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State Historical Society remembers 1972 Rapid City flood

PIERRE, S.D. – On June 9, 1972, Rapid City citizens and other Black Hills residents experienced a devastating flood that took 238 lives, destroyed 720 homes, severely damaged 1,400 dwellings and resulted in more than half a billion dollars' worth of damage.

In remembering the event, the archives staff of the South Dakota State Historical Society created a website with links to photographs, a reminiscence and a 10th anniversary program through the South Dakota Digital Archives.

"The Rapid City flood of 1972 is one of the most tragic events in our state's history," said Jay D. Vogt, director of the SDSHS. "It's our job to keep records of such events and make them available to the public, and the South Dakota Digital Archives is a way of doing that."

The South Dakota Digital Archives provides digital access to unique historical records held by the South Dakota State Archives at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

The link includes various images taken after the flood, a reminiscence by then-Mayor Don Barnett, and a 10th Anniversary Program from 1982, including a list of those who perished in the flood.

Visit the State Historical Society-Archives website at history.sd.gov/Archives and find the link to "1972 Flood."

In recognition of the 40th anniversary of the Rapid City flood, the South Dakota State Historical Society Press last year published *Come into the Water: A Survivor's Story* written by Merlyn Janet Wagner. The book is available by contacting the Press at 605-773-6009 or www.sdshspress.com.



Photo caption: This photo shows some of the devastation from the June 9, 1972, Rapid City flood. (Photo courtesy South Dakota State Historical Society-Archives)

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.