

## Big Elk Meadows, Boulder, Morrison May 4-8, 1969

**Rainfall and Streamflow Data:** [click here](#)

**Damage Estimate:** Statewide, \$21 million

The above figure includes: \$12 million in damages to private property, \$750,000 damages to state and federal highways, and \$8 million in damages to other roads and public property. The estimate includes damage in Denver, Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Jefferson, Clear Creek, El Paso, and Weld Counties.

**Boulder County, damages to roads and bridges, \$892,000,** (is included in above figure).

**Deaths: 1**

Rain began over much of the eastern slope on May 4 and continued almost nonstop until the morning of May 8. Early in the storm a persistent southeasterly flow transported moist air from the Gulf of Mexico into the Plains States, Texas, and Colorado. Beginning on May 5, a High was building to the north in the Montana-Dakota region that brought the moist air from the Midwest into the foothills of Colorado. As the air was lifted by the mountains, the rainfall became more intense. **High rainfall rates occurred on May 6-7** when this flow was the strongest. The greatest intensities occurred in a band along the mountains from an area about 25 miles southwest of Denver northward to the Estes Park area. **Low intensity rain fell steadily from May 4-7** suggesting convective instability was not present, but rather that the rain was the result of a consistent lifting caused by the flow against the mountain. This pattern persisted until late on May 7 when a second cold front began pushing southward toward the storm area bringing cooler and drier air behind it.

On May 7, the Denver Post reported that "nearly 60 hours of continuous rain sent streams over their banks from Conifer to southwest of Denver to the Longmont area nearly 30 miles north of the city." Most flooding was caused by river flooding, although some was caused directly by rainwater. **Boulder Creek was measured at six-foot depth on May 7, 2.2 feet higher than the previous record of 4.2 feet calculated in 1921.**

On May 7, flooding was widespread, however most reports of damage to personal property were confined to Boulder County. **South Boulder and Bear Creeks** were out of their banks. At least 500 basements were flooded by full sewer mains backing up into them. A trailer court was evacuated in Marshall. **Boulder Creek** caused damage to the sewage treatment plant in east Boulder. **In Longmont, low lying areas around the South St. Vrain** were flooded and homes were evacuated. The Denver-Boulder freeway was closed because of 1.5 feet of water flowing over the highway just south of Boulder. **Flooding in Lyons** caused dozens to evacuate and the South St. Vrain eventually wiped out the town's water supply. By mid-morning on May 7, several communities in Boulder County had been "virtually marooned from roads washing out around them." The bridges leading into **Jamestown and Big Elk Meadows**, a cabin area above Lyons, were washed away. In Jamestown, residents dumped old cars into Jim Creek to prevent it from

changing course completely and sweeping right through the one main street in town. Despite the residents' efforts, four buildings in Jamestown were lost into the creek including the town's pump houses. In Big Elk Meadows, some cabins were inundated by up to four feet of water.

Outside of Boulder County, other mountain towns were isolated. **Tiny Town**, about eight miles from Conifer, was isolated when roads were undercut and washed away by raging river water. An estimated 400 families were isolated in **Coal Creek canyon** by impassable roads. **South Deer Creek washed out bridges, and Bear Creek** washed out portions of Colorado 74 between Evergreen and Morrison.

In Denver, flooding was minimal by comparison. The Valley Highway was again flooded. More than 50 intersections in Denver, including several major arterial intersections were closed at the height of the flooding. The **South Platte was three feet above flood stage on the evening of May 7 fed by overflow from Bear Creek**. About 150 people were evacuated along the creek. North of Denver, the farming communities of Ft. Lupton and Brighton were flooded by several feet of water from the South Platte River. The flood crest at Ft. Lupton on May 8 (8.66 ft.) was higher than it was in 1965 (8.49 ft.).

**One death was directly linked to the flooding. A young man drowned on Boulder Creek during the highest water levels on May 7 after being tossed off his inner tube.**

Storm totals, according to both official and unofficial measurement, exceeded 10" over much of the area and were over 12" in some localities. It is possible that some of the rain totals might include some error introduced by snowfall counted as rainfall. In **Phillipsburg**, west of present day Chatfield Reservoir, the **Denver Post** reported that residents claimed they received **11 inches of rain** during the event with at least another inch of moisture in the form of snow that followed the rain. The 13.05" storm total near Boulder is suspect and possibly includes some moisture accumulation from snow.

The Bureau of Reclamation requested that citizens submit their own precipitation observations from the storm. Below are some totals from these "rainbucket" surveys. The measuring period was between 4 p.m. May 4 and about 6 p.m. May 8. In addition, the Bureau stated that the period of heaviest precipitation was between 6 p.m. May 6 and 4 a.m. May 7. According to HMR 55A, the largest total storm report of 20 inches was located at Big Elk Meadows.

