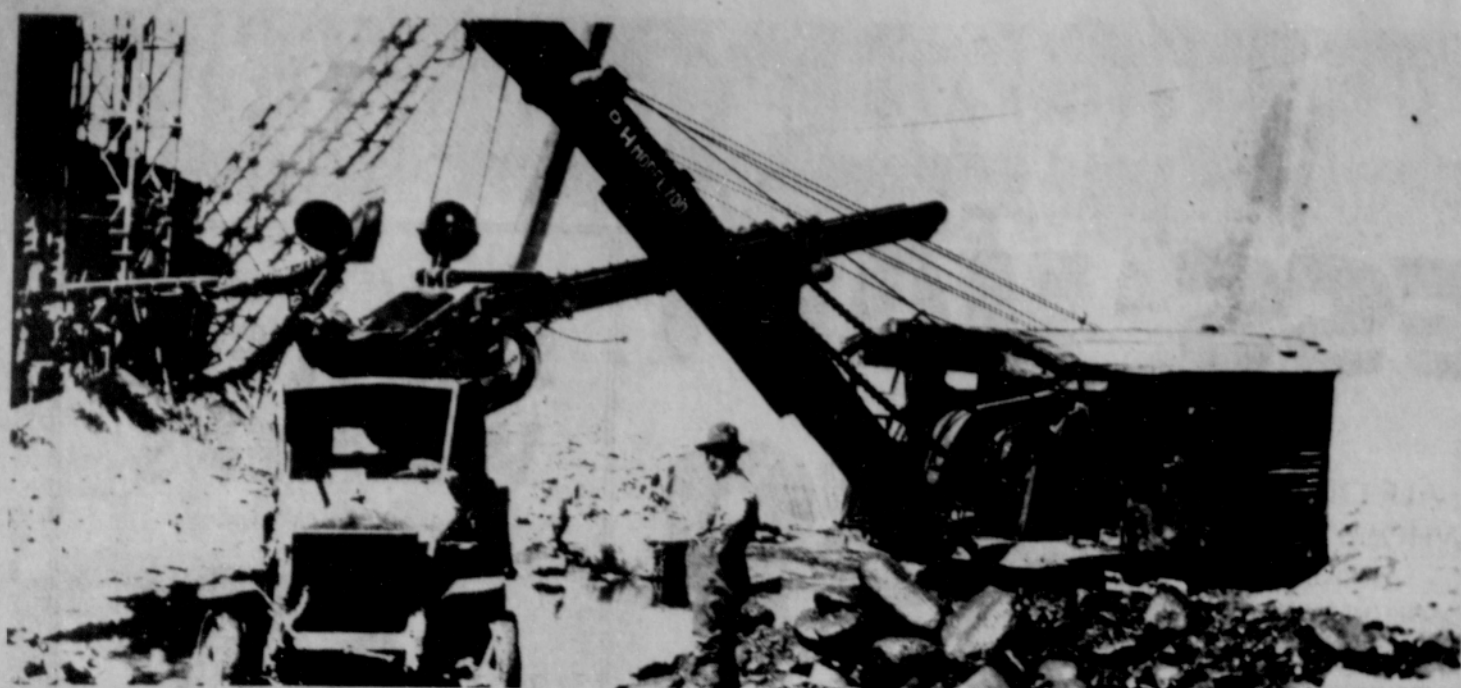
