34/15 car stuck on Glasgow/ft. P road: snowbanks up to windshield

34/16 w. bluffs in winter, pyramidal faces w/ coulees between



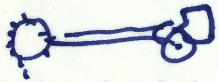
34/20 Cat pulling oldfangled snowplow

34/47 hauling dredge timbers (30+2'long?): truck & teams of horses

34/53 sawmill used to saw timber removed from damsite

34/103 Alvord's ~~furr~~ store, 1st business @ damsite: small falsefront bldg

34/116 Ice block cutting rig: two-wheel outfit w/ buzzsaw blade out front, engine in back



34/122 ice blocks being loaded, w/ tongs, onto small horse sled

winter detail

AXELSON, J. M., 9621 South 241st Street, Kent, Washington 98031. "The 'cool' winters (-41° degrees) and the hot summers are what I remember most. When it was real cold and the wind would stop blowing, sound carried very well. You could hear a rancher call his dog 20 miles away."

Nancy
Johnson card/6

permanent damage. It turned out that the temperature had plummeted from -40° to -64° and at the dredges, -74° had been reported. I always smile here in Oklahoma when it hits zero, or there abouts, and someone sagely comments, 'Yep. It's too cold to snow today.' Dad and his fellow workers conferred frequently during those cold, wintery blasts. They worried about whether or not to pour the concrete. If it were too cold, the concrete might crack as it cured. I guess they must have figured it out pretty well, no major crack for 50 years! Yes, the winters were cold. Nothing unusual about -40°. Funny, you could feel the difference as it neared zero. Then again, when it hit -25° or so. You got used to that and dressed for it. The next noticeable weather change was when it got down to forty below. The -64° didn't feel a whole lot colder--the blizzard was mostly a nuisance. And, yes, the summers were hot, dry and dusty. But never much over 100° or so. One summer we were infested with grasshoppers. All sizes and all kinds. Some of the biggest I've ever seen. For some reason, going to a

(continued)

Major
It was not an idea I sponsored.
cared to sponsor,

white rectangles (squares?) of roofs all across town

icicles 2' long

Owen & Chilane

They threw the supper dishes at each other. No, they didn't, but they might as well have.

box 167--notation in Statistics binder: "1936--Ice broke--Sat. Apr 11th
Ice Went Out--Mon. " 13th

'36 winter?

· intense cold of -7°. P winter was gauged by whether it was 2-(long-johns) underwear or 3-underwear weather.

-have a character buy longjohns in 2 sizes: ~~on~~ his usual, & · next size bigger to wear after that ~~pair~~ set. After thinking it over - or after being out in · cold, he troops back to · store - he buys a 3d, next-larger-yet size.

'36 winter 7

#4. P movie theatre was open 24 hours: have a character (Darius? or both Bruce & Neil?) come in to get out of bitter cold, i.e., to warm up.

mercury used as backing in mirror? (see for "Liver of Mercury")

It was plenty cold just 53 years ago

GF Trib Feb. 15, '89

By RONALD J. RICE
Tribune Staff Writer

Wednesday is the 53rd anniversary of the coldest day ever recorded in the history of Great Falls.

On Feb. 15, 1936, the Weather Bureau measured the temperature in Great Falls at 49 below zero. Montana Power Co. reported temperatures of minus 45 in Choteau, minus 47 in Fort Peck and minus 52 in Sun River Gardens.

That year produced the coldest February since 1892 when the Weather Bureau started compiling weather data here. The average temperature for the month was 5.2 below zero, and eight state fatalities were blamed on the weather.

February of 1922 is second coldest with an average temperature of 9 degrees.

February 1989 has a good shot at second place because, as of Monday, the average temperature was 2.9 degrees, according to the National Weather Service.

In 1936, Montana had been locked into vicious weather. For days before the record-breaker, the mercury had been low. In Great Falls it was 35 below on Feb. 14 and Feb. 16 and 39 below on Feb. 17.