5/4-8	SE of Estes Park	20" in 86 hrs.
5/4-8	E of Longmont	Up to 19" in 86 hrs.
5/4-8	Dear Creek Basin	13.0" in 86 hrs.
5/4-8	Near Evergreen	12.6" in 86 hrs.
5/4-8	Stratton Park (W of Ft. Collins)	12.5" in 86 hrs.
5/4-8	SW of Boulder	<b>13.05" in 86 hrs.</b>

From these surveys, in combination with other Bureau data, the Bureau made other storm total precipitation estimates:

5/4-8	Denver	4"-7"
5/4-8	Idaho Springs	6"-7"
5/4-8	Estes Park	5"-6"
5/4-8	Boulder	7"-9"
5/4-8	Bear Valley	9"

Official U.S. Weather Bureau storm totals for the same time period were recorded at weather stations:

5/4-8	Morrison	11.27" storm total, 5.77" daily max
5/4-8	Denver	4.71"
5/4-8	Denver WFSO AP	4.87"

#### Rainfall Data:

Date	Location	Peak Rainfall
5/6	Boulder	3.5" in 24 hrs.
5/6	Evergreen	4.5" in 24 hrs.
5/6	Longmont 6 NW	3.4" in 24 hrs.
5/6	Manitou Springs	2.3" in 24 hrs.
5/6	Morrison 1 SW	2.82" in 24 hrs.
5/7	Boulder	2.35" in 24 hrs.
5/7	Denver WSO City	2.37" in 24 hrs.
5/7	Evergreen	2.4" in 24 hrs.
5/7	Morrison 1 SW	2.72" in 24 hrs.
5/7	Denver WSFO AP	2.95" in 24 hrs.
5/6-7	Big Elk Meadow	5.35" in 24 hrs.

#### Streamflow Peaks:

Date	River and Location	Peak Flow and Height
5/7	South Platte at 19 <sup>th</sup> St. in Denver	19,500 cfs, 10.47 ft.
5/7	Bear Creek at Morrison	2,340 cfs

#### Sources:

- The Denver Post, May 5, 7-10, 13, 14, 21, June 15, 1969
- The Boulder Daily Camera, May 6-12, 1969
- [http://alert.udfcd.org/bear\\_history.html](http://alert.udfcd.org/bear_history.html)
- Storm Data May 1969
- McKee, T.B., Doesken N.J., Colorado Extreme Storm Precipitation Data Study, Colorado State University, Dept. of Atmospheric Science, Ft. Collins, 1997.

-Hydrometeorological Report No. 55A (HMR 55A) Probable Maximum Precipitation Estimates-United States between the Continental Divide and the 103rd Meridian, U.S. Department Of Commerce National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration, U. S. Department Of Army Corps Of Engineers, U. S. Department Of Interior Bureau Of Reclamation Silver Spring, Md. June 1988.

# Denver Area Threatened by Rising South Platte Waters

An undetermined number of families along the banks of Bear Creek at Tinytown were evacuated late Tuesday as the creek, swollen by two days of rain, washed over its banks and threatened homes.

At nearly the same time, the Weather Bureau issued a flood bulletin for "tributaries of the South Platte River from Bear Creek downstream through the Denver metropolitan area and the South Platte River," and a flood watch was set on the South Platte in the Denver area.

Along the creek, Denver police at Bear Valley reported

Bear Creek had risen a foot in an hour and was beginning to flow over the banks. Arapahoe County Sheriff's officers said the creek was overflowing in that county, too.

One small dam on Turkey Creek burst, sending a small flood crest down the creek, but another small dam further

downstream held to slow the swollen stream. Turkey Creek empties into Bear Creek between Morrison and Englewood.

But Jefferson County Sheriff's officers and Colorado State Patrolmen stood by at Tinytown in case a more massive evacuation became necessary.

Bear Creek, which flows into the South Platte near W. Hampden Ave., has been called "a shotgun pointed at the Denver area" by groups in the Denver area which have

been pushing for fast completion of the proposed Mt. Carbon Dam near Morrison.

Flooding on Bear Creek washed out a bridge near Morrison and forced the State Patrol to close U.S. 285 between Morrison and Rooney Road. High water and occasional overflows continued all the way in the canyon to Evergreen where water 12 feet deep flowed freely over the spillway of the dam.

Water coming over the dam reached the bottom of the bridge

in Evergreen and forced local officials armed with poles to stand guard against debris piling up.

A 1/2-mile section of Deer Creek Canyon Road had to be closed because water had washed up over the roadway.

Jefferson County officials said there was no danger to any homes in the areas.

Clear Creek County Sheriff Harold Brumbaugh in Georgetown reported several rock slides in and around the town and said rain and snow at Gene-

va Basin combined to form about a foot of slush.

Douglas County Sheriff Charles Sloan said 3 1/2 inches of rain were measured in Castle Rock Tuesday and Rocky Mountain News photographer Mel Schieltz measured the same amount in his own rain gauge at his home.

Minor flooding and some high water were reported at several Denver intersections and underpasses but there were no serious traffic problems.

## Nuclear Blast Delay Slated, Love Claims

(Continued from Page 1)

involve the safety of about a dozen families who live downstream. He said the AEC is considering the need to lower the water level in the reservoir before the blast is touched off.

Involved might be the value of water to irrigation farmers this season and it might be necessary to buy some water rights.

Ten Byck said springtime in the Rockies, when the frost is coming out of the ground and the country side is moist, is notorious for dangerous rockslides.

Recently on the Western Slope he said he observed some large boulders which had fallen down a mountain "without the need for help of an underground explosion."

