

***The Fight to Build the Grand Coulee Dam and the
Economic Revolution that Transformed the Nation
A Presentation by Patrick Ruckert***

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The Fight to Build the Grand Coulee Dam and the Economic Revolution that Transformed the Nation

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I. Introduction

The one point Lyndon LaRouche has been trying to get across to you for a long time is that this system, of a globalized dictatorship over humanity by the British financial oligarchy, is running out of its ability to survive. There are two choices for humanity: Change the system or war. The oligarchy has chosen war. We choose to change the system. Our journey tonight will explore an example of how, during the first forty years of the twentieth-century, this same battle was successfully waged.

Most people do not, or do not want to understand that; so, they try to adjust to a world collapsing around them. “Yes, it's bad,” they will say, “but, it won't get that bad.”

We have to give people a solution-- one that they can recognize will work. Then they will fight. But, we as a nation are not the same as we were 90 years ago.

For example, look at this recent full-page ad from a newspaper.



“The Next Big Thing.” A new phone, is a BIG thing?!

That is not the way we used to think. Tonight I will show you what a “next big thing” really is.

First let's establish the principles upon which we shall proceed.

A few weeks ago, Lyndon LaRouche made the point that real ideas, that is ideas that increase man's power over nature, are only initiated and brought to fruition by a small number of people; by those who dedicate themselves to a mission that is to them more important than life itself. Why? Because they live in the future and what they create for that future is what their lives mean. They allow nothing to get in the way of the accomplishment of that mission. While they may be the only one with that kind of commitment, the effect they have on others can sweep those others into participating in the accomplishment of the mission.

In the webcast of October 5, 2012, LaRouche put it this way:

***“And therefore, you look forward, to what you can do, for the future. And what gets you, what grips you, is you don't want that ever to go away! You want this continuity of the progress of mankind, mediated in part through yourself, into a better future for mankind as a whole. This is the kind of immortality which people can actually enjoy, without trying to make mystical dreams out of it: If you can get people around you to become better people than they are, in this sense, and that they in turn will make people coming after them, become better, that is what it is, the joy of living!*”**

“You're all going to die, so why aren't you so sad? Because there's a meaning to life, that you know that what's been engendered by what you've contributed to, means something for centuries to come! And you determine that those centuries to come will not be destroyed, so that that will happen!”

In addition, we must be truth seekers, and, in fact, we can know the truth beforehand, if we can forecast what are the interests of the coming generations. We must be able to know what will be the effect for humanity, of what we do, or what we don't do? And, it is personal-- not just we, but you.

On the other side, those who oppose such a truthful mission, or the great project, violate that principle with selfish motivations, lying and fraud and corruption. They live only in the present, and like all who are blind to the future, they are even blind to the possibilities that are in front of their eyes.

Third, as Americans, we have the US Constitution to guide us, with its three principles that establish a foundation for both policy and morality. They are: sovereignty, the general welfare and a commitment to posterity. Guided by those principles we can construct a future of which we can be proud.

I want you to keep in mind those ideas and especially note the following as we proceed this evening.

In Lyndon LaRouche's paper, *“End the Folly in Sense-Perception-- Metaphor!”* (September 19, 2012), he writes, ***“Competent insight into crucial developments occurring in the future, depends upon the developed capability of the forecaster to have predetermined the content of the action by means of which foreknowledge of the future changes the present course of events.”***

And in *The Weekly Report*(larouchepac.com) of September 26, 2012, he said, ***“And this has also a***

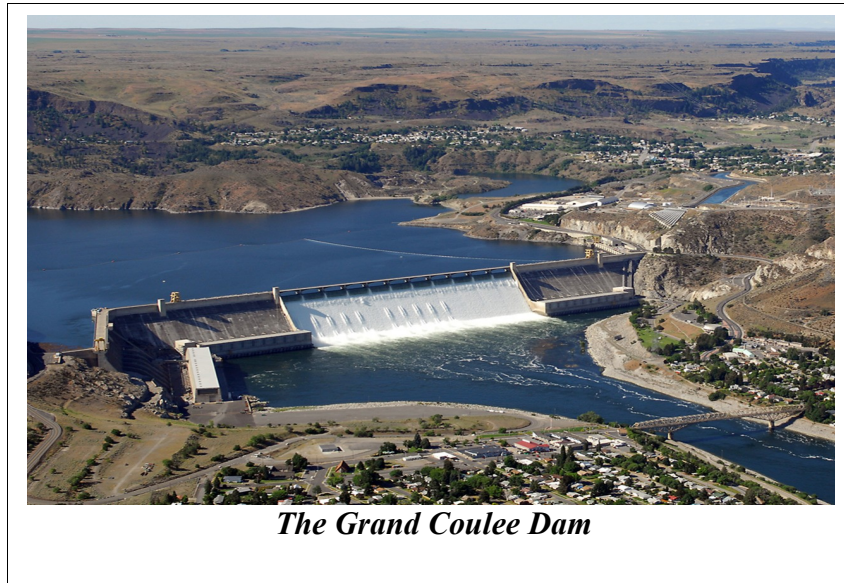
moral effect: The person who has this kind of experience, and is aware of it, has a moral capability which other people do not have.”

Later, in that same *Weekly Report*, he added: *“And our stupidity consists in the fact that we don't understand that it is possible to forecast the future! Not to predict an event, but to forecast the condition in the future, and to estimate the time-frame in which development will occur.”*

In response in that same *Weekly Report*, Ben Dennison said, *“As you said, the forecasting is a question of actually giving mankind an ability to act; it's about action, creating action.... A successful forecast is actually creating the capability of mankind to create a new state, to create a new change.”*

Our discussion tonight is emphatically about mankind creating a big change by living in the future.

Now, here is the big foot-print that is the center of our story tonight: The Grand Coulee Dam. The real “next big thing” more than 90 years ago. And it is still the biggest thing today. And more like it must be the “next big thing” tomorrow, starting with NAWAPA XXI.



II. Background

But first, some background.

In 1879 Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. This was one element of a flood of inventions, all to apply the principle of electricity to more and more tasks, increasing dramatically man's productive power.

This was the beginning of the age of electricity—a leap from a lower level of productivity to a new, higher platform of man's power over the universe. Where one man could now do the work of 100, with less real physical effort.

That was only 123 years ago-- about 1% of the 10,000 years of recorded history. A mere moment.

Imagine, from the flash of the light bulb to man working at the speed of light, on Mars with Curiosity-- less than the lives of two generations.

Creativity

What made this, and much more to come in the future, possible, if we get rid of Obama and reorganize civilization for the “common aims of mankind,” is that fundamental quality of creativity unique to human beings.

Such creativity is not just expressed by scientific discovery and classical principles of composition, but also by how man organizes his society through political and economic systems. That is the real essence of our journey tonight-- The partially successful battle to restore the American System of economics based on the Constitutional principle of the general welfare, and the immortal identity of a trans-generational participation in building a future for all mankind.

The Credit System

Our story highlights a key element of that American System-- a credit system, in which the investment of the increased productivity of the future, today, creates that increased productivity of the future. Thus, the future determines the present. Value is not money, but of its use as credit invested in the increase of the physical wealth of society.

That is what was established by Washington and Hamilton in the creation of the U.S. National Bank, which by its investments began the systematic transformation of the U.S. economy from mainly a scattered rural population, which merely produced its own means of survival, to an increasingly integrated production system of infrastructure, industry and agriculture-- dramatically raising the productive power of the U.S.

That increased productive power is measured by an increase of the energy flux-density of the system as a whole, as best seen by the transition from burning wood, to then the use of coal as the energy source of production. An even more productive use of both was developed with the steam engine. The utilization of electricity then, again, increased the energy flux-density of the power source for production.

This continuous upgrading, as for example, just to use transportation, changed man's relation to the universe by changing time and space. Whereas, in 1850, for example, to go from St. Louis to San Francisco would require up to six months. A mere decade later with the completion of the Trans-continental Railroad, that trip would take only one week.

Our story tonight brings together all of the foregoing-- creativity, a real idea, an impassioned leadership, the American System of economics and a restored credit system, all to create a succession of higher economic platforms of productivity, turning the Pacific Northwest from a relative backwater of the nation into an essential and critical region of advanced and powerful productive capability, which helped to determine the future of the nation and all of human civilization.

My Idea

My idea for this presentation began by thinking about how the Grand Coulee Dam and the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project would be a useful example of what we could do on a continental scale with NAWAPA XXI. That initial idea led to much more, as we shall see.

I shall develop the context of that 1930s project first, then highlight the battle required for its realization with a focus on one man who made it happen. His leadership brought many others into the fight and some of them will be mentioned, especially the role of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

By the late 1800s, as electricity began replacing steam power, the internal combustion engine began replacing horses, and the airplane era began, humanity leaped to an new productive economic platform.

By the 1920s, electricity was a necessity in every city and town. That was the beginning of the battle for who and for what purpose this great good was to be controlled. Power trusts of private electric companies emerged, which were run on the same monetarist ideology upon which hedge funds and derivatives operate today-- how can we loot and steal using this new development called electricity? These privately owned and increasingly Wall Street controlled were not motivated by the idea of how to use the power of electricity for the development of the nation. For these trusts, it all came to an end with the crash of 1929, in which these power trusts were a key element of the speculation and debt that collapsed.

