

MAJOR FLOODS
IN THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY:
1907 - 1997

An Essay
Presented to
the California Pioneers
of Santa Clara County

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Introduction

Floods; these natural disasters are among the lesser known to those who have not yet experienced them. When one hears of a flood, the extent of its damage and capabilities are often times imperceivable. This may be a result of the amount of news coverage or reality of the matter. To most, floods are regarded as things that "never happen." A fire or earthquake, on the other hand, are disasters that most can relate to because they are more commonly heard of. Most people have at one time in their lives experienced a fire or earthquake, either directly or indirectly. A flood, however, is harder for most to associate with than any other disaster would be.

Accounts of flooding in the Santa Clara Valley date back to 1779, two years after San Jose was first established as a Spanish pueblo.¹ The focus of this paper, however, will be the floods that have occurred in the Santa Clara Valley between 1907 and 1997. The theory of 100-year floods and the one percent flood will be addressed. A background on floods and the various ways that they occur will also be discussed, but the main part of this paper will be to focus on the most important floods that have occurred in the above time period.

Background on Floods

The creator of this valley is now considered a monster. The Santa Clara Valley itself was formed by floods. Rainfall runoff eroded the hills surrounding the Santa Clara Valley for millions of years. The runoff cut channels and small creeks throughout the valley that are large enough to hold water from minor storms. Still, many of these channels and creeks are much too small to hold water from large storms, and therefore, floodwaters caused them to overflow. Land surrounding these creeks and rivers were inundated, and silt was deposited on the land over vast areas.

Consequently, the valley floor was formed; full of rich fertile soil.

Today, floods are looked upon as disasters and as destructive forces. However, what most do not know is that floods are a natural part of history. A river cannot always be confined to its banks, and it is natural for it to overflow and flood the low lying areas around it; its floodplain.

"Flooding in inland areas is usually caused by rainfall, although large storms may not always result in floods. The occurrence of an inland flood depends on both the amount of rainfall and the condition of the drainage basin or watershed before or during the storm."²

When a watershed, an area over which water drains, is saturated by previous storms faster than can be absorbed, runoff occurs. Runoff, excess rainwater that cannot be absorbed, exceeds the carrying capacity of the receiving waterway and results in a flood.³ This can also happen when a large amount of rain falls. Tides and ground surface conditions are also factors that contribute to flooding. High tides make it almost impossible for creek flows to spill into the bay. Low-lying bay lands can be directly flooded due to high tides, although the amount of rain could have been low. Ground surface conditions are also important factors in flooding. Soil

composed of sand or gravel absorbs rather quickly, whereas if clay is present in the soil, very little water is absorbed and therefore flows into the creeks and rivers. Land covered by sidewalk, buildings and streets can cause more flooding potential. These items act as obstacles to the floodwaters and do not allow rain to be absorbed, thus causing more flood potential.

The One Percent Flood

The term "one percent flood," is used often by hydrologists to describe a flood that over a long period of time, has a probability of .01, or one percent, of occurring in any year. "A one percent flood is the flow of water that has a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year."⁴ It can also be referred to as the 100-year flood.

Theoretically, over a period of several thousand years, a one percent flood would occur, on the average, every 100 years. This, however, is not often the case. Because a one percent flood occurs in one year, there is still a one percent chance that it may occur the next year. This terminology can sometimes be misleading, due to the fact that mother nature is extremely unpredictable. Currently, flood control projects are being proposed by the Santa Clara Valley Water District and are awaiting approval. The project the board has proposed would hypothetically control a 100-year flood, or the one percent flood.

The Flood of 1907

Floods occurred in 1907 beginning on January 11. At this point, however, only the lowlands in the Salinas Valley were affected. Flooding that occurred the evening of January 11 "cut off all railroad communication between Monterey, Pacific Grove and San Francisco."⁵ Thousands of acres were flooded, including the Cojo, Moro and other ranches. Beet and potato fields were ruined and those crops lost. The rushing water from the Arroyo Seca River drowned cattle throughout this valley. One life was lost, that of a Chinese man who died due to exposure to floodwaters after he and four other men became capsized while in a boat trying to flee. Trains were again running the next day, although not to all areas. The damage of this flood was mostly agricultural.

Flooding did not occur until January 16 and 17 in the Santa Clara Valley. The flooding that occurred during this time affected mainly only areas of San Jose. "Lowlands in East San Jose are flooded and the waters, seeking the lower levels to the south, wash across the car line and make islands of homes."⁶ The electric car tracks in the Alum Rock District in East San Jose were underwater for a few blocks. Passengers that took the risk of riding in the electric cars during that time witnessed the floodwaters firsthand as they rode through several inches of water. The standing water in most streets covered half of the wagon hubs. Homes appeared to be islands, surrounded by water, and were isolated. "One white house, where a sign declares horses are for sale, is cut from the road by a sheet of water a hundred feet long and fifty feet wide that rose half way up the post where the Mercury box was set."⁷

The Coyote Creek was filled from bank to bank until well after January 18. The Guadalupe River and the Los Gatos Creek both had spilled their banks on January 16, and had only begun to recede on January 17. On the afternoon of January 17, the water level in the Guadalupe River

began to rise slightly, but it did not cause another flood. The current along the Los Gatos Creek was ten miles per hour, which flowed onto the San Augustine Bridge, just before Los Gatos Creek empties into the Guadalupe River.

Residents along South First Street and other nearby areas feared their cellars would flood from the Coyote River which had been steadily rising until the 18 of January, when the water level began to taper off. Many were forced to move their coal from bunkers to safes in the second stories of their homes. Several of the old inhabitants in San Jose at that time were astounded at the damage and extent of the flood. "...this condition is unique...this year is the first time that water has covered the roadway so deep, or that a definite current has flowed across it."⁸ Still, this flood was considered to have done little destruction; mud on the sidewalks and flooded cellars were the only significant damages to Santa Clara County from the flood of 1907.

The Flood of 1911

Due to an extremely heavy downpour on March 5 and 6, at midnight on March 6, 1911, Canoas Creek and the Guadalupe River spilled their banks causing much havoc for people in the Santa Clara Valley. The Canoas Creek kept Monterey Road under water from the Oak Hill Cemetery to the Pratt home. People remained in their homes, despite evacuation warnings, and had to be rescued by police. Police and fire commissioner John F. Mecklem was one of the men who drove police paddy wagons through the floodwaters to rescue marooned victims. Rescue efforts were still ongoing through March 7. "Shotguns were fired by marooned residents and women and children, crying, added to the general confusion."⁹ McClellan Avenue, Willow Street, Maple Street, and San Fernando Street near Locust were just some of the areas that had to be evacuated. The water continued to rise well after 1:30 am, although the rain had stopped. The Guadalupe broke two of its levees, one on Alviso Road and the other near Brokaw Road. Standing water was at two feet in most places and higher in others.

Alviso and Agnew were also affected by the floodwaters from the Guadalupe River and Coyote Creek. Alviso and Agnew roads were both covered with water. Water throughout Alviso was over five feet deep. At 9 p.m., on March 6, the floodwaters surrounding the Agnew hotel were rising at the rate of an inch every two hours.¹⁰ The Sanjon Creek on the Arroyo de los Calabazas broke its banks on the evening of March 6, flooding the adjacent countryside. The Agnew State hospital was also flooded by the Guadalupe at its confluence with Sanjon Creek. The immense conduit, a pipe or channel for conveying water, spilled over near the hospital, and the entire grounds were flooded. Water pumps were working to keep the hospital clear with little success.

