

## CELEBRATION BEGINS AT 10 A.M. TOMORROW AT THE DAM

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The Center Hill Lake and Dam project sure has come a long way since its **initial construction contract was awarded in 1942**. In fact, the 50th anniversary celebration of the project's completion is set for 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. tomorrow at the dam. A special invitation has been extended to construction workers who helped build the dam, **US Army Corps of Engineers Ranger Mark Herd** said, and visitors to the dam will have a chance to ask those workers questions at tomorrow's celebration.

"Tomorrow's celebration is important because it will provide a rare opportunity for members of the community to speak with these construction workers," he said. "In another 50 years, it will definitely be too late to talk to them."

**A video in which former dam construction workers Kenneth Pullum and Earl Agee**, both of the Baxter area, recall their experiences working on the project will also be featured at the celebration, Herd said.

"I was involved in the construction of the dam virtually from beginning to end, and so was Earl," Pullum told the Herald-Citizen. "It lasted from 1942 to 1948, but construction was halted for about two years during World War II for lack of steel. That's why the construction took so long."

Although the dam itself has some steel in it, Pullum said, the majority of it was used to build the powerhouse.

The dam itself is considered a combination earth and concrete gravity structure, Herd explained.

It stretches 2,160 feet in length and is 240 feet high from its lowest foundation.

Land purchases for the project began in 1942, authorized by Congress under the Flood Control Act of 1938. Initial cost for construction was \$44.3 million.

But the sale of hydropower and dollars spent for recreational use at the lake has more than repaid the cost of the dam's construction, Herd said.

In fact, \$2.1 million was generated from the sale of Center Hill's hydropower and \$111 million were spent by the public for recreational purposes last year alone.

Approximately five million people visit Center Hill Lake's nine Corps recreation areas, three state parks and eight commercial marinas annually.

Although recreation is now a major factor in the operation and management of the lake, Pullum said the dam's construction could sometimes get to be grueling work.

"There were about four people killed while they were working on the dam's construction," he said. "Two fell, one was killed when a big rock fell from a bluff and hit him and another was killed when a rim blew out of a tire and hit him."

But even though the work was difficult, Pullum said he plans to be on hand at tomorrow's event to celebrate the achievement he was a part of.

Tours of the power plant will be conducted by Corps of Engineers employees at 9 a.m. and again at noon.

A special anniversary ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. with DeKalb County High School band member Amanda Winchester performing the National Anthem and a presentation of flags by the 278th Regional Armored Cavalry Regiment Headquarters at Cookeville.

Cookeville's Country Giant radio personality Philip Gibbons will serve as the event's master of ceremonies, and Lt. Col. Christopher Young, commander of the Nashville District of the Corps of Engineers, will be the keynote speaker.

Other speakers will include retired DeKalb County teacher **Jane McGuinnis** and Gordonsville mayor **Joe Anderson**.

To get to Center Hill Dam from Cookeville, take Interstate 40 west to Exit 268 and make a left onto Highway 96. When Highway 96 intersects with Highway 141, make a right. This road will take motorists across the top of the dam.

For more information about the event call Center Hill Dam at (931) 858-3125 or (615) 548-4521.



Displaying the Center Hill Lake and Dam project's 50th anniversary painting are, from left, Power Plant Supt. Olga Beddingfield and US Army Corps of Engineers Ranger Mark Herd. \* H-C Photo: Ty Kernea

### **CENTER HILL DAM WILL BE COMPLETED BY 1948, OFFICIAL ANNOUNCES**

Published: Putnam County Herald, Cookeville TN: 25 July 1946

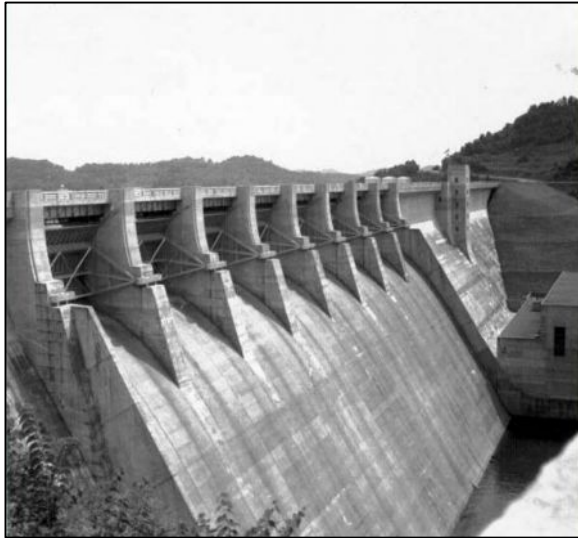
Present plans call for the multiple-purpose Center Hill Dam to be completed by March, 1948, Captain R. W. McCall, resident engineer, has revealed.