During this particular week in history, the snow was six inches to three feet deep, a heavy blizzard was blowing in the Baker-Ekalaka area and the communities were short of food because drifts eight- to 10-feet deep were blocking the roads.

Ice jams on the Yellowstone River threatened 2,000 sheep and a bridge near Livingston. Helena had a moderate earthquake which did little damage but dumped lots of snow from rooftops into streets. The tremor was felt in many sections of the state, including Great Falls.

Trains carrying coal for Bozeman were having difficulty in getting through and most Montana highways and roads were being classified as "very difficult" if they ranked as being passable at all.

It was announced on that Saturday, Feb. 15, that Great Falls public schools would be closed on the following Monday and some of the parochial schools announced they would remain open and would provide lodging and food for their students at reasonable rates. The schools were to reopen after the storm had moderated.

The tiny community of Faranuf, 60 miles southeast of Glasgow, was isolated and Frank Wiley, an airplane pilot, made air-drops of food to the community.

The week also was one of tragedy. By Feb. 14, four Montanans had died because of the storm. One man was struck by a train during a blizzard, another died in a vehicle crash, a third died of exposure and a woman froze to death. On Feb. 15, a stove exploded in Carter, killing four and injuring others. This brought the state's death total to eight for the week.

Robert Rhodes--1st folder MHS oral history summaries

log jam "in '37": blasting ice in river (possibly in hard winter of '36-7?)

77. Press eye - detail
winter of '36 detail

BUCKLEY, FLORENCE "FLO," 4845 Devonshire Place, Santa Rosa, California 95405. "How many others recall Ira Tourtlotte's Stetson hat and the enormous buffalo skin overcoat that he wore when it was -30°? Or the time his son, Gene, saved his own life and the lives of several visiting engineers that he was chauffeuring across the dam by suddenly shifting into high speed reverse as several thousand cubic yards of dam fill slid away in front of them, leaving a great gaping hole where the road had been? Or the snapshot of a thermometer registering -60° at Fort Peck in the winter of 1936?" The person I remember most: "D. M. Clarke, Area Engineer. He knew everyone by their first name. He seemed to love and kid everyone. After work, he often had a cup of coffee at the drug store and visited with everyone there until, as he said, it was 'time to go home to see if the neighbors had brought in any chicken necks.' D.M. transferred to Oak Ridge in June 1945. He and his wife, Anita, made a home for D.M.'s

Have a guess as to what I'd rather be doing instead of this.

~~oo~~ Warming your toes on Carter's tummy.

Close. Have another.

"Toes!"

winter of '36 detail

CRANE, CLARENCE E., 4101 Division Avenue, Vancouver, Washington 98660. "My wife Hester and I were married in Glasgow, Montana, in June 1935. We lived in the boom town of New Deal where the temperature ranged from 110° in summer, to the unforgettable -62° in the winter. As it was too cold to start my car, I walked the three miles to work for the graveyard shift. I was so well bundled up I received nary a frostbite. Many folks have registered disbelief at this, but I am sure many of my fellow workers during this time will well remember and believe. The following summer we were able to move into the luxury of the barracks apartments. Later on, we moved into a house on Musselshell Drive." The person I remember most: "Not one, but several fellow workers. Because after all these years, we still keep in touch and remain good friends."

Lloyd Larson, 1st folder MHS oral history summaries

'Cat tractors never shut off in winter.

DARE, 622

chilblain--(check Am. Heritage meaning)

Thelma Bondy, 1st folder MHS oral history summaries

--a foot of snow on the roof all winter long (7-6)

--banked the stove @ night w/ coal; used wood for quick fire (p. 7)

Ruth Van Faasen--1st folder MHS oral history summaries

"vicious" winters at Ft. Peck

Up here (Ft Peck country; or Montana) they have nine months winter and three months damn late autumn.

