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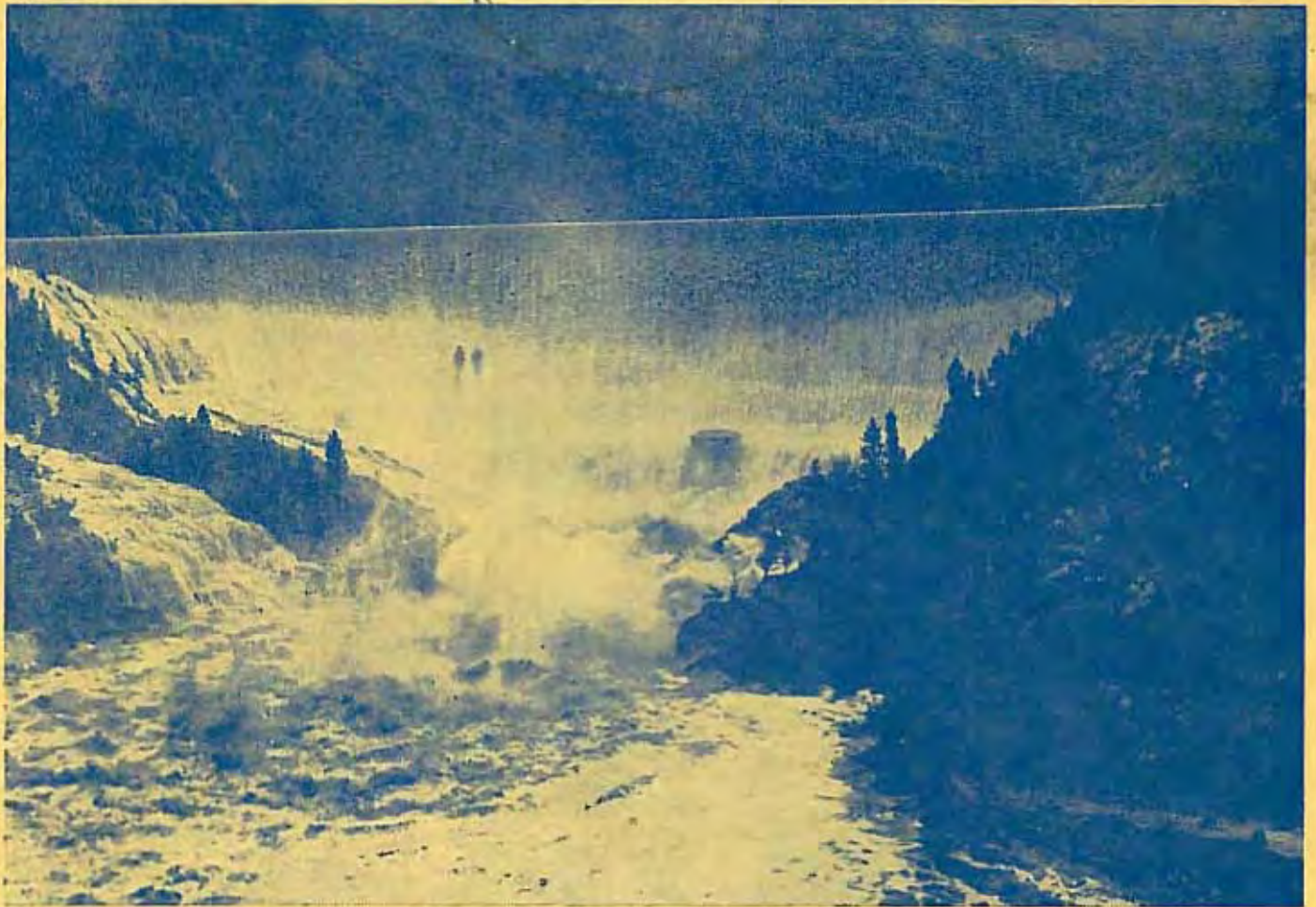
FLOODS

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Montana

FLOOD

1964



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THE STORY OF FLOOD WEEK IN MONTANA—JUNE, 1964

For the first time since Gibson Dam was built on Sun River 35 years ago, water came pouring over its top the night of Sunday, June 7. (See photo on cover)

The huge reservoir, swollen by heavy snow melt and pounding rains, spilled its overflow down the face of the 200-foot-high barrier into the Sun. The floodwater tumbled downstream, chewing at roads, ripping out a campground and gathering more water from smaller streams at flood stage.

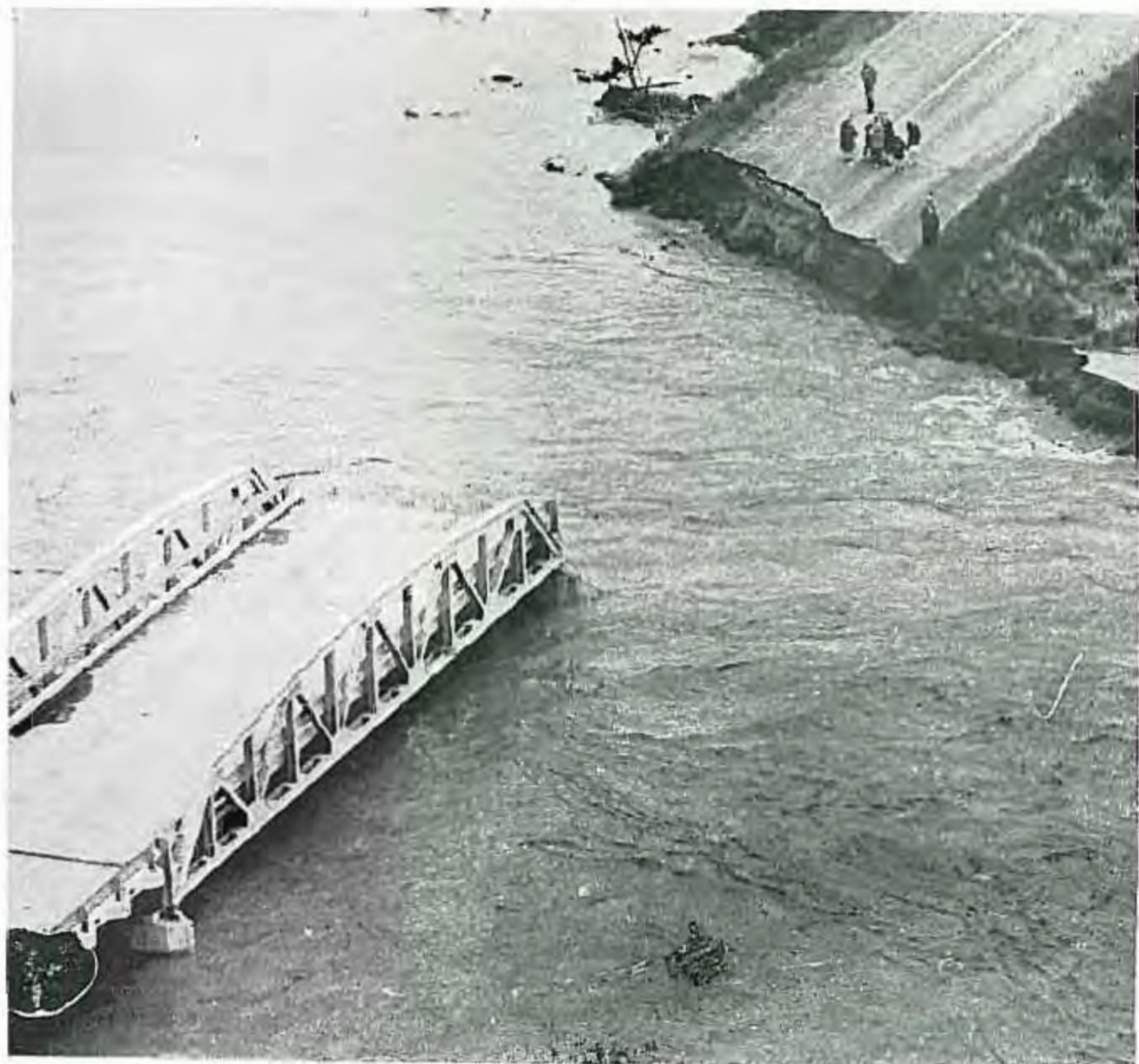
This was the start of the flood that enveloped all of the Sun River Valley and a large area in West Great Falls, where the Sun empties into the Missouri River.