Meanwhile, a group of more than a dozen University of Colo-

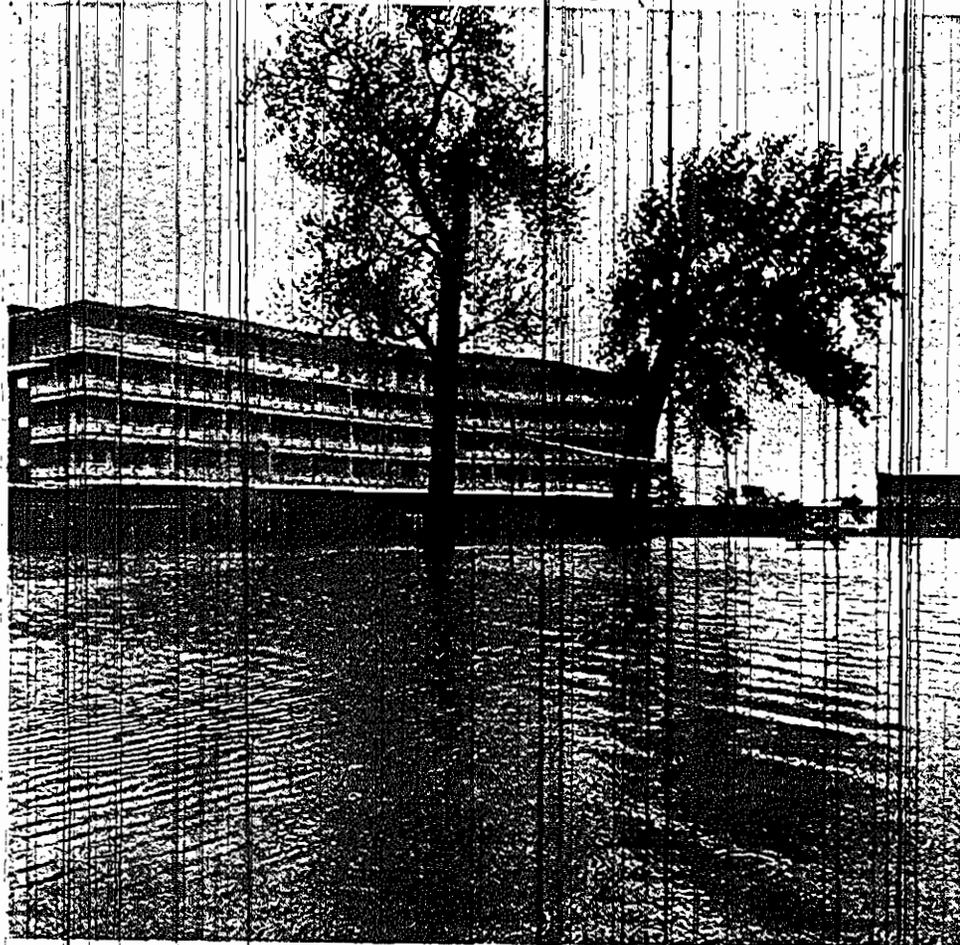
# IF YOU KNOW A BARGAIN WHEN YOU SEE ONE...

## DON'T MISS THIS



### King-Size Aluminum and Plastic Folding Chair in Avocado

# New Flooding Perils Denver, Other Areas



The Harvest House in Boulder was only one of the many places in the Denver area where water filled a good part of the scenery.

By GEORGE KANE  
*Rocky Mountain News Writer*  
Continued heavy rains and snow in Colorado's isolated mountain communities Wednesday sent tributaries of the South Platte River out of their banks. One unconfirmed death was reported in Boulder County.

A flood warning was issued by the U.S. Weather Bureau Wednesday morning, and by midnight some areas of Denver, Littleton, Englewood, Sheridan, Arvada and Westminster reported farmland, residential areas, streets, highways and railyards flooded.

Boulder police reported a possible drowning at mid-afternoon, but a 40-man search team had failed to find a body by midnight. They reported a 21-year-old former University of Colorado student was seen floating in an inner tube on flooded Boulder Creek east of that city.

The inner tube was later seen passing under a bridge. Police would release no name for the possible drowning victim, saying the death was still unconfirmed.

## Debris Piled Up

Nearly a dozen locations spotted over the Denver Metropolitan Area were evacuated or partially-evacuated as debris piled up against bridges and caused speeding waters to back up and overflow banks on a half-dozen creeks.

Meat packing plants and residents in the area around E. 51st Ave. and Franklin St. were reported evacuating, as were residents near W. Dartmouth Ave. and S. Gray St., S. Wadsworth Blvd. and Bowles Ave., W. Hampden Ave., low areas between S. Federal Blvd. and S. Wadsworth Blvd. and W. Colfax Ave. and 16th and W. 17th Aves. at the river.

Sixty Metropolitan State College students volunteered their help in evacuating families from some of the areas, and temporary shelters were set up in the Platte Valley Action Center, 3204 W. Colfax Ave., and Rudy Center at W. 13th Ave. and Decatur St.

Telephone service in Southwest Denver areas was reported disrupted, and power was out in a few isolated areas.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS PHOTO BY JOHN GORDON  
Mud and rock slides caused by nearly three days of rain closed most of the roads near Denver leading into the snowy mountains.

# 14 Arrested in Colo. Senate Demonstration

By BILL LOGAN  
*Rocky Mountain News Statehouse Reporter*  
Fourteen demonstrators — including two priests, a nun and a minister — barged into the Colorado Senate Wednesday and captured control of the presiding officer's platform for 47 minutes.

Trujillo has previously identified himself as a local director of the Communist Party. Others of the group carried mock pollins to the Statehouse a day earlier to symbolize death of bills they sought.

The Senate was in closed-door executive session at 10:55 a.m. when the group went to a side entrance to the chamber and knocked on the door.

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In Denver, the W. Evans Ave. Bridge over the Platte at S. Santa Fe Dr. was in danger, and highway crews expected a bridge over Bear Creek at W. Hampden Ave. and S. Knox Ct. to wash away at any time.

Navajo Freight Lines moved all of its trucks and much other equipment to high ground on Ruby Hill, overlooking the Platte, and dozens of businesses along S. Santa Fe Dr. were evacuating.

## Railyards Flooded

Denver's railyards were flooded by rising waters of the Platte. The switching line around the north edge of the city was closed by wash-outs. Rock Island trains were detoured through Union Depot.