winter detail

PRESSNALL, LYMAN L., 2720 Georgia NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110. "The summer of 1936, my wife and two children and I lived in a two-room tar papered shack in Wheeler. It was extremely hot weather, from 112° to 118°. Inspecting 16 spillway gates during the summer of 1936, then transferred to the Fill Control, Engineering Department the winter of 1937. Glasgow recorded as the coldest town in the United States one day with -65°. That fall my wife went back to Carrington, N.D. with some friends of ours. They all traveled back there before winter set in. Nov. 11, 1937, my wife gave birth to a lovely daughter. I lived in that shack all winter. Had to sleep in my bed with all my clothes on under eight blankets -- or freeze to death. However, I was able to drive to the project every working day. I did not feel embarrassed living in a two-room shack because Wheeler was a shack town." The person I remember most: "Manson Bailey and T. E. Meadowbrooks. Both gentlemen were equally great in my opinion. I worked for both of them at one time or another. The personnel director made sure I could not get a permanent rating by transferring me from job to job in 3 to 4 month engagements."

weather detail
slide detail 1st of 2 cards

HARMON, FRANCIS E., P.O. Box 42, Watford City, North Dakota 58854. "I remember the big slide on the upstream toe of the dam in the late summer of 1938, which cost the lives of eight men. I was employed on the Dredge Jefferson at the time and distinctly

(continued)

remember Joe Donovan, our skipper, telling us we could have the rest of the day off to go home and see to the welfare of our families. It so happened that my wife and I lived in Park Grove which was below the dam about a mile and a half. We had one son, two years old and my wife was expecting another baby. Park Grove was a mushroom project town of some 3,000 to 4,000 people. When I arrived there, all I could see was people moving out with whatever belongings they could stack on their vehicles. Alot of them never moved back. Upon arrival at our home, a small two room shack, I found that my wife and son had left for safer ground. The report had come to Park Grove that the dam was going out. If it had, there would have been a wall of water probably 100 feet high over the town. After a few hours searching, I found her in Wheeler staying with friends. Another

Harmon card/2

incident that remains with me is the morning in February 1936 when I went to work at 8 a.m. and after arriving at the place where we checked in for work, found that the temperature was -61°. Needless to say, we were sent home until the weather changed. It was nearly two weeks before the weather moderated enough to return to work. I have many other memories of the years I spent at Fort Peck which will stay with me all my life. Working there was an experience none of us will be likely to forget." The person I remember most: "Barney Hunter, Crew Foreman on the hydraulic fill, because of his friendly attitude towards his crew and his general attitude of consideration for his men."

winter of '36 detail

GOODRICH, NATHAN A., 39 Jet Drive, Glasgow, Montana 59230. "I would like to relate a few memories about the winter of 1935-36 which was abnormally cold, as records go, for the Fort Peck-Glasgow area. I was working on the Dredge Jefferson as an oiler even though I was on the payroll as an electrician's helper. The weather changed so fast in November 1935 that the dredge was caught dredging upstream in the Missouri River and heavy ice formed around it before the crews had time to dismantle the pipelines and move it to the winter harbor area. I guess they were busy moving the dredges Gallatin, Madison and Missouri, and had left the Jefferson until last. In just a few days we were walking on the river ice to the dredge where we were soon busy with winter maintenance and repairs. Our dredge captain was, I believe, Sam Thomas. Later in the winter, when the official temperature was -60° or more, I was working on one of the so-called 'land boosters.' Mr. Brooks, an electrical engineer, was my supervisor at that time. I was living in Wheeler. I remember the morning my thermometer registered -59°. I started our 1928 Chevrolet car by first setting a pail of burning kerosene and ashes in the snow under the oil pan to warm up the engine. I then drove about 3 miles to land booster #4 where I was stationed. I still have a nice 5-by-7 photo of it taken on a warmer day!" The

RF

the wind shoved against the north side of the house all winter

RF

Angus in ch. 7 blizzard scene:

Thirty years before, Rob and I in what I thought was all the snow in the world...

(on their wagon trip into Two Med country)

By Mont. standards then as a mine of frost, compared c this.] use in print?