The floodwaters which spilled from the Coyote Creek claimed two bridges. Twenty feet from the William Street bridge over the Coyote were washed away early March 7. The concrete bridge that had been recently erected over the Coyote on Milpitas Road was also destroyed by the rushing Coyote River. The Penetencia Creek had overflowed its banks as well early March 7. Floodwaters spilled over between the mouth of Alum Rock Canyon and Coyote Creek. Water in orchards near Capital Avenue stood three feet at their peak. Penetencia Creek was carrying vast amounts of driftwood which pummeled the bridges and roads. Two bridges in the canyon were carried away by the Penetencia. A railroad bridge collapsed due to the force of the water on the night of March 5. Another railroad bridge was torn loose March 6. On March 5, floodwaters forced the Alum Rock electric line to discontinue service between Jackson Avenue and the carbarns. ¹¹

The cause of these floods was supersaturation of the soil. "After an extremely dry autumn, 12.38 inches of rain fell in January, 2.03 inches in February, and 6.26 inches in March. The total for the season was 22.65 inches."¹² Most of the season's total rainfall came from the rains in January through March. Much damage was done to Alum Rock Park including: channel changes, hill erosion, four bridges washed away, and the water system destroyed. There was property damage to Agnew hospital as well. Much public property was ruined in Alviso and San Jose.¹³

The Flood of 1938

On January 31, 1938, residents experienced twenty-four hours of continuous rainfall in the Santa Clara County. Then, on February 1, another twenty-four hours of rain fell from a storm that came in from Canada and traveled to Southern California. Near Campbell, Wildcat Creek overflowed its banks and flooded the adjacent streets. The Guadalupe River and Campbell Creek inundated orchards and pasture lands south of Alviso. Another effect of Campbell Creek spilling its banks as well was the flooding Mountain View-Alviso Road. "The total rain that fell for this season to the end of the flooding was 12.51 inches in the San Jose area. Gilroy received 20.96 inches of rain and Santa Clara received 14.09 inches. In the proximity of Cupertino, over two inches of rain had fallen, flooding Stevens Creek Road."¹⁴ Although civilians saw the rain and flooding as a nuisance, farmers welcomed it, saying, "Just what we needed."¹⁵

Most areas experienced only minor flooding, but Alviso was to the contrary. As downpours that started January 31 continued to hit the Santa Clara Valley, on February 2, Alviso was still submerged under water in "...one of the worst floods in its history..."¹⁶ Late evening, on February 1, the Guadalupe River's floodwaters spilled over their banks and flooded the area near Montague Road. This floodwater combined with a five inch tide at Alviso to produce what City Councilman Fred Baumbach referred to as "...the worst flood the town has known."¹⁷ The water was three feet in most places in Alviso, and many were forced to use boats to evacuate. Those who had none waited for a friend who did or attempted to flee by wading through the murky water. Alviso received little respite after this flood, due to another storm that had formed at sea off Vancouver Island. Although no more floods occurred, rain from that storm pelted the area and worried many.

The storm subsided and nearly all the floodwaters had receded by the night of February 4. "...the storm left in its wake torn highways, broken communications, swollen streams, and inundated lowlands."¹⁸ By February 4, all floodwaters in San Jose had receded, but the Guadalupe River was filled to its capacity of 3,500 acre feet. Almaden and Vasona were also full at 2,000 acre feet and 750 acre feet. Coyote Creek's floodwaters receded, but it lacked only 2,000 acre feet to be filled. Stevens Creek had been scheduled to spill at noon on February 4. It did, but caused only minor street flooding. On February 3, Alviso was still under water, but by February 4, the water had receded four inches. By the evening of February 4, the only floodwaters still present in San Jose were those in the basements of homes in the vicinity of Jackson, Alum Rock, and Storey Roads. The floodwaters in Alviso finally receded by February 9.¹⁹

Rain continued to fall for the eleventh consecutive day on February 10. Once more on February 10, Alviso was inundated by floodwaters from the Guadalupe River. Coyote and Campbell creeks continued to rise from the downpour of February 9. Thousands of acres of low lying pastures and orchards were flooded in Alviso by the Guadalupe River and the Coyote Creek.²⁰ Due to a six foot, three inch tide, this flood proved to be more severe to Alviso, with floodwaters ranging from three to eight feet. This was a result of the combined waters of the Guadalupe, Coyote, Los Gatos, and Campbell Creeks. Approximately fifteen families were left homeless by this deluge.²¹

The Coyote Creek was the main culprit of this record flooding. This was a shock to many residents because Coyote had spilled its banks for the first time in over thirty years.²² Its flood waters ran 100 yards wide in parts of San Jose, endangering the Pacific Coast Aggregates Plant. Coyote

Creek spilled over its banks at William Street and Maybury Road. East of Oakland, it tore a hole in a levee and inundated several hundred acres of orchard and pastureland.²³ It then broke another levee near Brokaw Road and flooded hundreds of acres of farmland once more. Then the Coyote Creek's floodwaters combined with those of Campbell Creek and inundated Alviso.

About 18,000 acres of farmland had been flooded throughout the Santa Clara Valley. Most of the crops on these lands were destroyed, seriously hurting farmers. The damage was greatest to the Alviso area. Due to the saturation of the soil, it took approximately four days for the last flood's waters to recede. Damage was done throughout the county, destroying bridges in San Jose and Alviso, and many homes in Alviso.

The Flood of 1942

In January, 1942, flooding occurred in the San Jose area, mainly on January 24 and 25. The news of flooding, however, was disregarded as the latest news about Pearl Harbor stole the front page. Flood stories took second place to the news of warnings given about Pearl Harbor that were disregarded by two navy officials in particular. During this time period, rainfall levels set an all-time mark for San Jose. The average rainfall for one hour was .78 of an inch. This flood inundated practically all of San Jose. In Los Altos, hundreds of acres of orchards were flooded. Trees fell, unable to withstand the water's current. Ditches overflowed into roads throughout San Jose, especially Permanente Creek. It was the cause of minor flooding along Highway 101. Intersections were flooded all over San Jose due to flooding of the Guadalupe River, Coyote Creek, and Silver Creek, in combination with severely backed up storm drains. Santa Clara Street and First Street were especially affected.²⁴

Overbanking was the cause of over eighty cases of flooded basements. Not many homes were flooded on the interior. The brunt of the damage was flooded basements and yards, blocked culverts, and minor street flooding. Many stores would have been flooded had men not sandbagged the danger areas. There was insignificant damage to public property whereas most of the damages were sustained on private property.

The Flood of 1955

The "Christmas Floods of '55" is how most Santa Clara natives refer to the flooding which occurred in 1955. The storms that caused this flooding began on December 19. The entire state of California was affected by these floods, in particular, forty communities. Minor flooding began on December 19. Two southbound lanes of the Bayshore highway were closed along with a culvert along the Los Altos and Santa Cruz county line, due to flooding. By December 22, the major flooding had begun. On the evening of December 22, "Flood waters fed by mounting streams ripped through low lying Santa Clara County Districts...causing the evacuation of a number of families in Palo Alto and Campbell."²⁵ The San Francisquito Creek in Palo Alto spilled its banks at 11:30 p.m., December 22. The Crestwood division was flooded and police began to evacuate. As the San Francisquito Creek threatened to overflow into the main business district, houses along Woodland Avenue were evacuated.

In Campbell, flooding was due to the San Tomas Creek overflowing. Evacuations took place on Rincon, Dot, Virginia, Budd and West Campbell avenues. About 100 homes were flooded in the Rincon, Virginia, and Budd avenue areas. Mariposa Gardens and nearby streets were also flooded by the San Tomas Creek. Water entered several stores on Big Basin Way between Third Street and Los Gatos Road in Saratoga. In Los Gatos, water overflowed into Main Street and was reported to have entered The Countryman auto showroom and the Medico Dental Building.