In the Colorado & Southern Railway's Seventh St. yard, workmen were building a two-foot earthen dike to hold back water from the Platte. The yard adjoins the river and suffered heavy damage in the 1963 flood.

There was no damage reported at the railyards nor at Centennial Race Track, although officials at the latter were moving records out of offices.

A tornado was reported south of Haxton, Colo., in the northeast corner of the state. Haxton is south of Julesburg. There were no reports of damage.

The mountain communities of Georgetown, Idaho Springs, Central City, Granby, Fairplay, Deckers, Jamestown and Bailey were reported totally isolated.

Public Service Co. (PSC) reported 17 inches of snow at Allenspark, and the Colorado State Patrol said 15 inches fell at Ward, west of Boulder.

The isolated communities were reported without electric power, long distance telephone communications and cut off by snow-covered and mud-slide-covered roads.

A Mountain States Telephone Co. spokesman said all crews are on the job, and said wet cables in Denver were causing widespread telephone interruptions throughout the area.

## Building Collapses

Another unconfirmed report from Georgetown said the Silver Queen Theater there, one of the oldest buildings in that mountain town west of Denver, collapsed Wednesday afternoon under heavy snowfall.

A PSC spokesman reported two large power outages in Denver when water shorted out 16 transformers and a 7,500-volt power unit. The outages were from Nassau to Mansfield Aves. between Quince and Tamarac Sts., and from E.

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Wiley J. Smith

# Candidate Smith Opposes Any Busing

By BARBARA BROWNE  
Rocky Mountain News Writer

Wiley J. Smith, Denver School Board candidate, opposes any form of busing.

"I don't say I'm against just mandatory busing," the soft-spoken 35-year-old trucking firm clerk says.

"I don't believe in busing in any way. I don't believe it would improve racial relations at all.

"I do know it would be an added cost when already there seems to be a drain on the taxpayers."

In place of busing, Smith calls for:  
• A uniform educational program with the same standards throughout the city.

• Improvement of substandard schools "where ever they may be found."

Smith says he favors "open enrollment" with children able to attend any school they wish in any part of Denver.

"However, the expense of transportation would be at the families' expense, not at the school system," he said.

**Should Be No Reason**  
"But if we have a uniform program of education, there should be no reason for busing or for unrest in the various parts of the city."

Smith also doesn't believe "all the substandard schools are in northeast Denver.

"For instance," he said, "Cheltenham School at W. Colfax Ave. and Perry St. is just so very, very old, it looks as though it's going to collapse in any moment."

# New Flooding Perils Metro Area

(Continued from page 5)  
37th to 40th Aves. between Columbine and Downing Sts. Power was restored after several hours.

There were numerous other minor outages reported from water-caused malfunctions and water seeping into underground distribution systems.

Police reported a trailer court at Santa Fe Dr. and Bowles Ave. was being evacuated because of overflow from the South Platte, and rushing waters from Bear Creek tore away some 35 feet of earth around the Kon-Tiki mobile home park at 3500 S. King St. in Englewood.

## Families Evacuated

Littleton police reported the evacuation of some families, trailer homes and small businesses along the Old Mill Road west of Santa Fe Dr. at the Bowles Ave. bridge because of high water. There was no general evacuation of the area, they reported.

Some residents were evacuated from Tinytown, a village west of Denver.

Police said flood waters by late Wednesday

had not reached the proportions of the 1965 flood on the Platte, but were concerned over continued heavy rain reported in the mountains and coming down both Bear and Turkey Creeks.

They said the water seemed to be receding along those creeks by midnight, but reported the Platte River still rising slightly.

The Weather Bureau hopefully predicted that rains would diminish overnight and end by early Thursday afternoon.

The Denver Civil Defense Department warned that anyone living within the vicinity of the South Platte from Englewood south should "be notified to be on the alert."

## 50-Mile Flood Area

Some flooding was reported along a 50-mile line from Comber southwest of Denver to Longmont, nearly 30 miles north of Denver. Many basements were reported flooded.

Along Bear Creek, a greenhouse was crumpled and washed away in the vicinity of W. Dartmouth Ave. and S. Webster St. as waters widened the creek at that point.

A portion of W. Dartmouth Ave. south of

Kennedy High School was washed away by Bear Creek and Department of Public Works crews were trying to shore up the rest of the street. The street was closed and police stationed cars there to keep sightseers away.

Most schools in Boulder County were closed and eight were shut down in Jefferson County. Reported closed in Jefferson were Wilmot, Evergreen Junior and Senior High, Harmalee Elementary, West Jefferson Elementary and Junior High, Ralston Elementary, Red Rocks Elementary and Coal Creek Elementary.

Most highways west of Denver were closed by snow or mud and rock slides, making it impossible for telephone and Public Service Co. crews to get to the areas to restore service.

At 5 p.m. Wednesday Denver police stationed along the Platte River reported the river has risen a foot between 3 and 5 p.m., causing serious concern among city officials.

## 'Key to Situation'

Police Chief George Seaton, of the job since midnight Tuesday said the "key to the situation" is keeping the debris away from the bridges.

Cranes were working at virtually every bridge along the South Platte throughout the day Wednesday to pluck debris from the swift water.

Dozens of streets in the Denver area were closed by high water and officials in Adams and Arapahoe Counties and in Arvada reported Sand, Plum and Ralston Creeks all rising, but still within their banks.

The Valley Highway north from downtown Denver was closed to traffic about 4 p.m. and many of the southbound entrances were reported flooded and closed.

