

JANUARY 26, 1935

Danger Of Serious Flood Is Lessened As River Starts Receding

*Danger Not Yet Over, But Hundreds Breathe
Easier; River At Highest Point Since 1917;
Dropping Rapidly In Eastern Section Of
County; Scores Labor To Stop Dike Breaks*

Hundreds of residents in many sections of lower Skagit county breathed a little easier this afternoon when it became apparent that the threat of the worst flood in years was gradually passing. The danger was not yet over, however, and scores of men continued their labors in strengthening weak points in the entire network of dikes which protect this section.

It was believed the high point in the river had been reached early this afternoon, and the Skagit was expected to start receding later today. At 2 o'clock, river watchers said the Skagit was no longer rising. The county gauge was out of sight, but it was estimated the river had reached a height of 28 feet, which is within a very few inches of the high in 1917 when sections of the county were visited by disastrous floods.

The river was at least a foot higher than three years ago when dikes broke at various places causing the inundation of hundreds of acres of farm lands. All that saved a recurrence of the flood of late February in 1932 was the strengthening of the dikes under the CWA program, many declared.

Reports from the eastern part of the county were to the effect that the river had dropped three or four feet at Concrete and that the Skagit had receded 18 inches between Hamilton and Lyman from 6 a. m. until noon.

This news was joyfully received in Mount Vernon and other sections of the lower valley where the river had risen steadily all night. The water continued to rise here until this afternoon. Although gauges were out of sight, those using markers estimated the river had risen seven or eight inches from 8 o'clock this morning until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

Meanwhile, the fight to save the collapse of dikes at various places was continuing. Although rumors kept the city in a state of excitement throughout the day, there was only one actual dike break. It occurred on the south bank of Freshwater slough, south of Fir. It was flooding approximately 250 acres of land near the Island Gun club. The farms of Ole Thompson,

At that place, water bubbled up in the field a few hundred feet west of the dike itself. Workers piled sand bags onto the spot so that the rushing water would not undermine the dike as it did in 1932.

Residents of Mount Vernon and Burlington had scares this morning, but prompt work kept the dikes from washing out and flooding the two cities. In Mount Vernon the fire department called out volunteer workers at 5 o'clock this morning to pile sandbags on two weak spots in the dike near the Federal condenser. The water was starting to seep under the dike when the alarm was sounded. Hundreds of residents were around and, fearing a serious break, rushed to the scene to watch the operations.

At Burlington, two or three weak spots in the dike were bolstered and the danger was believed past. A break at any of the places would have flooded the town of Burlington.

Two more emergency calls for workers were sounded here today. At 12:30 more men were called to the Archie Young farm on the river bend in South Mount Vernon. The water was bubbling up in the field, but sand bags were piled over the spot to eliminate the danger for the time being.

An hour or so later, an appeal was sent to the fire station here for more men near the H. L. Willis farm, west of this city on the McLean road. Workers were also rushed to that scene.

At 2:30, a total of 4,000 sacks of sand had been used to prevent the Varney slough break. Thirty men were still on duty and they thought the situation was well under control unless the high water lasts.

Many homes in West Mount Vernon were inundated. They are located between the river and the west side dike. Water was covering the floor at the West Side Confectionery store operated by Miss Florence Siegle.