This was not the only flood story in Montana in June, 1964. Elsewhere in north central, northwestern and central Montana, streams became rivers and rivers rampaged far beyond their courses as the water rushed down out of the high country.

The second week of June, 1964, was Flood Week with a terrible toll of life and property, an immeasurable amount of human anguish and suffering.

In this volume, The Great Falls Tribune-Leader tells the story of Flood Week in Montana, in pictures and in words.

BRIDGE OUT



The flooding Teton River wiped out a section of this bridge on Highway 89 three miles south of Choteau, a community 50 miles northwest of Great Falls. AP Wirephoto.

VAST AREA SUBMERGED



Flood waters of the Sun River surrounded the Country Club Towers in the center of a vast section of Great Falls cut in half by Tenth Avenue South, running left to right in this aerial photo. The Meadow Lark Country Club golf course is at bottom. Country Club Addition at left. Tribune photo.

HARD-HIT AREA



This was another southwest Great Falls area hit hard by the Sun River flood. At extreme right is the west end of the Great Northern overpass on Central Avenue West. The road to the left runs past Great Falls Breweries and to the Fourteenth Street bridge. Tribune photo.

FLOOD MOVING



The flood crest of the Teton River moves downstream toward Loma in north central Montana. The flood covered the entire Teton River bottoms. Loma miraculously escaped the deluge. Tribune photo.

CONSTERNATION



Although 15-month-old Victoria Edwards of Browning, headquarters of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in northern Montana, was too young to understand what happened, her expression mirrored the consternation of Montana's worst flood. AP Phototax.

SUSPENDED RAILROAD



The Great Northern Railway roadbed was cut out by raging flood waters in the Marias Pass area around Glacier National Park and hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of damage was done to highways, roads and other railroad properties.

FULL FLOOD



Muddy Kennedy Creek north of Babb on Highway 89 is in full flood as it carries tons of debris over the approach road to this steel bridge. The bridge dropped into the river bed finally. George Goggins photo.

BROKEN DAM TAKES TOLL OF LIFE



The waters of Swift Reservoir, an irrigation dam on Birch Creek west of Dupuyer poured out over lowlands in Pondera and Teton counties when the earth and concrete dam gave way under the pressure of runoff from heavy rains in the area. The town of Dupuyer was flooded by Dupuyer Creek and the flash floods took a heavy toll of known dead and missing, including eight members of one family who lived just below the dam. DeMier photo.

THE MAD MARIAS



The flood-swollen Marias River at crest early in the week of the flood rose to the level of this Highway 91 bridge south of Shelby in north central Montana, expanded beyond the bridge's end and ran rampant over the earth fill between the bridge end and the highway's incline. Clem Dolven photo.

BOAT DRIVE-IN



A Shelby drive-in looked more like a boat dock on the afternoon of June 11 after a cloudburst dumped almost three inches of rain on the city in three hours and triggered a dam break north of the city. John Kavanagh photo.

LEWISTOWN HAD WATER, TOO

C
O



Although it is far removed from Sun and Missouri Rivers, Lewistown, in central Montana, did not escape Montana floods. This is the small city's main street flooded by Spring Creek, known far and wide as one of the best fishing streams in Montana, Tribune photo.

EARLY VICTIMS



The area near the west end of Central Avenue West was one of the first in West Great Falls to be inundated when the Sun River's flood crest hit the city the afternoon of June 9. Tribune photo.

WATER CASCADING FROM HIGH COUNTRY TRIGGERED DEVASTATING JUNE FLOODS

Sunday, June 7, dawned bright and clear over Great Falls. Billowy, white clouds stood high over the mountains and the city looked fresh and clean under the warm morning sunlight.

Many families — in their Sunday best — went to church services early so they could go on outings to lakes and streams in the mountains or perhaps a picnic along the Missouri River somewhere.

Before noon, clouds had packed themselves tightly overhead and a steady rain had begun to fall. It was a lighter rain than had been falling in the mountains since the previous Friday.

It was only in the offices of the U.S. Weather Bureau on Gore Hill that there was any general realization of what was in the immediate future.

The week before, officials had pointed out that studies indicated deeper than average snowpack in the mountains; the Missouri River and the Sun River running high—but not dangerously so, and a possible threat of floods if heavy rainfall was recorded over the area.

It was only a news story — read and forgotten by nearly everyone who had thoughts of the weekend.

On that same Sunday morning, ranchers along the Sun River did their chores, fed their stock and turned wondering

ESCAPED



Fort Benton, on the brim-full banks of the mighty Missouri River, miraculously escaped the ravages of floods that struck her nearby sister cities. Tribune photo.

LOMA ON THE TETON



Loma, at the confluence of the Marias and Teton rivers with the Missouri, was evacuated when a 15-foot crest of water from the Teton bore down on the town. But the crest smoothed out and the Teton joined the Missouri peacefully. Tribune photo.

BENT BRIDGE AT WEST GLACIER



High water at West Glacier washed over this bridge and inserted many logs neatly into the bridge members. The bridge will be dismantled piece by piece and a new one built.

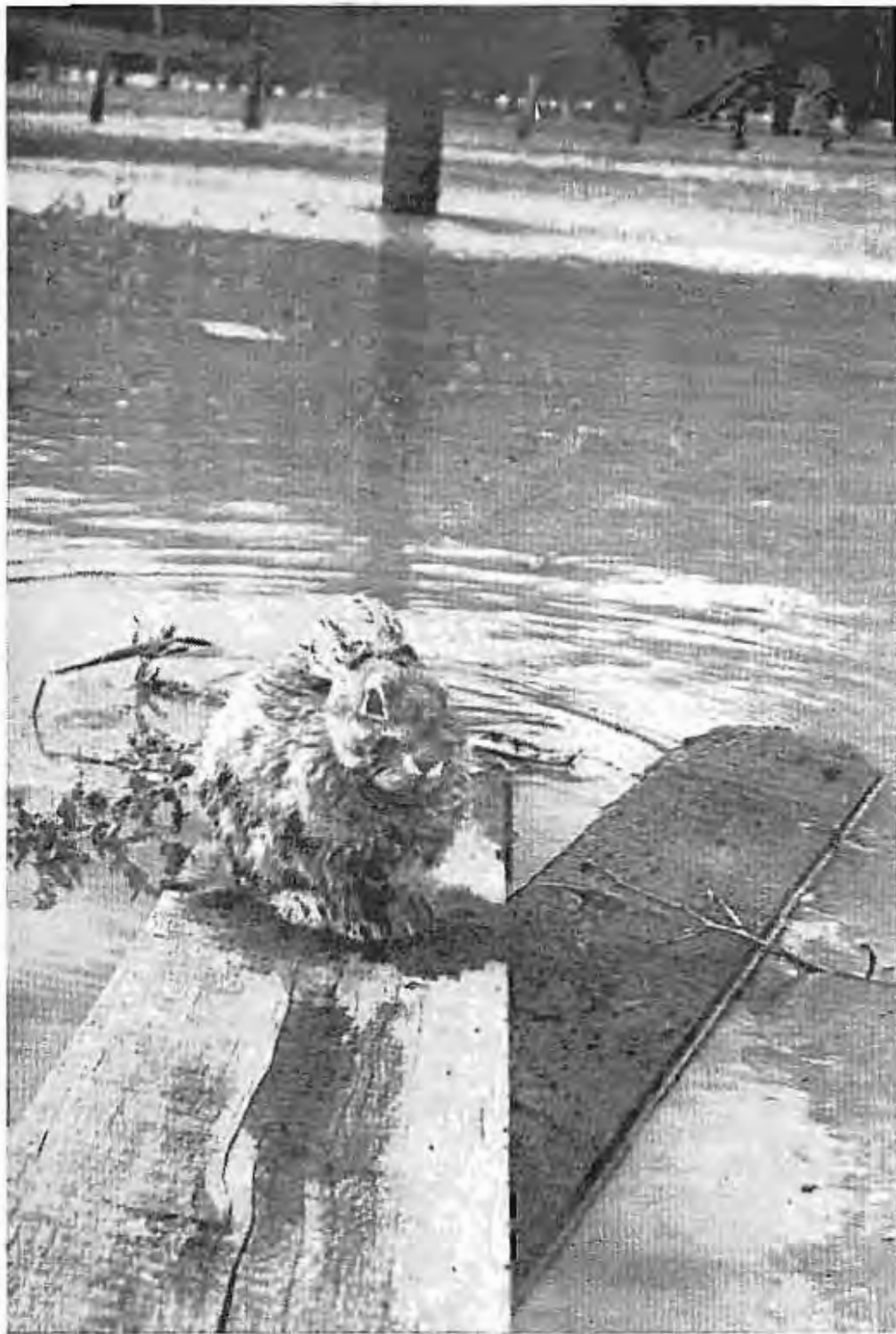
FLATHEAD RAMPAGE



Evergreen, Kalispell residential suburb, took the brunt of the Flathead River flooding in northwestern Montana June 10-11. Above is the Evergreen area looking west toward Kalispell. Below are farms and grazing lands in that section that were flooded. The main river is about a mile and a half to the east. Guest photos.



