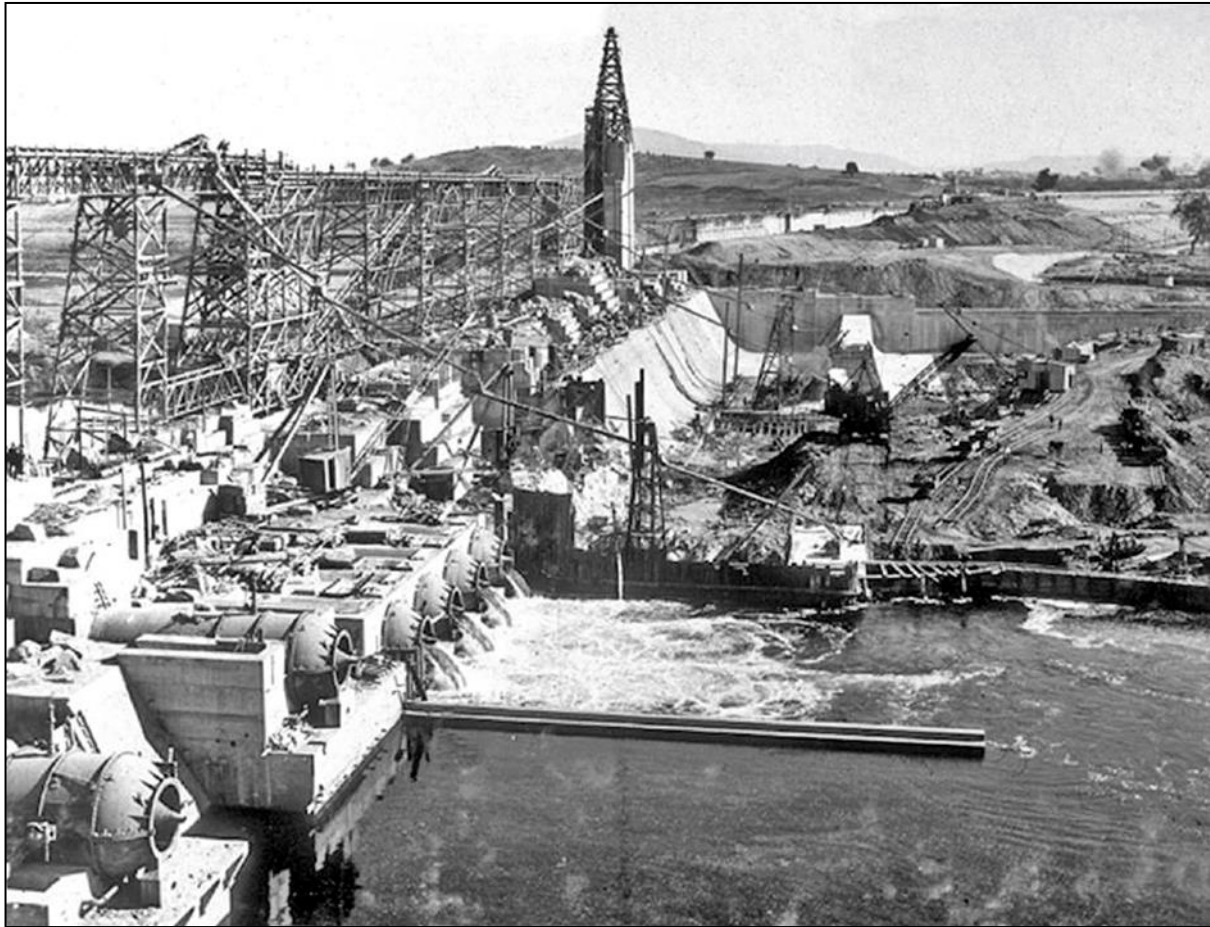


Construction of Hume Dam, 1919-1936

Part 8 – The Spillway Rises

Joe Wooding and Greg Ryan

Facing north-west, but always referred to as the north or south ends of the structure, the partially completed spillway, along with its dissipator wall and trough, are well above their foundations but similar to an iceberg, there is as much concrete below ground as above. The regulating section is also well underway. It's 1930, the weir is holding water, the Murray is now regulated and flowing through the four irrigation valves.



The four regulating valves are partly open while concrete is being delivered via four concrete chutes.

The white-water area is the stilling pool. This has a concrete floor with an upturned ramp at the downstream end to impede the velocity of the water flow passing over it. The wall in the foreground separates the fast-flowing water from the more tranquil area below the turbine outlets. Two serviced the hydro power station, while a third was capped. Serious erosion under both the wall and the stilling pool was discovered when this work began in the 1950's and had to be rectified.

The Oregon scaffolding on the left carries the concrete conveyor belts. These were rubberised, 800mm wide, from which concrete could be retrieved at any point by chutes for placement where required. An ingenious device called a Tripper was used. This raised the

belt by a metre and the wet concrete simply fell into the head of the chute as the belt passed. The belts were pressure cleaned on their return journey.

The greatest quantity of concrete placed in an eight-hour day was 953 cubic yards (729 cubic metres).

Trash racks were installed behind the valves to prevent problems with logs, rubbish, vegetation etc fouling the intake for the seven valves. The overburden in front of the spillway is yet to be removed. The levee bank dividing the dry land from the river will not be removed until the dissipator wall and trough are completed.

On August 26, 1929 and again in June 1931, an upriver deluge sent flood water pouring over the partly completed spillway and through the works below. For yet a third time, on October 28, 1934, the completed spillway overflowed as the road bridge piers and decking were still being built.

After the first event, huge logs and debris floated down to the wall and had to be removed by the flying fox. The *Border Morning Mail* reported in August 1927 that on several occasions, live snakes were found in the debris.