III. Private vs Public Power

The fight over who would control and for what purpose the generation and distribution of electricity during the first 40 years of the 20th Century was a battle known as private vs public power. Even before the turn of the century, leaders who were motivated by an idea of the general welfare and the future, had created municipal power systems owned by the people and their governments. One of the first was Tacoma, WA. Seattle soon followed. Soon hundreds of cities and towns across the nation followed suit. The principle of the municipal, or public power systems was to serve everyone in a given area at a low uniform rate. That is, like the “postage stamp” rate-- where it does not matter how far your letter is to travel it will cost the same.

Of course, the private power companies were opposed to the public systems, since to compete in the arena of municipal systems they had to lower their rates to that of the public system. For example, when Seattle City Light was founded and charged five cents a kilowatt hour, the private utility Puget Power was forced to lower their rate of 20 cents a kilowatt hour to match that. The private power interests charged that the public power people were anti-American and opposed free enterprise, as, of course, do the Wall Street looters today.

It was not until FDR became President that the power of the Wall Street power trusts was broken. Public power was a central element of FDR's policy. He had led a fight for public power and the regulation of the private utilities while Governor of New York, and was ready to run with it the day he entered the White House in March, 1933.

Reclamation

Intertwined with the issue of power was reclamation. That is, the irrigation projects necessary to bring water to thirsty lands, especially in the West.

While the US Army Corps of Engineers had always dealt with flood control and navigation on the US river systems, reclamation was just a minor part of their job.

In 1902 the Reclamation Service was established by the US government, later renamed the Bureau of Reclamation. Its task was to bring water to the land.

The increased demand for electricity through the early decades of the last century necessitated an explosion of dam building to generate it. Hydroelectric power is produced by the building of a dam in which the force of cascading water turns a turbine producing the power. The great cost and time required to build a dam and lay the power lines, in most cases, was far greater than any private company could handle. Thus, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation became the backbone of dam building in the country.

The same dam that produces power can also provide irrigation, thus many projects were of dual use, or more.

By the mid-1920s the big projects began. For example Hoover Dam was begun in 1929 and completed in 1934. At that time it was the biggest dam in the world, and as described, a miracle of engineering, built by the Army Corps of Engineers.

The New Deal: A New Platform of Development

FDR changed everything. His New Deal not merely saved the country from a catastrophe, like that which Germany slid into, also in 1933, with the establishment of the Hitler dictatorship, but moved the nation to a new platform of development. His entire policy must be seen as a conscious determination to transform the relationship of man and nature, where man is less and less a subject of nature's violence.

FDR would unleash-- using a Hamiltonian-type credit mechanism with agencies such as The Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), The Works Progress Administration(WPA), and The Industrial Recovery Act(IRA)-- a massive infrastructure building program. The leading element of that policy would be power and irrigation.

Seven Key Elements of FDR Policy

But first he had to get control over the banksters of Wall Street and bust the power trusts. In a series of acts and laws from 1933-1937 he did just that. These included the following:

Seven Key Elements of FDR Policy

1933 Emergency Banking Act and Glass-Steagall
1933 The Tennessee Valley Authority Act
1934 The Securities and Exchange Act
1935 The Public Utility Holding Act
1935 The Federal Power Act
1936 The Rural Electrification Administration
1937 The Bonneville Project Act

In these acts, FDR and Congress declared the furnishing of electric service to be a public utility; to be controlled and regulated for the general welfare of the nation. In addition FDR and Congress saw this responsibility to include the furnishing of electricity to every home, business and farm of the nation. This was the policy until the 1990s deregulation binge, which gave us Enron and other crimes.

Rural Electrification

Let's look at the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) to see how this policy actually transformed the nation, rapidly increased its productivity and brought millions of farm families out of an essentially peasant existence. In 1936, outside of tractors and combines, life on the farm was no different than it had been 100 years before. In that year 90% of the farms in the US had no electricity. Compared to other nations that was a shocking statistic. France, then, had electrified 95% of its farms; it was 90% in Japan; 85 % in Denmark; etc. Those nations had governments that had programs to make it happen.

Why so low in the US? Because the private power companies would not run the lines to rural areas unless the farmer paid the entire cost (at \$1,500 per mile) and paid a rate based on distance from the power source. That would be \$1000s per farm-- in 1936, when most farm families had an annual income of a few hundred dollars. The municipal systems could not do it by law.

In truth, the private power companies didn't give a damn, and they would not build the dams. In July, 1935 a group of utility company executives wrote a report in which they claimed, ***“that there were very few farms requiring electricity for major farm operations that are not now served.”***

I want you to think about life on the farm in 1936, without electricity. Life and work for most rural Americans in the 1930s was fixed in a cycle of hardship and drudgery. They lived and worked in a dark and powerless land.

No running water in the house or barn. No flush toilet. Water was pumped by hand and hauled to where it was needed. The average farm family spent 240 hours per year pumping and hauling water.

No electrical machinery: saws, grinding wheels, pumps, milking machines, and dozens of other tools.

No refrigeration for food and milk production. The typical dairy farmer would lose a portion of his milk to spoilage.

No washing machines. The farm wife would wash clothes with a scrub board.



The Scrub Board

No electrical appliances, like stoves, irons and hot water heaters. Wood stoves for cooking and heat were the norm, which meant many hours chopping wood. No lighting in the house or barn.



Wood Stove



Kerosene lamp

Beginning in 1935, FDR created the Rural Electrification Administration(REA), which became law in 1936. Immediately the country side began to light up. Farmers would get together and form a COOP. The COOP would apply to the REA for a loan to pay for not only running the lines to the farms and hooking them up to a power source, but also to buy appliances and machinery to use the electricity. The REA charged the COOPs 2% interest. More than \$410 million was lent in the first ten years, with the funds coming from the RFC. Within five years, 30% of the farms had electricity. By 1952 it was 90%, and by 1960 it was 99%. This was the most successful and massive electrification project anywhere in the world. The REA got every penny it loaned to the COOPs back, plus some. Over 98% of the loans were repaid.

Back to the battle. The private power companies did everything they could to sabotage the REA program. They waged court battles, tried to bribe farmers by hooking a few up and making it impossible to form a COOP in the area. They even sent crews out to tear down COOP lines and poles.

In Washington State alone, the private power companies in the 1930s spent over \$1 million attempting to stop not only the REA, but also the Public Utility Districts that counties would create, which were the rural equivalent to municipal systems. How? The same way Wall Street got Glass-Steagall repealed: outright bribery, election manipulation, campaign contributions, and media campaigns stressing that public power was a socialist or communist idea.

What the REA Accomplished

What did the REA accomplish for the economy, in addition to bringing millions of farm families into the 20th Century?

Farm productivity leaped. Hundreds of hours spent hauling water, chopping wood, milking by hand, etc. now were used to plant and harvest crops. Tens of thousands of appliances were purchased by farmers produced by private industries, thus aiding the economic recovery. The REA used fairs, extension agents and other means to teach the farmers the more than 200 uses of electricity on the farm.

Just to name a few: motors for multiple tasks, refrigeration for milk, poultry lighting, electric fencing, feed grinders, water pumps for the buildings and irrigation, grain elevators, grain grinders, milking machines, wood saws; tool grinders, and the list goes on.



Modern Washing Machine-- 1940



The farm kitchen after electrification



Imagine a rural school house with no electricity; or small towns with no lights; or gas stations with hand pumps. All these now were electrified.

The REA engineers lowered the cost of stringing lines to below \$1,000 per mile, and developed entire new technologies to increase the efficiency of entire systems.

It freed up manpower from farm work that was especially critical as the United States went into World War II. These farm boys entered the military and the industries producing the war materials. The increased farm productivity provided the food not only for the US military, but for half of Europe.

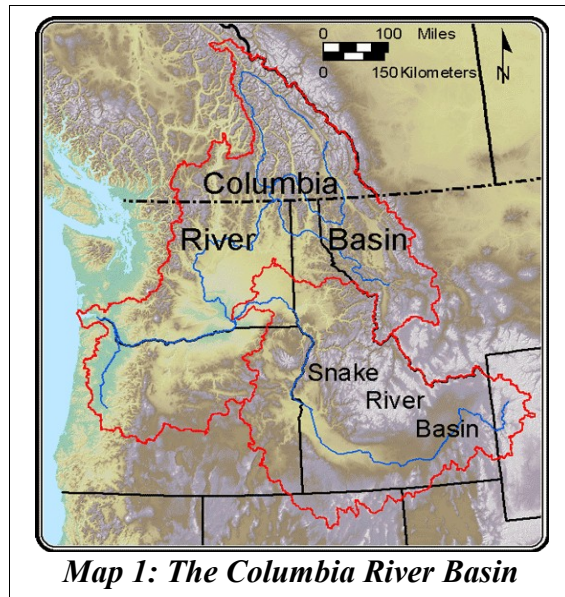
In Tennessee, a farmer who got his lights in the early 1940s, rose the next Sunday at church to bear witness: *“Brothers and sisters, I want to tell you this. The greatest thing on earth is to have the love of God in your heart, and the next greatest thing is to have electricity in your house.”*

IV. Introduction to the Fight to Build the Dam

Now we turn to the Pacific Northwest and the fight to build the Grand Coulee Dam and irrigate a million acres of farm land in Central Washington.

