

The BADIN BULLETIN

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OF GENERAL INTEREST

Hydraulic Development at Badin

(Second Article in Historical Series)

In the Legislature of 1898, Mr. R. L. Smith, representative from Stanly County, endeavored to obtain support of that body to secure funds to employ engineers in order that plans might be made of the Yadkin Narrows, so that either the State could induce capital to develop, or develop it itself. The size of the undertaking was too great for that time, and the plan fell through.

Not until 1908, ten years afterwards, did this section of the river again receive attention. This time it came from Mr. George Whitney, a financier of Pittsburgh, Pa. Mr. Hambley, of Salisbury, interested Mr. Whitney in a prospect to construct a dam at Whitney, about six miles up the river from the present development at the Narrows. The development at Whitney came to a timely end when, in 1912, the Southern Aluminium Company purchased the rights of the Whitney Reduction Company, and after a few months' work on the Whitney plans this new company abandoned the project, and started work at the Narrows.

At the outbreak of the European war, work was stopped by the Southern Aluminium Company, and little or nothing done until November, 1915, the month and year the property changed hands and came into the possession of the Tallassee Power Company.

Upon assuming control, the Tallassee Power Company went at the work in earnest. Many obstacles had to be cleared away, including the work which had been started or completed by the Southern Aluminium Company that would not fit in with the plans developed by Mr. James W. Rickey, Hydraulic Engineer, and Mr. William Hoopes, of the Aluminum Company of America. This preparation period lasted from November 15, 1915, until April 1, 1916; consequently, when one considers that

the Narrows dam and powerhouse were completed within fifteen months of actual working time, it is indeed an achievement to be proud of.

The last closure was made in the dam, which for thirty days held back all the water of the Yadkin River, on June 27, 1917. For several days prior to June 27 the Yadkin had been at flood stage. Everything on the job was being whipped into shape to begin the storage of water on the above date, and the order from "headquarters" was to close on that day.

At this point, let us digress a little from the boiled down statement of facts, and publish some heretofore unheralded incidents which furnished the only means of eliciting so much as a smile from our genial contractor, Mr. Scott, and generally served to keep away the blues, which were fast reaching the indigo stage as a result of the realization that the day of judgment was fast approaching when estimates, the engineer's nemesis, would be struck in the balance with actuals. As we rapidly approached the tape, even friend Urqu-

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The Man Who Planned the Narrows Dam

There are two processes in the creation of any master work, whether it be a painting, a drama of human life, a great building, or a structure to harness the waters of a mighty river. The first is the mental operation or planning; the second is the practical execution or working out in material form the ideas previously conceived in the mind and specified on paper. The dam at the Narrows certainly ranks among the few foremost achievements of its kind in our country. The man who planned the great structure which now controls the enormous resources of power latent in the flow of the Yadkin River is Mr. James W. Rickey, who occupies the position of Chief Hydraulic Engineer of the Aluminum Company of America.

Mr. Rickey was born in Dayton, Ohio, on November 10, 1871. He entered the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N. Y., in 1890, and was graduated in 1894. It is interesting to note that Mr. E. S. Fickes and Mr. S. K. Colby were members of the same class and of the same society. Even at that early date, by the unconscious process of association and coherence, the Aluminum family was beginning to develop.

Now comes a part of the story which should prove an inspiration to every young man who at the beginning of his career is compelled to face discouraging conditions, and lose or win according to the kind of fight he makes. James Rickey finished his school training and was ready to launch out upon his professional career. At that time the panic of 1893-1894 was in full swing, and there was absolutely nothing to do in the engineering line. The first job that the ambitious and capable young engineer could find was that of ushering in a summer theater at fifty cents per night, carfare included. Did he hesitate, or turn this down? I should say *not!* That was not the kind of stuff he was made of. He stuck to his theater job, did his

Take Care of Your Families

Trees have been planted in front of a great many houses in Badin, and in another year should provide considerable comfort for our people. To insure the growth of the trees, it is necessary, however, that they receive plenty of water and proper care.

Each tree has, therefore, been named after the occupant of the premises, and is considered a member of same. Will you then please give each of your trees three buckets of water twice each week? Then keep the weeds cut down so they will not take moisture which should go to the tree, and you will be astonished how rapidly these members of your family will grow.

DO NOT WAIT! DO IT NOW!