In Los Altos and Cupertino, inundations occurred as well. "Springer and Adobe Creeks overflowed their banks in Los Altos. Many homes were inundated on Morton Avenue between Los Altos and Cupertino."²⁶ Residents in Cupertino kept watch as the Saratoga Creek rose four feet in one hour after 12:30 a.m., the morning of December 23. The Permanente Creek in Mountain View also caused some problems. On December 22, it

overflowed at many points, flooding homes near the creek. Flooding at this creek was due in part to brush and other debris clogging under bridges, and therefore forcing the creek to leave its banks.

On December 23, the vast majority of the flooding occurred. "For a time, San Jose found itself a virtual island in the midst of flotsam and jetsam from the surrounding hills as all major roads in all directions were either cut off or severely restricted to creeping traffic."²⁷ Four hundred and eighteen people were forced out of their homes for over twenty-four hours. About 1500 people were evacuated from their homes, but flooding did not occur to all these people. Some were evacuated merely as a precaution. "Thousands of families throughout the county found themselves chased out of their warm, Christmas bedecked homes by the rushing water."²⁸ When many returned to their homes, they found their gifts had floated away and that their home was ruined. In the immediate San Jose area; 130 families were sheltered at Burnett Junior High School. Those who had been evacuated from Palo Alto were housed at Jordan Junior High School.²⁹

Many roads and highways were closed throughout the Santa Clara Valley due to flooding. Monterey Road was closed from Ford Road to the south county line. El Camino Real was passable in some areas, but there were many inches of standing floodwaters in most of it. Mariani's hotel, on El Camino, was inundated, but the swimming pool was left unharmed. The Agnew Underpass on the Bayshore highway was still underwater on December 24. From Saratoga to Skyline, Saratoga Gap Road was closed. Chittenden and Hecker Pass roads were both closed as well. Flooding of these roads was due mostly to high tides combined with the runoff from various creeks.

The cause of these floods is partly due to the Santa Clara Valley

being "...drenched by the heaviest downpour in nearly four years."³⁰ Los Gatos received a great amount of damage, particularly Los Gatos Union High School. Its swimming pool was lifted over four feet off its foundation. The damage was estimated to be \$15,000. Plumbing connections were also damaged and mud and debris could be seen throughout the city. Saratoga also received some damages. The Wildwood Park Bridge was washed away and several homes were flooded.³¹ Garages and basements were still flooded up until December 24 in the homes south of Bollinger Road in the Cupertino area. The Westchester Park subdivision was evacuated late December 22 and early December 23. Floodwaters began to recede gradually during the afternoon of December 24. The final flood damages were set at \$753,500 for Santa Clara County. Agricultural damage reached \$246,600 and residential damage was \$56,000. Commercial damage amounted to \$183,000 and industrial damages ran to 126,000. The damage done to public facilities was \$141,700.³²

The Floods of 1958

In 1958, two serious floods occurred. One occurred toward the end of January and the other in the beginning of April. The storms began on February 19. On February 24, the floods began in the Santa Clara Valley. Foxworthy Avenue was flooded eastward from Union Avenue. This was mostly caused by the overflowing of the Guadalupe River. The San Tomas overflowed in Campbell, at the Campbell Avenue Bridge. Traffic was severely detoured. "Hecker Pass was closed two miles east of the summit for several hours."³³ This was due to mud and several inches of floodwaters. There was no significant damage by these floods to the Santa Clara Valley, but minor repairs had to be done to some of the inundated streets.

The more significant flood occurred on April 1, when the Guadalupe River and the Los Gatos Creek became full and overflowed into Alviso. When these floodwaters met with the incoming tide, the situation worsened. The tide had crested at five feet, four inches the morning of April 1. All of the Alviso lowlands were thus inundated. Over 800 people fled their homes in Alviso. Approximately 300 of them were housed temporarily in the George Mayne School which had been set up as a disaster center by the American Red Cross. Almost 400 people left the community unassisted. They were assumed to have sought shelter with family and friends. About 110 were moved to motels in the San Jose area because their homes had already been ruined, it was discovered, by April 2.³⁴ They were cared for by the Red Cross for three weeks. Many roads were also closed due to flooding. The Bayshore highway was closed to southbound traffic near Agnew State Hospital. Montague Road was also flooded near Agnew state Hospital. Kifer Road was closed as well.

In Palo Alto, 250 families fled the rising waters and imminent floods on April 2. Over 100 families fled from the Crescent Park District due to

the slowly rising flood waters of the San Francisquito Creek. In Saratoga, twenty families evacuated as a result of the Saratoga Creek flooding Pilot Knob Drive and Agate Drive. In San Jose, the Guadalupe River buffeted bridges and overflowed, flooding the downtown area. River and Autumn Streets were evacuated and most evacuees were moved to a shelter at Burnett Middle School.³⁵

Alviso became seriously flooded on April 3, in the early morning. "The 75,000 acre-foot Anderson Dam spilled over for the first time in its seven-year existence..."³⁶ The water was running five feet deep at times over the spillway. This caused the Coyote Creek to fill as well. The Coyote Creek spilled from its banks and destroyed a bridge over the creek at the William. F. James Boys Ranch. Eight hundred pigs had to be evacuated from the neighboring ranch of J. Raziano. Puppo ranch, three miles south of the Coyote River was inundated as well. Puppo, his twenty-four employees, and their children had to be rescued by a helicopter from Moffet Field.³⁷ After the rescue, they were taken by bus to the Red Cross center at Burnett Middle School.

The damage from this flood was immense. Damages in April alone were at \$1,348,000. The agricultural damage totaled \$192,000. Residential damages ran to \$217,000 and commercial damage was at a staggering \$625,000. Industrial damages were not as high, adding up to \$22,000, but the damage done to public facilities was the opposite; \$292,000.³⁸ President Eisenhower declared all of California a disaster area after these destructive floods. Governor Knight saw the situation so serious that he flew over Alviso, Santa Monica, and the Central Valley on April 5 to view the destruction. Flood situations remained perilous throughout Santa Clara County, particularly Alviso, until April 7, when the storms finally moved on.³⁹

The Floods of 1982

The January Floods

The Floods of 1982 caused much damage to the Santa Clara Valley, in part, because the county had to deal with the clean-up of two floods. The first instance of flooding occurred January 4 through the 5. Beginning on January 3, the Santa Clara Valley began experiencing small amounts of rain. It did not pose a threat alone. However, when on January 4, a tropical storm was centered over Santa Clara County, vast amounts of rain began to worry the residents. The high rainfall in the very short time period caused flooding and erosion damage in the San Francisquito, Uvas and Llagas Creek areas. The damage done in the Santa Clara County during this flood was minor compared to other parts of the state. In Hayward, winds from the topical storm flipped over private jets; in Santa Cruz, people were buried alive in mudslides, and in Marin County, damages exceeded those of all other counties.

"San Francisquito Creek flows through the cities of Palo Alto and Menlo Park, and forms a boundary between Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. It experienced high flows and severe erosion damage."⁴⁰ Overbanking on the San Francisquito Creek occurred at three locations. Alpine Road, downstream of Highway 280, was flooded, along with University Avenue. Downstream of Highway 101 was also inundated. This overbanking caused only some minor flooding in homes and in the streets. Erosion, however, created more damage than flooding. Damage to private property included the destruction of fences, erosion near the foundation of homes, and the weakening of retaining walls. Erosion to public property included undermining roads, weakening and sometimes destroying bridges, and damaging walls.

