

Barber Dam



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Photo: www.waterarchives.org

Barber Lumber Company was established in 1902 with 25,000 acres of holdings in the Boise and Crooked River watersheds.

Barber Dam, a “crib & timber” structure was completed by the Barber Lumber Company, on the river just south* of here in 1905. The dam was constructed to provide a holding pond for logs destined for the mill at Barberton, the company town. The sawmill was completed in 1906. Both the mill and town were on the north side of the Boise River; Barberton was located downriver from the mill and north of what is now Hwy. 21. The former mill pond is now within the Barber Pool Conservation Area.

A small powerhouse, capable of producing 4.14 megawatts of power, was constructed on the north side of the dam to generate power for the mill and town. Ada County acquired the dam in 1977 and later sold it to a private company, which still operates it today.

Barber Dam is quite big and it includes a fish ladder because the Boise River teemed

with salmon and steelhead in the 1800s. Sadly, employees of Barber Lumber Company stated that 1916 was the last year spring Chinook salmon were observed at Barber Dam’s fish ladder.

Barber Lumber Company originally planned to float logs downriver from the Boise Basin forests, but this proved to be impractical. A rail line was eventually constructed to Centerville but it wasn’t very profitable. The Barber Mill was dismantled in 1934 and railroad was abandoned in 1935.