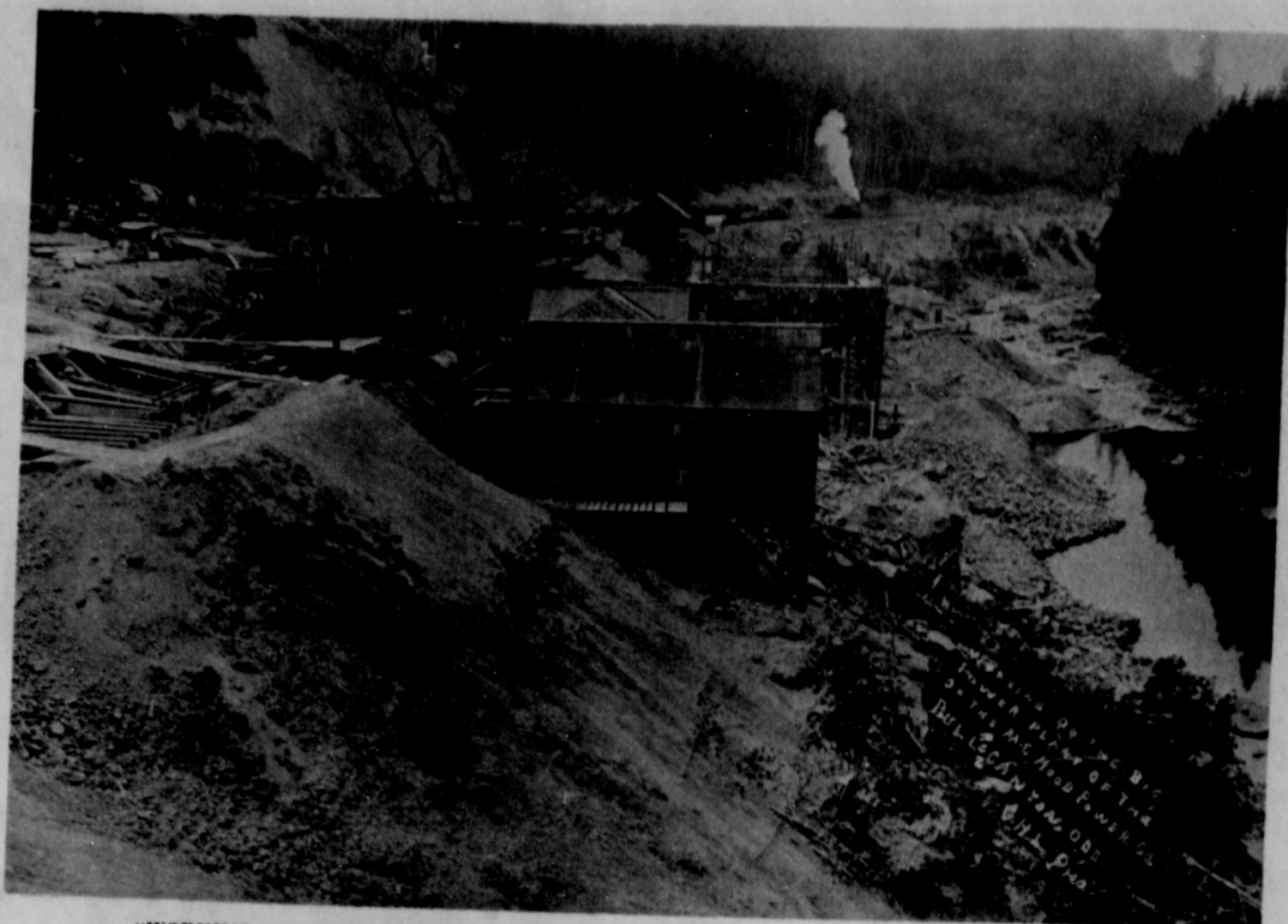