The most severe flooding in the Santa Clara Valley during this storm

was in South Santa Clara County and the cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill. Llagas Creek and its tributaries did the damage in this area. West Little Llagas Creek inundated Llagas Road. The water at this area did not reach inside the homes, but the doorsteps of homes and businesses on Llagas Road towards Hale Avenue. Corralitos and Tennant Creeks, tributaries of Llagas, each have minimal capacities. Due to their insufficiency to carry large amounts of water, each flooded the streets in east Morgan Hill. "The Llagas Creek Watershed south of Morgan Hill experienced flooding on West Little Llagas, East Little Llagas, Corralitos, Tennant, Edmundson, West Branch Llagas, Lions, Day, Jones and Llagas Creek."⁴¹ The runoff from the east hills did not flow into Edmundson Channel, and this caused major flooding. Water was four feet deep on La Crosse Drive and homes there were flooded. In Gilroy, North Morey, Morey Channels and Miller Slough contributed to flooding in the northwest portion of the city.

Widespread flooding took place in San Martin as well. Flooding occurred along the West Branch Llagas Creek due to its limited capacity to hold extensive amounts of rainwater. Lions Creek flooded parts of North Gilroy to depths of over two feet. Homes were flooded on Wren Avenue and water reached the doorsteps of homes that were farther from the creek. Extensive flooding occurred in Las Animas Park as well. Besides the floodwaters outside, two feet of water had inundated the park buildings. Flooding at Las Animas was due to Miller Slough. Miller Slough also spilled its banks west of a cannery on Forrest Street. Ten homes were flooded to depths of three feet on Forrest Street and Walnut Lane. In the 8500 blocks of Church and Monterey Streets, seven businesses were damaged. "Flows overtopped the Llagas Creek levee at the Gilroy Sewage Treatment Plant...causing severe erosion and a potential health hazard."⁴² Two hundred acres of primarily agricultural land were also inundated by Llagas

Creek to a depth of two feet.

Uvas Creek and its Tributaries also contributed to flooding. The Uvas Creek Watershed experienced extensive flooding and erosion. At the convergence of Uvas Creek and Little Arthur Creek, the bordering flatlands were flooded at a depth of two feet. Miller Avenue ford of Uvas Creek at Christmas Hill Park was inundated with six feet of floodwaters. The levees on Miller Avenue and Thomas Road received extensive erosion. Three hundred feet of Burchell Road at Highway 152 was weakened. Near Highway 101, homes were flooded to depths of five feet. At Carnadero Creek, floodwaters covered approximately 200 acres of farmland to depths of nine feet. Six houses and two businesses were reported to have been flooded in this area. The total damages to public and private facilities from this first flood totaled \$4,640,000.⁴³

The April Floods

The storm which arrived on March 31 caused high amounts of rain and extensive flooding to the east and central portions of Milpitas, San Jose, and other surrounding areas. The Guadalupe River overbanked its easterly levee at Alma Street, causing fifteen acres from the Western Pacific Railroad tracks to McLellan Avenue to become inundated. The San Jose Elks Lodge was flooded with one foot of water. The Willow Street undercrossing of the Southern Pacific railroad bridge received ten feet of floodwaters. Trimble Road, Montague Expressway and North First Street all experienced flooding, but no water entered buildings there. Hundreds were evacuated from the area of McLellan Avenue where approximately twenty homes and five businesses were seriously damaged from the flood.

The Coyote Creek did not overbank on March 31 as did other creeks

and rivers in the area. However, this all changed on April 1. Coyote Creek flooded some areas between Highway 237, Montague Expressway, and North First Street. The most damaging aspect of the Coyote Creek flood occurred at Mobile Parks West, a mobile home park between Zanker Road and North First Street. The cause of this flooding was told to be by Leo Cournoyer, assistant operations and maintenance manager for the Santa Clara Valley water district as:

The extreme flooding apparently was caused by a bulge of water that left Anderson Reservoir at 4 a.m. Thursday and moved swiftly down the river. The "bulge," moving at 1 to 2 feet a second, took 12 hours to travel the 26 miles from the dam to the downtown area. It resulted from the flow over the spillway at Anderson and releases through the outlet. The releases are necessary to make room in the reservoir for more runoff and to avoid even worse flooding.⁴⁴

Over 1600 people had to be evacuated from the mobile park during the night of April 1 and the early morning of April 2.⁴⁵

The floods did not reach Alviso until the evening of April 1. Still, when they did, they were extensive. Residents on Pacific Avenue, Michigan Street, Grand Street, and the surrounding neighborhoods evacuated as homes around them were flooded. Approximately 262 homes and 60 businesses were flooded by the combined forces of the Guadalupe River and the Coyote Creek.⁴⁶ Agnew State Hospital was flooded along with the streets and parking lots around it. The Coyote flooding was also attributed partly to leaks in one of its dikes that the city was unaware of. Agnew State Hospital seemed to be an island, with all roads leading to it and all roads leading out, being flooded. The overbanking in Alviso died down on April 4. On April 5, residents from Alviso and Mobile Parks west "...waded back to their flooded homes, checked their muddy carpets, picked up some

soggy clothes, then waded back to dry land."⁴⁷ Waters did not recede from Alviso until the morning of April 7. Mobile Parks West's floodwaters had been fully pumped out by April 8.

The Upper Penetencia Creek watershed also experienced considerable flooding. The creek spilled its banks upstream of Noble Avenue to downstream of Piedmont Road near Cayman Way. Floodwaters rose to two feet in the area adjacent to the creek. Furthermore, flooding occurred to the south of the creek at Stonecrest and Viceroy Way. The water here also reached two feet. Heatherfield Lane was also flooded, and from there, the water flowed to Penetencia Creek Road and North Capitol Avenue. Erosion occurred for approximately 40 feet at the north levee near highway 680. Maybury Road, N. Jackson Avenue and N. King Road also were flooded. Homes around these areas reported flood damages, but most of it was done to garages and basements. The fields and parking lots at Independence High School were flooded; students evacuated, but water did not harm the buildings. Buildings on Dobbin Drive and Lenfest Road received up to two feet of water inside. The total damages to public and private property were set at \$10,100,000.⁴⁸

The Floods of 1983

The January Floods

In 1983, flooding occurred three times. The first, from January 22 to 30, and the last, from February 28 to March 4, were the most severe. The second flooding was minor, occurring February 5 to 8. The rainfall began January 22. By January 24, the Elks Club, Alma Street, Miller Avenue, the Fountainbleu apartments, the Berryessa Road Flea Market, Seymour Avenue, and Llagas Avenue were flooded. Most of the creeks and streams in the valley flooded during this time period. Coyote Creek inundated San Jose between Highway 237 and the bay on both the west and east sides of the creek. The flooding affected over 200 acres of agricultural land, including farm buildings and several homes. Homes adjacent to the Coyote-Alamitos Canal were flooded in part due to debris and mud carried by the storm runoff and blocking the flow of water.⁴⁹

Matadero Creek spilled its banks as well, in seven places: Matadero Avenue, Alma Street, Middlefield Road, Cowper Avenue, Ross Road, Louis Road, and upstream of El Camino. Homes near Matadero Avenue experienced minor flooding. The Flamingo Motel, upstream of El Camino, also experienced minor flooding inside the building. In the other places where Matadero overbanked, only streets were flooded. This, however, caused extensive erosion. Erosion undermined retaining walls of public and private property and washed away one private bridge. The Guadalupe River also overbanked, leaving over a foot of floodwater in the Elks Lodge on Alma Street. This occurred on January 24, when water flowed over both the easterly and westerly levees. The undercrossing of the Southern Pacific Railroad had nine feet of water present. High flows from the river caused extensive erosion damage, including a failed wall at Old Almaden Road. Guadalupe floodwaters also inundated West Virginia Street, the South

Pacific Railroad tracks to the east of the river, and McLellan Avenue.

