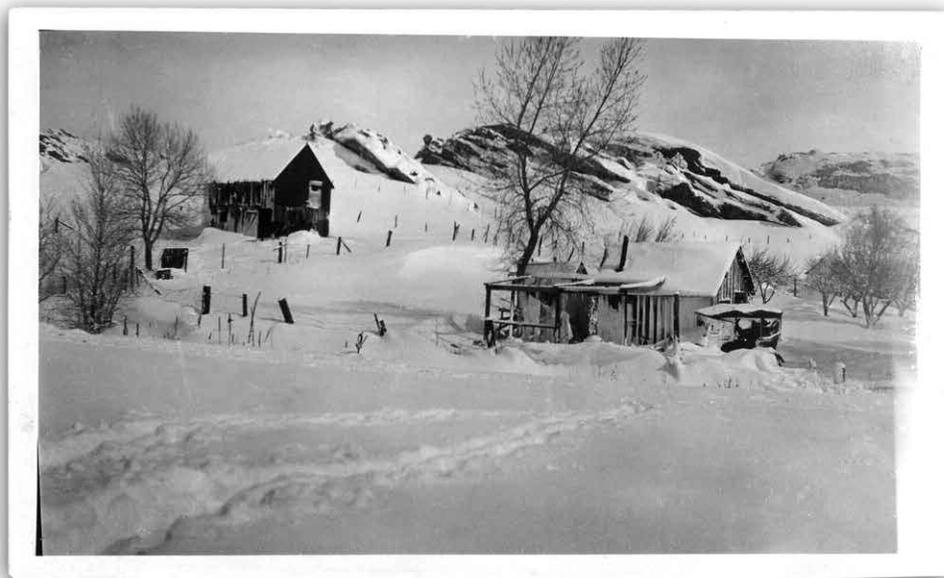


# Jeffco “Weathers” Historic Blizzards and Extreme Cold

By Richard Gardner

Separated by 90 years, two blizzards brought life to a standstill and set records in Jefferson County. In mid-century between the two blizzards, a wild swing of weather occurred that also set records.

wagon overturned a short distance from his home. One month and seven days after he went missing, Klaasen’s body was found. Jefferson County pioneer George Busbee was found buried under a snow drift in south Jeffco.



Historic homestead and flivver lie buried near Morrison in the snow brought by the December 1913 blizzard. Mail carriers to Evergreen reverted to using horses for the duration of the storm.

*Chambers Collection.*

## 1913

On that “partly cloudy” Thursday morning, Dec. 4, 1913, Jeffco residents were toughing out the storm, but nobody was really prepared as snow, snow, and more snow was blowing in and piling relentlessly upon the region. By noon Thursday, life stopped. As day broke on Friday, the huge snowstorm raged unabated. By this time some 30 inches of snow were on the ground in Golden.

When Saturday morning arrived, the clear blue sky was a beautiful sight after such an ordeal; but it was just the beginning of the next great challenge of dealing with the staggering snowfall levels: five feet at Golden and Evergreen and four feet at Creswell and Morrison. A century later this great storm stands alone atop Jeffco record books for the most snow in a single storm, most snow in a 24-hour period, and the longest lasting snow cover afterward.

Recorded fatalities include John Bergen, who had made it to the doorsteps of his home, but died of overexertion. On Thursday night John Klaassens left Golden with a load of malt. His

## 1963

Fifty years ago this year on January 11, 1963, Jefferson County experienced a deep freeze that set records that stand to this day for all-time record low, record low high, greatest temperature swing in the shortest amount of time, and more. The *Golden Transcript* reported, “Temperatures plummeted last weekend to grip this area in below-zero temperatures [changing] as much as 100 degrees within a two-day period in some parts of Jefferson County. It had been in the mid-60s Wednesday afternoon. High temperature for Friday as recorded in Golden was 11 below zero. It was so cold that Colorado School of Mines weather instruments refused to work so no reading from the station was available for Friday or Saturday.”

## 2003

Although the Great Blizzard of 1913 is in a class by itself atop Jeffco’s record charts, another stands alone in a class just below it. The Blizzard of 2003, which took place on March 18-19, 2003, is the second largest snowstorm in Jefferson County history. Snowfall totals across the county are available to give an idea of magnitude of the blizzard. Totals range from 74 inches three miles southwest of Bergen Park to 58.2 inches on Lookout Mountain and to 31 inches in Westminster. ☞

*Mr. Gardner’s complete story is available at [HistoricJeffco.org](http://HistoricJeffco.org)*

## Sources:

*Colorado Transcript, various editions, 1913-1914 and 1963*

*Golden Globe, various editions, 1913-1914*

*Historical files of Richard Gardner*

*Ingrid Norquest, personal letter to Lydia Norquest, 1/13/1963*

*University of Colorado Department of Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences, March 17-20<sup>th</sup> 2003 Colorado Winter Storm Totals*