Between Sunday afternoon and noon Wednesday Denver had received an official 2.52 inches of rainfall, the Weather Bureau said, but some rain gauges around the city measured in excess of 5 inches. Boulder, as of noon Wednesday, had received 5 1/2 inches.

## Heavy Snows Fall

While the lower elevations received incessant rains for the fourth straight day, heavy snows fell in the mountains.

Heavy snowpack closed Loveland Pass and Berthoud Pass was closed because of a snow slide. Snowblows were being used to keep as many roads open as possible.

Highways closed during the morning because of flooding were mostly in Boulder County, but others in Denver and south were being blocked throughout the afternoon.

One bridge was closed at E. 96th Ave. and Dahlia St. in Adams County because of high water, and 81 persons were reported stranded for a time in Pinevood Springs, west of Lyons, from flooding.

for today's college students when they were in elementary and high school we wouldn't have this taking over of administration buildings and rioting and complete disorder we have in our colleges today," he said.

"By appropriate discipline I mean the schools should be run by the administration, not by the students.

"If a student is unruly or uncontrollable he should be suspended until he can be brought under control by his parents.

"Personally, I found it appalling that two junior high school teachers could be beaten as they were at Cole Junior High School.

"We hear complaints that certain schools don't have qualified teachers. Yet if a teacher reads another teacher is beaten at a school, he isn't going to be too eager to teach there."

Smith says he does not know if minority groups are right in complaining Denver lacks a uniform educational system.

"If elected, this is something I would have to investigate fully," he said.

"I do feel, however, some of the demands the minority groups are making are foolish.

For instance, the call for Negro and Hispanic school principals.

"It sounds to me as if the minority groups making these demands are putting color or national origin above qualifications."

"They're really excited about my campaign," Smith says.

A Democratic precinct committeeman for the past nine years, Smith has worked in many political campaigns.

He supported State Rep. Wayne Knox (D-Denver) as a legislative candidate in a 1964 in tra-party fight, and saw Knox elected.

"The party machine—the district captains and the bulk of the committee people—were against me. But I felt Knox was the better candidate," he said.

Smith was born in Jefferson City, Mo. His parents died when he was four.

He grew up in St. Clara's Orphanage (now closed) because he had relatives in Denver and attended Mulvan High School.

"I don't have a college degree," he said frankly. "I have taken some college accounting courses, at the University of Denver."

Smith is a clerk in the accounting department of Riggins Truck Lines, Inc. He has worked there 13 years. He lives at 129 S. Windsor Drive in southwest Denver.

The third point of Smith's 3-point campaign program is his insistence on more latitude for teachers and principals in the matter of school discipline.

"I feel there have been appropriate discipline

Publisher Ties  
Annex Turmoil

# Denver Area Mops Up After Near-Disaster

By GEORGE KANE  
Rocky Mountain News Writer

A mopping wet Denver saw the sun peek out for the first time in four days as residents in a five-county area began cleaning up after a near-disaster.

Seven mountain towns were still isolated Thursday and it appeared it would be sometime Friday or Saturday before telephone service was restored and roads opened into the areas.

One possible death has been attributed to the four-day storm, two injuries were reported when a hotel collapsed at Georgetown and a Denver man died of a heart attack after trying to ball put his flooded basement.

Boulder police said Paul E. "Toby" Tobler, 22, a former University of Colorado student, was (drowned) drowned in rampaging Boulder

Creek. Another youth told officers he saw Toby floating down the flooded creek on an inner tube. He said the tube hit some debris and "jarred him loose." A search team is still trying to recover the body.

Two children were hospitalized for what was described as minor injuries when a part of the Silver Queen Hotel, one of the oldest buildings in Georgetown, collapsed Wednesday under heavy snow. Some 20 other persons escaped injury.

The children were identified as Mary Miller, 7, and her brother, Richard, 3, the children of Mr. and Mrs. C. Richard Miller of Idaho Springs.

Denver Patrolman Gordon Reed said Eric Richard Swisher, 61 of 1459 S. Elizabeth Street, died of an apparent heart attack Thursday after trying to bail water out of his flooded basement.

Reed said Mrs. Swisher told him her husband had worked about 15 minutes at the job, then complained of shoulder pains. He went to bed and was found dead a short time later.

Boulder County was the hardest hit by waters slopping out of the banks of streams, fed by incessant rains since last Sunday. Boulder officials, however, could not yet estimate damage.

From scattered reports from the inundated five-county area, most of the damage apparently was done to low-lying homes and businesses and to roads and highways.

The Denver Fire Department reported receiving more than 2,000 telephone calls from residents asking for aid in pumping out flooded basements. That story was the same in Littleton, Englewood, Sheridan, Thornton, Westminster, Arvada and Boulder.

Four days of continued rains swelled a half-

dozen creeks, forcing them out of their banks, and tributaries of the South Platte River fed that stream to overflowing.

Wednesday afternoon, flood stage on Bear by late Thursday, the reading at Morrison on Bear Creek had dropped to just under 7 feet. It had hit a high reading of 7.37 feet late Creek is 3.5 feet.

Although other creeks were rising, the Weather Bureau said flooding in lowlands along the tributaries in the Denver Metropolitan Area and into some portions of northeastern Colorado (would) continue for several days.

The South Platte crested last Wednesday night at 10.6 feet, and was registered at 10.3 feet at midnight. It had receded only one more by late Thursday. Flood stage is 7 feet on the Platte.

The multi-billion dollar flood of 1965 resulted when the Spah Platte crested at 16 feet. Officials had been convinced that the last four days of rain might cause a repeat of the earlier flood, and all street, highway, police and fire personnel were kept on duty through the night.