Let's look at the maps.

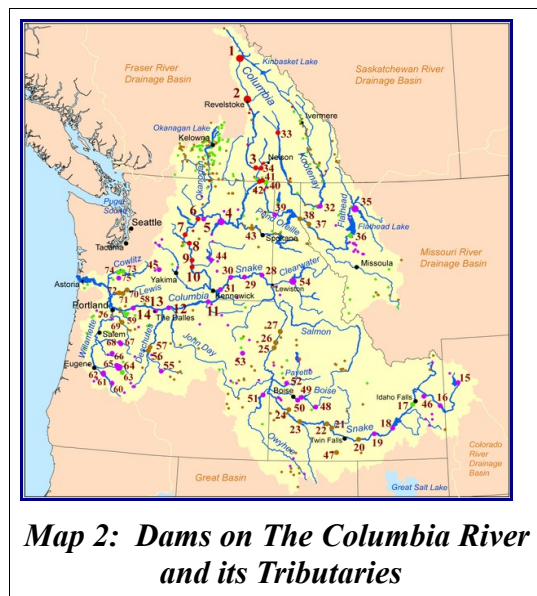
Here is the Northwest and the Columbia River Basin.



The region has two distinct geographic/climatic zones. On the west side of the Cascade Mountains it is temperate with abundant rainfall. On the east side it is arid and desert.

The Columbia is the 7th longest river in the US, and the 4th largest in terms of water discharge. The Columbia River basin is huge-- 260,000 square miles. For comparison, the Tennessee Valley Basin is only 41,000 square miles. The basin encompasses seven states and the Province of British Columbia. The seven are: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and small parts of Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada. The river has 150 major tributaries, the largest being the Snake river, which itself is the 14th longest river in the US, and begins in Wyoming, entering the Columbia at Tri-Cities in SE Washington.

Today, there are 76 dams on the Columbia and its tributaries.

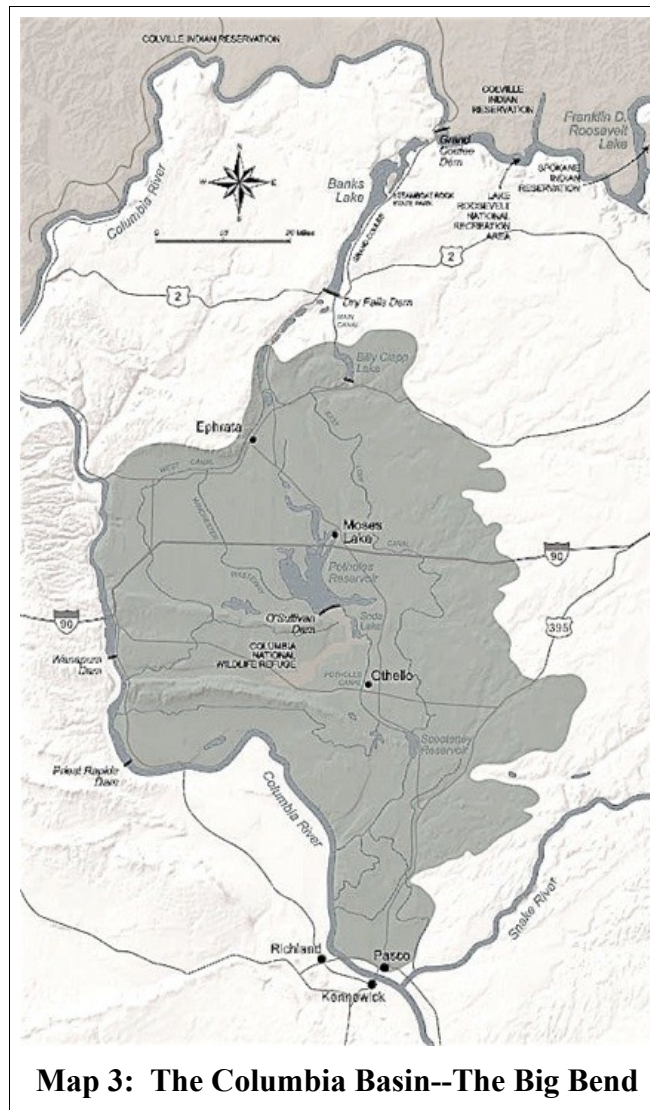


These dams produce electricity, provide irrigation and flood control and facilitate navigation. With the dams, very large barges can now go as far inland as Lewiston, ID, on the Snake River.

The far eastern area of Washington is mainly dry land wheat farming. Here, on map 1, south of Boise, is a large irrigated agricultural area of 390,000 acres, created by the building of the Arrowhead dam by the Reclamation Service in 1918.

The Columbia Basin

The focal point of our story is here, the area known as the Columbia Basin, and especially this area, known as the Big Bend, signifying the northwest turn of the Columbia at the Grand Coulee Dam, before heading south again.



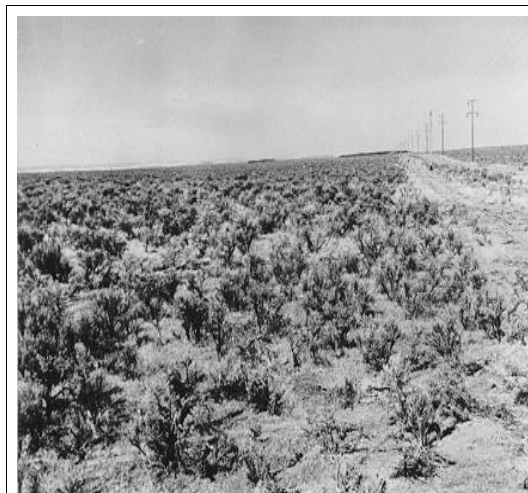
Without presenting a longer historical and geological discussion, I'll just assert that this area is a tremendously rich agricultural area, but without water. The Columbia all through this area is 500 feet below the general land elevation, making it virtually impossible to access the river for irrigation without powerful, electrical powered pumps. Here is a photo of the area where the dam is now located before it was built. You can see how far below the general elevation of the land the river runs.



The Columbia River, before the dam

The area gets only 8 to 15 inches of rainfall annually. Despite that, during the late 1800s, thousands of settlers moved into the area and began farming. They came as a result of another great President's policies-- Abraham Lincoln's homestead Act of 1862, which gave to any pioneer 160 acres of land, free, but for living on it and making it productive. And they got to the land as a by-product of another policy of that great President-- The Trans-Continental Railroad. But, after very few years the land would not produce because of the lack of water. Farms were abandoned, leaving structures to decay.

Before Irrigation



Columbia Basin Project, before irrigation, 1951, near Moses Lake



Steam Boat Rock: This area is now Banks Lake created by the water pumped from Lake Roosevelt

Abandoned Homesteads



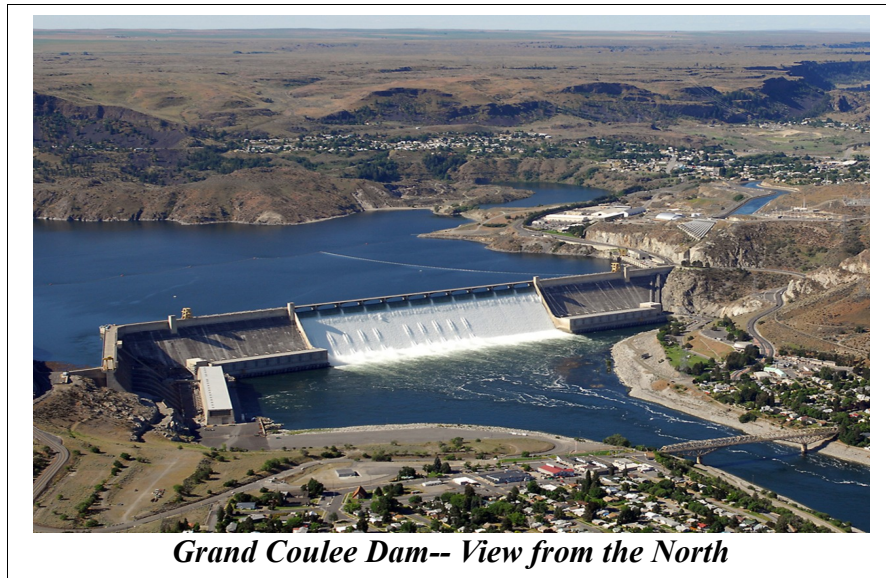
Homesteaders who settled here at the turn of the century were forced to leave the land when their crops failed.

Then a real drought hit the area starting in 1919 and lasting more than a decade. The soil began to literally blow away, like the Midwest dust bowl of the 1930s. Thousands of more farms were abandoned and the small towns in the area declined in population.

