

The Burlington Journal

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Burlington Escapes Serious Damage During Devastating Skagit Flood

Burlington, due to a number of reasons, was one of the few towns in the Skagit Valley suffering only minor damage last Sunday night and Monday during one of the worst floods in over 25 years. Lyman, Hamilton, Mount Vernon, Conway, and Stanwood communities suffered the worst.

The factors that saved both Burlington and Sedro-Woolley, five miles to the east from the fate of other towns were first, that the Seattle City Light retained hundreds of tons of water behind their dams up-river, second, dikes breaking near Conway relieved the pressure here, and the fact that hundreds of volunteer workers filled sacks with sand, hauled them to the dikes where other workers were on constant patrol and reinforced the water-soaked and rat hole weakened earthwork.

The high stage came about 4:30 Monday morning with a crest at near the 26 foot mark. Emergency crews had evacuated many people from their homes, moved much livestock to higher ground and some people even transferred household goods to safer places. Although so far no loss of life has been reported overall head of livestock were lost in the quickly rising waters. Hundreds of acres of some of the richest soil in the state was inundated and as the waters receded left varying amount of debris which will have to be removed before land will again be as productive as before.

Much credit should go to Burlington's Volunteer fire department who were the first to recognize the danger here and took over supervision of the patrol and sand bagging work carried on through the night. When

danger was at its height firemen called in other citizens who willingly relieved the tired workers who had been on duty since early Sunday evening.

Up-river several small bridges were washed out and traffic to Newhalem was at a standstill. The Red Cross was busy buying furnishings for families who had suffered loss of their household goods and neighbors and friends were supplying housing and meals for these people until the waters receded enough for them to return to their homes and get them in a livable condition.

Mail and train service was disrupted when a section of track went out near Milltown south of Mount Vernon. Trains were routed through Clear Lake and Sedro-Woolley, then into Burlington onto the main line which track was clear into both Mount Vernon from the north and into Bellingham from the south.

It is very surprising to see the high morale and willing work by the hundreds of volunteer workers who answered the calls for aid from emergency officials. Skagit county's radio station, located west of Mount Vernon also deserves much credit for the part they played in the all night program – receiving assistance wanted calls and relaying them over the air to standby crews in the several towns of the county.