RIVER-ROOSTED RABBIT



Animals other than man suffered the dire consequences of the flood. This wild cottontail rabbit, perched on a plank in the Clark Fork River nears Plains in western Montana looks as if he'd be happier somewhere else. AP Photofax.

TRACK DESTROYED



The flooded, silt-laden Middle Fork of the Flathead River destroyed this stretch of Great Northern Railway track between West Glacier and Essex. Guest photo.

HIGHWAY 2 WRECKED



Flooding water from the Middle Fork of the Flathead River washed fill away and undercut a new section of Highway 2 at Nyack between Essex and West Glacier. Guest photo.

FLOOD VICTIM



A Helprey truck (arrow), Spokane, became a flood victim when the Middle Fork of the Flathead River washed away Highway 2. Dave Brown, Kalispell, possibly saved the lives of other drivers when he crawled across suspended railroad tracks and reached Summit, where he called for a helicopter. George Goggins photo.

IMPORTANT BRIDGE



One of the most important bridges to go out during the central Montana flood was the structure over Hardy Creek on U.S. 91 between Great Falls and the capital city of Helena. Motorists had to detour over 7,389-foot Kings Hill Pass to reach Great Falls from Helena, Len Ashburn photo.

THE BIG MO



The swollen Missouri River pounds the rocks below Rainbow Dam, downstream from Great Falls, with water that flooded West Great Falls homes, Tribune photo.

TOPSY-TURVY



Fifty miles northwest of Great Falls the Teton River swept through farm lands lifting whole buildings on the crests of turgid waters. It left barns upside down and pieces of bridges scattered about the countryside. Tribune photo.

AIRLIFTED FOOD



Children at Choteau in north central Montana dive into part of 10,000 pounds of food and clothing flown to Choteau by the Air Force. A temporary refugee center was set up at the country club. AP Photofax

STREETS TO BE REPAIRED



On June 11 this was one of the scenes Choteau city officials saw after the tragic flood through that city. It graphically shows what much of Montana faces in repairs to streets, roads, and public utilities. AP photo.

STUCK TIGHT



Water rushing through the streets of Choteau wedged this pickup truck against the railroad tracks in the downtown section. This area was in the hardest hit part of town. AP Photofax.

RESCUE MISSION OVER SUN RIVER



Helping hands reach out to bring Robert Fatz into an Air Force helicopter which rescued him from a shed top at a flooded farm at Vaughn, west of Great Falls. Tribune photo.

eyes skyward for some indication of how the day would shape up.

To the north, in modest homes along Two Medicine Creek and Birch Creek, many Indian families breakfasted and wondered at the rain which had become quite heavy. Still farther north, some of Glacier Park's usually small, bubbling streams already were out of their banks. Water was cascading down into the valleys from higher elevations as the result of the continuing rain.

This was the pattern which was followed throughout Sunday afternoon and night and continued into Monday. By this time water was chuckling into storm drains throughout the city.

FOREST EVACUATION



A Forest Service helicopter evacuated Mr. and Mrs. Charles Blixrud and their children from near the Seven Lazy P ranch in the Lewis and Clark National Forest west of Choteau. The 'copter landed in the former bed of the South Fork of the Teton River which found a new channel during high water. Forest Service photo.

SAND BAGGING



Volunteer workers swarmed over of the city sand supply at the east end of Warden Bridge on Tenth Avenue South as they sacked sand for trucks to haul into the West Great Falls flood area. Tribune photo.

FLOOD BEFORE THE FLOOD



Even before the waters of the Sun River deluged West Great Falls, heavy rains caused the drainage ditch in the foreground to overflow, nearly flooding the house. Tribune photo.

FLOODING BEGINS



Central Avenue West and Twenty-fourth Street in Great Falls looked like this at 5 p.m. on June 9. The flood rise was just beginning. When it was over, many of the homes pictured were in water up to their windows. Tribune photo.

HEAVY WORK



Volunteers worked day and night to sandbag the lower Sun River area in West Great Falls. Tribune photo.

WAITING



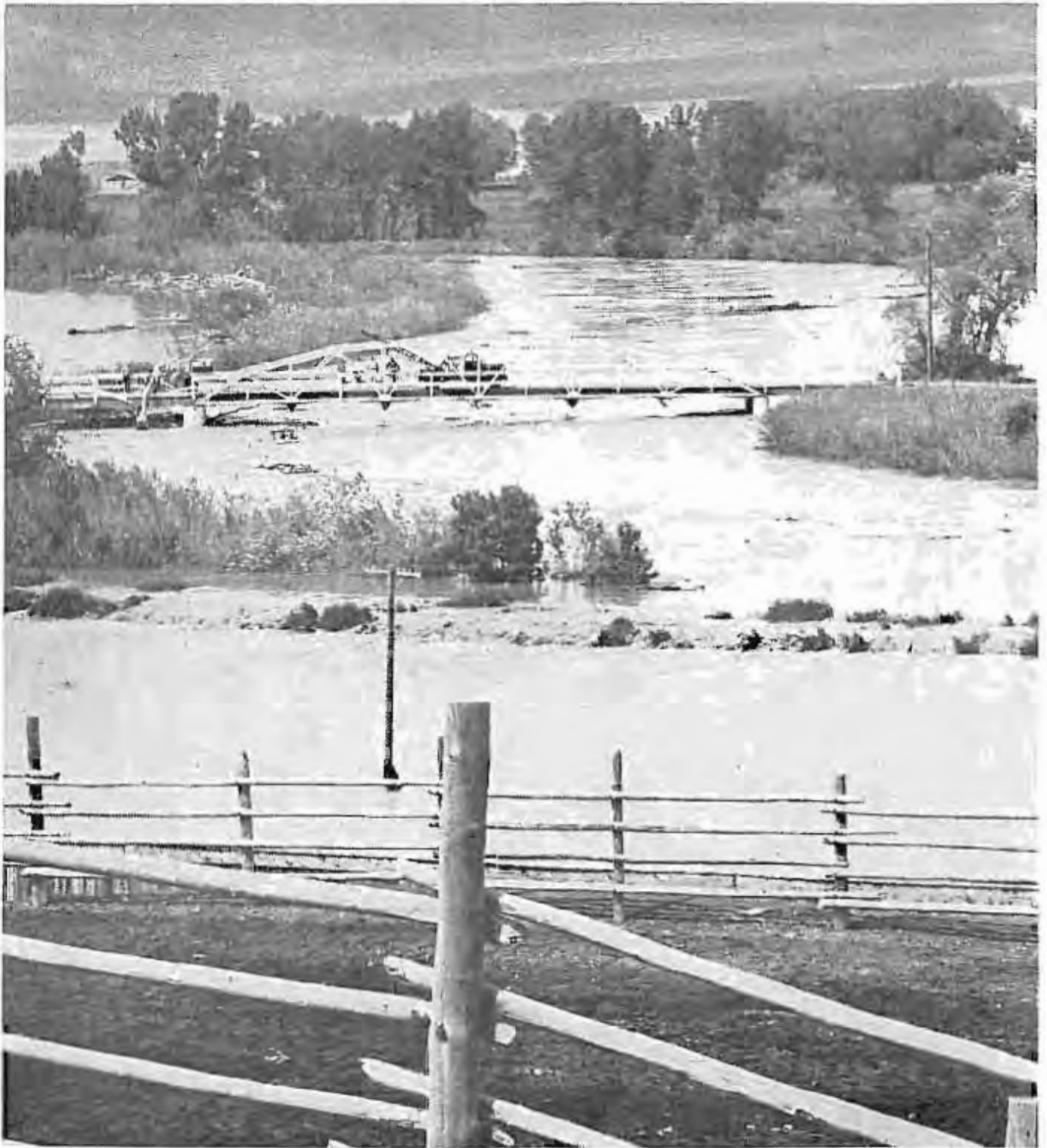
Sandbags in front of the home of Clifford C. Kimble, 917 14th St. SW., Great Falls, await the onslaught of the West Great Falls Sun River flood. A bend in the river is directly across the street. Tribune photo.