PHIL HAMBRECHT, excavation foreman of the Bull Run dam project, directing work at construction site. This photo, circa 1929, shows latter stages of work as the face of the dam can be seen in the background.



"WORKING ON the big power plant of the Mt. Hood Power Co., Bull Run Canyon, Ore." Pencil caption explains this undated photo discovered in a Fairview family attic. The power plant still operates, clinging to the canyon side below the Bull Run bridge near Roslyn

Lake. The bridge is said to be half a span of the old Burnside Bridge which once spanned the Willamette. The other half spans the Clackamas River at Barton, according to a story heard by Harold Kitchen, PGE employee.

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Food was rotten

Lightning-and Phil Hambrecht-helped to build Bull Run dam

by Bob Watkins
staff reporter

The Bull Run Dam, or Dam 1, sits in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains about five miles northeast of Sandy. A dividing valley separates its reservoir from Mt. Hood.

Together with Dam 2, sufficient water is collected to service the City of Portland and much of the surrounding area. The City of Gresham receives its water from this source.

In mid-winter approximately 100 million gallons of water a day flows through three conduits to Portland. During maximum summer days 225 million gallons pass through the pipelines.

The Bull Run Dam was

constructed between 1927 and 1930. Phil Hambrecht worked on the project from the opening of the construction camp until its completion three years later.

He really couldn't see the detail of the photograph in his hand. He not only had to ask if it showed what he was looking for but if it was even the right photo.

But his memory saw what his eyes could not.

"That's me standing by the shovel. I was both the excavation foreman and in charge of all the powder work. Can you make out the face of the dam in the background?"

Phil Hambrecht leaned forward and gestured again at the photograph.

"You know something? The food was rotten there and the bunk rooms were crowded and uncomfortable. But it was a good job and we were sure proud of her when we finished."

Hambrecht is now 90 years old and lives in Gresham. He said he was one of very few who lasted the duration of the project.

"I have problems remembering day-to-day things now but my memory of those days is still clear. We had quite a turnover in manpower. I couldn't guess but there weren't many who went from start to finish like me."

"But that was the nature of construction workers. We worked six days a week year-round. No vacations. If you wanted a vacation you just up and left. And plenty did."

He started as an oiler on the shovel. He ran the shovel after his predecessor quit and within the year was named excavation foreman.

"That dam was a beauty," Hambrecht remembered. "She rose over 200 feet from the base. And it was set in such beautiful country. It was all timber when we went in there."

"I've been up there several times since then. You can still see plenty of deer and Douglas firs six and eight feet through. It was a good project to be on."

But it was hard work. The foundation for the dam had to be set in solid rock, not dirt, which increased problems in excavation. The job called for extensive blasting.

"We shot twice a day. One day I had the holes all loaded and we were ready to shoot. Just then a thunderstorm hit and the lead wire was struck. The whole load went off."

"No one was killed, though. Plenty were injured but I don't think I was. I kept my health pretty well all the way through."

The dam was originally called Bear Creek Dam after a

small creek that ran just above the face of the dam. Hambrecht said the entire creek is now underwater.

To get to the project site the crews crossed the Sandy River at Dodge Park. Hambrecht said there was a bridge there in the '20s, the remains of the foundation still recognizable today. The actual site was about nine miles from the Bull Run Post Office.

"When we got to the point of pouring the concrete," Hambrecht said, "we went all over to get our materials. We took the gravel out of the Bull Run River, the sand from Roslyn Lake and the cement was hauled by truckloads from Portland."

He said over 100 men were working on the construction site, all hired by Bent Brothers of Los Angeles, the contractors. They also contracted for the cooking outfit that raised Hambrecht's ire and inverted his palate.

"Like I told you, the food was rotten. I had been used to good food and this stuff just wasn't up to snuff."

"You see, I used to do all my own cooking. I also used to cook on log runs and at other construction sites. There were times when I would be cooking in the mess tent and all the women from the nearby town would come over to watch me. They wanted to learn something from me."

"Yessir, I was a well-known cook."

Phil Hambrecht was born in Lynn, Mass., on Dec. 8, 1885. As a young man he worked in shoe shop. One day he read an advertisement in a newspaper that said "Go West, young man."

At 21, he did. He arrived in Spokane in 1906 and worked himself in and out of numerous jobs. He was a cook, baker, lumberjack and held a variety of construction jobs.

By 1915, he had settled as a homeowner in Leavenworth, Wash., and was working in Wenatchee. That year he also joined the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

The IWW was a revolutionary trade union formed in 1905 by leading American Socialists and trade unions. It reached its peak during World War I, with a membership between 60,000 and 100,000, but also incurred the wrath of both the citizenry and the government with strikes that were seen as being against the national war effort.

