



Veazie Town Council

Workshop

September 16, 2013

AGENDA

ITEM 1. Call to Order

ITEM 2. Secretary to do the Roll Call

ITEM 3. Pledge of Allegiance

New Business:

ITEM 4. Veazie Power House Reuse Discussion

Old Business:

ITEM 5. Comments from the Public

ITEM 6. Requests for information and Town Council Comments

ITEM 7. Adjournment

**Joseph Friedman
1 Veazie Villas
852-0933**

**Karen Walker
1002 Mutton Ln
947-0458**

**Robert Rice
1116 Buck Hill Dr
942 -3064**

**Tammy J. Perry
5 Prouty Drive
947-9624**

**Chris Bagley
16 Silver Ridge
907-4820**

Agenda Items

For September 16, 2013

Item 4: Following the tour of the power plant earlier we are here tonight to discuss future reuse of the Veazie Power House and if the Town has any interest in reuse or suggestions for the Penobscot River Restoration Trust. At the request of Councilor Rice I did some research and was able to find some history on the Dam which I have enclosed for your review.

TURN OF CENTURY

With the closing of the mills, there was little work for many of the mill hands and laborers. Many of them moved to other Maine communities where they found employment in the pulp, paper, leather, and textile mills. Some farmers and farmhands moved West to the Mississippi Valley now cleared of hostile Indians. Veazie's population fell steadily from its founding until 1900 when the rate of decrease slowed. The lowest point was in 1920 with five hundred and four people. The population was low but the town was still active. In 1880 the town had no sewers, electricity, town water, or telephone services. By 1940 it had all of these.

In 1889, the town approved the construction of the new hydro-electric station, (the first in Maine,) and granted the Bangor Street Railway rights to build a single track along the County Road. The Street Railway opened the town to commuters. This allowed Veazie people to work in Bangor and Old Town.

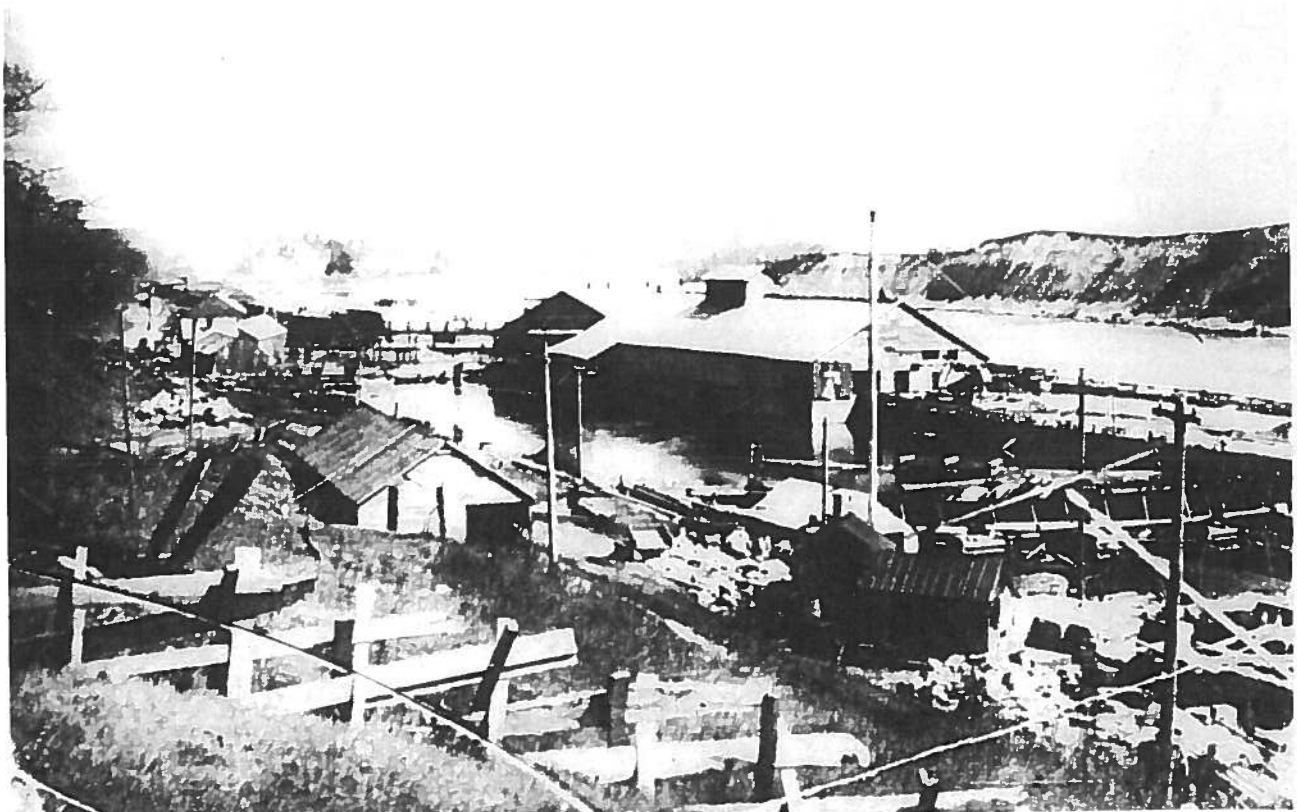
The street railway ran into several problems. First, there was the question of where the right of way should go. After several heated meetings it was decided to allow it on the east side of the Orono Road. The town also overvalued the