V. “Let's Build a Dam”

This is when the battle for building the Grand Coulee Dam and irrigating the land began. Not accepting that nature should determine the destiny of man, in 1918 a small number of men in the towns of Wenatchee, Ephrata, Quincy and a few others had a real idea. “Let's build a dam,” they said. And they did, 15 years later construction began when FDR pushed it through.

Now, here is what they built.



In this image note the pipe-tunnels in the upper right above the dam leading to the irrigation canal. I will discuss them shortly.

The Grand Coulee dam was completed in 1941. This beautiful dam, at the time, was called the eighth wonder of the world; the largest structure ever built by man-- larger than the pyramids.

It is one mile across, and 550 feet high. It is still, today, the largest concrete structure in the US and the fourth largest in the world. It is the largest hydroelectric facility in the US and, again, the fourth largest in the world. It irrigates 670,000 acres of land, with another 400,000 acres projected to be irrigated. Lake Roosevelt, which the dam created is more than 150 miles long, reaching all the way up into Canada.

Building the dam and its irrigation system of thousands of miles of canals went beyond the existing experience and capabilities at the time. It required entirely new methods of engineering and construction. Hundreds of innovative techniques were developed that became standard for big projects in subsequent years.

For example, the six irrigation pumps that move the irrigation water from Lake Roosevelt to the canals lift about 10% of the average flow of the Columbia River, 280 feet above the dam. Each pump lifts 720,000 gallons of water per minute. The pipes leading from Lake Roosevelt to the discharge canal are visible in the first picture of the dam, above. Below is a close up of the twelve pipes.

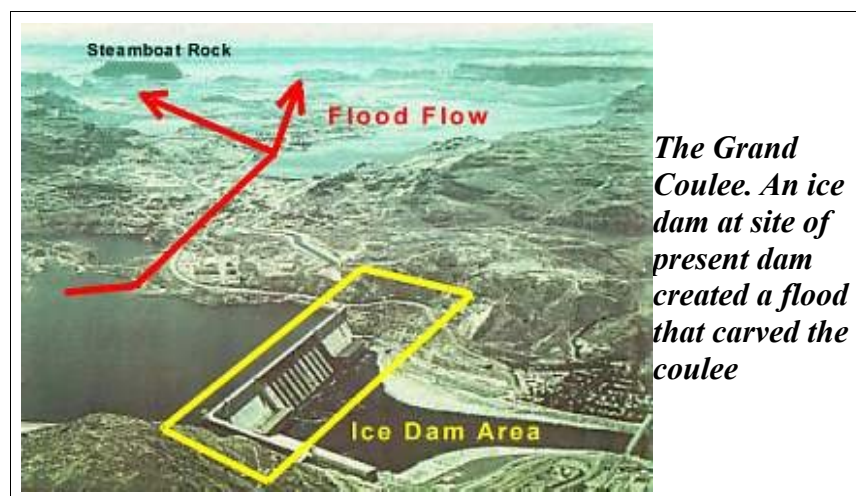


Twelve Discharge Pipes from Lake Roosevelt to Feeder Canal

James O'Sullivan

The story of the more than twenty-five year fight to build Grand Coulee Dam and irrigate the Columbia Basin is one that began with the idea to do just that of a few people.

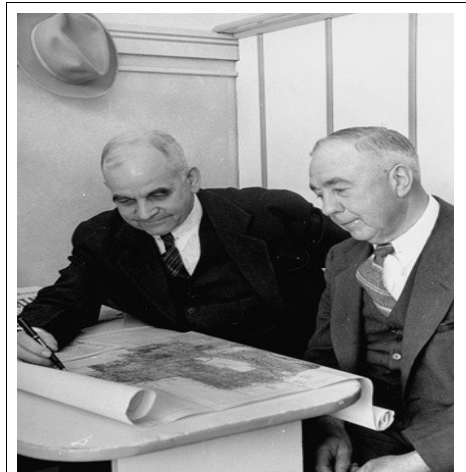
One day in July, 1918 Rufus Woods, the editor of the Wenatchee World, was in Ephrata looking for a news story. A local attorney, Billy Clapp, gave him his story, proposing that a dam be built at the same location that an ice dam had blocked the flow of the river during the last ice age.



The Grand Coulee. An ice dam at site of present dam created a flood that carved the coulee

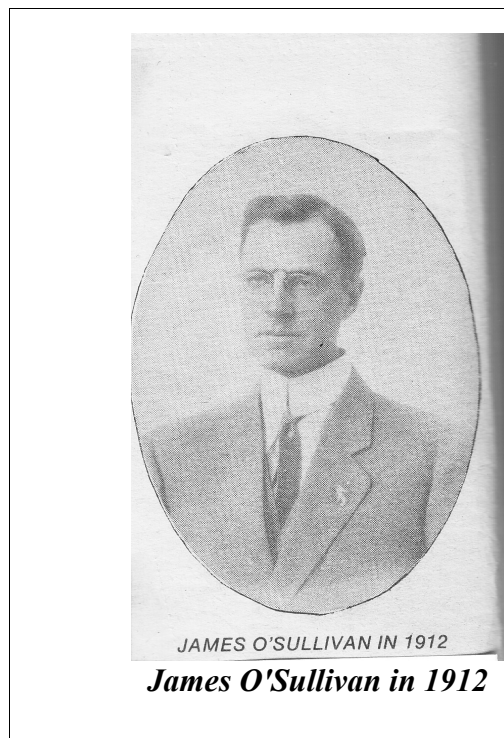
The blocked river created a new river channel, the coulee, now dry after the ice dam melted, which stretched for 50 miles south from the proposed dam site. The new dam, Clapp proposed, would divert the river once again into the coulee for irrigating the land.

Woods published the article, and the fight for the dam was on. Woods and Clapp were in the battle until victory.



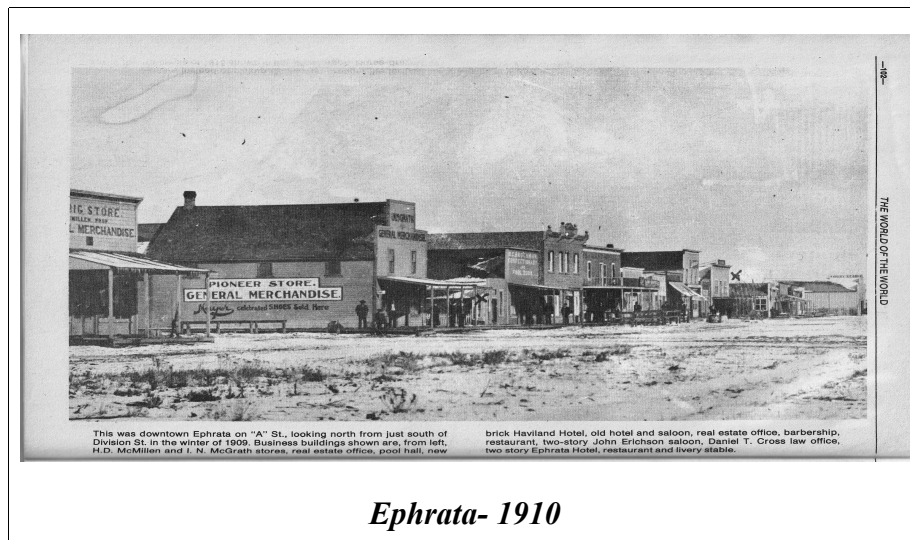
Rufus Woods and William Clapp

But it was another man, James O'Sullivan, who was, as he was latter called, the soul of the Grand Coulee Dam. O'Sullivan was from Michigan and came to Seattle in 1908. He was an attorney and construction contractor. He moved to Ephrata in 1910 to practice law. Here is O'Sullivan in 1912.



James O'Sullivan in 1912

Here is downtown Ephrata in 1910, the headquarters of the dam proponents. Not a very likely looking place to set off an economic revolution.



The idea of the proposed dam grabbed O'Sullivan, and he saw immediately not only the potential irrigation benefits, but also the huge amount of electricity that could be produced. He began writing articles about it for the local press. He also began training himself as a dam building engineer, deeply studying all books on the subject.

He was an organizer's organizer. He sent the articles he wrote to the director of the Reclamation Service, and everyone else, paving the way for what would become a nationwide battle.

O'Sullivan made the first proposals for building the dam. He recommended a dam 500 feet high, with pumps to raise the water the remaining distance into the coulee. He proposed that the sale of the hydroelectric power from the dam would not only pay for the irrigation costs, but would also pay for building the dam itself. At the time, the idea of a 500 foot dam a mile long was unheard of, and, it was claimed, could never be built, especially one that also had to be one mile across.

But, O'Sullivan knew from his studies that, *"Theoretically, there is no limit to size, as a masonry dam is an artificial reproduction of a hill or dike, such as those built by nature to heights of thousands of feet. It is merely a question of using enough material properly put together, the size being governed by the relation between the cost and the value to the result."* That quote is from the standard textbook of that time on dams, *"Principles of Irrigation Engineering,"* which became a virtual bible for O'Sullivan.