(snow in desert?)

used in trilogy? R-1

At least weather is a grievance capable of going.

RF

where the whips of wind had cut in

RF

the push of wind

RF

snow light and dry as foam (sawdust?)

R+

rheumy clouds

RF

spiteful wind

RF

read the weather

Even I could read this weather.

RF

raining blue snakes

(use in connection with muddy roads of Maudlow country?)

use w/ mudhole scene?
RF

a bucketing rain

from T.B. Long "70 Yrs a Cowboy" filecard in Montana lingo:

blizzard gear: German socks and overshoes

Each day now had to meet the next as best it could.

The wind was working again... (after extreme cold & stillness)

(during fire season of August; particularly worrisome)

longhandles--long underwear

used in previous book?

When a Montanan doesn't have anything else to do, he can always worry about the weather.

when the snow goes off.

Ft. Peck looked terrible when...

wooled with snow (ie., land covered with fresh snow; or evergreen trees with snow thick on branches)

icicles

--they drip and then fall (clatter?) in chinook; the glass of winter breaking itself.
– cancing down on our heads
--~~Spring~~ Wherever you looked spring was breaking the glass of winter (ice on creek etc.

painful pinches of coldness where glasses fit on nose, in winter at Ft. Peck.

(this wd be true even of 1930's-style wire-rims with little nosepieces; Dad used to have to contend with that pain of cold, taking glasses off--sometimes leaving them off, rare for himmm, to work outside--and massaging the aching bridge of his nose with his fingers.)

spreading ashes on ice around the house: outhouse path...front steps?

Her breath clouded in front of her.
His

Dam crew member, abt winter

Stanley, during rain: Let 'er come. We were here first.

Fool, thought Hugh.

pneumonia was prevalent (among tunnel workers at Fort Peck? several interviewees seem to say so.)

Hugh?
Roellen?

dam detail

GORENC, ANTONE R., Box 25255, Prescott Valley, Arizona 86312. "In May-June 1936, the heavy snow melt combined with heavy rains upstream caused a great amount of logs and debris to be carried down to Fort Peck. The bridge crossing the Missouri which carried both rail and auto traffic began to build up with the debris acting as a dam. The continued pressure made the bridge vibrate and it started to lose alignment. A trainload of riprap was placed on the bridge for added weight while a clam shell crane was used to move the debris away from the bridge pilings. This operation lasted for more than a week, but it saved the bridge." The person I remember most: "Herb Weil, Chief, Laboratory. He seemed to know everything about the construction materials and how to test them and interpret the results."

see WPA Missouri River ice info in "Missouri River" file

Dialogue from Donald Wintersgill:

- "Pick bones out of that for awhile, why don't ye?"
- Entire family had colds: "We're rotten with it."

from Jerry Schott: the Dutch call chillblains "winter toes."

--possible use: a child telling parent, "Mrs. Ten Eyck says I got winter toes."

- Bruce & Rhonda's child, winter '37-8?
- Dora minding child, when Dorine comes?

Construction of the dam can be conveyed in a deliberate motif, done 3-times--once each in the chs. The Missouri, Peckerstroy, and Ice and Mercury (maybe a winter descptn in this one; maybe a chapter-ending graf in Peckerstroy). Each time, simply begin with:

The dam.

Then begin w/ new graf, sketching the design, procedures, state of the work...

Charlene ? (abt Owen
regarding
Pond Coulee?)

This fuming mood... (lasted a couple more days)

unused:

Now, here she (Charlene) was...Bewildering country, the first land she had ever been in without a mountain on any horizon.

The Missouri--if you'd told her it was the Tigris or the Euphrates or the

Danube or the Congo...

Not a good thought. (i.e., something disturbing)
Owen abt dredging delay akin to April '35?

From here on out,... (Charlene has told Owen she'd have nothing to say about Ft. P; she'll just wait it out.)

Bruce?
OO said with satisfaction, "That slowed him up in a hurry," a concept which brought a furrow to Darius' brow.

