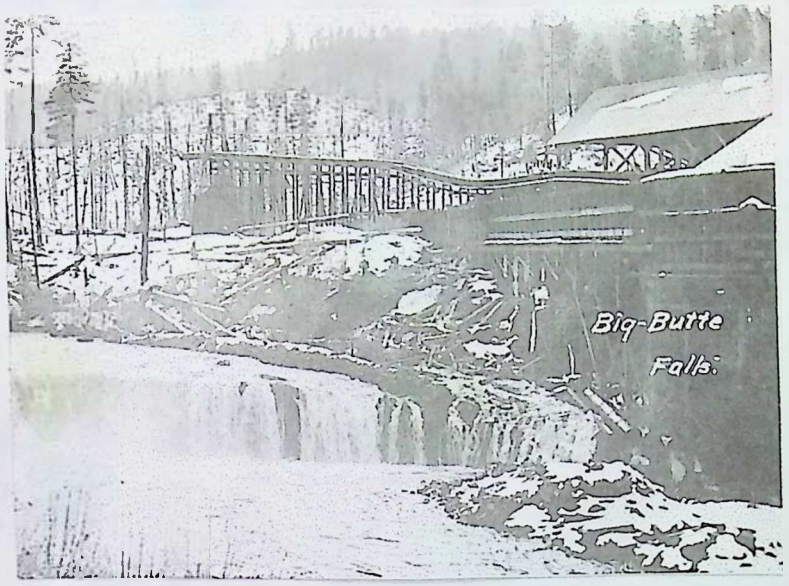
DID YOU KNOW?

Historical notes from Big Butte Historical Society
Compiled by Charleen Brown

BIG BUTTE CREEK FALLS



Ernest Smith Collection

When timber cruiser, Bert Harris saw the falls on Big Butte Creek in 1904 he saw a source of power for a sawmill. A small sawmill was built on the site by Big Ben Milling Company. A dam was built above the falls and the water was used to power the mill. This early mill was soon replaced by a larger mill known as the Butte Falls Sugar Pine Company. Bert Harris was the first boss of the new company.

The falls on Big Butte Creek can be classified as a combination of a "cascade" falls which flows over a series of rock ledges and a " plunge" falls which descends vertically, losing contact with the rock surface. On the near side, the water cascades down the sloping rock ledges while on the far side it plunges over a 15 foot cliff. Floods and seasonal flow have changed the channel over time so the face of the falls has changed naturally as the energy from the flowing water has continuously eroded the rocks creating a slow migration upstream. The plummeting water has created a 'plunge" pool at the base of the falls which has become a favorite swimming hole over the years. It is a "right of passage" for the local kids to jump off the falls into the pool. If you look closely, you might spot some unidentified teens preparing to take the plunge.

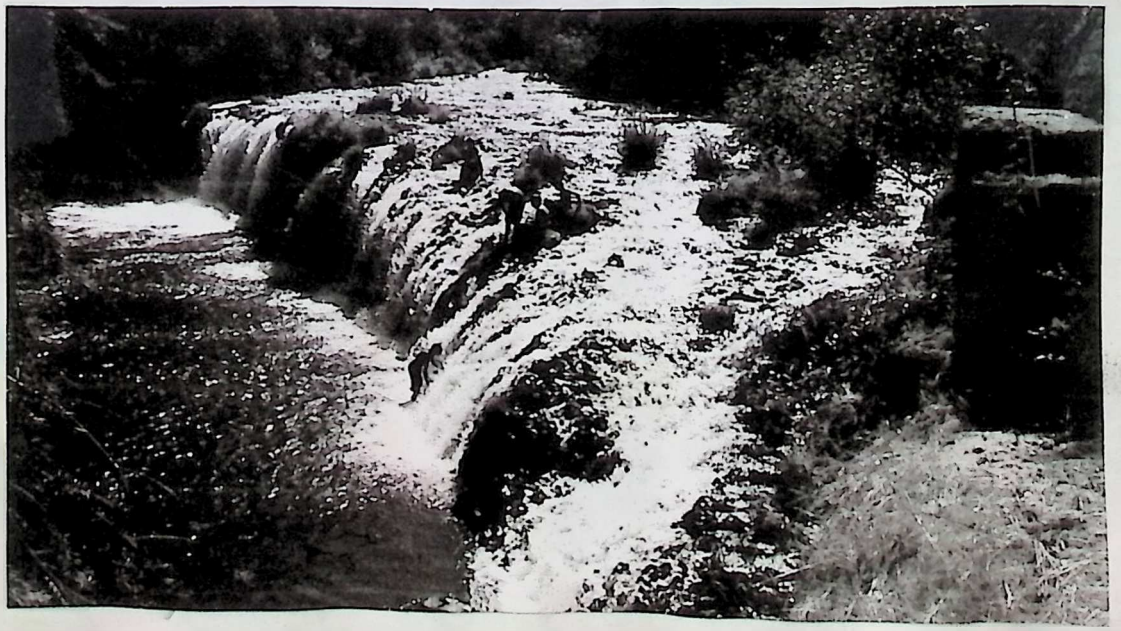


Photo by Charleen Brown