

# Crest in Skagit River Passes; Nookachamps Valley Flooded

## High Water Follows 2 Rainy Days

Mount Vernon and Skagit County were counting their blessings and damages today as the swollen, muddy Skagit River reached its peak this morning and began to recede almost as fast as it rose in the past two days.

The county engineer's office reported that the crest of the flash flood was reached at 7 a.m. with a gauge reading of 23.7 feet. It rose to that level from a low of nine feet Monday morning.

Warm temperatures and continuous rain Monday and Tuesday sent the Skagit's tributaries on a rampage, pouring silt-filled water into the normally clean mother river. The high water gauge reading hit Concrete at 7 p.m. yesterday and was 35.17 feet.

### Below 20 Feet

Deputy County Engineer W. R. Whitnall, who is in charge of plotting the flood's history, forecast that the river would be below 20 feet by midnight tonight.

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As was anticipated, the Nookachamps Valley northeast of Mount Vernon was under several feet of water but no loss of human life or cattle has been reported to authorities. The sheriff's office answered a few calls this morning for stranded cattle in the area but reported all were saved.

Gene Olson, a deputy assessor, described a fine bit of teamwork among the residents of the North Fork area:

### 400 Sacks Placed

"We put some 400 sacks of sand in the dike last night about a quarter of a mile north of the Conway bridge. The dike had been excavated for rocking and the sandbags were put in to protect it. It's all under water now."

Huge logs floated down the Skagit like twigs and Mount Vernon residents lined the revetment to watch the swirling chocolate-colored water sweep past. Members of the Mount Vernon Moose Lodge said their "Gopher Room" and rifle range in the basement were flooded.

The logs, brush and other debris were creating a jam at the North Fork bridge. One veteran observer said it was the biggest such jam he could remember in the river's history. Some reports of flooding over the dikes in the lower valley were received, but again no one reported serious loss.

### Phones in Order

Telephone communications throughout the Skagit Valley remained good and company officials said yesterday's high winds caused more trouble to the service than the rampaging river.

### Nookachamps Valley residents

were commuting by boat this morning. Superior Judge A. H. Ward said by telephone that about 200 of his 230 acres was under water, but that all his cattle were safe, as were those of his neighbors.

Many of the farmers in the Nookachamps said the water was within a foot of floor level.

Farms which flooded included those of Elmer Vogt, Marvin Porteous, Ralph Oosterhof, O. A. Soderlind, Gordon Chase, John Petter, Marie Moore, Ken Nogle, John Koetje, Cameron Gwin, Burt Bjorling, Judge Ward, Bill Dow, Bert Johnson, and Art Johnson.

Art Johnson led a crew of about 50 men during the night which, using mechanical corn-pickers, worked until 3 a.m. this morning harvesting 20 acres of corn from his Nookachamps farm before the water could destroy it.

A foreman at the new bridge site for the new U.S. 99 north of Mount Vernon said one of the cofferdams had been flooded by the high river, but that there was no way of estimating the damage until the waters recedes further.

### Forecasts Showers

Meanwhile, the weather bureau has forecast scattered showers today and tomorrow. Engineer Whitnall said the freezing level in the Cascade Mountains had dropped to 3,000 feet and that it was snowing rather than raining there which would hold back the water.

For those interested in the pure statistics Whitnall revealed that this flood closely paralleled that of 1949 in its quick rise but was much less severe than the 1951 inundation which hit a high mark of over 25 feet at Mount Vernon.

At its peak this morning there were 87,000 cubic feet of water a second passing by the revetment. In 1951 there were 140,000 cubic feet of water per second roaring past.