"I said I'll see." (Owen to Charlene, abt future after H.P.?)

..., you know that. (Or: You know you're lying.)

There were times, any more, when (Hugh?) wasn't sure he knew straight up.

Hugh

Why wasn't I informed? (said ~~of~~ ironically of something inexorable or unobservable, such as aging.)

Living is [a blood sport, and] fatal, always fatal. (Owen during hospital visit to Hugh)

"That slickdick." (someone says of Darius, or Bruce?) (Morris about Nixon?)

Inventing an asbestos rake for Hell, what does it look like I'm doing?

something peice – difficult; as in, The woods are something peice to walk in.
(Granger, 24)

And I mean OO. (repetition for emphasis)
(Gwen: alt need for /ar/ start to dredging?)

If ya jiggle it more than twice, you're playing with it. } Nancy helps H. w/ backpack?

Howie carefully jiggled once...

Out in the corners of the dark...

The dark slide of night

Hugh, abt Darius. (Blake bk)

"The man is a walking attic." (i.e., collection of odd bits of knowledge?)

MontSt

WPA--livestock histories

humor (in Misc. file) --Sun River Sun material

WANTED: half a dozen more saloons, and then the town roofed over.

We have received a note from a Chestnut stockman to the effect that it is so cold there (winter of 1884) that all the whiskey has frozen up and there is moaning throughout the valley."

→ "A note in the bank is a great annihilator of time; the days are crowded together in thin layers, and the nights are like a smear from a blacking brush."

But there was not much reason to think so.

looked like a move that had paid off

Life was stiff and uncooperative this morning. (Hugh coming down w/ pneumonia?)

...mad enough at it (the weather) to (make it change)...

10 March 1914 work

(Owen despised) people who could afford not to have ambition.

FY. Peck life detail 1st of 6 cards

WIMMER, DALENE, 8001 E. Broadway, #781, Mesa, Arizona 85208. "In the middle of the worst Depression in history, my husband Earl and I, along with my brother Boyce Crone, got much sought after work permits from Glasgow. Off we went to the Fort Peck damsite to work for 50 cents per hour. How thrilled were were to be getting pay checks when the country was plagued by poor crops, and dust storms that covered the fence posts and blew into the houses to nearly choke us. Many times it was necessary to drive with the lights on (if you had a

(continued)

car). There was no housing, but 'shack towns' were springing up everywhere. We improvised with a borrowed tent, added a feather tick to sleep on, and our clothing was hung on tent supports to keep them dry. We had a gas stove, and an apple box nailed to a tree held what few dishes and food supplies we had. Then to saw off a tree, nail a board across for a table and tree stumps for chairs. Now we have a home--of sorts. Several friends had similar accommodations in this little clump of trees near a small shack town called

Midway (now dredged into the landfill portion of the dam). Some of the wives, always accompanied by one of the husbands, went to a new dance hall and were given 10 cents a dance to dance with the many men who came, as we did, to work on the dam. How we hoarded those dimes. Later, professional 'taxi dancers' came and the local girls were no longer interested. When winter arrived, we bought a 'trailer house.' It was 8-by-12 ft. with quarter-inch plywood outside and 2-by-4's inside. Thinking to help keep out the winter cold, we brought cardboard cartons and nailed them to the 2-by-4's inside. Ice formed between the cardboard and the plywood and when spring finally came, we wore our overshoes in the trailer to keep our feet dry. In the spring of 1935, Earl built a 12-by-14 ft. house (using the term loosely) and we couldn't have been happier with a castle. Our house was in a new town called Free

Deal (as there was no rent). We had to buy water by the gallon to be heated on a tiny stove. We were awaiting the birth of our son, Leith, in the spring and we then washed his clothes on a washboard in the backyard. We had no water and no electricity. In the fall of 1935, we saw a huge cloud rolling in from the west. It was a tornado and we had no protection, our little house raised up and then settled back down on the ground many times. Thirteen houses not built as well as ours were demolished in our block. One came flying through the air and disintegrated like a cardboard carton. Two people were killed. Our only protection was our prayers. We purchased our first radio. Things were moving rapidly at the Fort Peck townsite. A hospital, clinic, store and some houses, plus a theater (which still stands and is now used by the Fine Arts Council for performances during the