Major flooding occurred on the Berryessa Creek which flows through San Jose and Milpitas. It spilled its banks upstream of Old Piedmont Road where it caused extensive street flooding, damaged fences and destroyed cars. Four homes in this area suffered sediment and water damage. Overbanking also occurred upstream and downstream of Montague Expressway and between Yosemite Drive and Calaveras Boulevard. These areas in Milpitas suffered damage to six businesses and minor street flooding in the adjacent lands. The Lower Penetencia Creek in Milpitas flooded from Redwood Drive to Marylinn Street. Floodwaters flowed into the Dixon Landing Business Park. No homes reported damage from this creek; it was mainly street flooding. The Upper Penetencia Creek in east San Jose spilled over downstream of King Road and into the flea market area north of Maybury Road and Berryessa Road. A local news source reported that, "Routed by flooding, Paup Huyun drags new luggage ruined by floodwaters from his family's vending area at the San Jose Flea Market. His family members load it into the van, his statement; "The entire inventory was lost".⁵⁰

Llagas Creek and its tributaries also flooded parts of the Santa Clara Valley. West Little Llagas flooded at Llagas Road, Carriage Drive, and Shadowbrook Way. La Crosse Drive and Watsonville Road were also flooded along with Wright Avenue. These streets were all closed to traffic. Tennant, a tributary of Llagas Creek, flooded at Dunne Avenue and Tennant Avenue. In San Martin, Church Creek flooded along San Martin Drive and Colombet Avenue. West Branch Llagas Creek flooded the parking lot of Gilroy Foods and its buildings, causing major damage. Many homes along Llagas Creek and its tributaries had minor flood damage and septic systems were damaged.

Barron Creek spilled its banks on January 23 at Laguna Avenue. Ninety acres of residential area were affected, some having minor flooding. Sixty homes and businesses were flooded with damage ranging from \$100 to \$22,000. Homes were flooded to about thirty-inch depths.⁵¹ Floodwaters receded by the 25, but floods occurred again in the same area on January 26. After these floods in January, the governor declared a state of emergency in the Santa Clara County. The president issued a Declaration of a Major Disaster for Public Assistance as well.

The February Floods

The storm began on February 5, producing 5.8 inches of rain. Damages from this storm were caused principally by Coyote Creek. The coyote spilled its banks on both the east and west sides. To the east, shallow floodwaters were present near Highway 17 and in the yards and streets of Milpitas manor.⁵² Floodwaters spilled to the west to Taylor Street near Alviso, yet flooding did not occur in the town of Alviso. Overall, some minor damage was done to homes, but floodwaters primarily flooded farmland adjacent to Coyote Creek.

The February/March Floods

Showers began on February 23, but the highest amount of rainfall began on February 28. This storm caused severe flooding to Alviso, North San Jose, and Milpitas. Some damage was also done in East San Jose, Palo Alto, and Cupertino. Waters from the Coyote Creek flooded a sizable area during this time period, beginning to spill on February 28. Its floodwaters covered most of the area between lower Penetencia Creek and the Guadalupe River. A total of 4,000 acres was flooded from Montague Expressway to the Leslie Salt Pond Levees. Floodwaters again inundated

highway 17 and parts of Milpitas Manor. The Dixon Landing Business Park was again flooded by water from both the Coyote Creek and The Lower Penetencia Creek. Highway 237 between Milpitas and Lawrence Expressway was closed for ten days due to flooding and repairs.⁵³ Overbanking occurred also at Mobile Parks West but it was not as serious as it had been in 1982.

The Upper Penetencia Creek also spilled its banks, but only minor flooding occurred. This took place upstream of King Road where fields, streets, and parking lots were flooded. Barron Creek overbanked as well, downstream of La Paloma Drive and Ascension Drive. Only minor street flooding occurred. Adobe Creek flooded upstream of Edith Road and along Moody Road. Marginal street and yard flooding also occurred. The Permanente Division Creek also flooded on March 2. This was due to "the plugging and unplugging of an outlet from a private detention pond on an upstream reach of Permanente Creek...which caused a surge of floodwaters."⁵⁴ Over 540 students were evacuated from Blach Junior High where floodwaters reached a depth of 1/2 a foot. Street flooding and damage to garages and basements occurred on Altamead Drive, also due to flooding from Permanente Creek. Sediment was transported by the floodwaters, 9,500 cubic yards of which were removed. The 8,000 to 10,000 cubic yards kept in the creek were removed over the summer months.⁵⁵

The totals for all the floods in 1983 were very high with damages exceeding \$20.8 million. Approximately 1900 people had been evacuated and one had died. Four hundred and sixty-six homes were damaged severely and two were destroyed. One hundred and sixty businesses were damaged as well, but none were destroyed. By the end of 1983, 79 people were still displaced. The damage to public property was \$1,542,000.⁵⁶

The Flood of 1986

In these floods, Gilroy was the hardest hit area in Santa Clara County. Other parts of the county were also affected. Calabazas Creek overflowed near Sunnyvale, flooding parts of Highway 101. At Intel Corp., employees were sent home early because the parking lot flooded and there were fears of more serious flooding. In San Jose, the Guadalupe spilled its banks at 2:15 a.m.⁵⁷ Twenty-six residents from River, West St. John, and Alma Streets were evacuated from the area and brought to a temporary Red Cross shelter at Willow Glen High School. The river jumped its banks near the Elks Lodge at Alma Street and at its confluence with Los Gatos Creek at Julian Street. River Street was flooded two feet deep in some places, and many garages and basements were flooded. Backyards that face the Guadalupe River were also flooded to depths of four feet. By 4 a.m., the waters began to recede, and by mid-afternoon, all traces of the brief flood were gone.

The Gilroy area was the hardest hit in the County. On February 17 and 18, the Uvas Creek in Gilroy flooded the area in southwest Gilroy. "The water came so fast that residents of Gilroy had no warning."⁵⁸ Residents were awakened early the morning of February 18 by the National Guard who had come to help evacuate. Some evacuated by their own boats, while others fled in school buses provided by the city. The water had begun to spill at around 9 p.m., February 17. It did not recede from the streets until late afternoon, February 18. Many backyards and homes were still flooded, but some streets were reopened. Highway 101 was closed at 10th Street for fourteen hours due to flooding.⁵⁹

Victims of the floods in Gilroy also experienced some health problems from the flooding. A poison-oak like rash broke out on the legs and feet of most of those who were exposed to the floodwaters. Doctors reasoned that rashes occurred due to poison oak trees on the banks of

Uvas Creek which were carried throughout the cities by the floodwaters. Some flood victims were treated for respiratory ailments. Some young children who were victims of flooding were observed with signs of depression by their teachers. The rash that many were experiencing was dubbed by the media as the 'great itch of '86.'

Over 250 homes were flooded, along with many businesses. The floodwaters were two to three feet deep in most homes. "The hardest-hit area in Gilroy was a neighborhood of \$120,000 to \$180,000 homes built in the past five years, bounded by Uvas Creek, 10th Street, and Monterey Road."⁶⁰ Most did not have flood insurance because they were told they couldn't receive it living so close to a creek. Many complaints were voiced by residents about the notice, or lack thereof, about the imminent flood. "...[We] had little warning about the flood...within a half hour, water rose from the street into their homes without notice from police or fire officials."⁶¹ Most Gilroy residents returned to their homes by mid-morning to survey the damage. Cars were carried away by the floodwaters, along with other personal items. One Gilroy resident, Carl Green, had this to say about the condition of his home: "We asked about flood insurance and were told we couldn't get it. We have a \$180,000 house with carpeting that's gone and a floor that's probably gone, too. And we have nothing to pay for it."⁶² The damage done to Gilroy was set at \$2.5 million.