"We have now completed over 50 per cent of the structure," McCall said, "and we expect to complete the project in March, 1948, in time to catch the spring rains of that year," he added.

The dam, which is being constructed under the supervision of the U. S. Engineers, is one unit in the comprehensive Ohio Valley Flood Control Plan and is being erected on the Caney Fork River about 20 miles west of here.

Meanwhile, families who have lived in the reservoir area of the dam are beginning to make plans for their final gatherings and reunions on the lands of their fore fathers. Many of them are related to the original settlers of the region.

One of the largest and most well known families are the descendants of John and Rhoda (Lidy) Puckett, a Revolutionary soldier who settled in the area in 1802 when it was a part of White County.



First of the reunions will be held August 18 at Second Creek School in DeKalb County, a place first selected by the early settlers as a place of worship. The affair will be an all-day event, according to E. L. Puckett, Silver Point, who is a direct descendant of the first settler. Many Putnam County families are also closely related.

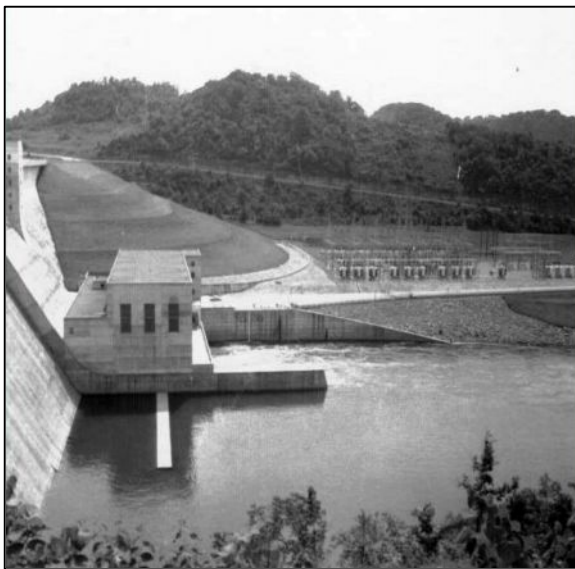
At least three daily newspapers have said they would send staff photographers and correspondents to cover the event.

Two shifts of workmen, numbering almost 600, are pushing the construction on this 30 million dollar project on which work was restarted in

February of this year after being held up by a War Production Board order since March, 1943.

Work is not only progressing on the dam itself but also on the saddle dam which is being constructed nearby.

Scores of construction machines of all descriptions are in operation 16 hours a day, in order that the project may be completed on time.



In answer to a question that is heard frequently around Cookeville about what affect the backwater would have on the Cookeville Hydro-electric power plant at Burgess Falls, Captain McCall said that it would not affect the powerhouse and other equipment the city operates there. It will not go that far up Falling Water River, he explained.

The Captain, who was engineering officer with a construction regiment on the Ledo Road, in the China-Burma-India Theater, said that the Center Hill Lake would extend approximately 64 miles up the main stream of the Caney Fork and about 10 miles up Falling Water, and, of course, for shorter distances up other tributaries of the river.

The backwater of this project will meet the tailwater of the Great Falls Dam, a TVA dam at

Rock Island, but in no way interferes with the operation of the Great Falls plant.

**(Daughters of the American Revolution Record):**

**PUCKETT, JOHN**

Ancestor #: A092011

Service:

VIRGINIA Rank: PRIVATE

Birth:

2-26-1764 AUGUSTA CO VIRGINIA

Death:

9-30-1844 DEKALB CO TENNESSEE

Pension Number:

\*SR8511

Service Source:

\*SR8511

Service Description:

1) CAPT THOMAS PRICE, CAPT HAYS

Comments (Overview)

- 1) SOLDIER WAS PENSIONED; HIS WIDOW'S CLAIM WAS REJECTED (REASON NOT
- 2) FOUND IN FILE).

Residence

- 1) **County:** WASHINGTON CO - **State:** VIRGINIA

Spouse

Number

Name

- 1)

RHODA LIDA

**CENTER HILL DAM LAND ACQUISITION TO BEGIN SOON:**

Published: Putnam County Herald, Cookeville TN: 22 December 1946

Acquisition of land affected by the Center Hill Dam will begin within the next two weeks under the direction of M. A. Smith, real estate division, U. S. Engineer, Ohio River Division office, it was learned this week.

All land within elevation 540, which is 16 feet below the roadbed of the bridge on Highway 56 between Smithville and Silver Point, will be acquired and cleared immediately. Work will be progressive from the point of the dam, upriver.

Construction of the dam was started in 1942 but was suspended early in 1943 in the interest of the war effort. Work was resumed in January 1946 and has progressed to the point where closure of the dam will begin by September 1947.

With the exception of key personnel, local people will be employed for the prosecution of this work, it was announced.

