— HISTORY —

In its day, Scotland Dam a masterpiece of construction

Part two of two

When it was built some 93 years ago, the Scotland Dam was considered to be an outstanding piece of civil engineering. It was in an isolated position, but the adjacent New York New Haven railroad line was highly convenient for the construction workers.

The dam's superintendent of construction, Philip H. Trout of the Tucker and Vinton Construction Co. of New York, admitted that this was the most difficult job he had ever undertaken because the base of the dam had to be secured with concrete on a less than stable riverbed.

When construction was completed, the total outlay for the Scotland dam came to more than $150,000. The dam was built in several sections. The section on the Scotland side of the river consisted of the solid rollway, and was 35 foot high and 15 foot long.

Tom Beardsley

The central section of the dam, the hollow roll way, was 35 feet high and 80 feet long and 60 feet wide at the base. It contained a 7-foot high and 5-foot wide passage way lighted by electricity.

The third portion consisted of the tainter gate consisting of five 20-foot wide steel gates.

The fourth portion consisted of the co-wall and was 170 feet long with hydraulic fittings on both sides. The entire length of the dam was 450 feet.

The concrete-constructed power station on the Scotland bank of the river was 75 feet long, 30 feet wide and 30 feet high, with turbines, transformers, generators and three water wheels that generated 2,400 horsepower.

The General Electric Co. of Schenectady, N.Y., installed the powerhouse machinery.

The final task was to seal the dam by pouring concrete into several wooden gates at the base.

A long chain of heavy timber was laid across the river from the Franklin side and chained down to prevent logs of wood getting into the gates of the dam.

This relatively isolated section of Windham County was utilized to bring 20th century conveniences to a wider population.

The old "meandering stream" part of the Shetucket River was replaced by a 500-foot wide pond on the Windham side of the dam, which greatly widened the river for quite a distance.

The Uncas Power Co.'s Scotland dam officially opened in early December, 1908, and greatly increased the amount of electricity available for the city of Norwich.

The intensive manual work undertaken resulted in only one fatality when an engineer was struck and killed by the jib of a crane.

The Scotland dam still provides some 200 kw of power, and is administered by Northeast Utilities, but the area is better known today by fishermen for its Rainbow and Brown trout, and Atlantic salmon.

The 1955 floods caused great damage to the Scotland dam.