STANDING BY



As the sun set on June 9, West Great Falls was beginning to fill up with silt-laden Sun River flood water and boats with volunteer owners at the helm stood by to help those who had become stranded at the last moment before the on-rushing crest caught them. Tribune photo.

THE CREST NEARS



Workers worked furiously on a bridge over the Sun River on the afternoon of June 9 to free the structure of debris as rising water a few yards downstream poured onto a farmer's land in the foreground. The bridge spans the Sun near a city park on the outskirts of Great Falls. Tribune photo.

THE CREST AT GREAT FALLS



The Sun River went out of its banks June 9 in Great Falls and poured over the lower Sun River section of the city. Here water runs down Central Avenue West and fills the low areas throughout that section. Tribune photo.

LOOKING SOUTH



Thirty-first Street between Central Avenue West and Fourth Street in Great Falls became just another tributary of the Sun River. Houses were floating off their foundations among the trees. Tribune photo.

PLEDGE DISASTER AID



State and federal officials met at Air National Guard headquarters at Great Falls and pledged the full force of every agency to meet the Montana flood emergencies. From left: Gov. Tim Babcock; Highway Commissioner Ted James; Brig. Gen. Richard Kendall, state adjutant general; Roy L. Sorrells, Highway Commission chairman; Creith Tooley, Everett, Wash., director, Office of Emergency Planning, and Vic Reinemer, Sen. Metcalf's secretary. Tribune photo.

FLOOD STARTS RECEDING



As the roily Sun River began to recede, much of West Great Falls remained under water. AP Photofax.

WATER TO ROOFTOPS



The murky Sun River floodwaters ran deepest in West Great Falls behind the Great Falls Brewery, left out of the picture in this view. Houses are up to their rooftops in water. At left is the Roll Greenhouse facing Fourteenth street southwest. Tribune photo.

SUBMERGED



Water reached nearly to the eaves of the Gerald Wentworth home, 410 31st St. NW, in Great Falls, before the flooding Sun River started to recede.

Neither the Sun River nor Missouri River had shown any indications of the wrath the Sun River would display later.

Rain continued and then there was more rain. It wasn't until Monday morning, June 9, that the first pieces of the vast, tragic puzzle of destruction began to fall into place.

The first indications that trouble was brewing came from those living in the rolling foothills which precede the advance of the towering Rockies bounding the western side of Montana's broad plains province.

Heavy rain — eight inches in Dupuyer, eight to ten inches at Augusta and estimates of up to 10½ inches in Glacier Park — were reported. In the Great Falls area, the soft, steady rain continued; sometimes almost ceasing, and roughening surfaces of the curbside brooks at other times.

Before there was any realization of the impending disaster, stunning news arrived: "Swift Dam is out on Birch Creek. A wall of water 30 feet deep is racing down the valley."

To most persons in the area, Swift Dam was only a name. Its location was unknown to most, but its general location was known to nearly everyone. To those familiar with the area, the news brought a foreboding for the safety of families living directly in the water's path.

In quick succession, news reports — the basic blocks in this wall of disaster — came in and dropped quickly into position. Water was running in the streets of Augusta. The Teton River west of Choteau was rising rapidly. Officials expressed concern that the earth-filled dam on Lower Two Medicine Lake would go out. Kennedy Creek near St. Mary's Junction was out of its banks

FUNNY PLACE FOR A BRIDGE



This bridge washed down the Sun River and ended up in a yard on west Central. Tribune photo.

THREE BRIDGES CLOSED



Every bridge crossing the Sun River in West Great Falls was closed while high water poured under them. The Great Northern Railway bridge (center) is loaded with trains as an added precaution against the pressure of the rushing river. Tribune photo.

WITHSTOOD THE TORRENT



Tree trunks, tanks and telephone poles battered this bridge crossing the Sun River at 14th St. SW., causing concern that the structure would not be able to withstand the current. But as the water level dropped the bridge remained intact. Tribune photo.

ONLY WAY TO TRAVEL



Mr. and Mrs. Jim Terry, 2329 4th Ave. SW., found the only way they could reach their flooded home was to paddle down Fourteenth street southwest in a canoe. Tribune photo.

WEST OF GREAT FALLS



Nature's rampages play no favorites. Waters of the Sun River invaded some of the oldest farm homes in Cascade County, on Highway 20 between Vaughn and Sun River, photo above, and Sunset Memorial Cemetery, halfway between Great Falls and Vaughn, lower photo.



CHOTEAU HIT



Choteau, a city of 2,000, was submerged in rampaging waters. The main street, at lower left, was spared, although water lapped at the rear of some of the main business houses. Most residents fled before the flood struck. Tribune photo.

RED CROSS THERE



The Red Cross set up a canteen at the west end of Central Avenue West bridge in Great Falls to provide coffee and sandwiches for flooded-out residents and cleanup workers. Mary Ann Filipowicz is the volunteer worker in uniform. Tribune photo.

FOREST DAMAGE



Dave Terry, Forest Service, inspects the flood-damaged Windy Ford bridge over the South Fork of the Teton River. Forest Service photo.

HIGHWAY CUT



Swollen torrents in the Dupuyer area in Pondera County knifed through this stretch of road and stranded a motorist whose car is at left. DeMier photo.

GRANDMOTHER IS HEROINE



Mrs. Agnes Madplume, 72, and her daughter-in-law dragged eight children to safety when flood struck almost without warning at Browning. Water in their log cabin routed the family from their beds. AP Photofax.

AND THE GRIEF



Sorrow over missing friends overwhelmed this woman in Valier where normally small creeks became raging torrents and took a heavy toll in lives and property damage.

FLOOD TOOK EVERYTHING



The Clarence Hirst family of Big Badger, northwest of Dupuyer, was left homeless by flooding in the Birch Creek area. Here they wait in the Valier High School gym, hoping for word of missing friends and relatives. AP Photofax.

CLOSEUP VIEW OF GIBSON DAM RESERVOIR, OVERFLOW INTO SUN RIVER



On Monday morning, June 8, this was Gibson Dam Reservoir on Sun River in the Rockies about 80 miles west of Great Falls. The reservoir was overflowing for the first time since Gibson was completed in 1929, and its rain and snow-fed waters cascaded down the Sun River Valley, cutting a wide course of desolation and destruction. The flood was heightened by runoff water that joined the Sun following heavy rains. This dramatic photo, and the one on the cover, were taken from a helicopter. The flow of water over the 200-foot-high dam started late Sunday night and ended by noon Monday. Lewis and Clark National Forest photo.

ABANDONED



This Air Force truck was abandoned on Central Avenue West after a futile attempt to outrun the flooding Sun River. The truck was taken into the area to haul furniture. Tribune photo.

and the normally small, sparkling creek was wreaking havoc as it battled its way to the St. Mary River which rushes on into Canada.

Information trickled in from Swift Dam. Heavy clouds shrouded the area, as if to keep its secret as long as it could. By this time ground travel also was hampered as small rivulets gushed with the strength of mountain torrents.

Weathermen, after feeding rainfall and stream flow data into computers, issued warnings for major flooding along the Sun River at all points down to its confluence with the Missouri River in West Great Falls. Flooding of between three and five feet above levels reached during the 1953 flood, which put a large portion of West Great Falls under water, were being forecast with suggestions that low areas be evacuated.

Meanwhile communications were disrupted. Traffic, in many areas, came to a standstill — and the rain continued. Later on that fateful Monday the report came that the Two Medicine Dam was out.

The Two Medicine, flowing through a winding canyon, burst forth on rich farming land in the plains area and joined

LEAVING IN A HURRY



Mrs. Gary Schank, 724 14th St. SW., rolls a baby stroller onto a truck bed as Air Force men help her and her husband evacuate their garage and trailer home in west Great Falls. They got out before high water of the Sun River covered the area. Tribune photo.

AUGUSTA MAIN STREET



On Monday of flood week the South Fork of the Sun River outgrew its channel and invaded Augusta. At 3 p.m. water stood up to a foot deep, but vehicles continued to navigate on the flooded streets.

NO ONE HOME



Water from the South Fork of the Sun River forced the occupants to leave this home on the eastern outskirts of Augusta. Tribune photo.

forces with the Swift Dam discharge making a river almost two miles wide sweeping everything — alive or dead — before it.