Employers saw these strikes as treasonous and the federal government took suppressive action. The Justice Department raided all IWW headquarters in 1917 and arrested the entire leadership of the organization—over 200 men and women.

"I had been a well-known and

well-liked man. People knew me, everybody liked me. But when I joined the Wobblies no one would brush up against me."

"One woman came up to me, looked me over good, and said, 'But you don't look like one.'"

Hambrecht said he was jailed without a trial along with about 300 other IWW members. Upon his release he remembers the sheriff telling him to get out of town or he'd end up in jail again.

"I told him," he recalled as his body tensed, "not to let anybody try to beat me up or I'll kill them."

Hambrecht finally left Wenatchee in 1918 to come to Gresham and he dropped his membership in the IWW. But he still defends the organization.

"You hear all this and that about the Wobblies. But up in Wenatchee we never went on strike for wages. It was always because of working conditions. We had no place to bathe, there were three and four to a bunk and the entire camp was filth."

He said someday the truth would come out about the IWW and exactly who was behind the efforts to discredit and intimidate them.

"I know the American Legion was in back of many of the beatings. Up in Wenatchee a friend of mine was lynched, castrated and filled with lead. Just because he was a Wobbly. It was the lumber barons and the American Legion who were behind it."

But Hambrecht said he was happy to find that he had left all that behind when he came to work on the Bull Run Dam project. The conditions were greatly improved and management was more concerned with the workers.

"I liked it here then and I like it here now. I have been married twice and both my wives are buried in Lincoln Memorial Park."

"And when my time comes, that is where I'm going."

Scenic railway short-lived venture

Black smudges from the steam locomotives still mar the walls of Bull Run power plant buildings.

Constructed in 1911-13, the plant is still operated by Portland General Electric.

Its builders were the Mt. Hood Railway, Light and Power Company.

Old-timers have told Harold Kitchen, power plant employee, that the Mt. Hood power company advertised a railroad to be built up through the Bull Run Valley to the base of Mt. Hood. Its purpose would be for commerce and recreation.

The company went broke in the 1920s before that ambitious dream was realized. The railroad never extended past the Bull Run power plant.

Prior to removal of the

tracks, people from Portland took Sunday excursions to Dodge Park on the electric trains. Residents of the Bull Run area used the electric and steam-powered trains as the fastest way to Gresham.

Kitchen also said working on the plant was no picnic.

"It was all built by hand labor," Kitchen said. "I've been told that the foremen would watch construction workers and count how many shovelfuls of dirt per hour they could dig. If they weren't fast enough, they were sent down the road."

What's new on the mountain? Read the Sandy Post and See!

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Increase in glass prices boosts recycling efforts

A recent 50 per cent increase in the price paid by Owens-Illinois Inc. for empty glass containers will be a big boost to recyclers throughout Oregon, according to the DEQ Recycling Information Office.

The price has risen from \$20 to \$30 a ton, or from 1 cent per pound to 1½ cents per pound for small quantities.

The Portland plant, 5535 NE 101st Ave., receives glass Tuesday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and on Thursday from 3 to 7 p.m.

"These changes at Owens-

Illinois will make glass recycling even more attractive than it has been," stated Bill Bree of the Recycling Information Office. "The higher price will help to keep many existing projects operating."

Bree pointed out that each day Portland area residents throw into landfills 200,000 pounds of glass which could be recycled.

"Glass is one of the most easily recycled solid waste materials," said Bree, "but one of the least biodegradable. Nature can recycle a tin to dust

in 100 years and an aluminum can in 500 years, but a glass bottle takes one million years."

People who wish to transfer their glass from the solid waste stream to the recycling stream should call the Recycling Switchboard at 229-5555.

The Switchboard lists over 100 depots in Oregon which collect glass. Those establishing new recycling projects can call this same number to receive information on how to get started and to be listed with Recycling Switchboard's referral service.