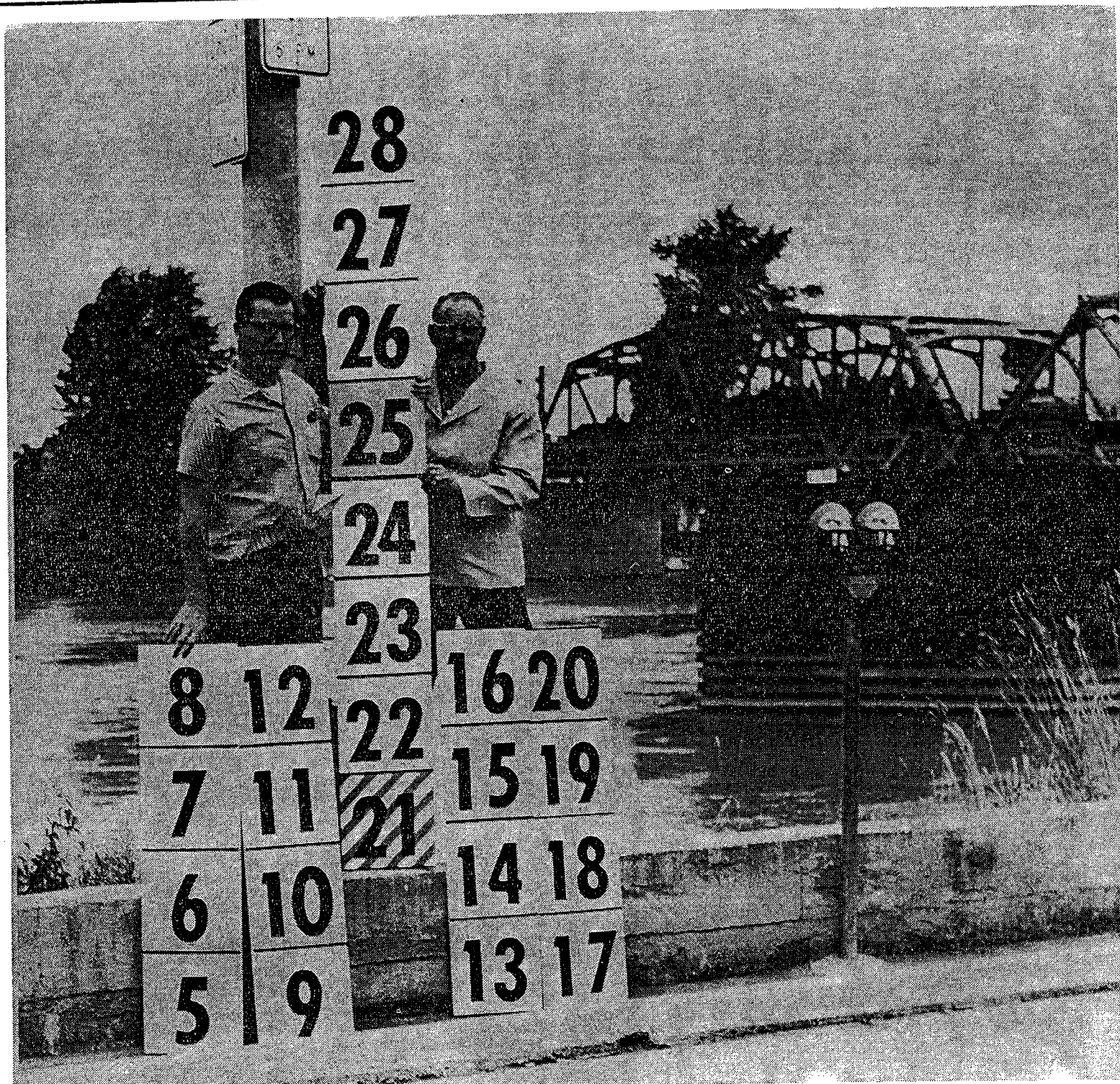


THE MOUNT VERNON ARGUS

THURSDAY, JULY 20, 1961



NEW GAUGE FOR RIVER — Mike Johnson and George Gazeley hold panels of the new Skagit river gauge that you'll be able to see without squinting, soon to go up at the lower tip of the down-

town Mount Vernon bridge draw rest. They are two of several volunteers who thought it a good idea and went to work on the project. — Argus photo, Scanagraving.

Volunteers Installing River Gauge for Fishermen

More than gossip comes out of a barber shop!

Mike Johnson, who does developing and photo printing at Daco Camera shop, was chinning with Lloyd Murray, the river-going barber, one day recently. The subject of boating and fishing came up, naturally.

"Why not put up a marker (river gauge) on the end of the bridge, where everyone can see it, from their car," someone asked.

Well, why not?

By chance, George Gazeley, who owns Simmonds Mount Vernon Paint store, happened to be getting a haircut at the time.

"If someone will supply the lumber, I'll provide the paint and do the painting," said Gazeley, who does lettering as well as other painting.

OTHER MATERIALS OFFERED

So, Mike got busy. He inquired down at Lakeside-Western Lumber company, and there

found Tom Brusegaard "anxious to help." Tom gave the special lumber for the six panels, an inch thick, a foot wide and four feet long, that were needed. Mr. Clark Zook and Dee Watkinson at Bert Robinson's arranged to supply the special brass nails also required.

Gazeley lived up to his promise and soon, perhaps by Sunday, the gauge will be in place, at the downstream tip, east face of the draw rest of the downtown Mount Vernon bridge. Murray will get out his boat to help with the installation.

FOLLOW ENGINEERS GAUGE

The big black numerous on a white background will be set in place to match the U. S. Engineer's gauge located on a piling behind the Moose hall. The fishermen's boatmen's-river-watchers' gauge will start at 5 feet, run up to 28 feet, with every fifth foot against a yellow background, and "21," the engineers'

official "flood stage," set against slanting orange lines.

And if 28 feet isn't high enough some day, it won't matter: Then you can go fishing on downtown Mount Vernon streets!

P. S. — If that 21-foot "flood stage" confuses you, here's the U. S. Engineers' official explanation:

"Local residents may note that 21 feet on the gauge at Skagit river in Mount Vernon means zero damage, but anything above 21 results in some flood damage. Residents would be living with a false sense of security if they believed 27 feet meant zero damage — for a stage of 27 feet on the (Moose Hall) gauge used by the weather bureau, Corps of Engineers and Skagit county personnel concerned with flood situations, would result in severe flooding and a critical situation in the lower Skagit river." (Ed. — The zero damage point at 27

feet sometimes heard of is on another gauge, maintained by the U. S. Geological Survey a mile above Mount Vernon."

AND A HISTORICAL NOTE:

Last major flood crested at 28.2 feet Feb. 2, 1951. Main street was sandbagged when the water came within six inches of spilling over into the downtown area. Conway was flooded when a dike broke and the waters spread over Highway 99 for several miles and remained there for six weeks, or until they could be drained out through salt water dike openings at low tide. Another dike break sent water surging across Fir island to Skagit bay and damaged many farms. Two years earlier, in November, 1949, the river surged up to 26.05 feet, gave the valley its first real flood scare in many years. Then, as in 1951, round-the-clock struggles to bolster dikes spared the valley greater losses.