



Pawhuska, 1923

Among others testifying was Oklahoma humorist Will Rogers, who said the Army Engineers, with the traditional levee plan, were just trying to put side boards on the river.⁸

Congress took the lead. In 1927 it directed the Corps to conduct a sweeping scientific survey of the nation's rivers. In what were called "308 reports," the Corps studied U.S. navigable streams to develop plans for improving navigation, water power, flood control, and irrigation.

But after the investigations, the Corps concluded in 1935 that many of the proposed reservoirs on Mississippi tributaries would not be cost-effective under that day's standard. The Corps recommended no action.

The Corps' no-action action torched a political explosion, doubly hot because the country was in the midst of the Great Depression when public works were more and more appealing as a means of employment.