railway. (Taxes were a large problem in the 1890's.) The town claimed \$4823.00 due in back taxes which the company refused to pay. It was equitably settled by a decrease in valuation and a payment of \$1000.00. Once the line was built, it posed a hazard to life and limb. Several people were killed in streetcar accidents over the years.

The Great Depression hit Veazie about as hard as everywhere else. In response the town allowed residents to work on town projects in lieu of cash to pay taxes. The town voted heavily for Hoover in 1932 and even more heavily for Landon in 1936 yet cashed in on Roosevelt's programs in building the Town Hall in 1938.

The general impression of this era in the town's history is one of growth in services rather than population. The mood of the town changed. Always frugal, the town turned from a puritan frugality to a more comfortable twentieth century frugality. Never could the town be said to be harmonious. No issue was approved by a large majority and most were recalled and haggled over time and again.

The bickering subsided during World War II in the face of a larger foe.



STANDING AT END OF SCHOOL STREET LOOKING DOWN ON SHORE ROAD AND MILL STREET

Sidewalks became an issue at the turn of the century. Year after year people would propose new sidewalks for Olive, State and Flagg Streets. They were consistently voted down or if voted they would not be built and the appropriation returned the next year. To this day there are still only dirt walks.

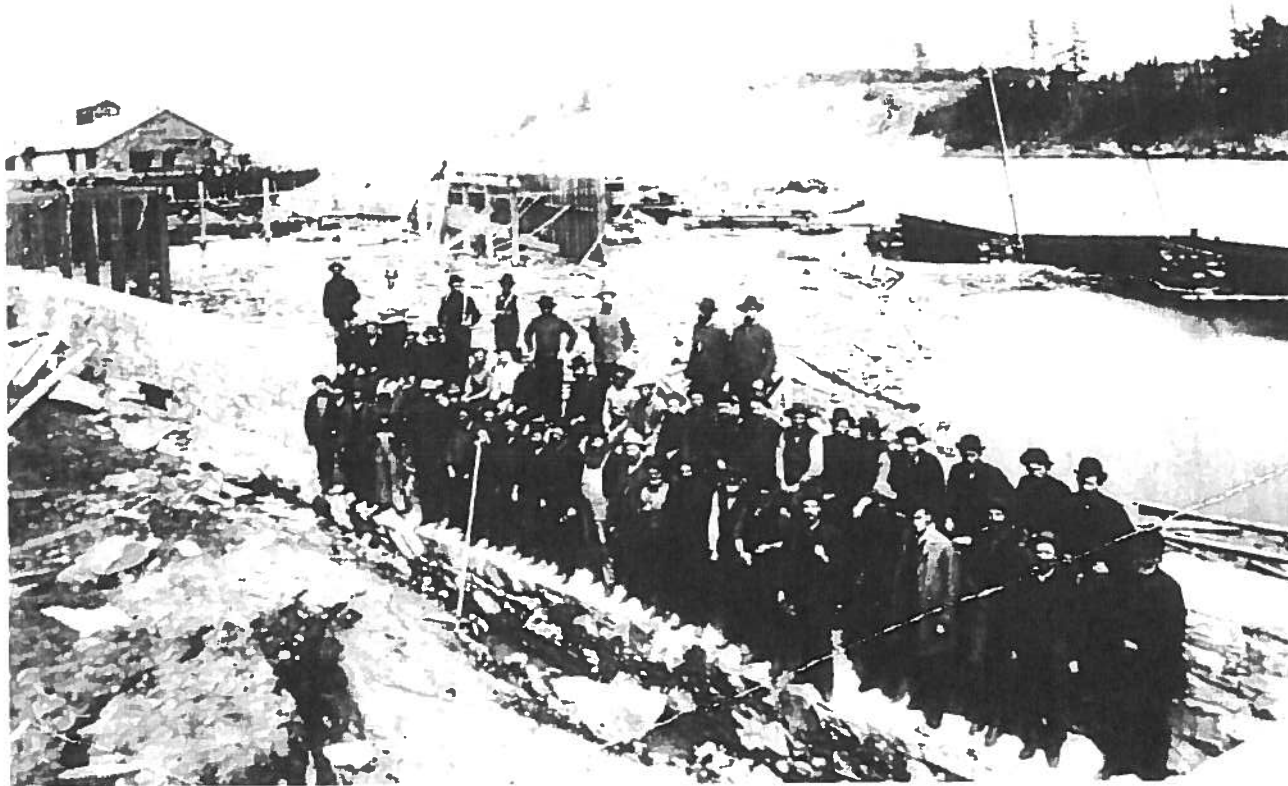
1923-town voted to build a gravel sidewalk from J. Miller's to Elm Tree, so-called, on the west side of the road.

