

House, Split In Two, Floats In Hole Gouged By North Fork Near Bridge

"You can see the house floating there right now, just a stone's throw from the dike," George Moore, Jr., said, describing the home he grew up in, near the North Fork bridge.

The large old-style farmhouse, one of the landmarks in that area for many years, was hit by the full force of water pouring through a break in the North Fork dike Saturday. The river, virtually taking a new course directly through the house, gouged out a hole under the dwelling deep enough to float the large structure, which split in two, the two portions resting on their sides.

The larger part of the house is mostly submerged, like a floating iceberg, with about four feet of the building bobbing above the surface.

None of the furniture in the house was saved. This belongs to the owners of the farm, Mr. and Mrs. George Moore, Sr., now living in Oregon. "The farm was all they had," their son said. "Now the house is gone, with all the farm buildings, and the whole 100 acres under water." Mr. and Mrs. Lyman Caling were living in the house and Mr. Caling was working on the dike when the first break appeared, near the barn. It was not believed serious, and furniture was moved up but not taken away. No one was in the house when the new break came and the Calings are safe.

There were no animals in the barn, since the Calings did not operate the farm, which was rented out to a neighbor.

21,000 ACRES AFFECTED BY RIVER OVERFLOW

With the Skagit River far below the danger point, flood waters that inundated an estimated 21,000 acres of Skagit Valley land over the weekend were receding in some areas, holding virtually level in sections where dikes prevented a runoff and actually rising slightly in other localities where water was slowly spreading out over wider acreage.

Although the acreage affected by the break below Conway and the overflow of the Samish River was greater, the heaviest damage from the Skagit's biggest flood in 30 years was in the Fir Island area, flooded by breaks near the North Fork Bridge and leaks and overflow in other areas.

A hole blasted in the sea dike was expected to gradually drain the water level to a point where the North Fork dike break could be stopped. The river ripped a hole in the dike below the North Fork bridge that permitted a virtually new channel for the raging stream, wiped out the buildings at the George Moore farm and inundated half of the main section of Fir Island.

Loss of livestock was believed to be very heavy on Fir Island, although it has been impossible to obtain anything like a complete report. Cows in the barns set high above the ground—for just such an eventuality—have been standing neck deep in water and heavy casualties are anticipated. Sewell's "duck" from Mount Vernon has been delivering feed to stranded farms, but the situation is apparently in hand today, since the sheriff's office has received no new requests.