

# Mount Vernon Herald

DECEMBER 15, 1921

## SKAGIT RIVER CAUSES FLOOD

Skagit valley has been in the grip of a flood for the past week. Torrential rains and strong southerly winds, amounting to gales at times, preceded the onrush of waters from the melting snow of the Cascade mountains, that came pouring down the Skagit river in a volume that almost equaled that of the memorable flood of 1909, when the river rose to 26 feet 4 inches, just 1½ inches higher than the present flood measured.

At Mount Vernon Saturday the fury of the waters caused alarm for the safety of the dykes and a close watch was kept over them. The first break occurred at McKay's place, Burlington. The low lying land was soon covered with water. On Tuesday morning the scene north of the city was one broad expanse of water, with dwelling houses, barns, hay stacks, fences and trees standing in it. From 3 to 6 feet of water was recorded in this section of the flood area, the lower floors of the houses being flooded, and the inhabitants taking to the second story. The flood waters reached as far west as Avon.

At the North Fork near Conway the next break was reported. This break caused the flooding of Conway, Milltown, Stanwood and the Skagit delta. The whole region from Mount Vernon to Sylvana is all under flood waters. The highway both north and south of the city is impassable for anything but boats.

In West Mount Vernon all the houses on the river side along the dyke are only

accessible by boats, the water being up to the floors of the first story of the dwellings.

No reports of loss of human life have come in. Billy Herbet, near Sedro-Woolley, it is said, lost 17 head of young cattle and a span of horses.

Very little damage along the river front here has been reported. The head of the Division street bridge pier was somewhat damaged by a log boom.

A number of houses between here and Burlington were reported to have been lifted from their foundations and otherwise damaged by the flood.

The most serious reported damage was to the home of Lee Davis whose home floated off its foundation and broke in two. The family had been warned to seek safety but were slow in taking heed to the warning. They were rescued by boat.

The dining hall back of the Armory is in an uncertain condition on account of an eddy forming a back current that ate its way completely around the building, lowering a portion of the foundation, leaving the building supported only at the corners. The depth of the cut is over 12 feet. How serious the foundation is damaged cannot be known until the water falls to about normal. The Dunlap wharf seems to be a wreck.

The Puget Sound and Baker River company were probably the heaviest losers by the flood. The loss is estimated at \$50,000. All the boats of the company are out down the river picking up logs.

The telephone companies were kept more than busy. The Rural Telephone office was unable to take care of its patrons. The Puget Sound office kept extra operators on for the benefit of the hundreds of extra calls. At Conway the operator, Mrs. P.G. Utgard, had an anxious and strenuous time of it. After the water came into the office she first used a box to stand on, then a chair and stuck to her post until 3:30 p.m. when she was relieved by boat by Glen Stover. The connection to Stanwood was broken. Lyman and Utopia went out about 4 o'clock early Tuesday morning, as did the lines from Burlington to Edison.

The Great Northern railway has been out of service since Monday evening, but the company expects to have trains running again in a day or so.

Wednesday the steamer Harvester commenced carrying passengers from Seattle to Mount Vernon and will continue to do so.

The mail will also be carried by the steamer Harvester. The greatest damage to the Great Northern hereabouts is that done to the roadbed between Mount Vernon and Burlington. The damage would indicate about a two week job. Trains may run as far as Mount Vernon, if no further as soon as conditions south have been repaired.

The Interurban weathered the storm and flood pretty well. While regular service was interrupted, they managed to get one or more cars through every day. By today (Thursday) they expect to be running all trains on time table schedule, and have stages to Everett running Friday. Travel was interrupted by the washing out of a bridge just out of the city limits and damage to the bridge over Varney slough.

The Interurban is carrying U.S. mail from Blanchard, Edison, Bow, Burlington and Mount Vernon.

Although there were several reports of loss of life, so far none have been

verified. A man living near Sedro-Woolley, named Elred, was reported lost after he had gone to look after some pigs but it is believed that he will turn up safe.

Many losses of farm products are reported but most of the farmers took heed and removed their stocks as well as their livestock before the waters came upon them.

Hundreds of men patrolled the dikes Monday night and in several instances workers were kept busy preventing breaks. Mayor Moody and Fire Chief Schlanser with the assistance of the telephone office, responded with help to all calls coming to town from the outside.

In Mount Vernon the danger points were guarded constantly. The carnation condenser, was considered a bad point but a little care kept this point in shape. A point of danger was at Milwaukee street near George Moreland's home. This point was guarded and serious results prevented.

The dikes held fine and had not the water risen to such a high point, there would have been little or no damage. Below town, the dikes were patrolled by hundreds of men and it was only after the water had risen to an overflow, that the men deserted their posts and hastened to notify their neighbors that the water was coming.

Burlington was the first place to get wet, a break in the dike causing the water to invade the "Hub City." An heroic effort was made to prevent the break.

### **At Stanwood**

In the first overflow, Stanwood got about two feet of water all over town. This was subsiding when a break in the dike north and west of the town let in another avalanche of water and the town was inundated about four feet, the water entering all business and most of the residences.

## **Mount Vernon Stays Dry**

While Mount Vernon remained dry, the people of the county seat were making a fight against the weak points in the dikes. In addition to protecting the city, hundreds of citizens stood ready to help the outside and many calls for help were answered. Families were taken from their homes and stock saved, help was rendered in fighting the weak points in outside dikes, in fact Mount Vernon, while cut off from the outside world, rendered every aid possible to those who called for help.

A large crew of men answered the call to the county poor farm, where the waters threatened harm.

While the losses are many, yet they are mostly small. The main losses are where lands were cut into, stored products damaged, and some losses of livestock. It is believed, however, that the total losses will aggregate around \$50,000, which with the lumber company losses, will approximate a hundred thousand or maybe more for this section of Skagit county.

## **At Lyman**

The farm of Mrs. Clara Flynn was badly damaged; fruit trees, berry bushes and chicken houses were washed down the river. By hard work of the citizens of Lyman the bridge crossing to the ferry was saved.