1925-town rescinded \$1000.00 set aside for a sidewalk and placed money in Poor, (\$300.00,) Dependent Children, (\$342.86,) Highway, (\$228.00,) Remodeling Hall, (\$79.18,) School Incidentals, (\$50.00).

In 1887 the Bangor Street Railway made application for a franchise to build and operate an electric railway in Bangor. President F. M. Laughton and F. H. Clergue, Treasurer, two early pioneers, persistent with foresight and courage accomplished what they set out to do. They were responsible for the first electric street railway in New England. In 1889 three and one half miles of track was laid from East Hampden up Main Street and State Street, Exchange and Pearl Streets. The first trolley travelled six miles an hour. Difficulties arose. The generator, known as

a Dynamo, lacked the power to drive the trolley so the site of the old lumber mill in Veazie was selected as the new power station. In 1891 the Public Works Company, the first hydro electric station in Maine, was ready. Equipped with a steam engine and boilers for stand-by, this project became one of the early successful attempts of the transmission of electricity in the United States.

The Public Works Company, with a new President, James H. Cutler, increased in size. By 1900 the Veazie Power Station was operating over thirty miles of electric railway, ten thousand incandescent electric lamps, and nearly one hundred horse power in small motors in Bangor. John Graham accepted the position of General Manager and Treasurer of the Public Works Company in 1902. On February 16, 1905 he took an option to buy the Company's entire holdings. The name was changed to Bangor Railway and Electric Company, consolidating the street railway, electric lighting, and the water rights of the old company. In 1913 a new cement dam was built across the Penobscot River. (Rumor has it that the old timber dam that was there prior to the cement dam had been built eighty years before.) If you walk down River Road, (called Mill Road in days gone by,) you will see this present dam, with a fishway, and the Veazie Hydro plant.



SAWMILL CREW (LATE 1800's)

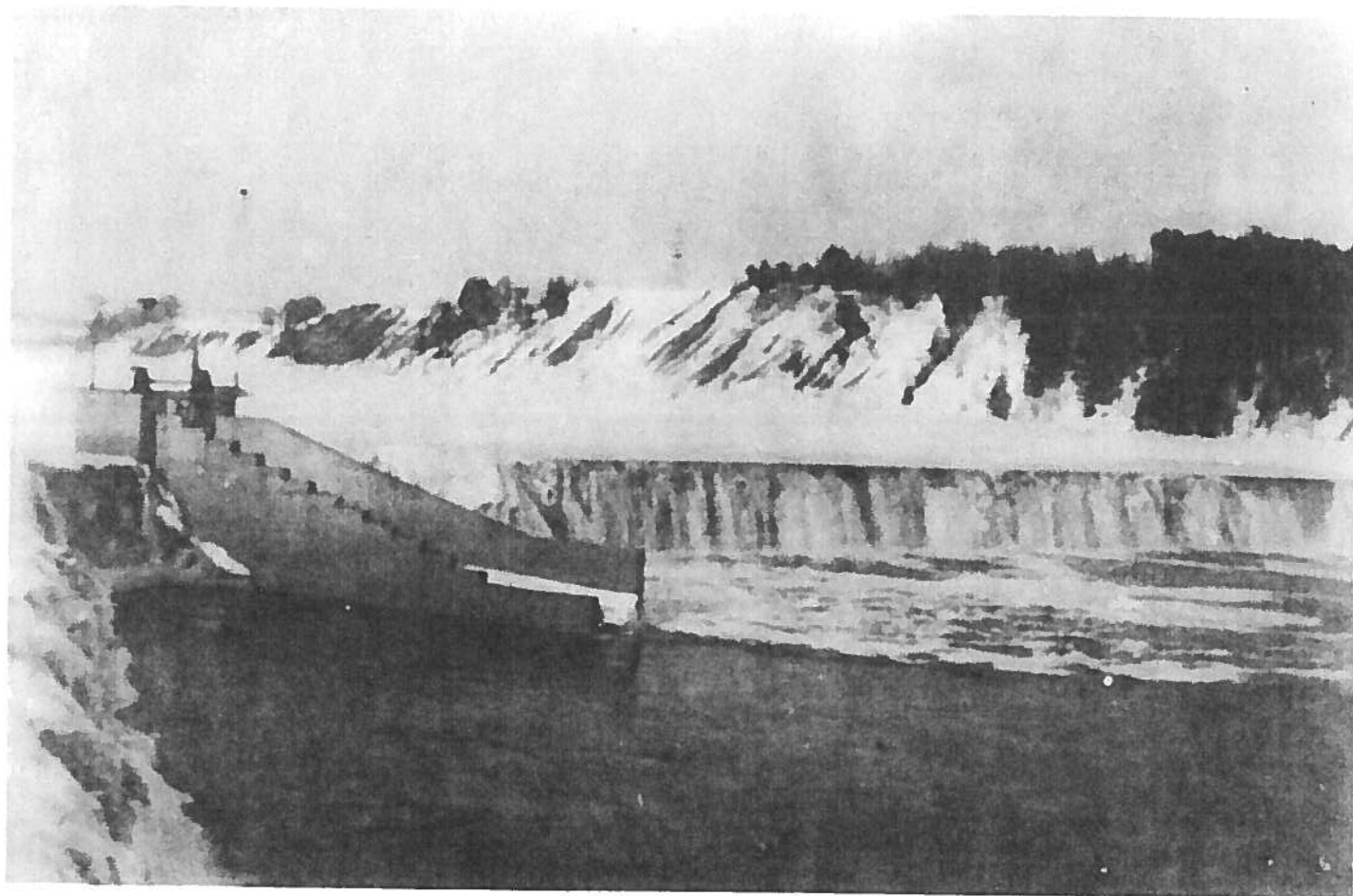
Twenty five or thirty years ago the 'Pit', as the Veazie Power Station was called, had a generating capacity of 9200 kilowatts. The power intake came from Orono, Milford, Ellsworth and Howland hydro power stations, with a tie line from Veazie Hydro to Central Maine Power Company for the purpose of load demand. When Graham Station was built in 1954 the intake was fed to this plant for distribution. At present Veazie Hydro's intake and distribution involves only Orono and Stillwater. There are two distribution lines: number 33 is Veazie and line number 37 is Eddington.

