

Historical Marker - L2142 - Cooke Hydroelectric Plant / Hydroelectric Power (Marker ID#:L2142)



Front - Title/Description

Cooke Hydroelectric Plant

William Augustine Foote, a Jackson entrepreneur, built a series of hydroelectric plants along the Au Sable River with the help of his brother, electrical engineer James Berry Foote. The Footes enlisted the aid of civil engineer William Fargo and construction supervisor Grant Cochran, and in 1910 began constructing the Cooke Hydroelectric Plant. The first of six hydros built on the lower Au Sable River, the plant opened the following year. Its 140,000-volt transmission line (the highest voltage in use at that time) extended 125 miles to Flint. The facility was named for Andrew Cooke, a financier who accompanied the Footes on surveys of the Au Sable River and suggested this location for the plant.

Significant Date:

Industry and Invention (1875-1915)

Registry Year: 2004 **Erected Date:** 2005

Marker Location

Address: Cooke Road at the Au Sable River

City: Oscoda

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Iosco

Township: Oscoda

Lat: 44.47194230 / **Long:** -83.57105070

Web URL:

Back - Title/Description

Hydroelectric Power

Flowing water has long provided power to mines and mills. With advances in electricity in the 1880s, waterpower was soon used to generate electricity. The first public demonstration of hydroelectric power in the country occurred on July 24, 1880, when sixteen carbon arc street lamps lit up Grand Rapids using a belt driven dynamo (generator) powered by a water turbine at the Wolverine Chair Factory. Michigan's extensive water resources were harnessed to power electric-generating equipment, first at existing dams and mills and later at sites built expressly for hydroelectric generation. The electricity from these plants provided power for homes and businesses and helped fuel Michigan's growth as one of the nation's premier industrial states.