

## SESSION 1.4: CLOSE READ 3: J.W. Davis

## The Blizzard of 1888

### In All Its Fury

#### A History of the Blizzard of January 12, 1888

Now read a third text from the same source.

- Read the text first to get the general idea then read it again to discover:
- Who wrote the text?
- What is the author's perspective?
- When was it written?
- What would you consider fact and what would you consider opinion? Why?  
(You might highlight facts in one color and opinions in another color.)

I was teaching in district No. 91, Saunders county, five miles west of Cedar Bluffs, at the time of the blizzard. We were having a late recess, and it was about three o'clock when I looked off toward the northwest and saw a huge cloud of snow coming with a heavy gale. There were sixty-one pupils enrolled in our little one-room school. The building was heated by two stoves. Seeing the approaching storm, I picked up my hand bell and ran out around the outbuildings to be sure that every child got in. I called school to order just as the storm struck and found that all the pupils were safe inside.

The day had been calm and beautiful up to that hour. There were several inches of snow on the ground. Now the weather turned very cold and the roaring wind picked up the snow and developed it into a regular blizzard. Parents hitched to their sleds and wagons and very soon commenced to make their way to the schoolhouse. All the children were soon on their way home, some accompany-

ing other families home for the night. Two of the boys left on foot – Ed Malloy and another boy. Each had about a mile to go, but both made it safely. After all the pupils had left the building I faced the storm for about a mile, to reach my boarding place at the home of Ben S. Williams. I followed a wire fence all the way and reached the farm, which was on the edge of the Platte bottom. I was uneasy all the evening and told the family I did not believe any living person could stay out all night in that storm. I got up before daylight next morning and found it quiet and clear, but very cold. I made my way to the schoolhouse, arriving there about daylight. I started a fire and soon had smoke rolling from the chimney.

About this time a man came riding across the field to tell me that the Malloy children had not arrived home the night before. A sensation came over me that I'll never forget, and tears ran down my cheeks as I put on more fuel.

Six Malloy children, the children of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Malloy, with Lillian Dixon and George Dubois, had left the schoolhouse in a bobsled drawn by a team of mules. The Malloy children were Anna, Emma, Rose, Ed, Joe and John. Goerge Dubois was driving the team. They had only a half-mile to go south, then the same distance west to where there was a correction line on the township corner. We learned afterward that the mules left the road and kept on south, going into a cornfield. They wandered around until about dark. The older boys realized that

**Close Read 3: continued**

they could not stay out in the open all night, so they unhitched the mules and turned them loose. Then they turned the bobsled over and putting the smaller children in the center, they huddled close together under a big blanket and spent the night there. The snow completely covered the sled, which probably saved their lives.

When daylight came they kicked their way out of the snow and found that they were only a short distance from the Pat Shanahan home. They all ran over to the house, except George Dubois, who was badly frozen and had to be helped. The side of his hands were badly frozen and they were always scarred and crippled from the injury.

As soon as I heard that the children were not accounted for, I hurried back to my boarding place to saddle my pony and start out looking for them. I rode back to the schoolhouse and then learned that they were safe at Shanahan's. There was great rejoicing in the neighborhood when this word got around.

The mules were found the next day. One was frozen to death and the other so badly frozen that it had to be shot.

I taught in this school four years and I still have the old brass hand bell with which I used to call them together.

Source: *In All Its Fury: A History of the Blizzard of January 12, 1888*, by J.W. Davis, 1947, pages 292-293

Read both the 2nd and 3rd texts from a teachers' point of view again and notice details of the passages that connect:

- What is the first thing that jumps out at you when comparing them? Why?
- What's the next thing you notice? Are these two texts connected? How?
- Do they seem to be saying different things?
- What seems important to each of them? Why?
- Are the authors trying to convince us of something? What?  
Give your evidence.
- What bias or point of view do you notice in each?
- How does the document's language indicate the author's perspective?
- Do you think writing for book of reminisces affects its contents?