Gov. Love after a helicopter trip with Chief Highway Engineer Charles S. Munn and State Natural Resources Director Tom Ten Eyck to survey flood damage Thursday, said he did not yet make up his mind to ask for federal aid to help offset flood losses.

He said highway damages alone would be about \$750,000.

Jefferson County Commission estimates damages in that county at about \$1 million.

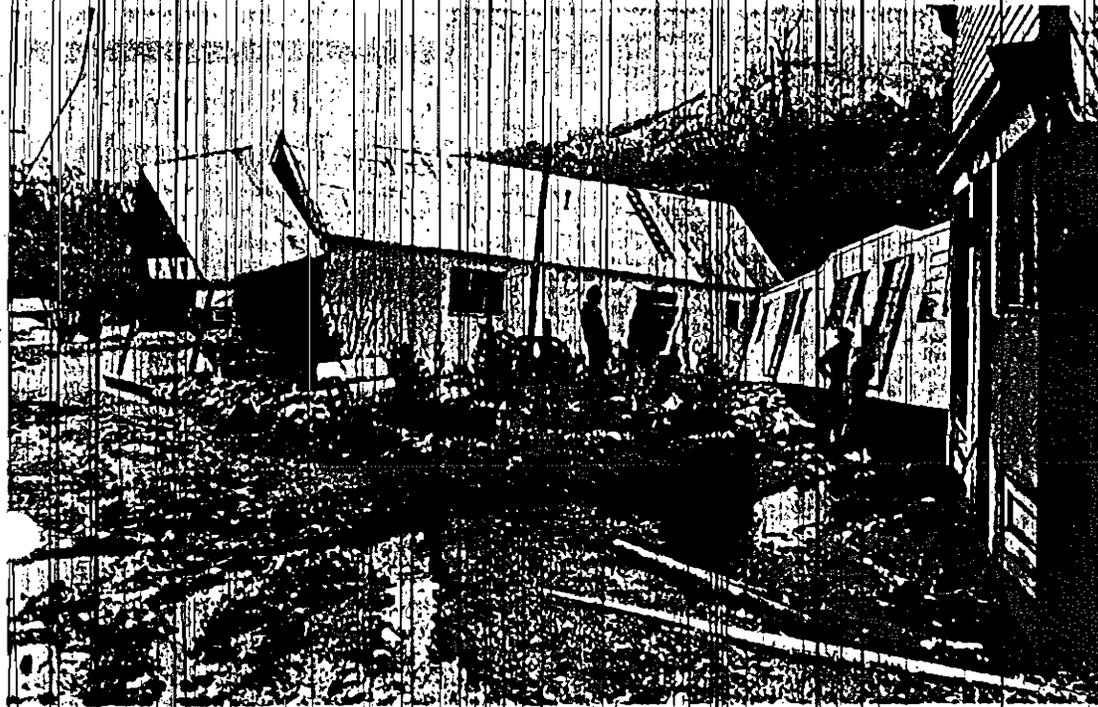
U.S. Weather Bureau forecasters here predicted the rain had ended and held out only a 5 per cent probability for precipitation overnight Thursday, with the percentage predicted to decrease to zero or 10 day.

However, some trouble was still expected into the weekend in spotted areas as snow which were dumped in the mountains by the massive storm system began melting.

Some communities — Allentown, Georgetown and Ward among them — received up to 18 inches of snow Tuesday and Wednesday.

Roads were blocked to Bailey, Dockers, Hubbard Springs, Central City, Georgetown, Allentown, Fairplay Thursday, and Mountain

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Across from the general store and post office in Jamestown, an old pool hall (right) and the Lively Cafe, joined by a house trailer, washed partly into Left Hand Creek

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS PHOTO BY MEL SCHIELTZ  
Wednesday as raging waters from three and a half days of steady rains swept by them.

## Jamestown Residents Reflect on 'Longest Day of Lives'

By CLEVE WORK  
Rocky Mountain News Writer

"Yesterday was the longest day in our lives."

Looking out the window of the combination general store and post office, the woman pointed to a spot across the road, now sunken to the level of the rolling chocolate creek.

That's where our new Jamestown Post Office was going to be," she said, chuckling now. The irony was that it was the Post Office Department that decided a new facility was needed. Jamestown residents hollered "no" and the plans had been dropped.

Next to the site that was no more, an old wooden building (left) into the creek bottom. Robert Caldwell was going to make a recreation center for the kids out of that. It used to be a pool hall. It had a half diamond and a skating rink behind it where the creek is now. It's postmaster's wife said.

Between the old pool hall that had lost its past and future overnight, a long house trailer seemed to be riches from its fate; a misspelled sign over the door defined — too late — its uncertain position. "Sorry. We will be closed." Next to it, Helen Robertson's Lively Cafe as a slant downward angle as the pool hall is left in front behind.

### Foundation Damaged

A little farther downstream, shiny door-knobs and fresh paint of a ranch style house contrasted with the scene of fresh fury behind it, but a peep around the back betrayed its untouched elegance. A corner of the foundation had been washed away; where Wednesday there had been a lawn, on Thursday was a

boulder-strewn waste. Built by a Kansas City, Mo. couple it has yet to be lived in.

A little wicker two-storied red and white house, which would have looked more at home between two skyscrapers, stood misbegotten in the wash, standing a lonely watch over its own fate.

Main Street in Jamestown looked more like a creek bed than a street Thursday morning. Just south of the bridge, which still stood, the street had been cut in half by the water early Wednesday. The water had then followed the street, a short way before cutting back toward its normal course.

Several houses that stood in the way of the rampage were badly flooded, and sheds on the low-lying land had been swept away. A small pump house near one of the flooded buildings pushed back against the flood, holding its own at least for the time being.

