# HISTORY OF THE TULSA DISTRICT

ACTIVATION--The Tulsa District was officially established on July 1, 1939. It was organized to perform civil works functions in the section of the Arkansas River Basin lying above Fort Smith, Arkansas. At the same time, the District inherited two projects being built by the Little Rock District: Great Salt Plains and Fort Supply Lakes in western Oklahoma. When the new District opened for business in the Petroleum Building, three officers and 275 civilian employees reported for duty.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION--Soon after construction for the Army Air Corps was transferred from the Quartermaster Corps to the Corps of Engineers in December 1940, the Tulsa District was building the Tulsa Airport Assembly Plant, the Midwest Air Depot (Tinker Field) and the Enid Army Air Base. In 1941, the District was also building Will Rogers Field and the Tulsa Municipal Airport for the Civil Aeronautics Administration. Later, the District built several other CAA airfields, including those at Ada, Shawnee, Enid, and Joplin.

The attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and the transfer of all construction responsibilities of the Quartermaster Corps to the Corps of Engineers nine days later, had a major impact on the military mission of the young District.

During World War II, the Tulsa District placed $800 million in military construction and procured special engineering equipment costing more than $100 million. The number of employees of the Tulsa District jumped from 800 in June 1941 to 2,700 a year later.

During the Korean War, the military construction program of the Tulsa District increased to over $50 million a year. In 1960, the District launched a $40 million crash construction program for the 12 Atlas Intercontinental Ballistic Missile sites in the vicinity of Altus Air Force Base.

In July 1961, the Tulsa District was relieved of all military construction responsibilities in order that it might devote a major portion of its energies toward the planning and construction of the Arkansas River Navigation Project. In 20 years the District had built all or part of some three dozen military installations in Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas.

# CIVIL WORKS

COMPLETED LAKES--The first dam and lake constructed by the District was Great Salt Plains on the Salt Fork of the Arkansas River in northern Oklahoma which was completed and placed in operation in 1941. This was followed by completion of Fort Supply Dam and Lake on the Wolf Creek tributary of the North Canadian River in western Oklahoma in 1942. During the ensuing war years very little in the way of civil works was accomplished and work on Canton Dam, on the North Canadian River, which had been started in 1940, was suspended.

In 1945, the geographical area of the District was increased to include that portion of the Red River Basin which lies above Fulton, Arkansas. This brought Denison Dam and Lake Texoma, which had been completed by the Denison District in 1944, under the Tulsa District control. After World War II, the District resumed construction of Canton Dam and completed it in 1948. Fall River Dam, on Fall River in southern Kansas and Wister Dam on the Poteau River in eastern Oklahoma were completed the following year. Heyburn Dam, on Polecat Creek southwest of Tulsa, and Hulah Dam, on the Caney River northwest of Bartlesville, were completed in 1950 and 1951, respectively. Fort Gibson Dam on Grand River and Tenkiller Ferry Dam on the Illinois River were in flood control and power operation in 1953. Toronto Dam

on the Verdigris River in southern Kansas was completed in 1960. Oologah Dam on the Verdigris River northeast of Tulsa, the first completed structure in the Arkansas River Navigation Project, was dedicated in July 1963. In 1964, Keystone Dam and Lake on the Arkansas River above Tulsa and Eufaula Dam and Lake on the North Canadian River south of Muskogee, both of which contribute to the Arkansas River Navigation Project, were completed. Also completed in 1964 were Council Grove Dam and John Redmond Dam both on the Neosho River in southern Kansas.

Elk City Dam and Lake on the Elk River, a tributary of the Verdigris River, in southern Kansas, and Millwood Dam and Lake on the Little River, a tributary of the Red River, in southwest Arkansas, were completed in 1966. Pat Mayse Lake on Sanders Creek, a tributary of the Red River, near Paris, Texas, was completed in 1967. Marion Dam and Lake on the Cottonwood River near Marion, Kansas, and Broken Bow Dam and Lake on the Mountain Fork River in southeastern Oklahoma, were completed in 1968. Pine Creek Lake on Little River was completed in 1969 and Hugo Lake, on the Kiamichi River--both in southeastern Oklahoma--in 1974. Dierks Lake on the Saline River and Gillham Lake on the Cossatot River, both in southwest Arkansas, were completed in 1975. Kaw Dam on the Arkansas River in Kay and Osage Counties, Oklahoma, was completed in 1976, and Birch Dam, on Birch Creek, a tributary of the Verdigris River, was completed in 1977. DeQueen Lake on the Rolling Fork River in southwest Arkansas was impounded in July 1977. Waurika Lake on Beaver Creek in southwest Oklahoma was impounded in August 1977. Optima Lake on the North Canadian River in the Oklahoma Panhandle was impounded in 1978.

NAVIGATION--The public works project of greatest magnitude, and which is having the greatest economic impact on eastern Oklahoma, is the main control plan for the Arkansas River. This project for improvement of the river, "Arkansas River and Tributaries, Arkansas and Oklahoma," was authorized by the Rivers and Harbors Act of July 24, 1946. Basically, the plan provides for integration of developments for navigation, flood control, hydroelectric power, and for other beneficial water uses into a single overall project. The project includes a navigation route from Catoosa, Oklahoma, to the Mississippi River. The 448-mile waterway has a minimum depth of 9 feet and a total lift of 420 feet. Seventeen lock and dam structures--12 in Arkansas and 5 in Oklahoma--were required to establish this stairway of water. Construction of the navigation system was started in 1957. By the end of 1966, work was underway on all of the locks and dams in Oklahoma--W. D. Mayo, Robert S. Kerr, Webbers Falls, Chouteau, and Newt Graham. They went into operation in 1970. On January 3, 1971, the first commercial payload--four barges loaded with pipe--reached the Port of Muskogee. The first tow to travel the full length of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System arrived at the Port of Catoosa on January 21, 1971.

The total estimated cost of the project is $1.2 billion. Of this amount, approximately $600 million is for project features in Oklahoma, and $600 million is for project features in Arkansas.

FLOOD CONTROL--The District also has completed 17 local flood protection projects. Flood control projects operated by the Tulsa District have prevented more than $834 million in flood damages with most projects less than 25 years old.

OTHER BENEFITS--Besides flood control, these projects provide power, industrial and municipal water supply, water conservation, low flow regulation, fish and wildlife benefits, and recreation. In 1979, more than 55.5 million people visited Corps lakes in the Tulsa District.

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