

The Blizzard of 1920

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Above: A Woman and girl on Charlotte St sidewalk near Rutherford Ave. The Johnstown Hotel is in the background. Right: People walking on what is now Parish Ave after shoveling made it possible again.

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Did anybody say snow?

On Saturday, April 22, 1920 around 4:00 a.m., one of the most terrific storms which has ever been experienced in Colorado began to rage and continued without intermission until late Monday afternoon. Great damage to livestock and to buildings is reported from some communities. Denver was threatened with a serious milk shortage caused by the tie up in shipping facilities. In most places there wasn't school Monday, but by Tuesday morning practically every kind of industry was commencing operations again.

The great amount of damage done will be offset, however, by the immense amount of good done to the wheat and other crops that happened to be planted. The wheat was nearly blown out of the ground by the recent windstorms, and in some cases had to be replanted, but now this snow on top of that insures a vast crop, especially in the drylands. Some beet acreage has been planted, and this added moisture will put the ground in excellent shape for a banner crop.

In Milliken there were snowbanks that reached as high as ten and twelve feet, and in the center of Main street the drifts reached a depth of eight to ten feet. Even to this day the side streets cannot be made, except on foot.

The Union Pacific and Great Western railways have sure had a hard time to get thru. Saturday's passenger on the U.P. from Ft. Collins to Denver was stalled a few miles above Koenig and soon the freight was also tied up there. These trains did not get out until Tuesday afternoon, and then only after two big plows and any number of snow shovelers had been on the job night and day.

Milliken's mail delivery was in a sad plight, no mail being received here from Saturday morning until Tuesday morning, and then it was only the small dab that was carried over at the local depot from Saturday's train. No Sunday papers were received until Wednesday morning, and at that time there sure was a big accumulation here, as in all the other cities of Colorado. Wednesday the regular schedule was resumed on the U.P. with exception of the trains being a trifle late. The Great Western is still reported as being tied up.

Many people were caught without coal here and now are being supplied by the sack full, as it is impossible to get around with a wagon or truck. The snow melted considerably Tuesday and Wednesday, and if no more storm comes within the next day or so, almost normal travel will be established, at least on the main traveled roads.



The Historic Parish House and Museum

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