

## *The First Home. 1875 and Later*

In the early summer of 1879 they moved to an abandoned claim shack near the new railroad which was being built from Worthington to Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Ma ran a boarding house feeding a big crew of the men who worked on the railroad. Dad, after the crop was planted, worked on the grade also as did many of the settlers. It was a windfall for them, as it gave them some ready cash. Some of the settlers would put a team on a slip scraper to work. They got extra pay for the horses. It was a wet summer and they might have tough going, building the grade through the low ground and the sloughs on the prairie.

In the fall of 1880 the snow came the 16th day of October and stayed until the next May. The settlers who lived very far from town, usually made a trip there, early in the fall and laid in a good supply of food for the winter. The early snow had caught them unprepared. Very few had food enough for the winter that was before them. It was hard enough to live with the ground covered with snow, but when storm after storm swept across the prairie it was terrible. The snow was so deep that it was hard for a team to wallow through for a short distance, to say nothing of going to town. To add to the danger, if they got caught out on the open prairie away from shelter in one of those blizzards, they would very likely wander in a circle, and in all probability, become exhausted and freeze to death. Several people died that way during the winter.

The only safe way was to stick pretty close to home. Fortunately, Dad had done as had most of the others, stacked his hay close to the barn. There it was handy as fuel for the house and feed for the cattle. The well was also close by; the barn and house were not very far apart. They had a rope strung between the house and the barn, so that he wouldn't lose his way in the storm. There are true stories of people who lost in a storm, had passed within a few feet of their home and moved off onto the prairie and froze to death.

The house and barn were both drifted over with nothing to mark the spot, except an extra big drift, with perhaps a wisp of smoke coming out of the tin chimney that stuck out of the drift.

After the first storm and the barn was drifted over, Dad made a hole through the roof. He took the feed and water through this