

THE COURIER-TIMES

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River at Door of Ninth Utopia Home

State and County Fail to Maintain Revetments;
Skagit Cuts 200 Feet in Few Weeks;
More Homes in Danger

Three or four more days and another Utopia home will be in the Skagit river because neither the county nor the state could see to furnishing a comparatively small maintenance fund for the revetments put along the river by the federal government a few years back at the cost of many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The home of George Betschart just behind the Utopia school is being moved today as the river has already cut into the front yard, slicing off more than 200 feet of land in the last two or three weeks and now only a few feet short of the front porch.

Teachers' Cottage In Danger

The house will be moved up the sideroad nearer the school and may be placed on a corner of the school grounds, if the new five man school board sees fit to selling a corner of the present school lot to Betschart. Other buildings will also have to be moved, and the present teachers' cottage on the back of the school lot is in possible danger of going this year if the river continues on its present cutting rage.

Overnight the torrents cut so deeply into road and Betschart's yard that it cut off the driveway, and the car now must be driven out through the front yard.

Ninth Home to Move

The Betschart home is the ninth home in the past twenty years or less that has had to be either moved or torn down in the path of the Skagit in the two bends in that area. Six silos, two of concrete, as well as many barns and other buildings have had to be transported out of the water's path. An estimated 250 or 300 acres of cleared land have been carried down the river in that period from that area.

Visitors can stand and watch the roads and cultivated farm lands continually slide into the river as it hacks its way into the bank. The Courier reporter and Betschart narrowly missed a plunge into the river this Thursday morning, when without warning, a large chunk of the road, where they had previously been standing, fell into the current.

Tries to Save Spuds

A similar incident happened to Betschart the previous evening when the ground beneath him gave way to the river while he was trying desperately to save some of his potatoes as the water each day cut further into the patch.

Betschart had already moved his barns earlier this year.

In the late 1930's the federal government allotted hundreds of thousands of dollars for revetments along the Skagit, the largest river in the State of Washington next to the Columbia, to keep it in its proper bed. A comparatively small sum of \$10,000 a year was asked from either the county or state for a maintenance fund to keep the revetments up. This was not obtained, and, as a result, the river is this week taking its ninth home in the Utopia area alone.

Lacked Support

The government had more funds available for additional revetments but would not donate them unless the state or county could supply a small maintenance fund. It was not done.

Today the river is dangerously near the point of possibly cutting away the revetment below the Betschart place. If that happens, much more land will be carried down stream and deposited at the mouth, making continual dredging necessary.

City In Possible Danger

There is also the danger that should the river cut through at one other point, which is not at all unlikely, the city of Sedro-Woolley will have the second largest river in the State of Washington flowing through its main streets.

The school directors meet Sunday to discuss selling part of the present Utopia lot to Betschart and also what is to be done about the teachers' cottage.