Continuing rain sent water flowing over Eureka Dam, an irrigation unit west of Choteau, and evacuation of the city was begun. By this time, Augusta residents had banded together at the high school while waters of the South Fork of the Sun River stampeded through the town. Fears were expressed that the earthen dam holding Nilan Reservoir near Augusta would go out. Plans called for everyone to evacuate to the high ground near the cemetery if the dam went, but it held.

Augusta was isolated. Bridges were out on two sides. Water, now at full flood stage, covered the roads on a third side and on the fourth side was the mountains.

But Augusta wasn't the only community with troubles. Water covered the road between Fairfield and Choteau and Deep Creek took out a bridge at Choteau. North of Choteau small streams surged with new strength, sweeping away bridges and approaches.

Dupuyer was under onslaught from Dupuyer Creek which sped northward to join the already swollen waters of Birch Creek where the 50-year-old concrete and earth Swift Dam had given way, loosing its lethal wall of water.

Valier residents first realized the scope of the disaster which was knifing its way across the farm land to the north. School officials began setting up an evacuation and rescue operation despite dwindling communications and worsening traffic conditions.

Air Force helicopters were airborne making surveys of the extent of the flooding and, with each succeeding report, the situation grew more grave.

While the citizens of these outlying communities were isolated geographically, a common bond of purpose was established throughout the stricken area. Wheels began to turn. The Red Cross established evacuation centers to handle the expected numbers of persons seeking a respite from the ever-rising water. Civil Defense forces moved smoothly into action and a host of agencies, organizations and ordinary citizens stepped forward—ready to be counted.

By Tuesday of that fateful week, President Lyndon B. Johnson had declared Montana a major disaster area with Cascade, Chouteau, Teton, Glacier, Pondera, Toole and Flathead counties bearing the brunt of the flooding. Disaster relief experts from all parts of the nation arrived to help.

The Middle Fork of the Flathead River slashed the Great Northern Railway's main line west of Summit, leaving steel rail dangling high in the air. At the same time U.S. Highway 2 was eaten away, blocking all traffic over the Marias Pass into the Flathead county.

Evacuation centers were set up in Browning. People were evacuated from the main town to the Country Club in Choteau.

Needed supplies were being carried by helicopter and other aircraft.

Information on the Birch Creek disaster continued to come in — a bit here, a bit there — and all bad. Unconfirmed reports told of families lost; livestock, buildings and vehicles swept away, and large trees uprooted and stripped naked by the torrent.

As Tuesday wore on, minutes became hours and West Great Falls girded itself for the savage blow it was about to receive. Homes were evacuated by those who heeded the advice of flood officials. Others couldn't believe that such a thing was going to happen and did almost nothing.

Upstream from Great Falls, Simms and Sun River were in trouble and Vaughn was making ready. Except for a few showers here and there, the rain had stopped. Sandbags were being filled; trailer houses were being moved; trucks laden with household possessions streamed steadily to the Montana State Fairgrounds where storage space under the watchful eyes of guards was offered.

Sun River flood bulletins were issued in a steady stream as the crest of the flood from Gibson and Diversion dams rolled onward toward Great Falls. High water, spilling into the Missouri River from the Dearborn River, was expected to send the Missouri upward in the Great Falls area but officials at Canyon Ferry closed down that dam to a virtual trickle so that the Dearborn surge would be shortlived after its Great Falls arrival. Thus they allowed the swirling waters of the angry Sun River to roll unimpeded into the course of the Missouri.

The crest of the Sun River flood passed Simms and an old-timer, who homesteaded in the area and who had seen the flood of 1908, said he had never seen anything like it in his life.

Helicopters were flying from dawn to dusk. People were picked off rooftops, from bits of high ground, out of trees and from the tops of vehicles. At the same time, members of law enforcement agencies were alerting the people, aiding in the evacuation of the ranchers, their possessions and livestock.

Within Great Falls, volunteers were doing everything possible to offset the anticipated damage of the rapidly advancing flood.

Floyd E. Dominy, commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, and Philleo Nash, commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, arrived on the scene to gather first-hand information regarding the situation so that knowledgeable decisions could be made for the restoration and rehabilitation of the area.

They conferred with Walter Wetzel, chairman of the Black-foot Tribal Council and president of the Congress of American Indians, and pledged their help. Wetzel earlier had alerted Sen. Mike Mansfield in Washington, D.C., by calling him direct during the early stages of the flood.

With everything physically possible being done, the only thing left to do was wait for the advancing menacing mass of wa-

ter. The countdown was under way. As night fell in Great Falls Tuesday, urgent calls were issued for anyone with a boat of any kind to help evacuate persons who thought they still had time—and didn't.

The water level climbed rapidly on the official gauge on the Fourteenth Street Bridge which had long since been closed to traffic. At 12:45 Wednesday morning, the water reached its peak at 24.6 feet — 9.6 feet above flood level of 15 feet and 5.5 feet higher than the 1953 flood.

Wednesday dawned with the wrathful Sun River still flooding but withdrawing slowly. A few hours before the arrival of the Sun River peak, a crest of flood water sent down the Missouri River by the Dearborn River, reached Great Falls. The Missouri fell after this crest passed as the gates of Canyon Ferry Dam had been almost closed as an additional aid to embattled West Great Falls.

Stories of heroism were myriad on Wednesday and residents of the flooded area stared in shocked disbelief at the sheer strength and savagery of the Sun River which, during the summer months, ambles lazily into town from the mountains.

Some homes were washed away. Others were damaged beyond repair. All in the flood area suffered heavy damage and were covered by a pall of silt. Livestock were drowned; crops, ruined.

More news came in from the Birch Creek area and all of it was bad. Officials were announcing totals of known dead, missing and presumed dead, and missing.

All-out efforts were made to re-establish communications and with each succeeding report, damage figures soared to staggering sums.

By Thursday the death list had grown to nine officially dead, twelve missing and presumed dead and nineteen missing. Offices of Emergency Planning opened in Great Falls and all agencies of relief and rehabilitation were working in high gear.

A cloudburst north of Shelby caused failure of an earth-filled dam holding part of the city's water supply and sent torrents of water spilling into that city's north side. Other dams in the immediate area held to forestall another possible tragedy.

A congressional committee, appointed to make a flood survey arrived and conferred with Gov. Tim Babcock and Mayor Marian Erdmann along with a host of Bureau of Reclamation, Forest Service and other governmental agency officials.

Congressmen making up the committee included Fred M. Clark of Pennsylvania; Arnold Olsen of Montana, and Don H. Clausen of California. Congressman James Battin of Montana's Eastern Congressional District, accompanied them. The Birch Creek toll stood at 10 dead; 22 missing, presumed dead, and three missing.

Interior Secretary Stewart L. Udall, who had a speaking engagement at East Glacier Park Friday night, made an aerial

AUGUSTA FLOOD



June 8 in Augusta was a wet day as the rain-swollen South Fork of the Sun River poured water into the town. The rodeo arena is at left under water. DeMier photo.

survey of the devastation as a personal representative of the President, and conferred with officials in Browning and Great Falls before returning to Washington, D.C., to make his report.