### House Across Road

Nelton Jansen was one of the men who was up all night, trying to divert the flow of the creek from his house. His house stands on Main Street, but fortunately the creek turned toward its bed before it reached it. The house across the road, however, had lost its front lawn and was separated from the street by a steep gully.

"My granddaughters, Mrs. Lynn Wright, is expecting a baby, you know. It's her first and they might have to do a Caesarian. I hope they get her out of here," he said, looking skyward.

The chopper had just been by, and had landed on the road, but took off again. "He'll be'd be right back," a friend told Jansen.

Mrs. Wright, according to Dr. Gary L. Ballard who led an emergency team to the belea-

guered town Wednesday, is a week past full term, but may not deliver for another two or three weeks. He decided not to evacuate her by helicopter for the time being.

"It's her first child, so she'll give us plenty of warning. Then we can take her out by road," he said.

"Our main problem now is drinking water," Jansen said. "Over there's where the old pump house was," he pointed to a few shreds of wood in the creek bed. "Our new water system — we couldn't get up there fast enough to shut the valves off, so the mains blew."

### Won't Last Long

"Some of us got our bathtubs full of time and a few people have tanks, but we don't have enough to last for very long," Mrs. Lorraine Upp, clerk at the general store said.

According to Dr. Ballard, the old water system's tank is still intact, and holding 17,000 gallons, enough to last the 185 residents a few days until more water can be trucked in over the makeshift road. Food is in short supply, he said, but there will be no real problem in trucking in supplies for the time being.

"Don't stand too close under that power line," Jansen shouted. "There's 13,000 volts there, and the only thing that's holding it up is that nylon rod and the guy wire. It's broken loose at the bottom."

A group of people — men, girls and young boys — piled up in a decrepit old truck across the creek. They started pulling out logs and carrying them down to the water. Several on the other side began hauling stones.

Within a half hour, a makeshift bridge, shaky but serviceable, had appeared, one of two links between the flood-split halves of the town. Waters were rising again Thursday noon,

## Colo. Legislature Pushing Toward End of Session

STORY ON PAGE 6

though, as melting snow added their volume, and threatened the hasty bridge.

The other bridge, toward the north end of town, was more secure. A tree had very fortunately fallen over the creek, and was bolstered by a log and crossboards. Mrs. Hauser, the bridge was to evacuate Mrs. Hauser, due to have her seventh child Thursday.

### Taken to Hospital

Minutes after the last nail had been hammered into the cross boards, Mrs. Hauser, looking pale and drawn, was escorted gingerly across the boiling creek, and taken overland by jeep across a rough, crude saw-cut access road to a Boulder hospital.

A Jamestown man was evacuated later by helicopter, suffering from a severe eye injury. Dr. Ballard said the man had been holding safety equipment from the creek Wednesday morning when he was hurt.

Thursday noon, the sun came out in Jamestown for the first time since Sunday. It wasn't necessarily good, not at first anyway. A first snow melt could prolong the city community's water woes another day or so. But except for that less severe threat, it appeared that the worst was over.

All day Wednesday, people of all ages and descriptions had been working to save their town. They had dumped cars in the creek to save the main road, built stone diversions and log bridges, done whatever they could do with their bare hands and the few tools they had.

Wednesday night many of the men had worked all night. Thursday morning they showed the strain in their faces, but they kept working. This was not the first flood — in the 1890s, Left Hand Creek had done on an even worse rampage, according to the memories of some of Jamestown's old timers.

which would cost the state's motorists between \$2.1 million and \$2.8 million more a year.

Lawmakers decreed that the State Parole Board will become a full-time body under Civil Service. But they turned down recommendations by an interim study committee and the gover-

tax burden of some \$7 million a year. Enacted was a one-cent a gallon gasoline tax hike to take effect June 1 and increase state and local revenues almost \$10 million a year for use on highways, roads and streets.

The legislature ordered a

dividual concerns and in the Senate yesterday, civil unrest." "Democracy is not a system designed to deal technically or quickly with this kind of unrest and . . . it is concerned with the freedoms of the individual." The new school aid equals an increase of approximately 50

# Mopup Begins After Near-Disaster

(Continued from page 5)

States Telephone Co. reported all those communities were still without telephone service.

Public Service Co. crews, however — most of them sent into those areas when it appeared there might be some trouble — had managed to restore electric power in all the isolated towns by Thursday morning.

Telephone crews — which totaled some 1,200 men working throughout this area of Colorado — were expected to be able to get into the troubled areas sometime Friday.

All services were restored by Thursday morning to Breckenridge, Nederland, Joes Cope and Kirk, and six emergency telephone circuits were operating through Craig to previously isolated Granby.

Most of Denver's power and telephone problems were ironed out by crews working through the night to restore service.

Public Service Co. said there was no problem with its major generating facilities, as was encountered in the 1965 flood, but that some 800 men worked Wednesday and Wednesday night repairing power outages caused by water seeping into small transformers serving one and two-block areas.

Another 200 PSC men were on special duty in the mountains restoring lines downed by snow-laden tree limbs and other lines shorted out by water.

Wet telephone cables and manholes full of water caused Denver's major telephone troubles, but service to almost all phones in the area was restored by mid-day Thursday.

Some streets, such as W. Dartmouth Avenue which was crumbled by waters from Bear Creek, were still closed Thursday. Bear Creek was receding rapidly, however, and residents along it were treading mud as they began a massive clean up.

