

ZACHOW CAR-TRAIN CRASH

As told by Diana Mayefske Radtke

On this bitterly cold winter day in 1961 a 55 year old Shawano man, Mr. Clarence Linke, died and a 37 year old Zachow woman, Alice Mayefske, became a hero following a train-car collision in Zachow.

As I recall this day I was in the kitchen with my mother who was leaning over at the kitchen sink washing her hair, when all of a sudden she asked me to go up to my bedroom and look out the window to see why the train was stalled on the tracks. I ran back to her shouting there was a car accident, a collision with the afternoon passenger train. While turning off the water and quickly drying her hair with a towel she instructed me to go back to my room and grab a warm blanket off my bed. She knew what had to be done and there was no time to lose. By the time I came back with the blanket she already had on her grey wool winter coat with a plaid woolen scarf knotted under her chin covering her wet hair. She took the blanket and ran outside to see if she could be of some assistance.

Margaret Linke lay on the ground in the snow, injured, but kept from going into shock with Mom's quick action of keeping the lady warm, talking to her, and comforting her. Hours later I remember Mom coming back into the house with her hair frozen to her head in ringlets.

Later on we learned Mom was credited with saving the woman's life. As time passed Mom received several thank you letters from Mrs. Linke for saving her life.

Mom had once told me she would have gone to nursing school had there been money for her to go.

2009