

Please return to  
release Saturday afternoon March 9.

Wesleyan University  
Alumni Council  
Wesleyan Station  
Middletown, Conn.

The Blizzard of 1888  
by G.W. Gardiner

Permitt  
H. Connelly  
SAT. MAG.  
Take care

(Ed. Note.-Mr. Gardiner, who after his college years at Wesleyan, became Collector of the Port at Providence, R.I., where he now lives, refers in his story of the "Big Blizzard" to the experiences of a center on the football team. A perusal of the records reveals that Mr. Gardiner was that anonymous center.)

~~THE BLIZZARD OF 1888.~~

PLEASE RETURN TO  
The Wesleyan University Alumni Council  
Winchester House, 201 High Street  
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT

Sunday evening, March 11, 1888, had a sort of mild-mannered nightfall for that time of year. Hesperus and Orion were veiled from mortal gaze by a drapery of clouds, while a gentle northeast wind diffused the chill of early spring or late winter (as you prefer) across the Wesleyan campus. By eight o'clock, snow was falling in a haphazard way. An hour later, when a couple of sophomores returned from services at the A.M.E.Zion Church, the wind had freshened and the whirling swarm of flakes was whewing through the air as if old Boreas was operating a mammoth exhaust fan at several thousand r.p.m.

Extra pitchers and pails were filled at the famous pump in the rear of old North College that night, for fear the usual early morning accomplishment of that chore might be unsuited to carpet-slippers and undoffed night raiment. How true the foreboding proved to be.

Monday morning dawned late, with a low visibility, for the college precincts were enveloped and almost sealed with a raging blizzard. Breakfasts had to be fought for with struggling plunges through drifts, to the accompaniment of a howling gale and zero temperatures. College classes were the victims of more or less willing "cuts". In some cases, they were devoid of a venerable and distant-residing professor, to the feigned sadness of folk with low marks. The "Quail Roost" was blockaded against both exports and imports, while fraternity houses rang with the glees of beleaguered fellows who were "ridin' out the gale".

The storm's severity increased savagely all day Monday. That night, an emboldened football center ran "before the wind" to his frat house, for supper. Sunday left-overs constituted most meals, since fresh deliveries, like the little man, just simply weren't there. Our gallant gridironer ate as heartily as the limited menu would permit and bravely departed for North College in the very teeth of the gale. Many times, in that desperate fight with waist-deep drifts, he realized how different it had been with the wind astern of him.

How often, too, there came to him those undying lines of Vergil--

Facilis descensus Averni;  
Sed regressus, hoc opus est; hic labor.

(For the benefit of modern boycotters of the classics, this may be translated freely--

Sliding down-hill into hell is easy  
But the return trip is damned hard work.)

Fortunately, the campus trees, bare of leaves, stood the shock. Our pigskin hero, with fast-ebbing breath, worked his way to the lee side of a noble elm. There he stood for hour-like minutes until his vagrant breath came back. Then he dashed forth, fumbling and stumbling through heaving, wind-swept billows of snow, and made 20 yards to the lee side of the next elm. Again he waited for that recalcitrant breath. Then he was off again for another 20 yards or more, and the third elm. And so on, as it seemed to him, ad infinitum.