

## THE BIG SNOW

On January 23, 1940 there came a record snowstorm. Eleven inches, and it remained on the ground about two weeks. We were not prepared for such a storm. No one was prepared for we never had such amounts of snow. A normal big snow for us was 3 – 5 inches and was gone in two to three days. Ice storms from freezing rain taking down trees and power lines, were more likely, and dreaded, for you could not get up and down the hilly roads when they were covered with ice. There were no snowplows to clear the roads, so we were on our own. Farm families remained at home; we had no other choice.

Food was not a problem – we had plenty of canned vegetables, dried fruit, salt/smoke cured pork and fresh milk, butter, eggs. Someone, maybe it was Mom, suggested making ice cream by mixing milk, sugar, etc., with the snow. It was a newfound delight for a day or two.

Although we had plenty of wood on hand the fireplaces were not effective for heating the uninsulated farmhouse. Long Johns and two layers of clothing became necessary, and we piled on more quilts at night. Suitable footwear was not available. We did as farmers in this area always did in dealing with the unexpected, we “made do” by fashioning leggings and wrapping our regular shoes in about two inches of burlap from sacks. This provided a degree of insulation and kept us from slipping on the ice caused by the thawing and refreezing. We spent a lot of time just staring out the windows at the beauty of it all – and hearing such comments as, “did you ever see the like”, “well I never seen anything like this”, “the weather sure is a changin”, “you reckon we’ll have this every winter from now on”, etc.

Other than just playing in the snow we had fun tracking wild rabbits to their bed and killing them, sometimes with a homemade “flip”, which some people mistakenly call a “sling shot”. Fresh wild rabbit meat was a delight during such a calamity.

When the snow and ice melted the country dirt roads was almost impassable. Driving on those roads in the automobiles of that era required a whole different set of driving skills, but they always made it somehow. I was not yet old enough to drive, but strangely enough I was old enough to get out and push when the car got stuck in the mud. I learned later about driving on such roads, after ice storms and snowstorms of much less intensity. We survived it all easily and its now just a nice fading memory.

By Thomas H. Ewing  
(Stuff I Remember)  
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# DEEPEST SNOW IN HISTORY CRIPPLES CITY; FREEZE THREATENS MORE TROUBLE TODAY