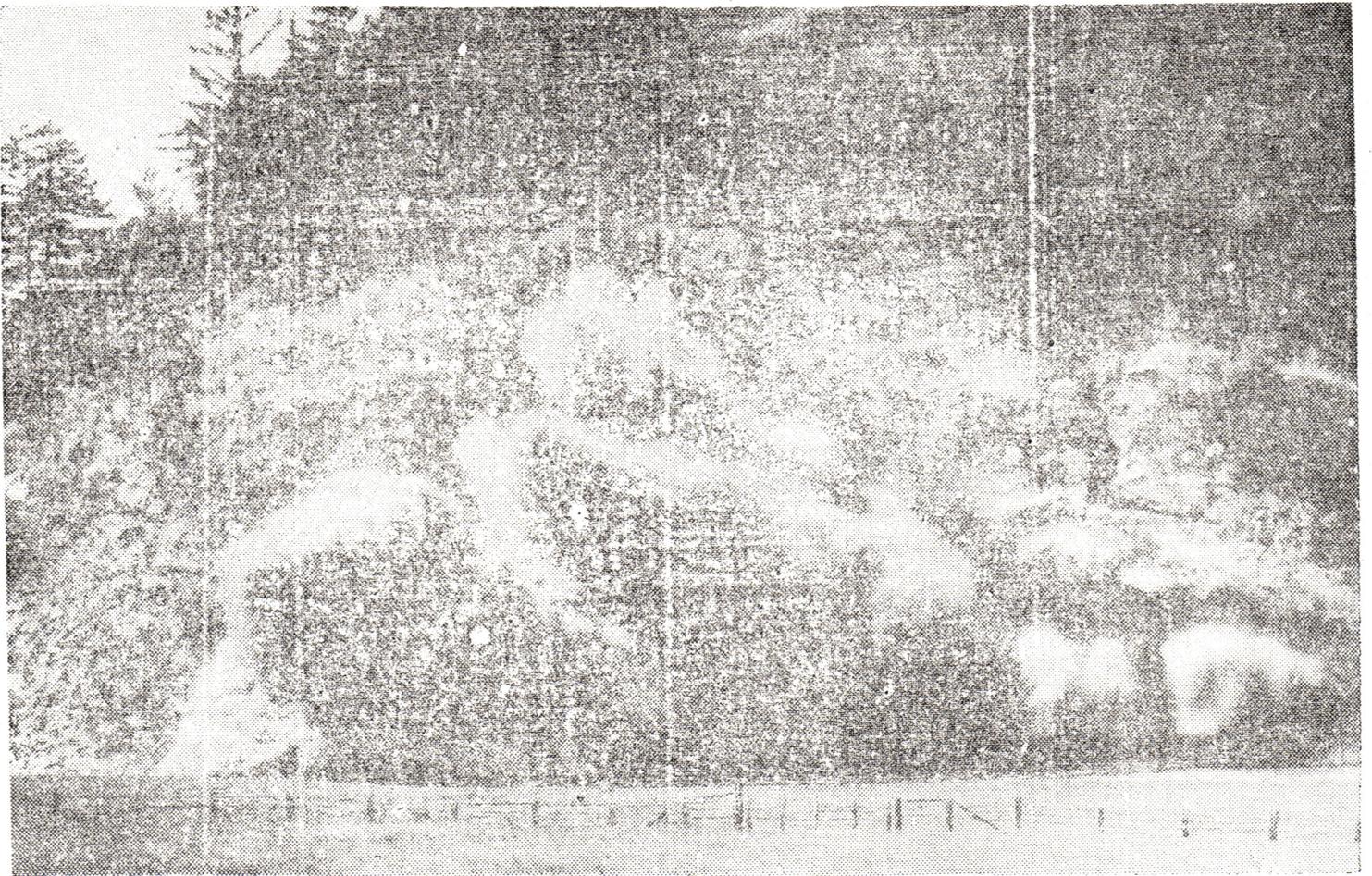


THE COURIER-TIMES

SEDRO-WOOLLEY, WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 1948

Sterling Hill Dynamited to Get Rock for Burlington Bend



Skagit County Quarry After 11-ton Dynamite Blast (Photographed with Telephoto Lens)—Photos by Howard J. Vallentyne Jr.

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**EARL WOOD EXAMINES BOULDER THAT NARROWLY
MISSED HIM**

Estimated to weigh ten tons, rock fell 500 feet from explosion site

—Photo Courtesy of Seattle Times

A distant, powerful explosion felt in several Sedro-Woolley homes last Saturday noon made available more than 30,000 yards of rock for flood control revetment work on the Skagit river near Burlington.

An 11-ton charge of dynamite, buried deep in the southeast end of Sterling Hill about two and half miles west of this city, lifted thousands of pounds of rock and pebbles into the air and poured up billowing clouds of powdery white dust. When the scene cleared, several acres of a farm in front of the hill were littered with rocks ranging from pebbles to pieces 10 feet thick and 15 feet long.

The county commissioners ordered the blasting so the county engineer, H. O. Walberg, could obtain rock for building a 4,000 foot long revetment along Burlington Bend on the Skagit River, where a horse-shoe bend has been washing away valuable farm land by the acre.

Earl C. Wood, county quarry superintendent, set off the explosion. Pete Tegmire of the Atlas Powder company, supervised the over-all plan for doing the blasting. L. E. Gruver of the Mt. Baker Hardware company, Sedro-Woolley, furnished all the 11 tons of dynamite used for the big blast and

supplied another ten or more tons used in the blasting which has been going on for the past three or four months.

The dynamite was placed in huge pockets at the ends of two sets of laterals branching off a 60-foot long tunnel at the base of the hill. The hill face was 72 feet high and solid rock.

While engineers and bystanders watched the awesome spectacle from a safe distance away, Quarry Superintendent Wood was running for his life. He thought he had stationed himself in a safe spot below a cliff about 500 feet around the edge of the hill from the blast site.

"There must have been a fault in the rock," Wood said. "I looked up and saw little chunks popping off. I lit out of there fast."

Wood pointed to a huge rock estimated to weigh ten tons, which he had seen rolling towards him.

"I was going to try to outrun it," Wood said. "Then I thought it would be smarter to jump out of its way. It rolled right past me, just a few feet away. See that big hole it made?"

The combined forces of the U. S. Army Engineers, state and Skagit county officials are carrying out the \$175,000 flood control project.