

Boulder Dam History

Year—1935

By FLORENCE LEE JONES

The Colorado river was brought under control at Boulder Dam on February 1, 1935, when the water flow through tunnel number four was stopped with the lowering of a huge 2,400,000 pound gate. The water then was forced into tunnel number one, where its flow could be controlled by bureau of reclamation engineers, who would measure out the amount required for downstream irrigation projects and domestic use, holding the rest in the reservoir which was to become Lake Mead.

Storage of the water began immediately, as the flow at Bright Angel was 5,340 cubic feet per second and the downstream requirements at that time were only 4,000 cubic feet per second.

The bed of the lake was being cleared, and families still residing in St. Thomas in the Moapa Valley were warned to move, as the area would be covered with water in a few months. H. C. Garrison, Boulder City mortician, had been awarded the contract for moving two cemeteries which would be covered by the lake.

"K" block of Boulder dam reached its maximum height of 727 feet on the night of February 7, 1935, marking the completion of pouring of 3,209,000 cubic yards of concrete, with only 46,000 yards remaining to be poured. Other blocks of the dam were nearing the top, and a two-foot deep "road block" was to be poured on top to form the highway across the dam.

Bids were called on February 9, 1935, for elevators to be placed in the dam to carry workmen, as well as visitors to the interior of the project.

The huge cooling tower structure, which played an important part in the dam construction, was torn down in late March, 1935.

Needle valves for installation in the valve houses on the Nevada and Arizona sides of the river had arrived by May 6, 1935, and work on installation was to start immediately.

It was announced at that time that 180,000 black bass would be planted in the lake during the summer. Also to be planted were croppie and bream in the lake and trout in the Colorado river below the dam.

On May 14, 1935, it was reported "With Boulder lake now 4 miles long and 132 feet deep in some sections and with game fish beginning to migrate from clearer upstream waters, the great reservoir behind Boulder dam already is showing signs of becoming the sportsmen's paradise it eventually is destined to become."

Pouring of the eight-foot slot through the center of Boulder Dam was completed by May 29, 1935, to the top elevation of 1232 feet. All that then remained to be poured were two blocks on the Arizona side of the river which were being held up until completion of the pouring of the roadway blocks and

completion of the safety island on the Nevada abutment of the dam. The exterior work was practically complete, but there remained much work on the inside. It was predicted that interior work would be complete in three months and that powerhouses would be complete in five months.

On May 30, 1935, Senator Pat McCarran was featured speaker at Memorial Day ceremonies held at Boulder Dam, where a bronze plaque commemorating men who had died in the construction of the project were memorialized. The plaque heading was "They labored that millions might see a brighter day." Senator McCarran said in part, "Mankind may create, but it is through individual effort that great projects like these are realized."

On the following day, Boulder Dam was the scene of a "live" radio broadcast, giving the background noises of the project work. Descriptions of the project were given by Don Wilson, NBC announcer, from the top of the dam and Don Thompson, field manager on special construction, described what he saw and felt as he went down the government cableway into the Nevada construction adit.

The government announced on June 7, 1935 that it would maintain a "trash barge" on the lake to collect debris flowing into the lake from the tributaries. Boatmen had complained that there was danger from floating wood and logs in the water.

Water in Boulder lake reached the base of intake towers at the dam on June 24, 1935, when the elevation of the lake was 895 feet. The intake towers were to control the flow of water from the reservoir through the power houses then under construction.

On June 29, 1935, approval was given by the state public service commission for the construction of a 150-mile transmission line to Pioche to provide Boulder dam power for mine developments there.

Congressman James G. Scrugham announced on July 10, 1935, that he had requested an appropriation of \$68,200 from the unemployment relief fund for conversion of buildings at Boulder City for use as laboratories in the investigation of electro-metallurgical treatment of ores in the Boulder Dam area.

After a two-week strike, Boulder dam workmen returned to the job on July 26, 1935. They had been protesting the schedule of working hours, wage scales and other grievances, which were settled by arbitration.

Miss Evelyn V. Hoag of Reading, Pennsylvania, was the first woman to swim across Boulder Lake. On July 30, 1935, she made the three-mile swim in 45 minutes from the Boulder boat landing to

the Arizona side.

On September 12, 1935, it was announced that railroad cars bearing 137-ton loads were being swung down into Black canyon, as the bureau of reclamation was getting ready to install the turbines in the powerhouses.

Plans were announced for the sale of a Boulder dam postage stamp on September 30, 1935, to be issued in conjunction with the dedication of the dam.

In ceremonies befitting the occasion, President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated the dam on September 30, 1935.

A CCC company was sent to Boulder City on November 11,

1935, to aid in airport work and to begin preparing lake beaches and roads to the area.

Preparatory to sending officials to Boulder City, the Los Angeles Bureau of Power and Light purchased 11 of the Six Companies, Inc., residences on October 16, 1935.

