

Worst Flood In Years Passes Crest; Falling

The Skagit river, a few days ago a peaceful stream, turned into a raging torrent last night, spilling over its banks in several spots, marooning many families and causing untold damage in property and loss to livestock.

The flood, which reached its peak here at 4:40 a. m., this morning with a crest of 26.5 feet, was the worst in Skagit county for the past 27 years.

No loss of life was reported today but several head of valuable livestock have been lost in the raging flood waters which have covered hundreds of acres of farmland throughout the valley.

Emergency measures were instituted throughout the area during the evening and are still in effect today although waters are reported to be receding slowly.

Yesterday afternoon and last night the entire community of Hamilton was cut off from the outside world and travel to the eastern end of the county is still at a standstill. Most of the families living in and around the community of around 200 persons, left their homes before the water spilled through the streets to a height of about two feet. Amphibious ducks, operated by private individuals and members of the state patrol, evacuated approximately 50 marooned persons there during the evening.

This morning hundreds of acres of land in the Fir Island district near Conway are under water due to at least three breaks in river dikes. About 150 volunteer workers, who responded to an emergency call, toiled through the night attempting to stem the flow of water with sandbags.

A trestle and 165 feet of the Great Northern's main line railroad track just south of Conway was washed out during the evening and all traffic north is being rerouted on the Northern Pacific tracks to Sedro-Woolley and then back to Burlington. Mail for Mount Vernon is being delivered by work train from Burlington.

The main business district of Mount Vernon was seriously threatened during the night but flood crest stopped two feet short of the top of the dike. Several stores on First street barricaded entrances with sandbags and some of the stores moved merchandise away from basement and street levels.

High water backed up in the city's sewer system in the southern part of the town near the ball park and flooded streets there under about 8 inches of water. Several basements there and also in the business district of Mount Vernon were flooded.

The American Red Cross, with Andy Loft, chairman of the disaster committee in charge, was the focal point for emergency work throughout the flood area. Emergency calls were dispatched for shovels, sandbags, volunteer workers and rescue equipment. Two amphibious ducks and several skiffs were dispatched to Mount Vernon from the coast guard in Seattle. Two other ducks were sent to the flood area from Bellingham and three locally-owned amphibious vehicles were put to work. Radio station KBRC remained on the air throughout the evening for emergency calls.

A call for 100 soldiers from Ft. Casey on Whidby island was put out by the Mount Vernon police department this morning to aid volunteer workers in the flooded areas on Fir Island.

Greatest flood damage in Skagit county was centered today in the Conway district where workers were unable to stop a dike breakthrough at Fisher's slough and above Conway on the North Fork. All travel on the Conway-Stanwood road is cut off today.