

The Babcock Plan



Babcock

The Loup Project represents the development of an idea that originated some forty years prior to the creation of the Loup River Public Power District. The first effort of the people to utilize the water of the Loup River was made in 1894 when a stock company known as the Columbus Power & Irrigation Company was organized with \$150,000. Due to the lack of technical direction and financial resources, no tangible results were accomplished.

However, an enthusiasm was engendered and intensified by drought conditions so that two years later, a new and more ambitious project was promoted. This effort was directed by a competent civil engineer, H.E. Babcock of Columbus. This project included an extensive canal and reservoir system for the irrigation of lands in Platte, Colfax and Dodge counties. The first section of the canal, in Platte County, was constructed and supplied a small number of farms until 1902. Due to the abundant rainfall in these years, it became impossible to interest the farmers in the purchase of water. The cost of operation became excessive and the canal was abandoned.

Babcock devoted himself to the promotion of a canal for power purposes along much the same general location as the Loup Power District canal. After many legal and financial difficulties work was started on the first section, two miles of canal from the Loup River to Beaver Creek just south of Genoa was completed. A 600 KW plant was built which was in operation for about one year. Financial difficulties arising from the outbreak of war in Europe forced the abandonment of the entire scheme, until 1932.