The dam was noted for its hinged flashboards four feet high which operated from an overhead cable. There are two tainter gates situated between the two buildings. These gates were the first of its kind to be used on the eastern seaboard. The gates control the head waters going into station B. If any difficulties arise with either of the two water wheels and they need to be checked, the tainter gates are closed, stopping the water flow temporarily. The gates are unique. They look like two huge oil drums cut in half lengthwise. Each one is approximately thirty feet in length and each one is separately controlled, manually or

electrically: They sit side by side in what appears to be a sluiceway.

Veazie Hydro ran a set of railroad tracks up to the plant so that the trains could haul in cars of coal which was used to heat up the boilers to generate electricity. The workers would climb up in the coal cars and shovel the coal into the chutes and into the plant coal bins. Men inside the plant were kept busy keeping the 'fires hot' under the boilers. This was quite a process and no doubt it was more economical than today's crude oil with its 'fuel adjustment.'

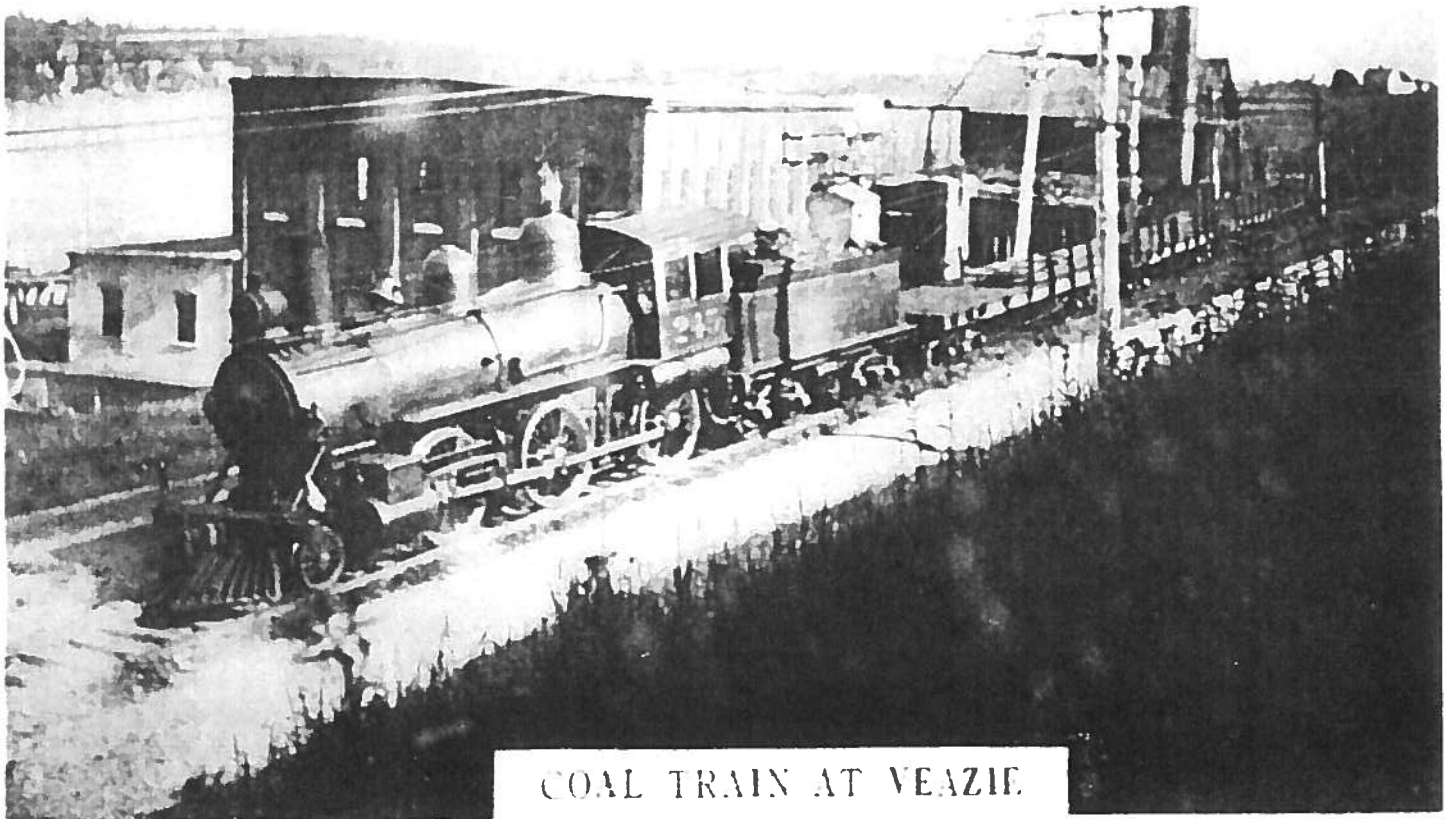
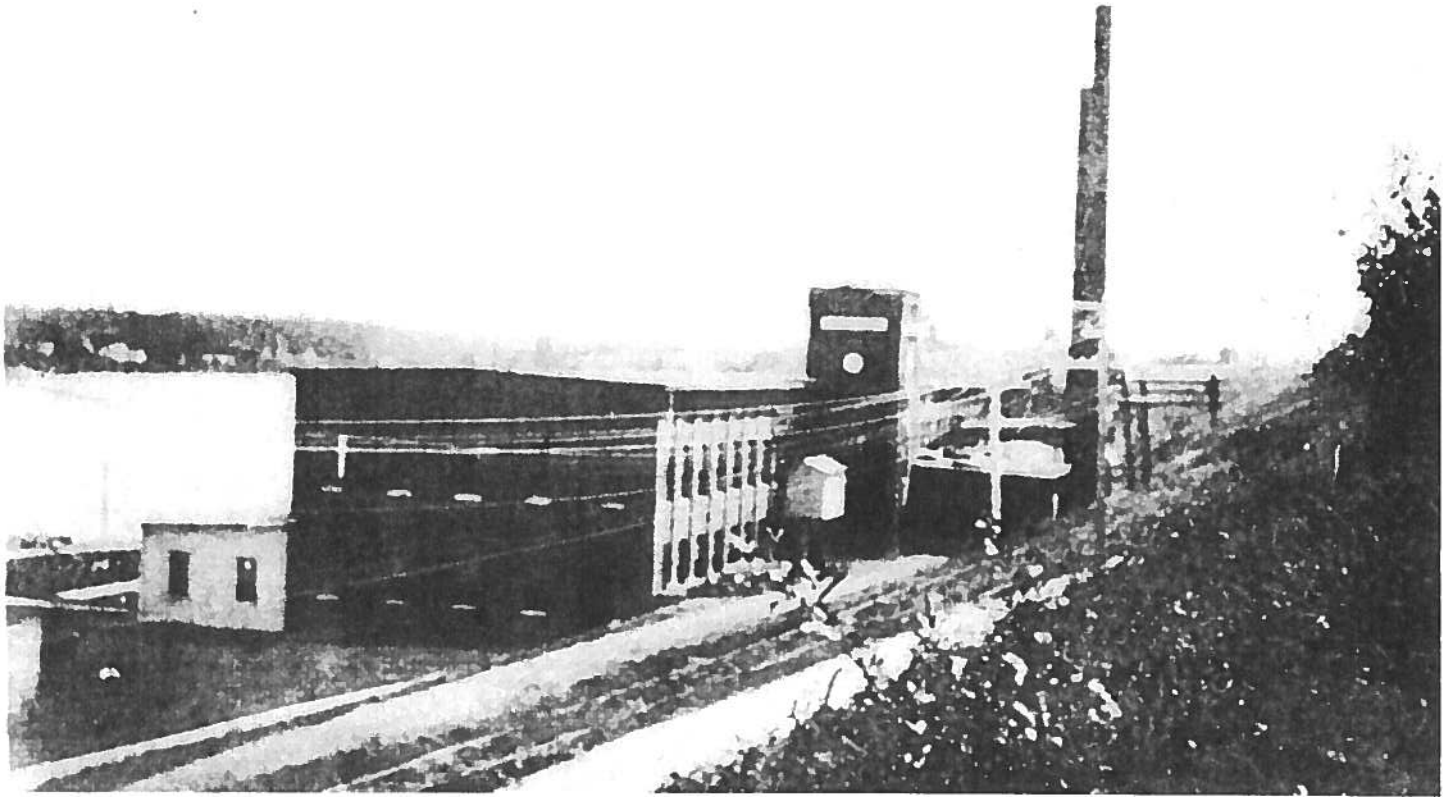
The Veazie Power Station owned a small heavy metal push car which sat on the tracks down near the end of Olive Street. This car was used on occasion to move generators and transformers. "Pete" (as Francis Webster is known,) told me about the fun he and Leonard Lancaster had going back and forth to school with this push car. It became their means of transportation on many occasions ...When they got out of school, they'd run down Olive Street to the push car, push it to gather speed and jump on, coasting along. They'd repeat this "operation" until they



