

Dusty Homestead Road

George Hagglund

May 2009

Blacktop on the Homestead Road was a long time in coming. During the 1930's and 40's we had to tolerate a fog of fine dust whenever it was dry, especially in the summertime. I grew up living just a quartermile off the road and can still remember seeing the dust clouds of red clay that were thrown up whenever a car traveled up or down on the main road. And since I didn't own a car for much of my early youth, can recall being enveloped in choking clouds of dust whenever a car passed me by.

The residents of the houses next to the road suffered the most — the Ivarinen's, the Ben Carlsons, and the Vostries in the early days of the 30's. Putting the washing on the line was to invite fast-moving trucks and cars to speed up and create a bigger cloud.

The first car in line had it good, but the cars that followed were exposed to choking dust and flying rocks. Pock-marked windshields were the rule, not the exception. There was so much dust thrown up on some days you couldn't pass the slow car in front because you couldn't spot oncoming traffic. Family cars were always dirty and covered with dust.

Henning Carlson was infamous — he traveled fast in his 46 Chevy and the dust would rise to record heights. And then came the blacktop road. What heaven! Life was never the same.