(continued)

summer). These little towns sprang up everywhere. Rough, tough beer parlors gave the men a place to gather after work. The weather dropped to -60° and since we lived three miles from work at the barracks in Fort Peck and had no car, Earl walked to work. He donned three pairs of trousers with paper placed in between to keep from freezing, and off he went to work. In 1936, we had to move our little home back to New Deal on the same lot our trailer house had occupied because Free Deal was to be dredged into huge pipes and then pumped into the dam. The water then drained off and the dirt settled to form the dam. In 1936, we had unbearable heat, 112°. We still had no electricity nor running water, but within a block there was an artesian well. We carried water, heated it on the little stove and I washed and ironed laundry for the men in the barracks. It wasn't unusual to start the day ironing 50 shirts with a gas iron and Earl delivered them as he still walked to work one-and-a-half miles. As times grew better, we often heard people make statements like: "They have 2 kids, they can't live in a one-bedroom house." I couldn't help remembering when we had 2 children in a no-bedroom house. I won't say it was easy, but we did it. Earl built a bed for the

children which slid under ours. During sleeping time it was put on two chairs. We saved pennies to make a down payment on a gas washer. I felt very pampered. When our daughter Beverly was born, we felt it necessary to have a car. We saved money in a baking powder can buried in the cellar until we got enough money to make a down payment on a 1937 Chevrolet (cost $699). I was employed as usher and cashier at the Fort Peck Theater, which seated 1,209 people, twice each night. On cash give-away night lines were formed waiting to get in for two blocks. New Deal, where we lived, was one-and-one-half miles from Fort Peck. I walked this distance to work and then home at 11 p.m. What I disliked most were the dogs. Can you imagine doing this with a new car in the garage? We made 2 car payments a month until it was paid for. There was much excitement when President Franklin Roosevelt came by train to Fort Peck. People by the thousands came to see him. We all knew he was responsible for us having jobs and we were so grateful. After we had retired one

(continued)

Wenniver cont/6

night we heard screaming and much commotion. We stepped out of bed and into about 3 inches of water caused by a dam breaking near Glasgow. A house with a man, woman and child on the roof floated against our house. We managed to get to higher ground with the children, but couldn't get the garage doors open against the current. Our precious wood pile floated away as did butter which had been sitting on the cellar steps. (The cellar was full of the dirty water that had run through the outdoor privies...Yuck!) Then came the day half-a-mile of the dam slid into the lake. Tractors, trucks, bulldozers and all heavy equipment was buried. Many workers were carried into the lake, all were rescued from the water, but the 8 men buried in the slide were never found. The Fort Peck Dam is a tombstone for them. Government vehicles with loud speakers drove through the 'shack' towns warning everyone to get out as it was not known how serious the situation was with the partial slide. In 1939, we moved into government barracks at Fort Peck which had

I thought I knew.... everything winter could do.

I say I thought I knew.

gray look (of illness?) - Hugh's pneumonia

We could use less of~~x~~ your jaw and more of your...

strong right arm

Owen to China (or Rm?), o Mag & Hugh

maybe their

I hate to face it, but OO's example is pretty much the way we end up, old and full of grudges.

WINTER

Does the spider's eye watch me, in thru the window, to see how thick the clutter on my desk is, as a gauge to how severe the coming winter will be?

--one of Nelson's centennial articles could be on Missoula in the 1930's, as gathering place of hobos, firefighters, etc. See Stan Davison's letter about CCCs, in which he mentions "buddy night" at the whorehouses, same as at the movie theatres--one admission and bring a friend free.

"Draw your (tongs? saws?) at the warehouse and let's go at this."