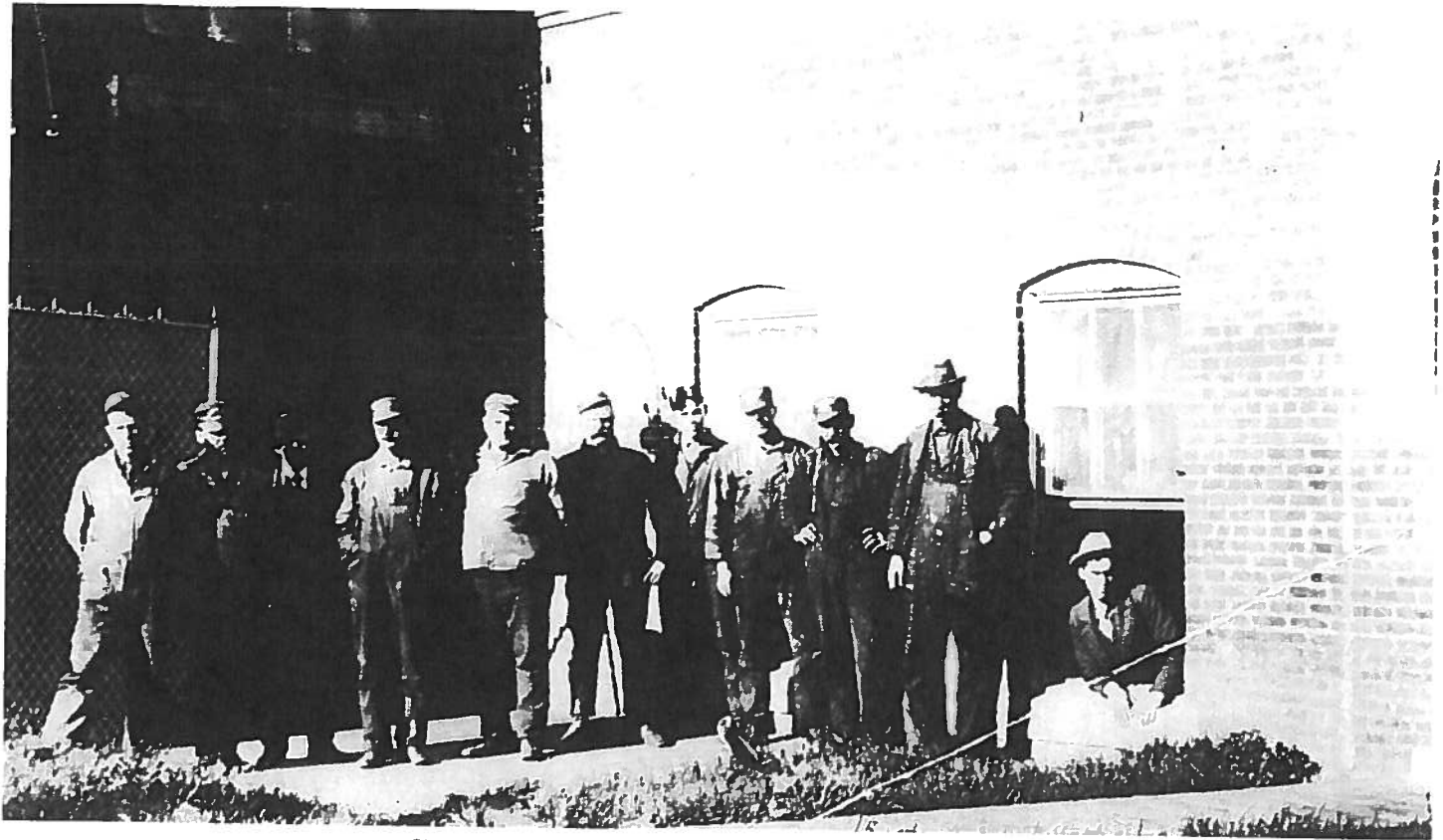
VEAZIE HYDRO DAM AND FISHWAY

reached the area behind Lou Silver's Construction Company. They'd jump off, go home to lunch, then return to the push car and go through the same procedure back to Olive Street. Pete said that Leonard