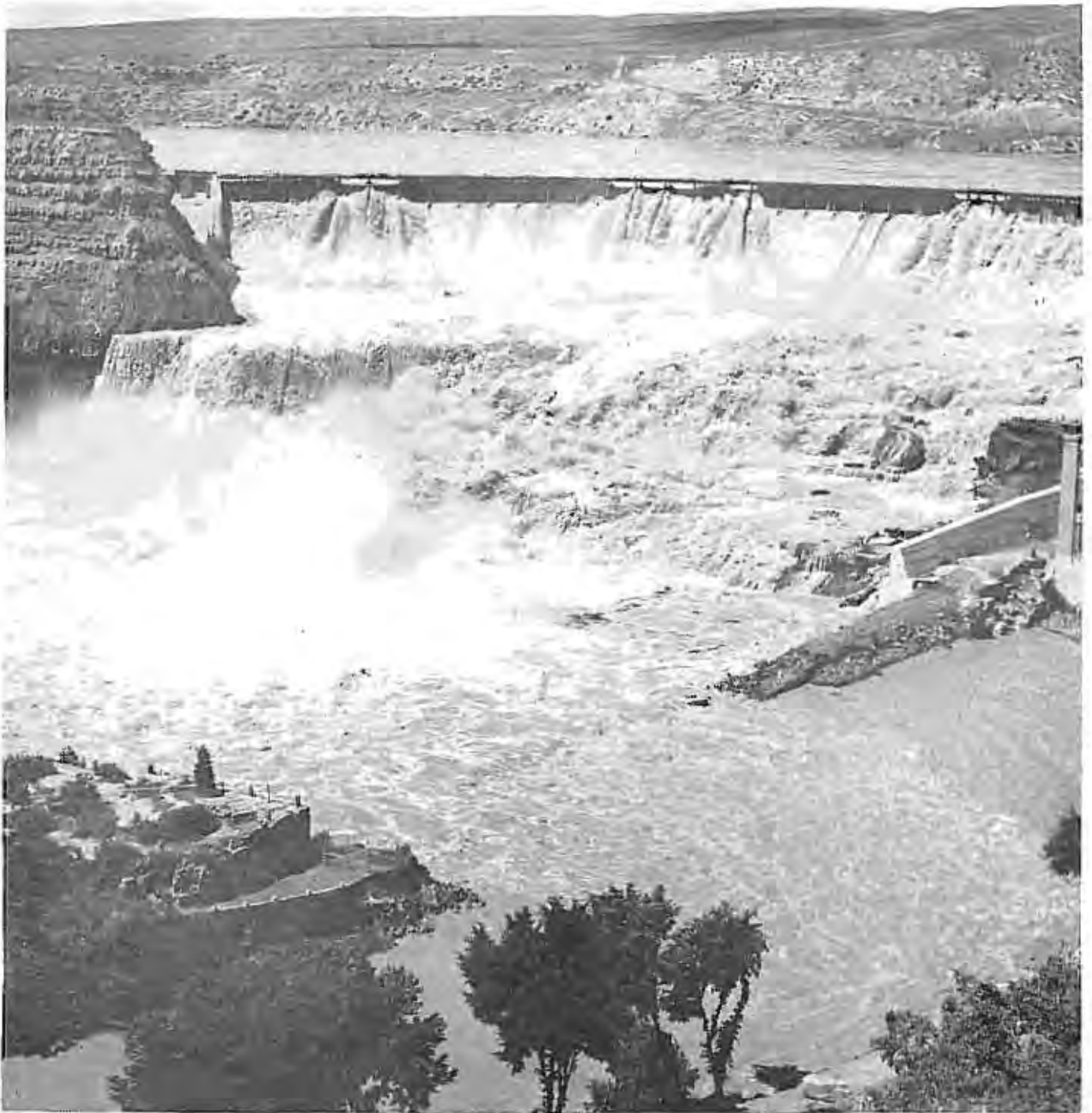
Things were still far from normal as Saturday arrived but workers, near exhaustion, were still on the job. But now they were helping people back to their homes in the upstream areas and at the perimeter of the flooded area in West Great Falls.

Senator Mansfield made a flying trip to the flooded area Sunday along with Edward A. McDermott, director of the Office of Emergency Planning, so that no delay would be encountered in planning aid for the stricken areas and Montana's citizens. Cleanup work went on.

At noon June 15—just one week from the time that water exploded through Swift Dam triggering a week of death, desolation and suffering — the Weather Bureau announced that the Sun River had fallen to flood level in Great Falls and was subsiding.

Damages amassed in this seven-day period run into millions of dollars. Many stories of heroism, tragedy and suffering will remain forever untold with the accurate, complete total of dead known only to God.

MIGHTY MISSOURI CARRIES RUNOFF



Roaring waters of the Missouri River cascade over Ryan Dam northeast of Great Falls, carrying the runoff from the flooding Sun River which swirled into the Big Mo near the city waterworks. The Missouri was slopping over its banks when the Sun's crest hit it but its damage was minor and confined to a small area near Broadwater Bay, the waterworks and southward along River Road. Fast water at Ryan Dam washed away part of the road, lower right. Ryan, fourth of five Montana Power Co. dams on the Missouri in the Great Falls area, is about 10 miles downstream from the city limits. Tribune photo.

CAR ADRIFT



An old car is pummeled by the swirling water of the flooding Sun River on the outskirts of Augusta. Tribune photo.

NO FEED HERE



High water from the North Fork of Dupuyer Creek west of Dupuyer stranded this bunch of cattle on high ground. DeMier photo.

CATTLE CAUGHT



Cattle trapped in the corrals in the Sun River flood at Vaughn, a small community near Great Falls, are seen from an Air Force helicopter. The chopper rescued six persons from rooftops around the farm. Tribune photo.

SUN RIVER ON THE SUN



The town of Sun River, 20 miles west of Great Falls, lies under the waters of the river from which it takes its name. As the water began to recede townspeople straggled back to begin mopping up. Tribune photo.

FLOODED SIMMS AREA



The town of Simms, a small town 30 miles west of Great Falls on the Sun River, was still above water, but the railroad track, center, was flooded and the elevator was surrounded by water. Road to Lincoln and Missoula angles off at right. Air Guard photo.

THE WIDE, WIDE SUN



At Lowery, west of Simms, the Sun River spread wide over bottomland pastures and hay meadows. Air National Guard photo.

DUPUYER UNDER WATER



Water from the North Fork of Dupuyer Creek and Sheep Creek flooded the town of Dupuyer in Pondera County. DeMier photo.

DECIDED TO STAY



This farm family in the Valier-Dupuyer area declined rescue by an Air Force helicopter. Tribune photo.

TETON COUNTY FAMILY RESCUED



The Chester Brewer family was rescued by Air Force helicopter after floodwaters trapped them at their ranch home in the Choteau area. When the chopper came to pick up the family, Brewer rushed barefoot from his home, clutching a suitcase and a small stuffed toy belonging to his infant daughter, Charlotte. The Air Force helicopter rescued Brewer, his wife, his daughter and his young cousin, Susan Brewer. Tribune photo.

AIRLIFTED TO SAFETY



Four members of the Calvin Nyquist family of Sun River were lifted by Air Force helicopter from the roof of their water-surrounded home and taken to Malmstrom AFB. Pictured above are Dana, 4; Rusty, 15; Mrs. Nyquist, and Linda, 7. Below, S.Sgt. Charles Clifford, Glasgow AFB, assigned to rescue work out of Great Falls, holds Dana in the 'copter. Tribune photos.



BOATS EVACUATED RESIDENTS



Eight boats, two helicopters and a radio-equipped truck helped to evacuate 300 residents of the lower Sun River area in Great Falls. Above, members of the Montana Air National Guard work in the roily flood waters. Below, boats travel on Central Avenue West as they carry flood victims to safety. Air Guard photos.



CAUTION—NARROW ROAD



The rampaging Teton River washed out this section of Highway 87 about five miles north of Fort Benton when the flood crest hit. This view shows little more than a footpath remaining of the once-wide thoroughfare. John Saks photo.

IN VAUGHN AREA



Water began receding in the Vaughn area early Wednesday, but this brought little comfort to the occupants of the houses in this new development. Earlier, water had reached to the eaves of the houses. Tribune photo.

WATER TO THE ROOFTOPS



Much of the lower Sun River area of Great Falls was completely inundated when the crest hit. Water reached to the rooftops of many homes, bringing inestimable damage. Tribune photo.

LOWER SUN RIVER HOMES



Here are some more homes in the Lower Sun River area which caught the brunt of the overflow. Water covered the roofs of many houses. Tribune photos.



