

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

Life at the Dam

Inise Powers: At Grand Coulee, we finally got water—and my dad built some apartments, and we lived there. I went to Grand Coulee High School. We went to B Street for the music. We admired the taxi dancers, who got 5-cents a beer and 10-cents a dance. I graduated from high school in 1937. When you went up to B Street, you could hear music coming out the doors. On B Street with the boardwalks and mud, everyone wore boots—even the women. I have wonderful memories of going to dances: B Street was wide-open. Women chewed snuff and drank.

Rod Hartman: It was a rough atmosphere. We had a saying, "Let's go up to B Street and watch the fights." The taverns were wild and wooly.

Skip Lael: The workers drank and fought, and traded with wild women. They had left their families, rode in on box cars, but they never posed any danger.

Rod Hartman: I was nine years old when we came to Grand Coulee in 1936. My dad came as Manager of the Roosevelt Theater on Main Street. (The building no longer exists.) It was a 750 seat big, framed building—they wouldn't allow them to build it like that these days. It had a "fly" screen they could rain into the attic, and they would have stage shows, and many western singers.

Bill Miller: I was too busy for entertainment, but there were lots of cowboys, and rodeos. We had a movie theater in Grand Coulee—I was the janitor there—and I was janitor at the Roosevelt Theater. It held 750 people and had air conditioning. It was always crowded because people had money.

Rod Hartman: Theaters were the main attraction in town. People came from the surrounding towns, even out of the area.