would stand on a small hill and when he and the push car came by, Leonard,

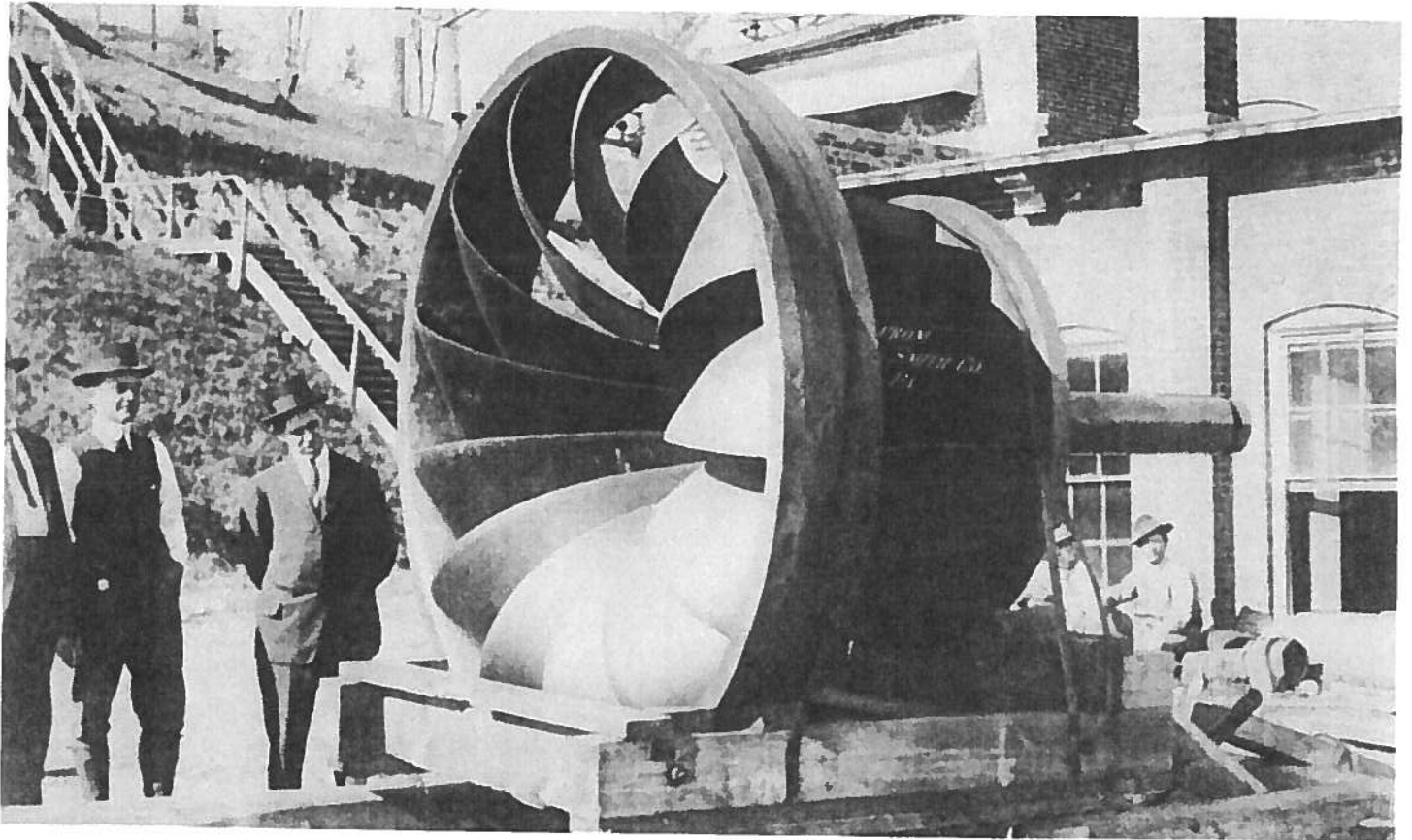
(with no difficulty,) would jump onto the car from the top of that hill. I understand many of the children used this push car as a means of play.