The near-disastrous rains, nonetheless, had their lighter side. One man who had just bought a home along Bear Creek, and had installed extensive wood paneling and carpeting, watched back-up water begin bubbling up in his drains Wednesday.

He had a sack of cement in his basement, so he poured it in all the drains and commented that he considered it cheaper to later unplug the drains than to repanel and recarpet the home.

More than 50 Metropolitan State College students worked for 16 hours Wednesday and Wednesday night helping evacuate 135 families from areas around the Platte, and McDonald's Hamburgers donated food and beverages to all the workers and victims.

A temporary shelter was set up in Platte Valley Action Center, 3607 W. 14th Ave., and furniture and personal belongings of the families was taken to Rudey Park Recreation Center at 12th Avenue and Decatur Street.

Staffers and dozens of volunteers from Metro Denver Fair Housing Center also moved Platte River flood victims to higher ground.

The center donated its two 1½-ton trucks, which joined a fleet of one-half and three-quarter-ton pickup trucks manned by Metro State College students to move families and furniture out of the flooding areas.

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## Boulder Area Sustainability Information Network

Current Theme: History

### Flood of 1969

1969, May 4, 8

**NOTE: Be sure to check out [streaming video clips](#) of the 1969 flood taken by Tom Mayberry in BASIN Watershed**

*Both Two Mile Creek and Left Hand Creek experienced major flooding, so it is safe to assume that Four Mile Canyon Creek did as well during this storm. Flood waters from raging Left Hand Canyon Creek swept thru the small mountain community of Jamestown, washing away 8 houses and isolating some 100 inhabitants. US 36 between Boulder and Lyons was closed because of washouts.*

*Mrs. Reed, who was elderly at the time, told her neighbor Ann McRoberts that though the '69 flood in Four Mile Canyon Creek was big, she had seen much bigger ones previously. She said that the little side canyon (Lion's Point) where Mrs. McRoberts lived had been filled "side to side" with water.*

*Mrs. McRoberts reports that the 1969 flood cut Wagon Wheel Gap road in several places, cutting the road 10 feet deep in places. Residents could not drive out for 5 - 10 days. Going up canyon from the intersection of Lee Hill and Wagon Wheel Gap Road to the second place that the creek crosses the road, Mrs. McRoberts reports that there was a 10 foot deep trench in the road. Bow Mountain Road was also cut off. (Interview, August 1999, Elizabeth Black)*

The May 8th flood was estimated to be a **25 year flood** by Public Works Director Andy Briscoe. The tracks of the Colorado and Southern railway were again washed out in the Boulder area.

Peak discharge at Orodell (located 1 mile upstream from Fourmile Creek and 3 miles southwest of the courthouse in Boulder) : **1150cfs.**  
**From US Army Corps of engineers, August 1969 Floodplain Mapping of Boulder Creek.**

"This was also a flood of **long duration general storm**. Precipitation was heaviest in the mountains; part of it being snow. In the **Boulder and South Boulder Creek** basins the rainfall continued at a moderate rate for nearly four days. Total precipitation for the storm amounted to **7.6 inches** at Boulder and **9.34 inches** at the Boulder Hydroelectric Plant located about 3 miles up the canyon from Boulder. Precipitation

amounts totaled **8.11 inches** at Eldorado Springs and **10.05 inches** at **Gross Reservoir on South Boulder Creek**. Peak flooding occurred on the 7th of May at Boulder and Eldorado Springs. Preliminary estimates based on the gaging records, indicate a peak discharge of **1150 cfs** occurred on **Boulder Creek**. Flooding extended over large portions of the flood plain starting at the junction of the two streams near Valmont Road and extending downstream through the remainder of the Boulder Creek study reach. Evidence of two bridge failures is illustrated in this report.

"The gaging records show that floods the size of the May 1969 flood occur on an average of about once every 5 years on Boulder Creek and about once every 7 years on South Boulder Creek." **From US Army Corps of Engineers, August 1969 Floodplain Mapping of Boulder Creek.**

**Compiled by Elizabeth Black**

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**INVITATION** BASIN is a community project actively seeking public participation. We appreciate all feedback and welcome comments, suggestions and contributions. To find out more about how you can be involved, [click here](#). Help BASIN serve your needs, take our "[10 questions in 10 seconds](#)" survey.

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BASIN is supported by the [US EPA](#), [the City of Boulder](#), [the Keep it Clean Partnership](#), [BCWI](#) and [BCN](#)

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## South Boulder Creek Introduction - Flooding History

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### Flooding History

Previous flooding along South Boulder Creek occurred in 1894, 1938 and 1969.

During the flood of May 29-June 2, 1894, the South Boulder Creek basin received up to 6 inches of precipitation, washing out bridges, buildings, roads and railroads. This event occurred at the same time as the largest recorded flood on nearby Boulder Creek.

From Aug. 31 - Sep. 4, 1938, more than 6 inches of rainfall was recorded west of Eldorado Springs causing the largest recorded South Boulder Creek flood. Floodwaters of 7,390 cubic feet per second passed through Eldorado Springs causing heavy damage and destroying numerous buildings including the Eldorado Springs Resort and leaving a path of destruction in the valley downstream.

Flooding from May 4-8, 1969 was caused by a combination of rainfall and snowmelt. Precipitation of 8.11 inches at Eldorado Springs and 10.05 inches at Gross Reservoir caused a peak discharge of 1690 cubic feet per second at Eldorado Springs and inundated many areas downstream including US 36 at South Boulder Road. Of note during this event was the fact that Gross Reservoir captured the entire runoff generated above the dam, averting what might have been a much greater flood in the South Boulder Creek valley.

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*Last Updated ( Monday, 10 December 2007 )*

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