so we figured we would see improvement a little sooner here, but then they changed it till later once again. So when we went to bed Friday night it was still raging winds and blowing snow outside. We decided to sleep downstairs on the couch that night, as our northeast room was so hard to heat with that fierce north wind. On Saturday morning, Glenn said the wind had gone down. I wasn't so sure as it still sounded awful windy, but he said

the house wasn't shaking anymore! So when we got up and looked out we could see that it was almost clear, and we could see out north to the windbreak and see the monstrous drift that had built up out there. The wind was down considerable and Glenn went out to the road and it looked as if it was clear down to our neighbors house. Then the wind gradually came up again and it was real nasty with ground drifting until after noon on Saturday. Glenn looked under the hood on the car and it was packed solid with snow all over the motor. He thought he would wait until conditions improved before cleaning it out. Then in the afternoon Tippy started barking and we looked out to see Mr. Mickelson walking up to our house carrying a two gallon can of milk. They said their place was so covered up with snow that they wondered how we got along. And they knew we didn't have any cows. So I thought that was extremely nice of them to be concerned. Then Glenn went out and cleaned the snow off our car motor and got it started so he could take him back home. There was no snow on our road between our two places, but right west of their driveway was a huge drift so we couldn't get to the west road to get to town. And we had quite a big drift right east of our driveway so we couldn't get to the east road to get over to the highway. Glenn decided he could shovel that drift out so we could go east. But we noticed people were driving up to the east side of it and then turning around and going back. So Glenn finally caught someone out there and they said that they were trying to get to Finley as the highway straight across from our house was blocked just terrible. So Sunday morning Glenn with Curtis's help shoveled that drift out. And got over to the highway. In the afternoon we all went in the car and drove through where they had opened the highway east of us. It was wide enough for one car and higher than the door handles in most places and in a lot of places twice as high as the car itself. If a car had been stalled there it would have been completely buried. Then we drove up to the drift on the highway straight across from us and a highway patrolman was there and told us that we could get to Finley by going south two miles, and then west to the highway and come into Finley from the south. So we did that and found that a milk truck had made it through and we got some milk. All the stores were open and the town was really buzzing with snow removal and people out taking pictures and all. We wanted to take some pictures, but wouldn't you know we were caught with only a few left on our roll. So we wanted to buy some film and all film was sold out, and some people were even buying cameras. When we got ready to leave town we came out the way we would usually come to see if that west road was open. So we found one of the other neighbors, Ronholm, out there with his tractor and scoop so he got the drift opened west of Mickelson's driveway. So now we can get to Finley just like we always did. After looking at the situation in Finley we decided we were really better off to live in the country. Many houses have snow up to the eaves, and I know one garage was covered up so all that was visible was the peak of the roof. The school roof had so much snow on it that one beam cracked. They scooped the snow off the roof and they said the roof came up six inches. The boys just came home from school and they said they saw the cracked beam and that it was braced up with a pole. So I guess they must have decided it was safe to have school. Oh, I was saying about the milk truck you see almost all the milk that we get in Finley comes out of Fargo and Moorehead.

Now it is Tuesday morning and it is a beautiful morning. The temperature is up to 26 degrees and a little wind from the north. During the night it did snow some and of course the wind was strong enough to cause ground drifting, too, but I guess it wasn't too bad as the school bus came at the regular time this morning. I am trying to remember the few other things that I wanted to add to this tale. I guess the hardest thing about it for Glenn was being cooped up in the house for so many days and it is hard to find something to do to keep busy. I finally put him to work polishing my silverware so that was an advantage to me. Then we also played a few games of chess, but I got beat every one. It has been so long since we played that I am sort of rusty at it. Then with Lorna giving advice from the sidelines I couldn't concentrate too well, either. The boys enjoyed their vacation from school. And of course there were times when they got in each others hair, so to speak, but most of the time they were very busy playing games, coloring, building things and so forth. And for some reason mother's work was here to be done the same as any other day. Glenn did help with dishes and the like, too, just to pass time. He also has my big mixer all apart and has painted it. It looked so old and the paint was getting so awful on it. Of course it is 15 years old I guess, but it is still a very good working mixer.

We decided we fared very well during the storm. After looking at some of the other farms around the country. Our shelter belt is quite a ways north of our house and it caught all the snow. I guess the drifts out there must be 25 feet deep or so. It is really hard to judge. Glenn did take a slide picture out there, but it will probably not tell the immense size of it. Anyway then our yard and drive way were swept completely clean. We think it even blew away some of the old snow that was really more like ice now. And although our car was packed with snow under the hood, at least the car was not covered up like many, many were in the towns. And some people on farms that had vehicles in garages had to dig the snow out of the garages to get to the cars. Farms with the trees closer to the buildings were just like buried in it. The house east of us has snow up to the eaves, and it is a two story house. Some people who lived in trailers had to have neighbors dig the snow away from the doors because both trailer doors were covered up with snow. It was funny on the highway, too, where the snow plow went through. He couldn't tell just where the middle of the highway was so in one place he went way off to the side of the road when he opened. It was a crooked tunnel that you drove through to get through the drift that was at least a quarter mile long. They are still working at opening roads, and a lot of people that were reported missing have been found. Perhaps you read about the coaches that were stalled out in it. They stayed with their car and built a fire in the back seat after they ran out of gas to keep the heater going for heat.

In Finley they had quite a time as they had a water break so they didn't have any water. I don't know if it affected the whole town or how long it lasted. But I am sure they didn't get it fixed until after the storm was over. Mrs. Mickelson was telling about the fellow that drives our school bus is a relative of hers. They have a new baby and another one that is only about a year old. So I guess they had quite a time getting along without water. And they didn't have much milk either. Also up north of us near a town called Aneta a barn roof collapsed on 5000 turkeys. That sure will be a terrible loss for that fellow. I guess there were other roofs that collapsed, too. I read about one in S. D. where it killed so many capons. They said it killed so many cattle, too, and that the meat prices we pay will be affected. So all in all, I guess it will be a storm that will be remembered for a long time. And as they say on TV will be referred to as the Blizzard of '66.

Mr. Ronholm took his tractor and scoop and opened up Mickelson's yard yesterday so they could get a car or truck or something out. We were going to get groceries for them, but they did finally get out so they could shop for themselves. Their tractor was buried, he said all he could see was the air cleaner and the exhaust pipe. Their barn door was almost covered up. They had to tunnel down to it to get in to do the milking. On Friday night they did not even try to get to the barn, as they decided it just wasn't worth the risk. With two small children to either leave in the house or try to take along to the barn it just wasn't worth the risk, he said. And I agreed, as I would have hated to see anyone even step out the door as they would have disappeared from view almost immediately. Well, I quit on this and hope I don't see another storm like it again!

March. 1966

- 1, 15
- 2, 17 - Bizzara started
- 3, 20
- 4, 8
- 5, 6
- 6, -11
- 7, -10
- 8, 24
- 9, 20
- 10, 30
- 11, 30

Finley, N.D.

Temperatures - Feb. 1966

Feb. 1,	-6,	17,	-28
2,	-10	18,	-39
3,	-12	19,	-35
4,	-12	20,	-20
5,	3	21,	-22
6,	15	22,	-19
7,	2	23,	-4
8,	25	24,	12
9,	20	25,	0
10,	4	26,	10
11,	-4	27,	26
12,	27	28,	20
13,	-20		
14,	-3		
15,	-18		
16,	-20		