

Photo of the Month

Beaver Dam



With the possible exception of the coming of the railroads, nothing has affected the development of Northwest Arkansas more than the building of Beaver Dam. In the decades since the dam's construction, this area has been transformed from a region of small towns surrounded by farms into a rapidly growing metropolitan area.

The dam created Beaver Lake, which provides recreation and a source of water for our area. The dam itself also included a hydroelectric power plant.

Given these benefits to the region, it would be easy to assume that Beaver Dam was built with the needs of Northwest Arkansas in mind. But in fact it and the other dams along the White River were built to control flooding downstream.

A recent donation by Thomas Petermann, project engineer with the construction company on the Beaver Dam project, provides an almost day-by-day look at the building of the dam. Petermann donated over 1300 negatives and photographs, accompanied by a chart, blueprint, and his field notes on the project. This particular photograph shows construction in progress in September 1962. These photos and documents detail the enormous complexity of a project that has had far-reaching impact on our area.