The Floods of 1995

Flooding occurred in 1995 twice, but in different general areas. In January, the Guadalupe River flooded the Willow Glen Area. In March, it flooded the downtown area of San Jose. Other areas were slightly flooded as well, but these were the basic areas.

The January Floods

The storm began on January 8, at 4 a.m. By the morning of January 9, two dozen rain gauges had measured five inches or more of rain. Again, on Monday, a new storm began in the late afternoon. By 9 p.m., the water had already started to spill from the Guadalupe River. The Elks Lodge was having bingo that night, and stopped early. Everyone was told to go home because it was flooding. People left in disbelief as already the parking lot had six inches of water in it. The Elks Lodge was flooded with two feet of water later that night. By dawn, it had flooded on Alma Avenue, on Curtner and Lick Avenues, Redbird Drive at Nightingale Drive, Tasman Drive, and the Guadalupe Parkway.⁶³ This was what was mentioned in the Mercury News. It, however, failed to mention that Padres Drive, Hervey Lane, and parts of Arata Court were also seriously damaged by the flood.

Mary Langone, a native of the Willow Glen area, particularly Hervey Lane, since 1962, shared her experience about discovering she was being flooded:

I was in bed, it was about 11:30 or so, watching television. I heard the house creak- like, it was making strange noises. I didn't think anything of it, but then it just kept on going. Then I thought to myself, God, something's going on. So I got up, and sure enough, there was water coming in the house and water was outside the window. Well then, I called next door, and I said, I think there's a flood. And nobody came around to tell us that there was any water coming in, I received not one warning. When I came back the next day, the water in the backyard was higher than I am tall. I am 5'2",

so one can imagine the damages.⁶⁴

Langone was extremely angry about the flood. She received no warnings and most of her personal items were lost. After calling the neighbors, she called her sister. She told them that she was being flooded out and would come right over. She said she left after about half an hour; "I put my rain boots on, put some things in a bag, and left."⁶⁵ When she returned the next day, the floodwaters had reached a foot and a half in her home, and some water was still present. She began cleaning up right away, removing layers of mud and debris from her home. She stated that she has not yet finished rebuilding. She had no flood insurance and received very little government aid. Her home is now back to normal, or as close as can be achieved after such an ordeal.

Rosa Catania and her son Rocco Catania have lived on Hervey Lane, in Willow Glen, since 1976. They are the neighbors of Mary Langone and were also flooded in January. After being called by Langone; Rocco looked outside as well and saw the floodwaters almost as high as the window. Then he called his brother who lives two doors down and warned him. He then woke up his mother and told her to get dressed. He put on his boots and walked through the knee-deep water to his brother's home. As his brother opened the door, water came rushing in. They talked for a minute, deciding that Anthony, Rocco's brother, would come with the pickup truck to evacuate their mother.⁶⁶

Anthony and his wife Maria woke their two children and told them the situation. They stepped outside the front door, holding hands. The brown murky water was knee deep and cold. They tried to cross the street to go to their neighbor's house who had a two story, but it was like a rushing river. They went into the truck and drove there. They dropped off

their daughters and went to Rosa and Rocco's house. Anthony went inside to help carry his mother to the truck while Maria stayed in the car. While there, she saw a horrifying thing:

I was sitting there waiting for my mother-in-law, and the water began coming in the truck, at my feet. I was so scared and I yelled to them, "Hurry up." I looked out the windshield and saw my brother-in-law's car in the open garage. The car was only visible from the windshield up. I looked down at my feet to see more water coming in and then looked up again. The car was being covered by the waters. It was then that I realized how powerful the flood was.⁶⁷

Kevin and Rosalba Pezzaniti, residents of Hervey Lane, were also flooded in January. The water was on their lawn and reached a few inches in their garage. Although they were not flooded directly, their friends went to their house when they realized they were being flooded. The day after the flood, Rosalba did not send her children to school, fearing that another flood would come and she would be separated from them. Rosalba washed many of the clothes that had been in the flood belonging to her neighbor. "I started crying when I saw all the beautiful new sheets and towels ruined. They were full of mud, dirt; just terrible."⁶⁸ Kevin stated that he recalls a flood warning was flashed at the bottom of the television screen. "I didn't think it was that big of a deal, I mean it said some of the places that had flood watches were: this county and that county, Santa Clara County was one of them. Yet it did not say where, nor did it mention the Willow Glen area, which is the area that I live in. That was the area which was in fact, being flooded."⁶⁹

These are only some of the victims from Padres Drive and Hervey Lane. Many residents blamed the Santa Clara Water District for the flooding and for not giving proper warnings. Most were devastated by the

floods and their damages. Very few had flood insurance, and for those who did, it covered only some things. Besides overbanking in this area, flooding occurred on Belmont Way off of Alma Avenue. Residents there had to be evacuated by raft because the flooding was not realized until very late, when the flooding was at its highest. Highway 87 was under six feet of water and closed, as well as Guadalupe Parkway at Interstate 280. Waters began receding in most streets by the 11 of January, but water in homes and backyards had to be pumped out.

Highway 101 was closed due to flooding along with McKee Road and the Santa Clara Street, Alum Rock interchanges. The Tamien and First Street light rail stations were flooded and provided no service until late on January 11. Pescadero Creek spilled over its banks as well, forcing fifty people to evacuate and take refuge at Pescadero High where a Red Cross shelter had been set up.⁷⁰ All Los Gatos schools were closed on January 10 because roads were cut off and many of those who lived in the mountains would not be able to make it into town. In Sunnyvale, the Calaveras Creek spilled over its banks, flooding streets and the Lakewood District. The total damage done by these floods surpassed \$3 million. Over 150 homes in the San Jose area were flooded. A State of Emergency was declared in the Santa Clara County at 1:30 am on January 10. Cleanup and repairs on Highway 87 ran to \$100,000.⁷¹

The March Floods

The second storm that caused problems and flooding in 1995 began on the morning of March 9. On the morning of March 10, the Guadalupe River began spilling its banks in several places. "The Guadalupe River spilled into downtown San Jose on Friday, turning streets to rivers, forcing

residents from their homes and driving office workers from high-rise buildings in the most extensive flooding of the city's core in four decades."⁷² The downtown area was the hardest hit with overbanking at Highway 87, St. John Street, and Alma Street. Challenger School on Wren Drive was evacuated the morning of March 10 because all access roads to and from it were closed due to flooding. North First Street was closed from Orchard Park Way north to the bay.⁷³ In total, twenty-four South Bay streets were closed by the afternoon of March 10 due to flooding.⁷⁴

Approximately 250 homes and buildings were flooded in various locations throughout the downtown area. During the day, the tide continued to rise in the bay, and the Guadalupe came within two feet of the Gold Street Bridge late Friday, March 10.⁷⁵ One thousand, four hundred workers were sent home at 2 p.m. in the Santa Clara Government building at 70 West Hedding Street due to that fact that the surrounding streets were flooded. As they left, employees had to cross streets that were knee deep to most people. Comerica Bank on Almaden Road and Santa Clara Street also experienced flooding. Two hundred employees had to be assisted out of the bank by volunteers.⁷⁶ Two downtown homeless shelters were also forced to evacuate on Montgomery and Julian Streets. The National Guard Armory stayed open all night on March 10 to house many of the homeless.

Flooding was caused primarily because of the Guadalupe River overflowing and also due to seven of Santa Clara Water District's reservoirs overflowing. Larry Johmann, associate director of the Evergreen Resource Conservation District, however, tends to believe that the flooding was also due to problems caused by man.