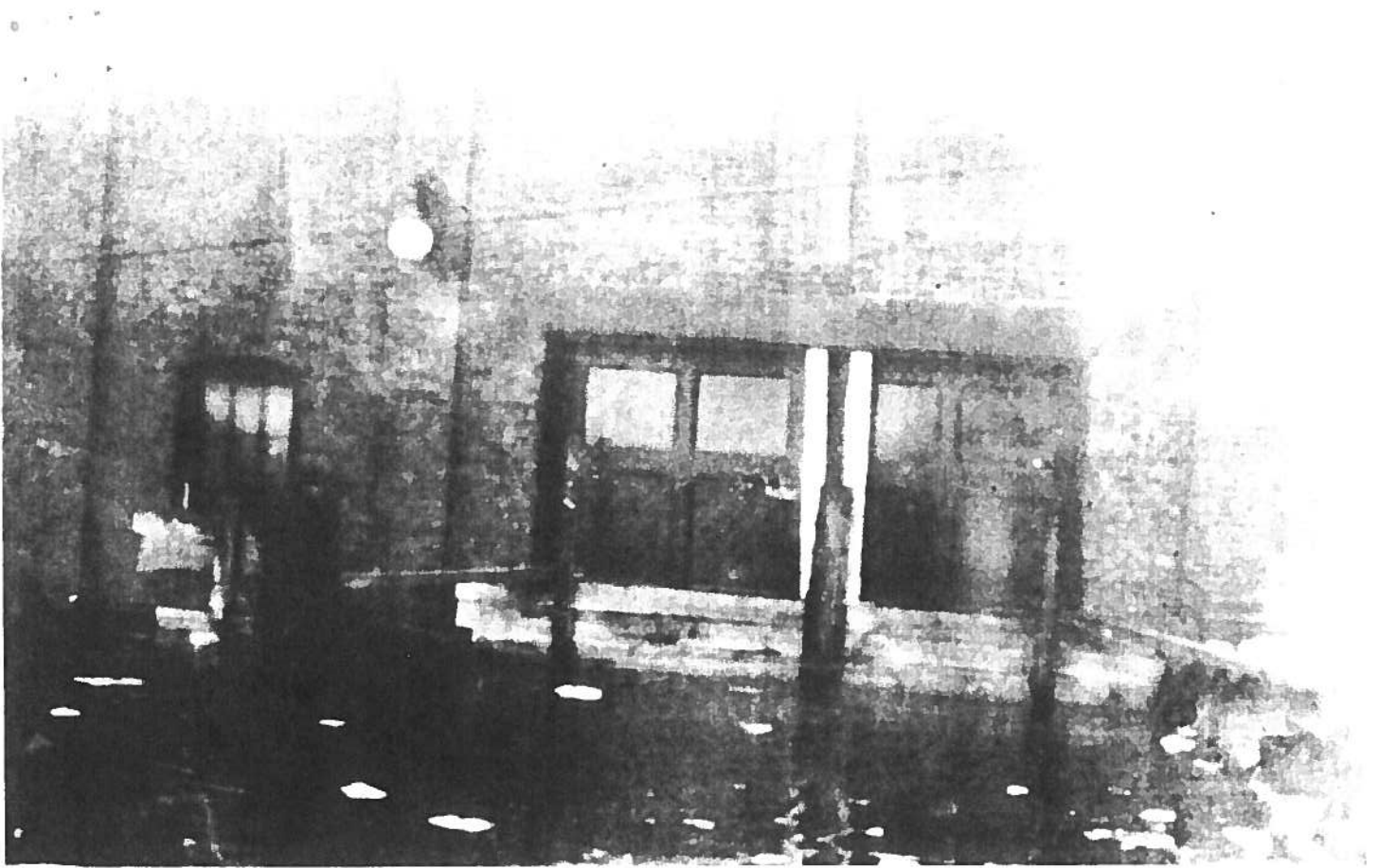
COAL TRAIN AT VEAZIE



SHIFT WORKERS AT VEAZIE HYDRO (EARLY 1900's)



VEAZIE HYDRO ABOUT 1910
Inspecting a new water wheel. Steps in rear were built for Superintendent Henry Perkins who lived up on hill.



MARCH 1936 - Heavy rains and melting snows cause flooding at Veazie Hydro Station - Upstream end of Veazie Station, showing main entrance with board barricade to keep water out of the station.



High water in Forebay at Veazie Station, showing outside wall of generator room. Platform which runs entire length of station used for track for rack rake under water.