Washington Water and Power

In 1920, as more and more articles on the dam were published, mostly by O'Sullivan, opposition to the project reared its dirty head. The private power company Washington Water and Power (WWP) of Spokane saw the dam as a fundamental threat to its interests. Washington Water and Power had a monopoly on water and power in most of eastern Washington State at the time. It charged outrageous prices for both, and, of course, refused to run power lines into rural areas, like its counterparts all over

the country. Washington Water and Power, in 1928, was taken over directly by the Wall Street power trust, being bought by Electric Bond and Share, a J.P. Morgan holding company.

Allied with WWP was the entire Spokane establishment, including the Chamber of Commerce and the Spokesman-Review newspaper. They proposed an alternative irrigation plan, solely in order to block the dam. Their proposal was for a 150 mile canal from the Pend Oreille River, near Spokane.

In 1920 a state commission set up to study the two proposals, and controlled by WWP, recommended for the canal and dismissed the dam.

O'Sullivan wrote a report refuting their recommendations, while at the same time he was convincing some of the most famous dam builders of the era of the feasibility of the project.

FDR's First Visit

Also in 1920, Franklin Roosevelt, as the Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate of Al Smith, visited the area, a visit that he would recall years later when he joined the fight for the dam.

O'Sullivan lived in the future. No opposition would stop him from his mission to build that dam. In an August 7, 1920 article he wrote for the Wenatchee World he makes the future visible for others:

“Handicapped in many ways by a vast desert in the heart of the state, by costly freight rates from and to the East, it would appear that nature has provided this state in compensation unlimited power possibilities that will provide water for every acre of arid land and more than overcome every other possible handicap, providing we have the courage, vision, and genius to utilize this gift. It requires no prophecy to say that the day will come when water power will inevitably make Washington one of the leading agricultural, industrial, and manufacturing states in the Union.”

Keep that quote in your mind, for 25 years later every word of it will be a reality.

O'Sullivan's work drew blood. Seeing a serious opponent making headway, WWP and its allies formed the Columbia Basin Irrigation League(CBIL) to counter-attack. The CBIL spent more than \$600,000 over ten years on lobbyists, campaign contributions, tours for Congressmen and outright bribes to promote their alternative canal and to refute O'Sullivan.

O'Sullivan knew that the dam was just an element of a bigger battle. He wrote: ***“Today Washington is the battle ground of great power concerns for control of the vast power resources that belong to the people. It is absolutely a matter of life and death to this section to get cheap power. It must be cheap if we are to make progress.”***

He learned the lesson, as had WWP, of how the public power policies of Seattle and Tacoma had forced the private utilities in their area to lower their prices from as high as 20 cents a kilowatt hour to less than five cents.

In 1921 the state financed a study of the dam site, including core drilling to determine how deep was bed rock. Again, the team was controlled by WWP, and lied, claiming bedrock was up to 150 feet below the river bed. Called-out on that fraudulent claim by O'Sullivan and his allies, the team was

forced to concede that bedrock was only 40 feet below the river bed. Even that forced admission did not stop the Spokane group. The Spokesman-Review just lied, writing, *“Now that these borings have proved the utter futility of the search for bedrock, the state and federal authorities ought to give no further considerations to the clamor of Hugh Cooper (one of O'Sullivan's allies) and the little group of land speculators in Grand County who noisily demanded the wasting of the state's appropriation.”*

Bachelor Report

In 1923 the Reclamation Service ordered a study of the potential dam. This was the report of Willis Bachelor, which recommended building the dam. Of course, the allies of WWP suppressed the report and lied about it whenever it was discussed.

Again, living in the future, Rufus Woods, the Wenatchee World editor, inspired by O'Sullivan, said the following to the Bridgeport High School graduates in 1923: *“I doubt not that you young people by the time you reach middle life will see the construction of one of the greatest dams in the world a few miles above Bridgeport.”* Woods hit it right on the head-- it was 19 years later that the dam generated electricity for the first time.

Then in 1925 the battle for public power intensified as the power trusts abuse of the population increased as their speculative bubble expanded. In that year, led by US Senator George Norris (Nebraska), war by the public power advocates was launched as he and a few others began an investigation into the power trusts.

During these mid-1920s years O'Sullivan was back in Michigan, but kept himself informed and continued to write articles.

Major Butler Report

Then in 1928 the battle for the dam intensified. The US Army Corps of Engineers study headed by Major John Butler, commissioned in 1928, was completed in 1931. This thorough report on the entire Columbia River above the Snake River, recommended not only the building of the Grand Coulee Dam, but six more dams on the river above the Snake. It also refuted any other plan, especially that of WWP for the Pend Oreille canal. That study was the result of Washington State **US Senator Wesley Jones**, a dam proponent, inserting authorization for it into another bill.

Jones' fellow Washington **US Senator Clarence Dill** soon joined the fight for the dam, and he was to play a key role in 1933 in shepherding the authorization for the dam through the FDR administration and the Congress.



U.S. Senator Wesley Jones



US Senator Clarence C. Dill

O'Sullivan returned from Michigan in 1929, and for the next two decades he fights, organizes, leads and inspires, non-stop to build that dam and irrigate that land. He and his allies called themselves the "Dam University."

His article in the Wenatchee World on March 5, 1929 again showed that he lived in the future: ***"It is not now unwarranted to predict that within the next ten years we will see a series of great dams on the Columbia and unprecedented industrial development. My dream, of course, is to see the Grand Coulee project completed.... It is the most wonderful project in the world, absolutely feasible from every standpoint and absolutely necessary. It would be a major crime not to seize this great opportunity."***

O'Sullivan filled the mails with letters to utility companies, federal agencies, the newspapers, and equipment manufacturers seeking additional information on all the many problems involved in building a dam, installing power plants, and selling energy. He made himself the master of the field, which would be crucial in the years ahead as he testified before Congress and provided his allies with ammunition.

O'Sullivan returned to the issue of public vs private power later in 1929, in an article in the Grant County Journal, as reported by Carl Sundborg in his book **Hail Columbia**, ***"when he told of having watched the spinning turbines of a private power company 'creating ceaseless wealth for men that perhaps never saw this power project. Then I turned and looked out along the Columbia and watched its ten million horses rushing madly to the sea. I recalled the bitter fight that has been made by these barons of wealth to prevent the people from harnessing just a part of these steeds--from seven to ten million powerful horses racing down the Columbia and serving no purpose.***

'Then I looked over that vast desert waste of several millions of acres and I saw the tragedy that had happened there. Thousands had lost their all in the hopeless fight against the desert. With courage they had remained, eking out a pitiful existence, hoping for the day when water would come. And I wondered if the country of Washington and Lincoln and Jefferson would permit greedy men to deny these pioneers the use of only a part of what belonged to them, a right earned by settlement and

made valuable by the sacrifices in the building of a commonwealth.” (page 95-96)

The Depression Begins

Then Wall Street crashed. These were the darkest days for O'Sullivan and the people of the Basin. The depression hit them especially hard as the market for agricultural goods collapsed on top of the still continuing drought. The entire area was losing population.

Contributions to the Columbia Basin Development League, which O'Sullivan and his allies had created, dried up. O'Sullivan himself, in order to keep organizing had to beg for rides and meals. He never quit organizing, speaking, writing and studying, and winning over more and more people to the battle. For him, it was more important than life itself, as he ignored poor health to keep on the road. How rough was the fund-raising? At meetings with 20 people in a country store, sometimes they would raise \$1.50.

O'Sullivan never passed up an opportunity to talk about the dam. On Thanksgiving Day, 1929 he was drafted to fill in for a local pastor at the church. He rose to the occasion:

“It seems that at last the star of destiny points toward the Northwest. All factors point this way-- the President's waterway development, the growing use of electric power, the shortage on the Sound, the Boulder Canyon precedent, the crash on Wall Street, the very atmosphere seems to be charged with hope and faith. Grand Coulee is next.”

It appeared that by 1930 the dam was well on its way to being built. But, WWP still would not give up. Remember they are now owed by J. P. Morgan. The president of WWP in 1930 made a trip to the east where he consulted with the soon to be infamous Sam Insul, who fled the country the next year as his power trust imploded like the derivatives bubble did in 2007-8. He also attended a lecture by none other than Hitler's future finance minister Hjalmar Schacht.

1930 was a turning point for the entire battle for public power, as the power trusts went bankrupt and the Congress investigated their scams. Public power ballot issues were winning all over the country and public power candidates were winning elections, like FDR winning a second term as the Governor of New York.

Reflecting this shift Senator George Norris wrote in the New York Times: *Electricity, whether from coal, oil or water “...This natural element ought not to be utilized by private corporations for private profit. The people are not only alive to the issue but they are going to demand through their public servants that this vital element of human happiness must be placed within the reach of all classes of our people.”*

FDR's Presidential Campaign

In December of 1930 Senators Dill and Jones went to the White House to urge President Hoover to back federal legislation to build the dam. Hoover refused. Dill told Jones, upon leaving the meeting, that, *“We will have to find a President friendly to our cause to get Grand Coulee launched.”* In January, 1931, Dill met with FDR to discuss the dam. FDR was enthused and Dill began campaigning

for Roosevelt for President. Several times during the subsequent campaign Roosevelt promised Dill, ***“You get me elected and I’ll build your dam.”***

Also in January, 1931 O’Sullivan attended a meeting of the Spokane League, walking right into the enemies den. After hearing them announce that so far the League had spent almost \$250,000 promoting their alternative to the dam, O’Sullivan returned to Ephrata to give his report. Reflecting the principle acted on by every great general, that one should focus on what we are doing, not what the enemy is doing, he told his allies:

“We may not be able to get any financial support from those who should be the first to give it. We may be headed off almost everywhere by the emissaries of a great monopoly that are influential among the mighty. We will manage to get along with the sacrifices of the little band of Spartans in Grant County. We will win the battle for the Grand Coulee because we have on our side the engineering and economic facts, the mightiest of weapons. Already we have achieved amazing victories. We shall not cease until the flag of victory is unfurled on the ramparts of Grand Coulee.”

