

SKAGIT VALLEY HERALD

10 Skagit Valley Herald
Mount Vernon, Wash.

Friday, July 14, 1961

The Army way is still wrong way

BY ALAN PENTZ

Whether the Skagit River water level ever reaches the coin slots on the Revetment parking meters or not, the waters are boiling unseasonably high.

Last week the Corps of Army Engineers took exception to statements made by Herald columnist George Geasey, and issued a countywide news release.

In their story the engineers said

that the Seattle disc jockey who reported the flood stage of the Skagit River at Mount Vernon as 21 feet was correct, and writer Geasey was wrong in saying it was 27 feet. To substantiate its statement the Army explained in some detail that the disc jockey had received his information from a teletype, which in turn was supplied by the U.S. Weather Bureau.

GEASEY'S error, the story implied, was in reading the wrong gauge. The official gauge, they said, showed zero damage in Mount Vernon beginning at 21 feet.

Today, on a whim, the Herald began checking gauges. The Moose Hall gauge showed clearly that flooding would not begin until the water level reached 27 feet. A query at the County Engineers office disclosed that this is the correct gauge.

County Engineer Frank Gilkey said, "I can't understand what all the controversy is about. Normal flooding does not begin in Mount Vernon until 27 feet. Of course the Nookachamps area outside of town floods earlier, but we generally consider that an overflow basin, and it isn't part of Mount Vernon."

AND TO MAKE writer Geasey's case even tighter, Gilkey said the U.S. Weather Bureau calls the county office daily to get its information about this area. Any reference they would make would be to a gauge that shows flooding at Mount Vernon begins at 27 feet.

The waters of the Skagit are running peacefully now, and there isn't any danger of flooding until another season, but writer Geasey has been prone in the mud ever since the Army's sandbagging. A speedy recovery is anticipated.