On October 25, 1935, Ralph Lowry, acting construction engineer for the bureau of reclamation, announced that Boulder City would start receiving Boulder dam power early in January, 1936, through operation of two small station house units.

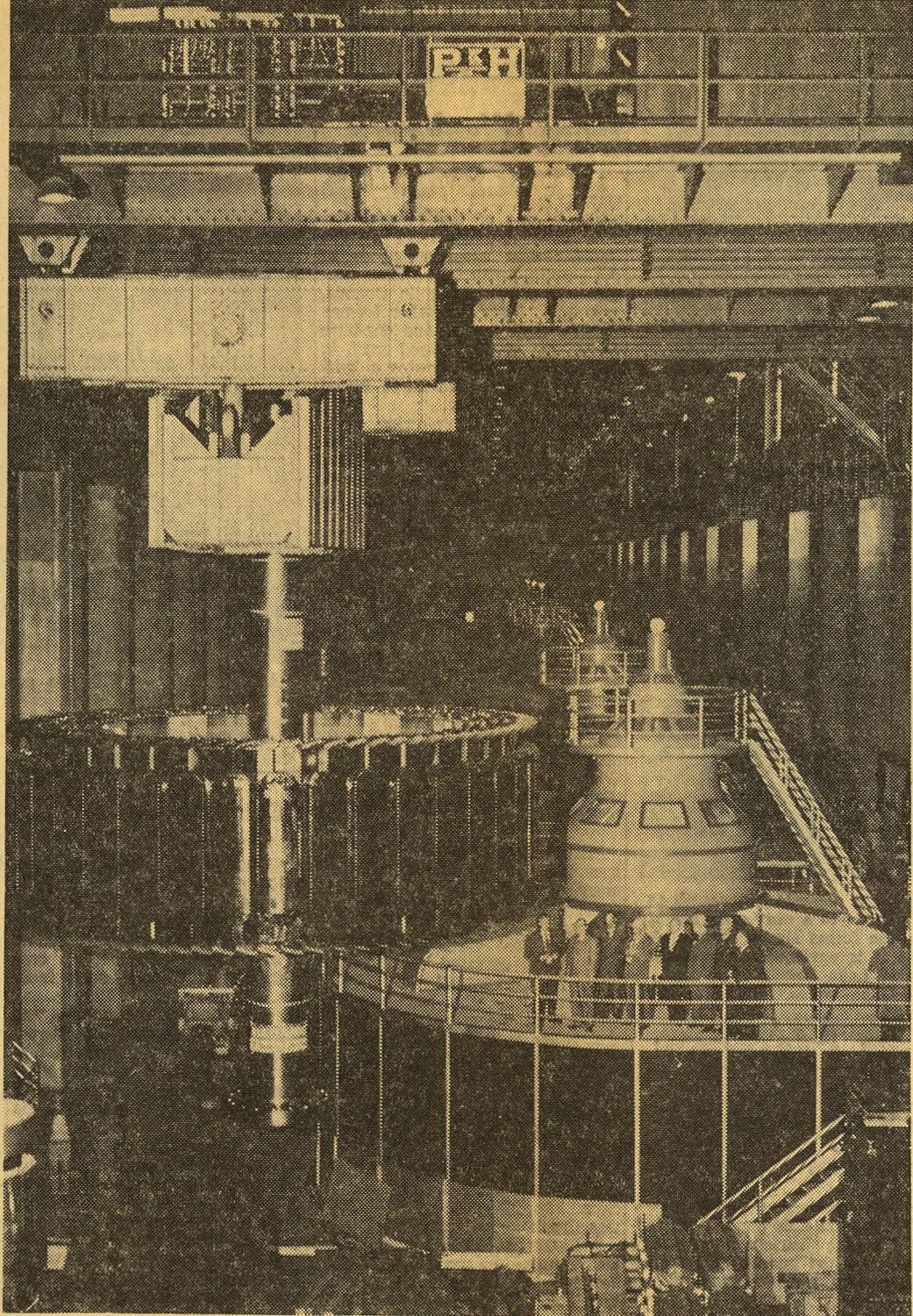
Six Companies, Inc., started disposing of its houses on November

30, 1935, as construction work was nearing completion. First offers of sales were to the occupants, at the rate of \$250 per house for three-room dwellings.

The highway across the top of Boulder Dam was opened to traffic on December 12, 1935.

The bureau of reclamation announced on December 20, 1935, that plans were being made to develop a recreation area on the shores of Boulder lake.

As the year neared the end, bureau of reclamation officials announced on December 27, 1935, that Boulder Dam power would be ready about the middle of March, 1936.



POWERHOUSES — Costing millions of dollars and requiring months for installation by teams of experts, the electric generators which operate on the water power from Boulder Dam present this gleaming picture to the millions of visitors who have been taken down in elevators and conducted through the project since the completion of the dam. A rotor was being placed when this photo was made. (Bureau of Reclamation photo)