The main reason downtown San Jose flooded, I believe, is the

debris dam near the railroad trestle a quarter mile downstream from St. John Street. I went down the river in my canoe on Sunday [March 12] to survey the storm damage. I saw huge piles of debris trapped between the pilings of the four railroad trestles that traverse the river near downtown. It was in fact, around those four junctures -- near Alma Avenue, Virginia Street, Santa Clara Street, and St. John Street -- that the river overflowed its banks. People knew about it. I spoke with the water district people and they knew about it, but they say it's the responsibility of the railroad company.⁷⁷

Teddy Morse of the Santa Clara Valley Water District responded to Johmann by saying that, "the district has spent thousands of dollars cleaning up the river, only to have the debris pile up a short time later."⁷⁸ Longtime residents of the area, however, disagree. Many say that they can not recall the last time that the river has been cleaned.

The floods in downtown caused much damage. "From the air, it appeared that San Jose's hub was being swallowed. The tentacles of muddy water crept up San Pedro Street to Hedding, where the water flowed east to Sixth Street."⁷⁹ In Santa Clara County, the damages from the March floods exceeded \$3.9 million. Over 1,000 homes were damaged by these floods. Together, for the entire year of 1995, flood damages totaled to approximately \$7 million.⁸⁰

The Flood of 1997

Storms began on January 24, 1997. After a weekend of downpours, minor flooding occurred on Highway 101 on January 27. Flooding in this year was caused primarily from Coyote Creek. Floodwaters from the Coyote created a four foot deep , 100 yard long pond that submerged a portion of Highway 101 between 13th Street and McKee Road exits.⁸¹ The highway remained flooded from 4 a.m. January 26 until the evening of January 27, and then, only two lanes were open. The cause of the flooding on Highway 101 was a malfunctioning pipe that was supposed to *prevent* flooding. A 24-inch diameter pipe was supposed to drain the roadway into the Coyote Creek creek bed. This underground pipe was meant to drain water off the freeway, but instead, the opposite occurred. The drain channeled the Coyote Creek floodwaters onto the freeway, flooding a 3.5 mile section. The problem was suspected to be a malfunctioning valve, but the Santa Clara Water District was not 100 percent sure.⁸²

On January 27, Coyote Creek also flooded Kelley Park and the Rock Springs neighborhood south of the park. Flooding had begun at around 1 a.m. That morning, East Santa Clara Street and areas near it were also flooded by the Coyote. Water poured into many homes on Nordale Avenue, Arroyo Way, William Street, and Roosevelt Street. Water was three feet high in those areas. The community center at Watson Park was also flooded to a depth of about three feet. At Happy Hollow Zoo and park, workers rushed to evacuate half of the animals to higher ground.⁸³ On the afternoon of January 27, county health officials investigated the flooded areas and found them to be contaminated with sewage. On the 28, residents were allowed back into their homes; many had to get back in rafts and small boats. Residents were told to wear rubber gloves when cleaning because of the sewage contamination, although, it was not in dangerous levels. The Japanese Friendship Gardens were closed for a week

and the Watson Park was closed indefinitely. Alum Rock Park was closed until the thirtieth.

Many victims of the Coyote Creek floods complained about the lack of warning they were given of the imminent flood. George Castro was angered over the fact that "...he and his neighbors were not forewarned of the flood that inundated their homes..."⁸⁴ Mike Shutte, who lives with his father, Robert, felt the same, saying: "I don't feel I was informed quickly enough."⁸⁵ Scott Herbert agreed with them. "We were not warned, PERIOD! I'd like some answers, I think this could have been avoided."⁸⁶ No suitable answers have thus far been given to any of the flooded residents who feel they were not warned.

A state of emergency was declared by San Jose City officials on January 29 in the following areas: Naglee Park, Rocksprings, and North San Jose. Floodwaters were six feet high in most places. In some of the duplexes that were inundated on South 17th Street, the water reached about four feet. Damages for all of Santa Clara County reached \$6 million.⁸⁷ This is over half of the damages two floods incurred in 1995.

Conclusion

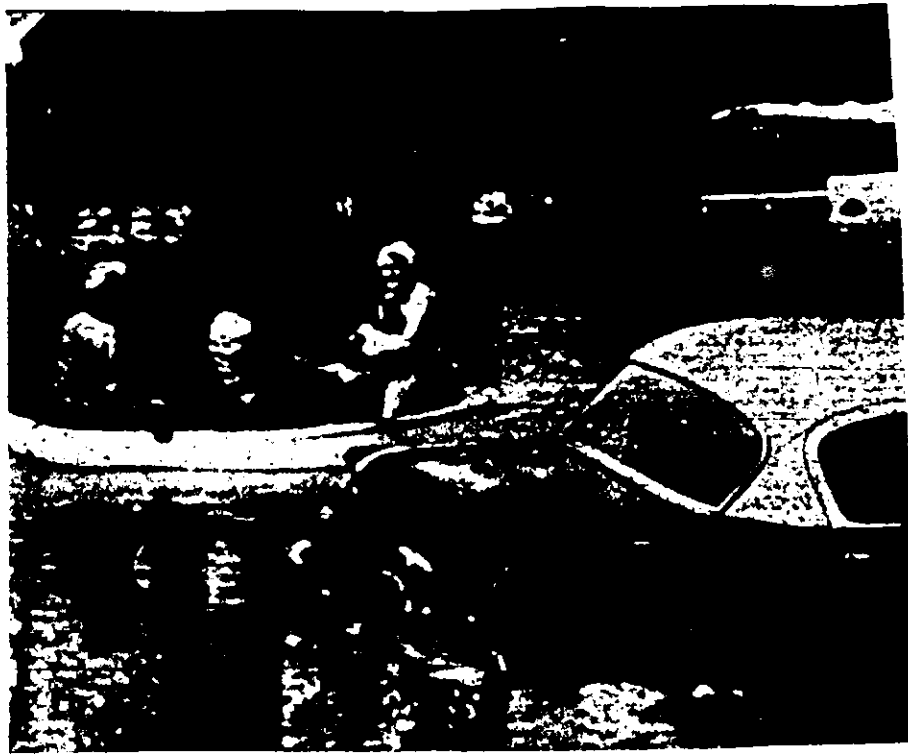
Floods in the Santa Clara Valley have been both productive and destructive over time. In spite of the challenges and difficulties posed by periodic flooding in Santa Clara County, the residents have managed to keep their spirits up. Flooding has scared some residents away from parts of this valley; but the strong and hopeful remain. They hope to control floods or prevent them altogether. Questions have been asked repeatedly by residents about homes that have been built in floodplains. Many believe that development should not have taken place on the floodplains in the Santa Clara Valley. Still, the Santa Clara Valley Water District has proposed several flood control projects over the years. These are meant to control flooding and alleviate the damages which floods incur. The Army Corps of Engineers is continuing to study this valley and is trying to find ways to control flooding. One such flood control project is currently awaiting approval for the Guadalupe River.



**Orchards between
Kifer Road and
Bayshore Highway
which were
flooded in 1955.**

("Orchard Goes Under."
The San Jose Mercury
News, p. 13, December 20
1955).





Those stranded on buses and cars had to be evacuated by rowboat during the flood of 1955.

("Night-Long Rains Pound S.J. Area." The San Jose Mercury News, p. 1, December 23, 1955).



An aerial view of Mariani's Motel which was flooded in 1955.

("City Officials Take to the Air." The San Jose Mercury News, p. 2, December 24, 1955.)



Flooding in the San Jose area in 1955.