Throughout 1931, momentum continued to build for the dam as the fight nationally for public power intensified. A speech by FDR in June demonstrates this well:

He said about 90 per cent of power generated in the nation was dominated by four major private interests. He further said that the utilities, like other interests, deserved a square deal.

“But,” he declared, ***“a square deal to public utilities does not require or include the unbridled power to make such profits as they please, to control such public service commissions as might otherwise impede their march to complete commercial dominance, or to own and operate such political organizations in cities, counties, states and nation as they may deem necessary to perpetuate their graft.”***

Senator Dill charged that the Republican party was dominated by the power trust. He said, ***“The power question is here to stay, until we put a President in the White House who will insist that the great hydroelectric sites be used in the interest of the people.”***

Meanwhile back in Ephrata, O’Sullivan’s creative organizing took advantage of a September Congressional junket paid for by the Spokane League. With only \$5 to spend and the Congressmen to be at the dam site for only one hour on Sept. 14, O’Sullivan used the money to buy stamps and invited elected officials and others to the dam site for a big rally.

O’Sullivan’s letter read, in part: ***“I appeal to the people of the Northwest to defeat this conspiracy by turning out en masse at the Grand Coulee on September 14. The Committee has been allowed one hour on that date to inspect the most wonderful power and reclamation project in America. The Columbia Basin League (Spokane), under the leadership of a few reactionaries, is doing everything in its power to undermine this project....”***

Publicized by the local newspapers a crowd of almost 10,000 showed up in the middle of the desert. The five dollar coup was underway.

After the Congressmen s’ scheduled hour was up at the dam site, and the Spokane League people were

attempting to hustle them out of there, O'Sullivan's plants in the audience began calling by name for each of the Congressmen to speak. Of course, being politicians, they could not resist a crowd of 10,000 people. The Spokane people were furious and the Congressmen got a good sense of what the population wanted.

VI. The Battle Appears To Be Won

Then General Butler's Army Corps of Engineers' report came out. Despite its clear statement for the development of the Columbia with at least seven dams, led by Grand Coulee, the Spokane League was confident that the Bureau of Reclamation would reject it. Why not? They had paid the bribes. The WWP also got other private power companies to issue reports that there would be no market for the amount of electricity that the dam would produce, so it should not be built.

Surprise, the Bureau of Reclamation approved the report. Now all the Spokane League could do was to work to delay appropriations, cut down the height of the dam, block construction of transmission lines, and other sabotage efforts. That is what they did, though in the end, they lose.

Now we are in 1932, the last year of the Hoover administration. Bills were now before Congress for building the dam. O'Sullivan was sent to Washington, D.C. to make sure nothing went wrong. Spokane had their people there too, to do the sabotage work. Again and again the argument was made that all the power the dam will produce could never be sold. Blind to the future, these people could not see it. James D. Ross of Seattle City Light always said to these people, and everyone else, produce the power and it will sell itself.

But this was the Capitol of the Hoover administration. As Senator Dill said, they were owned by the trusts. For example:

Hoover's Secretary of Agriculture Arthur Hyde said about the dam: ***“Private enterprise would not think of attempting it.”*** Ironically, he was right.

O'Sullivan in DC saw the problem, and echoed LaRouche's attacks on the same mentality. He wrote, ***“The frame of mind here is that things never will be any different than they are today. Everything is measured by conditions today.”***

He urged that the people of Washington State keep unrelenting pressure on the Congress. In another letter he reminded everyone that, ***“It is a law of life that there cannot be any real progress without growth.”*** And in another letter about the Washington State Congressional delegation, he wrote, ***“We have got to have a fighting delegation-- a delegation inspired by the project-- praying, talking, fighting, plotting all the time for it.”***

O'Sullivan was now known nationally as he had published letters and articles in newspapers all over the country.

FDR in Portland

The Roosevelt vs Hoover campaign was now in full swing. In Portland, OR, on September 21, 1932,

FDR unleashed himself against the power trust, and confidently told people what the future would be. He began by stating the principles he held.

“As I see it,” he said, *“the object of Government is the welfare of the people.”* FDR was no partisan, as he then stated, *“When questions like these are under consideration, we are not Democrats, we are not Republicans; we are a people united in a common patriotism. When the great possessions that belong to all of us-- that belong to the Nation-- are at stake, we are not partisans, we are Americans.”*

Then he went on the attack against the power trusts. *“...there has been in these past few years, as the Federal Trade Commission has shown, a systematic, subtle, deliberate and unprincipled campaign of misinformation, of propaganda, and, if I may use the words, of lies and falsehoods. The spreading of this information has been bought and paid for by certain great private utility corporations. It has permeated the schools, the editorial columns of newspapers, the activities of political parties, the universities and the printed literature in our book stores.”*

FDR thrived in a good fight. He continued: *“And now for a personal word. I am speaking to you as the Governor of the State of New York, who for four years has been attacked by the propaganda of certain utility companies as a dangerous man. My answer has been, as it is tonight, to point out these plain principles that seek to protect the welfare of the people against selfish greed. If that be treason, my friends, then make the most of it.”* He hammered the point home, saying, *“To the people of this country I have but one answer on this subject. Judge me by the enemies I have made. Judge me by the selfish purposes of these utility leaders who have talked of radicalism while they were selling watered stock to the people and using our schools to deceive the coming generation.”*

Making his campaign for public power clear, he said, *“True regulation is for the equal benefit of the consumer and the investor. The only man who will suffer from true regulation is the speculator, or the unscrupulous promoter....”*

He concluded by making a promise to the people of the Northwest: *“We have, as all of you in this section of the country know, the vast possibilities of power development on the Columbia River. And I state, in definite and certain terms, that the next great hydroelectric development to be undertaken by the federal government must be that on the Columbia River.”*

In response to that speech, the Washington Post wrote, *“Muscle Shoals, Hoover Dam and the Columbia River projects are all misuses of federal authority. Now Governor Roosevelt adds the immensely costly Columbia River project to the list of squanderings to be made if he should become President.”*

Back in Ephrata in October, O'Sullivan one day was able to raise \$129 and immediately put it in the bank. The next day the bank closed its doors.

The Battle is Won, Sort of

The November, 1932 election was a sweep by the Democrats, led by a very different Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Congress, Governors, Legislatures were generally won by Democrats, many of them fighters for public power and a public works program to put people back to work. Unemployment was now at 25% or more, banks were closing and the panic was beginning, only to

explode in the weeks prior to FDR's inauguration, on March 4, 1933, just a few days after Hitler had been given total dictatorial powers in Germany.

Clearly, by now, the enemies of the dam and public power should have given up. Not so. As we go into the early months of 1933, prior to inauguration day, here is a sampling of their propaganda.

The Bremerton Searchlight: ***“Probably nothing more visionary or impractical or ruthless with waste of public funds has come in the mass of schemes to use taxpayers' money than the Coulee Dam Project.”***

The Bellingham Herald: ***“It is the state's greatest undertaking. It is great too in volume, but it is vastly more impressive in the magnitude of its folly! There is no call for hydroelectric power. The Coulee Dam project would have no market... an enterprise that is almost certain to be disastrous.”***

O'Sullivan knew that unless he was personally involved in seeing the project through to the end there was no guarantee it would not get derailed. Thus back to Ephrata and the fund-raising he went, collecting a dollar here and five dollars there; sleeping in his car because he did not have enough money for a hotel room; hitch hiking when he did not have money for gas. He did not stop.

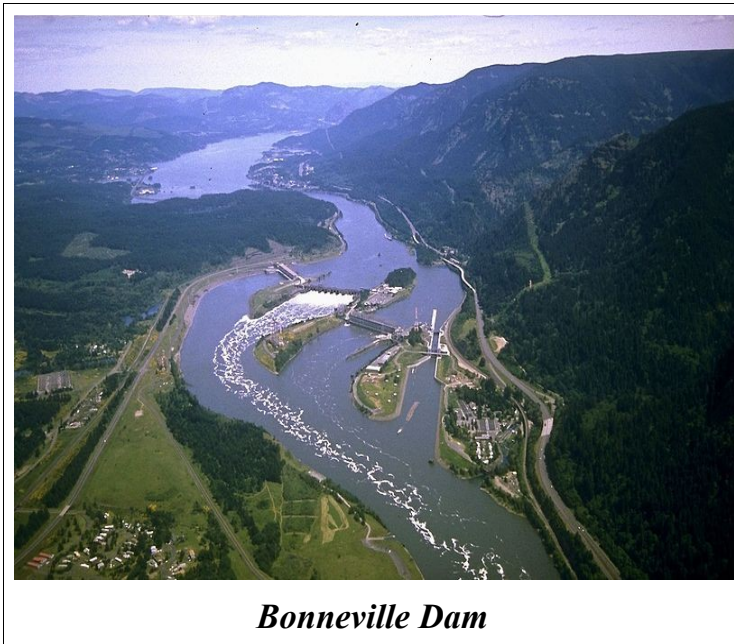
He was right. Had he, and especially US Senator Dill and Washington State Congressman Sam Hill, not kept on FDR and the Congress, the dam may have been built, some day. It may have been 145 feet high and useless for irrigation.