SMILE THOUGH YOUR HEART IS BREAKING



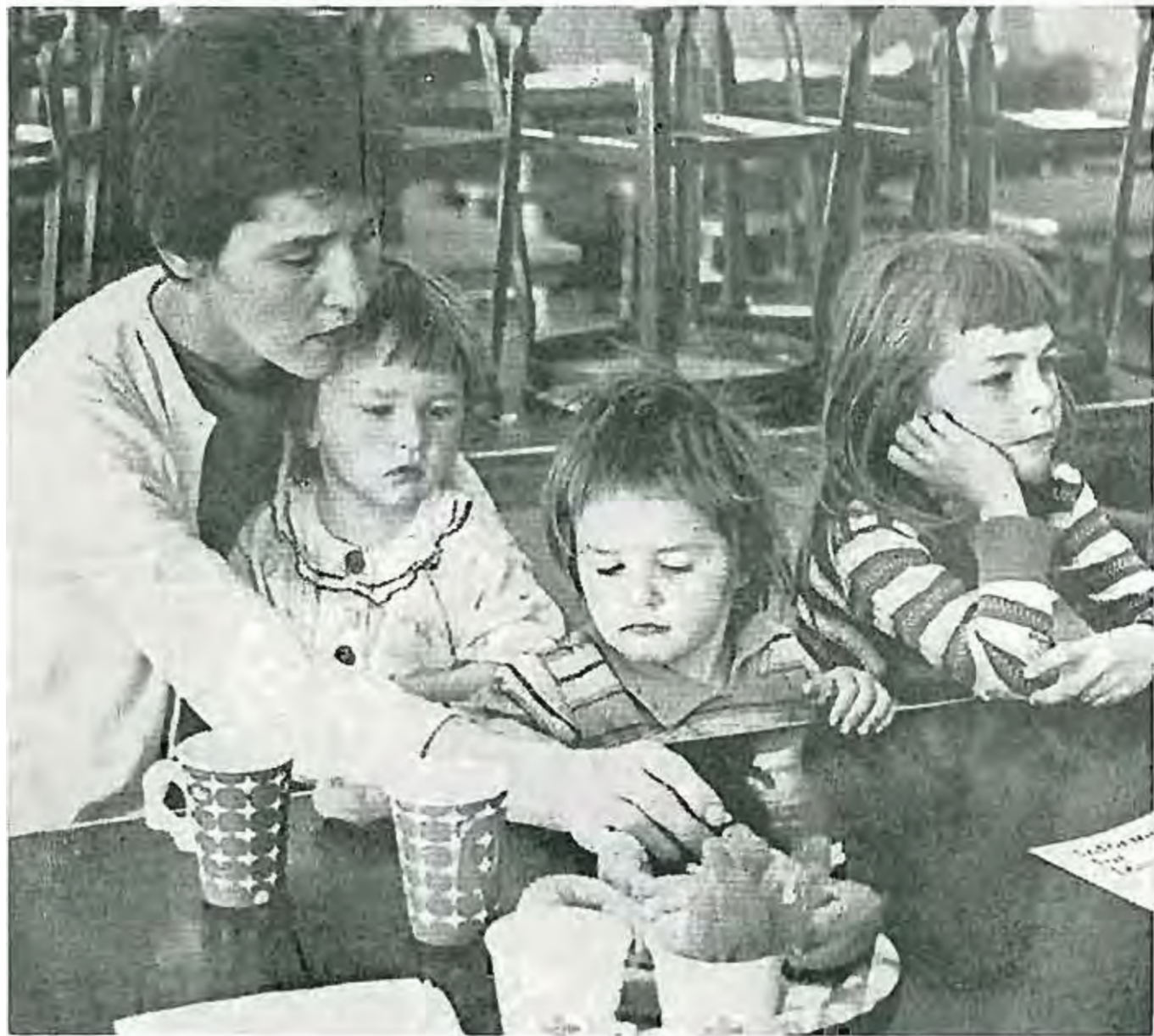
A boat pulls up to the Arthur Hajek residence, 1910 Central Ave. W., as Hajek views the problem of navigation from a window. Under water in the house were used and reconditioned pianos valued at \$6,000. Tribune photo.

MOVING OUT



Mrs. Lawrence Rafferty, 527 14th St. SW., Great Falls was one of the many householders who loaded pickups, trucks and trailers with belongings before the deluge from the Sun River hit. Tribune photo.

HOMELESS



Many West Great Falls residents fled the flood with only the clothes on their backs. Here Mrs. Wallace Koehnstedt and three of the six children in the family relax at the Red Cross emergency center. AP Photofax.

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE



This old-fashioned farm house near Choteau sits desolate as the swirling waters of the Teton River roar through the farmyard. Tribune photo.

BIG CLEANUP



Upper St. Mary River at St. Mary, eastern entrance to Glacier Park, is normally a small stream but it turned into a torrent and spread debris over a section of Highway 89, leaving a big cleanup job for someone, George Goggins photo.

RETRIEVED BIBLE



Mr. and Mrs. L. R. Valentine returned to their flooded West Great Falls home to retrieve clothes, Social Security checks and the family Bible. Tribune photo.

BRIDGE IN, ROAD OUT



While the river connecting the two St. Mary lakes in Glacier Park stayed in its channel, a small creek near the town of St. Mary ran wild, eroding away a large part of the highway. Tribune photo.

PREPARATION FOR THE DELUGE



The Beacon Bar on the old Sun River road between the Sixth Street Southwest and Fourteenth Street Southwest bridges got pre-flood protection from sheets of plastic secured against the building with dirt piled against them. Tribune photo.

ON THE MISSOURI



About four miles south of Great Falls, the Missouri River slopped over onto lowlands. Here the water crept up higher later, inundating a number of homes but never covering the highway. Closer to the city, water edged over the highway in several places and seeped into a few more homes and trailer houses. Tribune photo.

HOT SOUP



Patty Brow, daughter of Sgt. and Mrs. Robert Brow, Great Falls, enjoys hot soup at the West Junior High School Red Cross flood disaster center. Tribune photo.

FLOOD RELIEF



Officers of the Montana Veterans of Foreign Wars Women's Auxiliary presented a \$1,000 check for flood relief to Maj. John Bawden, Great Falls Salvation Army. From left are Mrs. Chester Lindblom, Outlook, state president; Mrs. Oscar Hippe, Froid, junior vice president, and Mrs. Tom McLean, Plentywood, secretary. Tribune photo.

RETREAT TO HIGH GROUND



Flooding in the Teton River Valley forced occupants of this valley ranch to drive to high ground, out of the way of the torrent that poured through the farmyard. Tribune photo.

FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE



Water spread everywhere when flooding struck the area between Choteau and Valier. Here the whole panorama is one of water everywhere, dotted by scattered trees and farmsteads. Tribune photo.

BROKEN HOUSE



This was a new house—until the Sun River flooded West Great Falls. It is owned by Mr. and Mrs. George Mader Jr., who rented it to the Herschel Storms. The Maders, who live in Choteau, were forced to evacuate their home there by the Teton River flood. Luckily, that home was not hit by water.

TOURISTS WELCOMED



Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall, second from left, urged people to "come right ahead" if they had planned to visit Montana this year. He was photographed during a brief visit in Great Falls on his way to Glacier Park with Harold Aldrich, left, Billings Bureau of Reclamation; James Cannon, Billings, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and L. A. Garrison, Omaha, National Park Service. Tribune photo.

BLACKFEET WELCOME



At Browning, Interior Secretary Stewart L. Udall is given a Blackfeet welcome by Old Chief White Calf, Blackfeet patriarch reputed to be 107 years old. Udall was in Browning looking at Glacier Park's flood damage. Others are Earl Old Person, left, interpreter, and Walter Wetzel, Blackfeet tribal council chairman and president of the American Congress of Indians. Bureau of Reclamation photo.

AID ASSURED



Philleo Nash, left, commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Floyd E. Dominy, center, commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, met Harold Aldrich, Billings regional director of the Bureau of Reclamation, in Great Falls. They assured people of immediate relief to flood stricken areas. Tribune photo.

CONFERENCE



Fritz Norby, left, acting mayor of Great Falls, confers with officials who made an aerial survey of flood damage. With Norby are, from left, Harold Aldrich, Billings, regional director of the Bureau of Reclamation; James Cannon, Billings, area director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs; Philleo Nash, Washington, D.C., commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs; Floyd E. Dominy, Washington, D.C., commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, and Charles Schramm, Billings, area chief of land operations of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Bureau of Reclamation photo.

MIKE SEES FLOOD



Sen. Mike Mansfield peers from an Air Force helicopter on a flight over flood-damaged Montana counties on June 14. He was accompanied by Office of Emergency Planning Director Edward A. McDermott. Tribune Photo.

INVESTIGATE LOSS



Members of a special subcommittee of the House Public Works committee arrived in Great Falls June 11 to determine flood damage. From left are Rep. Frank Clark, R-Penn; Grant Rice, head of Corps of Engineers, Omaha district; Rep. James F. Battin, R-Mont.; D. M. Clawson, Calif., and Floyd Dominy, commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. DeMier photo.

OPEN HEARING



Residents of Great Falls learned where to turn for aid at an open hearing on June 12. Congressman Frank M. Clark, Pennsylvania, rose to open the meeting. From left are Mayor Marian Erdmann, Montana Congressman James F. Battin, Gov. Tim Babcock, Clark and Montana Congressman Arnold Olsen. Tribune photo.