**COLONEL CANAN TELLS ROTARIANS TVA TO GET  
POWER; JOBS OPEN FOR CLEARING OPERATIONS**

Putnam County Herald, Cookeville TN: 29 May 1947

Cookeville Rotarians last night were first to hear that a scenic highway over the Cumberland River tributaries' dams is in the making, that the power generated will be pooled with the TVA, and that there is some doubt as to when the Center Hill project will be finished.

Col. H. V. Canan, head of the Nashville office of the U. S. District Engineers, made these revelations at a joint meeting of the Rotary Club with U. S. Engineers and officials of the Massman-Metcalf and Hamilton Company, contractors on the Center Hill project. The meeting was held at Center Hill after the visitors had been conducted on a tour of the works.

An ugly side of the immense project was also cited by Colonel Canan when he said that he had heard of "landowners being advised not to sell their land at the government appraisal value. They are being told that they will receive more if they will litigate the matter," the colonel said, "but I frankly believe that the appraisers, who are all local men, are offering plenty for the land."

Colonel Canan would not elaborate on who was giving the advice, but reassured reporters after the meeting that such was the case. He did say, however, that the advice was not altogether from "disinterested parties."

(Editor's Note: From past observation in the Chickamauga and Watts Bar Dam areas, litigation is unwise in most instances. It was found there that the federal government usually paid more for the land than it would have brought through other sources of disposal, the theory being that a homeowner should be paid more because of being forced to relocate).

News of the scenic highway was received by Rotarians with much interest because it will place Cookeville at a greater vantage point between Dale Hollow and Center Hill. The route will begin in Nashville on U. S. Highway 70-N to the Stewart's Ferry dam Site, back to Highway 70 to Lebanon, thence to Alexandria over State Highway 26 to Dowelltown to the West abutment of Center Hill Dam, to Silver Point, Baxter, Cookeville, Livingston, across Dale Hollow, thence to Wolf Creek Dam in Kentucky, to Russell Springs, KY, and then South back into Nashville. "Much talk about a scenic route to these dams has been done, and I can now tell you that it is in the making" was the engineer's statement which caused his listeners to perk up.

Colonel Canan's answer to a question of what was to be done with the power generated at Wolf Creek, Dale Hollow, Center Hill, and Stewart's Ferry, gave some light on a subject that has long been a question mark to leading daily newspapers in Tennessee and Kentucky. He explained that there is a heavy demand for more power in this area and that "under existing law, all power generated by plants built by the U. S. Engineers is turned over to the Department of Interior and that it would in turn be distributed by the Tennessee Valley Authority."

Center Hill is set up for three 45,000 kilowatt units, but only two are contemplated at present, the colonel said.

Doubt as to when Center Hill will be finished stemmed from the failure of Congress to appropriate funds in order for land acquisition, clearance, and the building of the dam to be carried on together. It has been planned for completion by late 1948 or early 1949, the colonel said, "but it is entirely dependent on appropriations from Congress."

Meanwhile, the Cookeville sub-office of the engineers announced today that clearing of the first of five segments of land would begin June 7. The first clearing will begin near the dam and will cover 1,100 acres. Contracts for the other segments have not been let, and in light of Colonel Canan's talk it is presumed that the appropriation of funds is the cause.

R. W. McCall, resident engineer at Center Hill, announced that an employment office would be opened near the dam June 11 for those interested in a clearing job.

Center Hill Lake will cover 15,000 acres of land at the low water mark which will be 120 feet deep at the dam, and a maximum of 23,000 acres when at the highest, Colonel Canan said, but added that it would be held as near stationary as possible.

The lake will be 63 miles long, covering 36 square miles.

Colonel Canan also asked the co-operations of all citizen in making the recreation facilities that will be afforded by the lake the best. "This can be done," he said, "by taking a long range view, not charging exorbitant prices to tourists, and seeing that they have a clean place to eat and sleep."

### **MAN FALLS TO DETH AT CENTER HILL DAM**

Published: Putnam County Herald, Cookeville TN: 7 August 1947

The second fatality since the building of Center Hill Dam started, occurred Wednesday morning when Charles Scott, 28, of Route 4, Liberty, fell 60 feet through a shaft inside the structure. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Scott, Liberty.

The body was badly crushed and death was immediate, according to personnel officials, as Scott received a broken back and neck. He was a bucket hooker for trucks unloading concrete.

Dr. J. M. Allison, physician at the dam, pronounced Scott dead upon arrival at the hospital there. The other death was several month sago when a rigger fell 60 feet.

Survivors include a wife, Mrs. Neil Scott.

**\*Read more about the History of Putnam Co., TN – Buffalo Valley, Putnam Co., TN at:**

<http://www.ajlambert.com>