Victory

By March, 1933 the bill to build the dam was in the Congress. By-passing the Congress, FDR authorized the dam to be funded by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and run through the Public Works Administration under the National Industrial Recovery Act-- all elements of FDR's 100 days program. FDR had restored the credit system. The completed dam would be managed by the Bureau of Reclamation.

The approved dam was to be a low dam, since FDR thought only \$60 million could be spent on it. But, it was only a matter of time until the high dam was approved, which was a few days after FDR visited the dam site on August 3, 1934, though it was not official until Secretary of the Interior Ickes signed it in 1935.

By the summer of 1933 site clearing work had begun. At the same time, the second Columbia River dam, Bonneville, was approved by Congress.



Bonneville Dam

Grand Coulee Dam actually was not approved by Congress until 1935, two years after work had begun on it.

Still, the assholes never quit. The Spokane League filed a lawsuit to stop construction. And Business Week wrote in July, 1933, ***“Grand Coulee Dam is typical of those things that won't have any more usefulness than the Pyramids of Egypt.”*** Ironically, as we now know, the Grand Coulee Dam is as useful as the Pyramids, since they were scientific laboratories and observatories of the heavens.

Senator Dill responded to this argument in June, 1933: ***“Some say there is more power being produced now than we can sell. Of course there is, and why? Because of the profiteering prices charge by the power trust subsidiaries that are paying dividends on watered stocks. Bring down the price of power to what Tacoma pays with municipal ownership and we will increase power used in Washington by 100 percent.”***

FDR at Grand Coulee

As I mentioned, FDR visited the dam site on August 3, 1934. First he visited the Bonneville Dam site, then Grand Coulee. There were 20,000 people there to greet him.



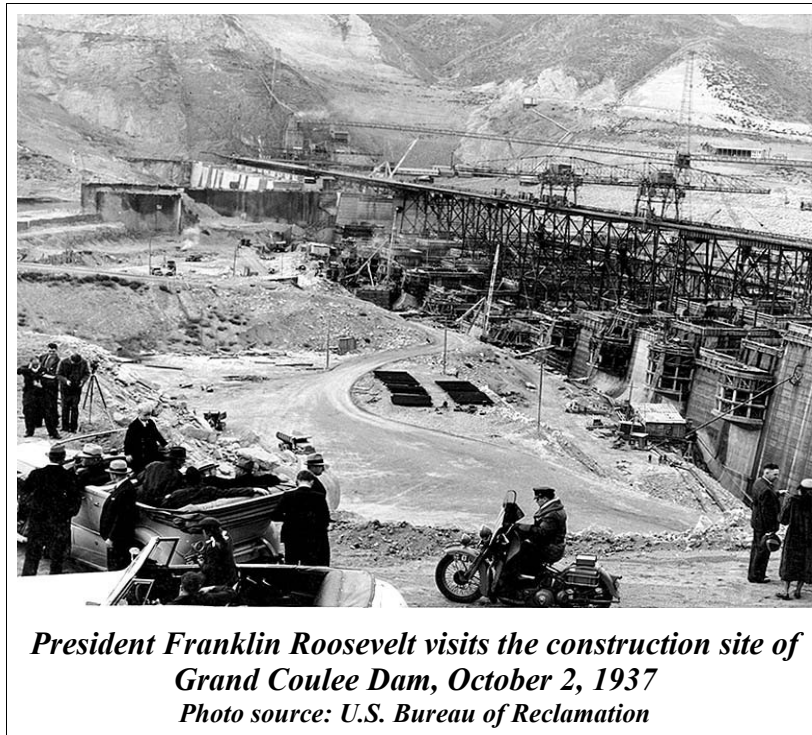
FDR at Grand Coulee Dam 1934



20,000 Greet FDR at Grand Coulee Dam 1934

Always looking toward the future, in his speech FDR said, *“We are going to see, I believe, with our own eyes, electricity and power made so cheap that they will become a standard article of use....”* He concluded, saying, *“I leave here today with the feeling that this work is well undertaken, that we are going ahead with a useful project and that we going to see it through for the benefit of our country.”*

Three years later, on October 2, 1937, FDR again is at the dam. He was astounded at the progress of the dam that was now referred to as the “eighth wonder of the world.”



President Franklin Roosevelt visits the construction site of Grand Coulee Dam, October 2, 1937
Photo source: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

I am not going to go through the details of the construction of the dam, or the continuing battle for funding it by the Congress. The dam was built and began producing electricity in early 1942, two months after Pearl Harbor.

Congressional authorization for the continued funding of the dam was easier after 1938. We were in a war mobilization, and by 1940 it was an urgent war mobilization.

The first one to publicly state that funding for the dam would be a critical part of the mobilization was Billy Clapp, who wrote to O'Sullivan, who was in DC again, that he should use the argument that the dam was critical for national defense.

VII. The Bonneville Power Administration

In 1937 the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) was created to generate, transmit and sell the power from the Grand Coulee and Bonneville dams. Bonneville was completed in 1937. The Act was signed into law by FDR on August 20, 1937. The Act stipulated that the new power agency would market and transmit power from federal dams and “*...give preference and priority in the use of electric energy to public bodies and cooperatives.*” The power cartel was busted. James D. Ross, the former head of Seattle City Light was the first director of the BPA. He set Bonneville's rates very low and uniform across the region, no matter how far it had to be transmitted. The BPA worked closely with the Rural Electrification Administration. By 1940, 30 public utilities had been formed in Washington, Oregon and Idaho, serving more than 40,000 people who had not been hooked up to electricity until then.

Over the next few years thousands of miles of power lines were strung throughout the Northwest, just in time for turning the region into an arsenal for democracy. Utilization of electricity suddenly and

rapidly increased. In 1939, 2.65 billion kilowatts of electricity were used by all industry in the Northwest. By 1947, 4.75 billion were used by aluminum plants alone, and over 9 billion by all industry.

Yet, even as late as 1939, the private power interests were still claiming that there was no market for all that electricity in the Northwest. They had been defeated and crushed, but their mind set had not changed. That is why LaRouche is always discussing how, once we defeat the oligarchy, then we will have an even bigger job of changing the culture to once and for all rid humanity of the oligarchical disease.

World War II Mobilization in the Northwest

In May, 1940, a year and one-half before Pearl Harbor, O'Sullivan wrote to FDR: ***“It is unnecessary to urge you to take steps to prepare for the day when this country will inevitably be involved. You can proceed no faster than public opinion will permit. But I believe that the vast majority of our citizens would support you and Congress in greatly extending the extent of our preparedness. And it seems that this should be done with all possible speed in view of the lightning speed shown by those who would not only conquer Europe but the whole world.”***

FDR was already moving. In May, 1940, as part of the defense mobilization, aluminum companies began moving into the Northwest for the cheap power. Other industries did the same. Soon steel plants and other metals processing industries were building along the Columbia River and on Puget Sound.

The 1940 election again saw public power as a central issue. The creation of Public Utility Districts and pro-public power candidates won across the country. Except in Spokane. Washington Water and Power spent \$200,000 to defeat public power in that city. Washington's US Senator Homer Bone berated WWP for its anti-social practice, saying it preferred to ***“distribute vast quantities of literature, send out hordes of canvassers, pack citizens' meetings, boycott business men, hand out beef roasts to the poor, publish full page political advertisements full of misstatements, stop the showing of moving pictures of public power developments, and use other high pressure tactics.”***

Again, these bastards did not, and will not quit.

In 1941 ship building companies moved into the region. Some of the Republicans began breaking the hold of partisanship and backing FDR on everything he asked for defense, including full funding for Grand Coulee Dam. In early 1941 the US Defense Advisory Commission declared the Pacific Northwest to be a key defense industry region.

In August, Roosevelt's Interior Secretary, Republican Harold Ickes, was back at Grand Coulee, where he stated, ***“the Grand Coulee Dam is the best investment that the government has ever made.”***

On December 7, Pearl Harbor brought the US officially into World War II.

In January, 1942, the War Production Board began building a ferro-alloy plant in Wenatchee to produce steel and magnesium. A steel rolling mill was built on the Columbia. Even more aluminum plants were built, now by the federal government itself. The ship yards in Portland and Vancouver were gearing up and building new facilities. New electric welding technology cut the time required to build a war ship

from 100 days to 20 days. Liberty ships rolled into the water at a rate of one per day. More than 50,000 combat planes were produced in Seattle, 30% of the entire national production. There were 50,000 people working there, rolling a new plane off the assembly line every hour and one-half.



