

SESSION 1.5: CLOSE READ 4: Anna Malloy Dinesia

The Blizzard of 1888

In All Its Fury

A History of the Blizzard of January 12, 1888

Now read the fourth text to see how it connects with the other narratives:

I recall what a beautiful morning it was, that day of the storm. We were in school, about a mile and a quarter northeast of my father's home, when the storm struck, about three o'clock. About twenty minutes later, George Dubois, who lived at our place, came for us with a sled and a team of mules. Besides George and myself there were my three brothers and two sisters, and a neighbor girl, named Lillian Dixon, who started home in the sled. It was literally true that one could not see his hand at arm's length before his face. The mules went with the storm and soon we were completely lost.

George and the boys finally tipped the sled over and with the endgate made a leaning shelter. We huddled under it, in a circle, with a blanket over our heads. Rose was the baby of the group and we laid her across our laps, for better protection. We were soon drifted over with snow. It was bitterly cold and we did not expect to survive the night. We tried to cheer each other during the night, as we prayed and longed for daylight.

At the first sign of dawn we emerged, hardly able to walk, and staggered to Pat Shanahan's home, just a short distance away. If we could only have known we were so near! They gave us first aid, treating frozen fingers and toes. I remember that they had to cut his heavy felt boots from George Dubois' feet. We were there under the snow from about four in the afternoon until daylight the next morning.

In the meantime, our parents had spent a sleepless night. Father himself got lost, looking for us, and wandered with his team until midnight when he finally got back home. As soon as it was light enough to see next morning he went to Grandfather's place and then to the schoolhouse, looking for us. At the schoolhouse he found the teacher, Mr. J. W. Davis, who had been worrying about his pupils and so came very early to start a fire. My father, broken-hearted, retraced his way to the crossroads and then, guessing that the mules had gone with the storm, he followed that direction. Pat Shanahan saw him coming and ran to meet him and tell him we were safe. I can never forget the look on my father's face as he clasped us in his arms, tears of joy running down his face. The mules were found next day. One was frozen to death and the other had to be shot. None of us suffered serious injury from the experience, but a heavy snowstorm always brings it back to me.

My husband, Frank Dinesia, was in school near Pender. Seventeen pupils from the school and the six members of the family spent that night in the Dinesia home. His father's name was Noah and after that the neighbors referred to their home as "Noah's Ark."

Source: *In All Its Fury: A History of the Blizzard of January 12, 1888*, by Mrs. Anna Malloy Dinesia, 1947, pages 293-294

Close Read 4: continued

- In what way does this document connect with the J. W. Davis text?
- In what facts do the three documents agree?
- What else do you notice?

Finally, consider all four documents in relationship with one another:

- How do they connect with the Minnie Freeman story?
- How does individual responsibility make a difference during disasters and the aftermath?
- If the blizzard happened today we would know the storm was coming because of our advanced technology. How else would our technology have changed these stories?
- What do you notice about how people behaved in the face of this disaster?
- How did the community collaborate in the face of disaster?
- Why was it so important during the blizzard to behave responsibly?
- How do primary sources about a disaster differ from historical fiction, poetry, song, and textbooks?
- Why should we use primary source documents?