COORDINATE AID



Edward A. McDermott, left, director of the Office of Emergency Planning, Washington, D.C., and Creath Tooley, center, Everett, Wash., regional OEP director, talk with a Malmstrom AFB officer after making a helicopter inspection trip of flood-damaged areas surrounding Great Falls. Tribune photo.

BOOKS WEDGED



Flood waters expanded the pages of books and wedged them tightly in the case at the Howard Strause home, 2421 Central Ave. W., Great Falls. Mrs. George Smith, left, and Mrs. Strause show what happened. Tribune photo.

RIVER DUMPS DEBRIS



The Sun River piled debris against every structure which withstood the water's force in West Great Falls. Here junk is piled up against a fence at 603 14th St. SW. Tribune photo.

NO GOLF TODAY



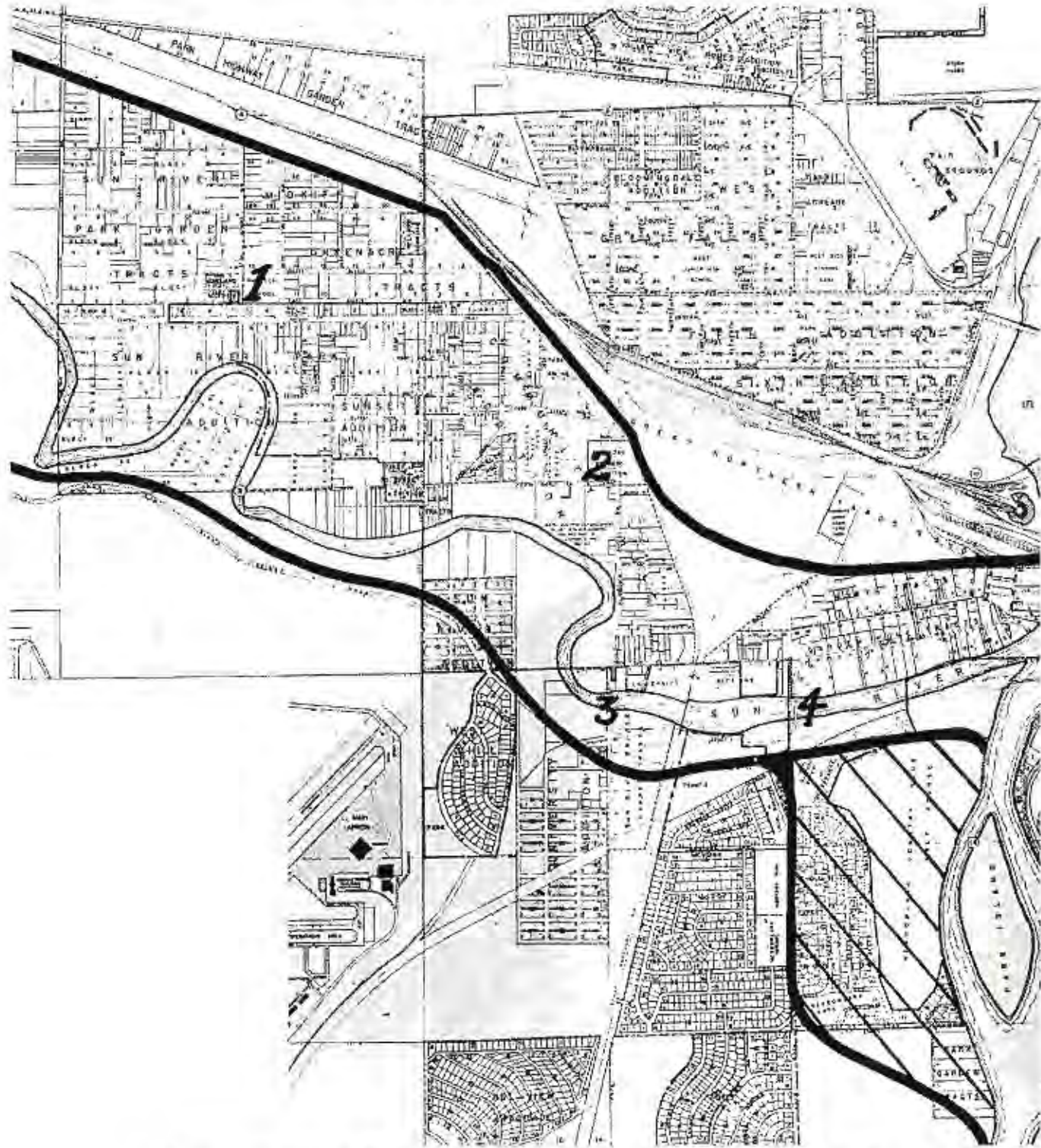
Water from the backed-up Missouri River spilled over onto the Meadow Lark Country Club golf course in West Great Falls. Only five of the 18 elevated greens were visible on the morning of June 10. Tribune photo.

WATER HAZARD



From behind the No. 1 tee at the Meadow Lark Country Club golf course it was just one big water hazard as Missouri River waters backed up in the rush of the Sun River through West Great Falls. Tribune photo.

EVACUATION AREA



Outlined on map of West Great Falls is the area ordered evacuated in the face of the Sun River flood. Diagonal lines show where Missouri River backed up. Tribune map.

HIGH WATER MARK



A street marker at Central Avenue West and Twentieth Street, nearly eight feet high, is barely out of the water. Early on the morning of June 10 the marker was completely covered. Tribune photo.

WELCOME FROM DUNKED DUCK



A duck with a strong homing instinct, left to its own devices when the flood hit West Great Falls, was right in its own backyard when the waters receded. Alan Martin, son of Mrs. Virginia Martin, 2120 5th Ave. SW., gives his pet a feed of oatmeal. Tribune photo.

DISMAL TUNE



The piano in the Martin home was not as cheery a sight as the duck which was so glad to see its family return. Floodwaters upset it and left it resting in silt. Mountain States Telephone photo.

HEADED FOR THE DUMP



Military personnel helped the Ray Whitneys, 2015 Central Ave. W., haul away furnishings ruined by the flooding Sun River. The Whitneys wish that everything had come out of the house before the flood, not after. Tribune photo.

RAGING MISSOURI



Every flood gate was open on Black Eagle Dam as the Missouri River roared downstream past Great Falls, carrying water which flooded many Sun River drainage homes. Tribune photo.

WET, DIRTY JOB AHEAD



The flood left a major rebuilding problem at the Great Falls home of William J. Burton, 2125 4th Ave. SW. Terrific pressure of Sun River floodwaters buckled the concrete wall of this section of the basement, opening up the back of the house. Timbers were thrust through the hole and out a basement window on the other side of the house to support the weight of the structure at that point. The house is owned by Ira McFadden. Tribune photo.

NO SCHOOL TODAY



This scene would have been welcomed by many Russell School children if it hadn't come during summer vacation. Water reached almost to the window sills of the West Great Falls grade school building. Tribune photo.

IT WITHSTOOD FLOOD



Water lapped at the decking of the Sixth Street Southwest bridge in West Great Falls, and the Sun River, which runs beneath it, piled debris everywhere. Officials feared the bridge would fail but it did not. Tribune photo.

FARM COVERED



Water from the flooding Sun River covers the Purvis Brothers dairy farm near Simms. Rivulets from hillside in background carry water into the normal river channel. Air National Guard photo.

TRANQUILITY IN THE TURBULENCE



The turbid waters could not destroy these tranquil views of the Sun River area of West Great Falls. Trees in full foliage contributed a peaceful aspect that contrasted strangely with the massive destruction of the flooding. Tribune photo.



COMMUNICATIONS RECOVERY



Telephone crews near Sun River work to restore service after the flood in a battle with debris and broken poles. Mountain States Telephone photo.

REHABILITATION



Orville Anderson, 2505 Central Ave. W., begins the sad job of cleaning up his West Great Falls home after the Sun River waters soaked everything. Tribune photo.



West Great Falls trailer homes were among the hardest hit by the disastrous Sun River flood. Pictured is the home of Dora Johnson, 2500 block on Central Avenue West, Tribune photo.

THE WALL DIDN'T HELP



Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Siegling, 2400 Central Ave. W., Great Falls, hoped a stone wall, built after the 1953 flood, and sandbags would keep the flooding Sun River from their home, but it didn't. They fled at the last minute, taking only a few clothes with them. Above, Mrs. Siegling is able to smile as she dashes through the flood water. On the opposite page, top photo, Siegling surveys the jumble in his living room after the flood. In the lower photo, he washes off damaged furniture. The Sieglings had to throw away many water-soaked belongings. Tribune photos.