The pouring of molten aluminum around a steel slab in the carbon anodes used in the smelting of aluminum at a plant near Wenatchee



Early model B-17 Flying Fortresses production at Boeing Plant in Seattle



***Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation
shipyards during World War II***

During World War II tens of thousands of troops were trained at Fort Lewis, south of Tacoma. Here are two of them from the 246th Combat Engineers, peeling potatoes in 1943. The man on the left is my father, Arthur Ruckert. The story I remember from long ago was that a couple of years before this picture was taken he was pouring concrete on the Grand Coulee Dam.



***Soldiers Peeling Potatoes, Fort Lewis, WA 1943
Arthur Ruckert is on the left***

The Grand Coulee and Bonneville dams were now producing the electricity that powered all that

production. By 1943, 96% of the Columbia River power production was going directly to war production. This included a secret, large transmission to the newly constructed plants at Hanford to produce plutonium for the atom bombs.

By 1947, 42% of all aluminum production in the U.S. was produced in the Northwest. That same year 42% of all hydroelectric production of the entire country was in the Northwest.

The people of the Northwest now began to grasp what O'Sullivan and his allies had been telling them for more than 20 years-- that what they were doing was making history and was indispensable for the nation's future.

To the first graduating class at Grand Coulee High School in 1942, Rufus Woods said, ***“So here it stands, a monument to the idea and the power of an idea;... and you, class of 1942, could you come back here a thousand years hence, or could your spirit hover around the place ten thousand years hence, you would hear the sojourners talking as they beheld this slab of concrete, and you would hear them say 'Here, in 1942, indeed there once lived a great people.'”***

O'Sullivan was back in Washington, DC in October, 1943 working on the plans and legislation for the irrigation that would have to wait until after the war. He found that even in the midst of war the poison of partisanship and party had not completely evaporated. He wrote, ***“This Congress seems hell bent on destroying the New Deal and discrediting Roosevelt. My opinion of Congress is not printable. It makes me furious-- this attempt to sabotage a great President and a noble cause right in the midst of war. We never had a greater war President. While he is leading us to victory, our ranks are filled with despicable snipers who would rather lose all than see the Roosevelt reforms continue.”***

O'Sullivan and FDR, although they only met once, were of one mind-- a mind that lived in the future. They both had a total commitment to the mission for which they would both give their lives.

Still the battle for the American System continued. June 6, 1944-- D Day. There was no question now that the war would be won. The British Empire began to move against FDR. Truman was forced onto the ticket for the 1944 election as FDR's Vice-Presidential candidate. Never again, they had resolved, would they allow anyone like FDR to be President of the United States.

The pigs of Wall Street also went into action. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce sent letters to 1,600 local Chambers asking them to endorse resolutions condemning government transmission lines for federal power projects, and demanding the repeal of the Federal Water Power Act. The letter also attacked the TVA as ***“the most significant departure from the long established American way of life.”***

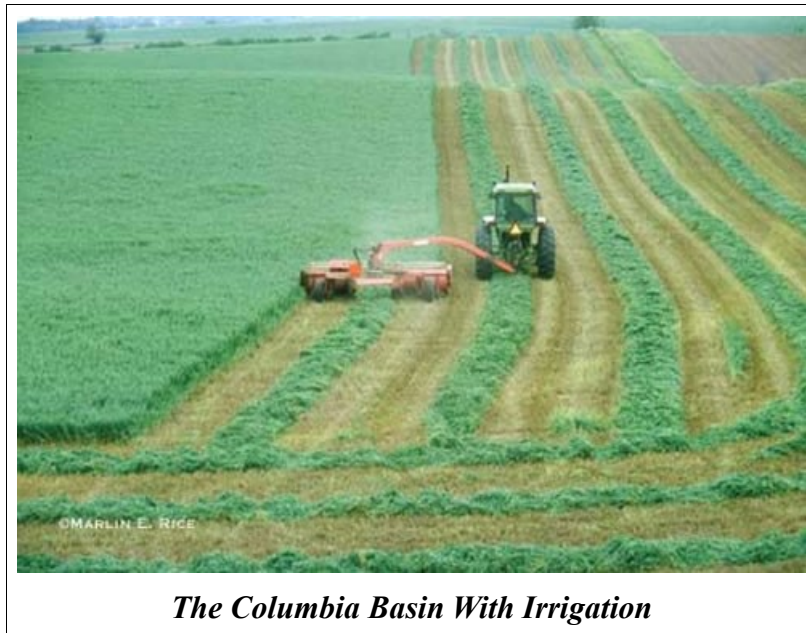
As I have said, but I will say it once again: These bastards will not quit until we have destroyed them once and for all.

VIII. The Post War Years

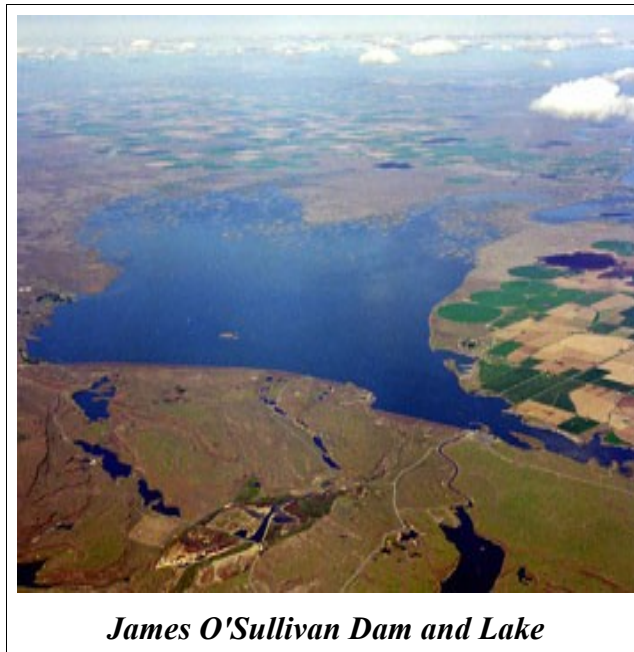
From 1943-1948 Sullivan was in and out of Washington, D.C., and concentrated on the planning and legislation required to unleash the irrigation potential now in place. He never stopped, and as a result the first of more than 600,000 acres of land in the Columbia Basin began to be irrigated. The development of the Columbia River Basin continued, with new dams being built above and below the

Grand Coulee Dam and its tributaries for years to come.

Here is a picture of what that desert called the Columbia Basin looks like today:



By 1946 O'Sullivan was hailed throughout the area as, "***The Grand Old Man of the Grand Coulee Dam.***" In 1948 a bill was introduced into Congress to name one of the dams of the project for O'Sullivan, which passed and was signed into law in June of that year. The O'Sullivan dam, at that time, was the fourth longest dam in the US.



September 27, 1948 was declared to be “James O'Sullivan Day” throughout the Basin, and the official day of dedication of O'Sullivan Dam. Reporting on the Ephrata event, attended by the Governor, members of Congress, the Secretary of the Interior, and thousands of others, the Wenatchee World wrote, ***“Intense, incorruptible, without any property interest in the project, Jim O'Sullivan was immune to attack. He dedicated himself to the battle. He wouldn't quit.”***

Even the Spokesman-Review capitulated, running a picture of him and writing, that his ***“indefatigable work for Coulee Dam and the Columbia Basin brought him the well earned honor of having a Potholes Dam renamed O'Sullivan Dam.”***

Secretary of Interior Julius Krug said, ***“I feel proud to share a platform with Jim O'Sullivan. I envy his intimate knowledge of this area where the Federal Government is undertaking one of the most ambitious projects for bringing water to the land. He came over this very spot when there was nothing here but rattlesnakes and sagebrush...”***

“That was the Columbia Basin as Jim found it.... He entered the campaign for Grand Coulee Dam. Why?.... Because he loved this country and its people. Because he had a vision. Because he is Jim O'Sullivan....”

“Jim, in officially naming this great dam in your honor today we are trying to repay you for the things you have done.... It required an act of Congress to do it, Jim, but when the Congressmen heard about your unselfish devotion for this great development, there wasn't a bit of hesitation in naming the fourth longest dam in the nation after you....”

O'Sullivan became seriously ill a few weeks later, and died on February 15, 1949.

The story of Jim O'Sullivan is really not about him. It is about you, and what you are going to do as humanity is faced with a crisis that threatens our very existence as a species. Neither history, nor economics, is a spectator sport.

So why did Jim O'Sullivan do what he did? Because he lived in the future, not the present. He knew that the purpose of his life was not to die, but to live; to live forever by doing something that does not die, but lives on after he was gone. Or, to put it another way, he lived in his dreams, because, like for us today, those dreams are more real than the world around us today will ever be.

You have to be very impressed with O'Sullivan's almost instinctive insight into the minds of his enemies, and the minds of the population he educated and recruited. He knew that they did not live in the future, and he had to somehow bring that future to them.

That he did-- and he made it very concrete. In fact, he gave them the biggest slab of concrete ever constructed-- The Grand Coulee Dam.

Thank you.