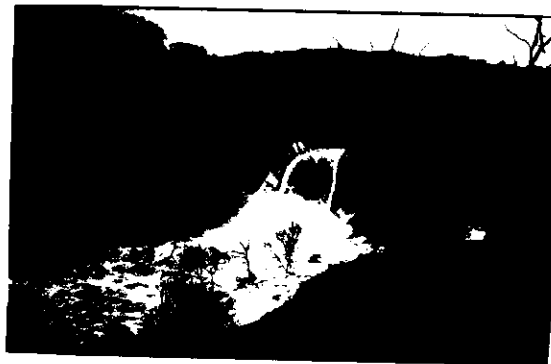
Flooding at the U.S. Post Office in 1983.



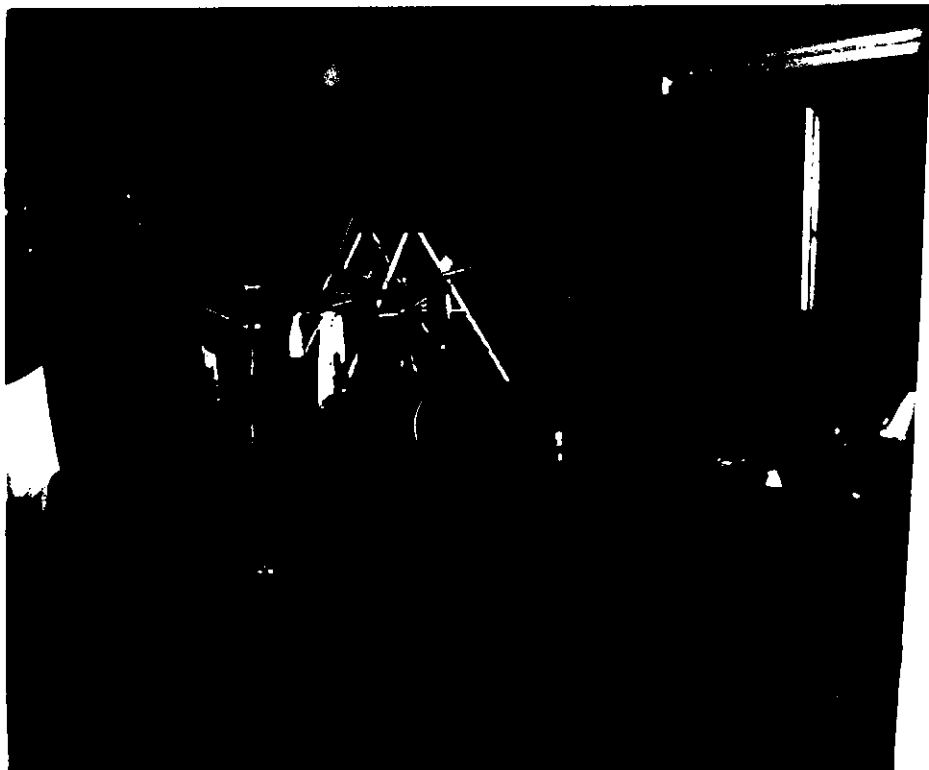
A street in Gilroy where floodwaters have receded after the 1986 flood.



Flooding from Uvas Creek in Gilroy during the 1986 flood.



(All pictures on this page: Santa Clara Valley Water District. Flood Control in the Santa Clara Valley - An Overview. San Jose: no publication date available).



Standing water present at 1490 Hervey Lane two days after the January floods in 1995.



(Photos courtesy of Kevin Pezzaniti, resident of Hervey Lane, January, 1995).

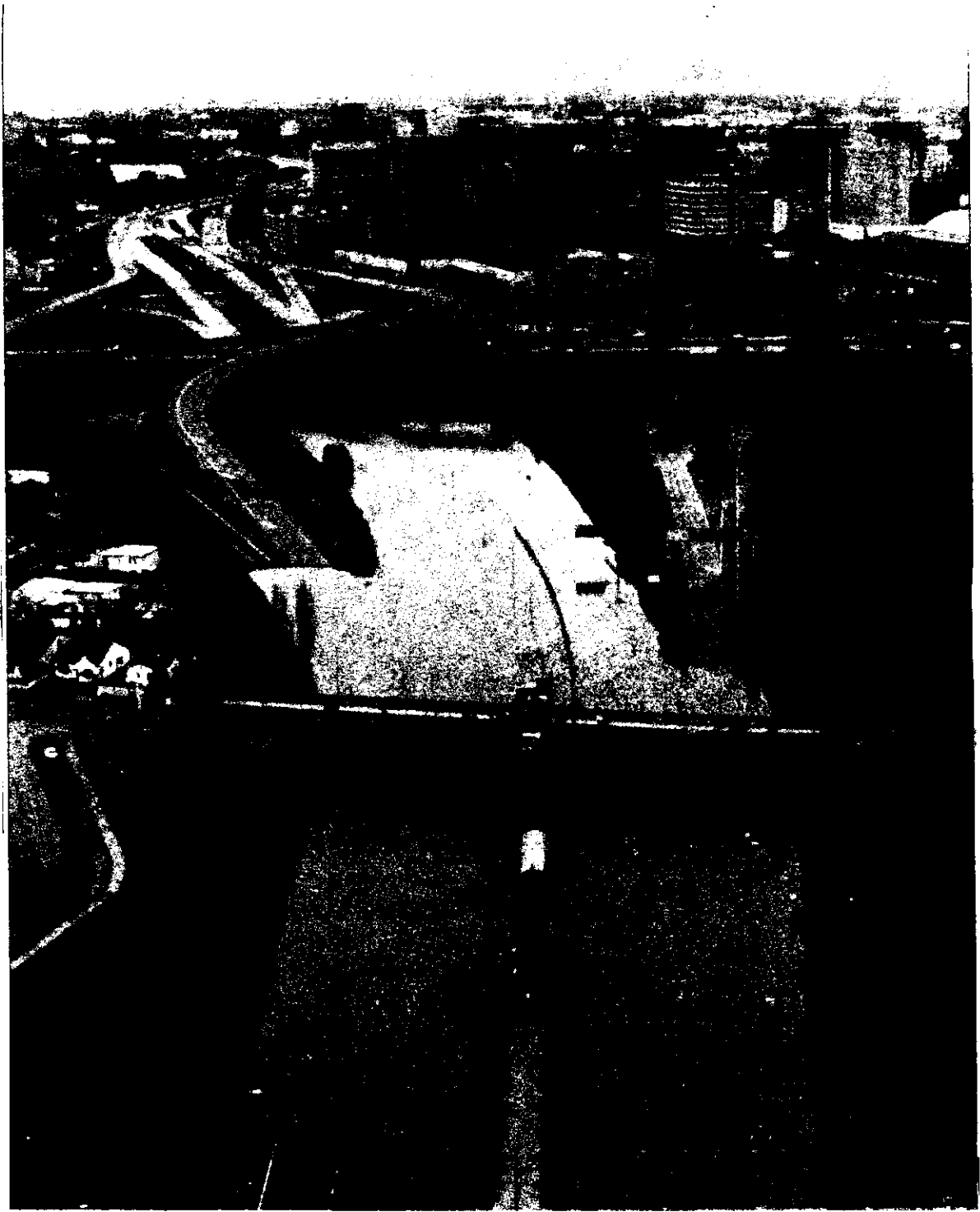


Standing water present at 1472 Hervey Lane three days after the January floods of 1995.



The floodwaters reached the roof of this garage at 1472 Hervey Lane, destroying all the contents and the car which was, at the time, two months old.

(Photos on this page courtesy of Rocco Catania, resident of Hervey Lane, Jan. 1995).



**This is a view from Virginia Bridge over Highway 87,
which was flooded in March of 1995.**

(Egner, Dick. "Flooded neighbors look for answers." The San Jose Mercury News, p. 9
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