In 1895, the Hercules Power Company built a plant at the mouth of Logan Canyon to provide power for Logan. Households were charged per 40 watt light bulb used. The first bulb cost $1.25 per month, and each additional one cost 50 cents per month. Since there were no other power providers in the area, Hercules had a monopoly and charged what they wished.

At a special election in 1902, citizens voted in favor of a $65,000 bond to allow the City of Logan to build a municipal power plant to provide power at lower rates. The city constructed a new hydroelectric dam, which today is called Second Dam. They charged 35 cents per light bulb or 3 lights for $1.00.

The Hercules Power Company was not pleased at having competition. During the summer of 1903, in the middle of construction of the city's new power building, Hercules raised their dam 5 feet, which flooded a greater area, including where the new building was being constructed. Water flooded across the brand new floor of the building.

Since the rights to the river were owned by the federal government, Logan City filed a federal application attempting to claim rights to the site, but Hercules had beaten them to it, filing an application only ten days before. After a heated debate, the federal government made a compromise and authorized both Hercules and Logan City to operate dams on the Logan River so long as they didn't interfere with one another.

The monopoly was broken and Logan residents had two separate power providers competing for their money. A rate war ensued. Rates dropped to 20 cents per light, then to 10 cents. Running a power plant with less and less revenue became problematic. It was made worse by the fact that this was a time before metering. To determine their customers' bills, power companies would send a person called a “checker” to visit each house and count the number of lights and other electric appliances, such as toasters and irons. People paid per light and appliance, not for how long they used them, so no effort was made to conserve electricity. Furthermore, people were not always honest when checkers came to call. Appliances like toasters could be hidden away and, therefore not paid for.

Electric metering helped solve many of these problems. And despite the difficulties of high demand and intense competition, Logan City's power plant has survived throughout the years. Today, about 10 percent of Logan's electricity is produced by the city’s hydroelectric power plants like the one here at Second Dam.

As for the Hercules Power Plant, it is no longer in operation. Ownership of the plant changed hands several times over the years, and it ceased operation in 1971. In 1973, it was sold to Logan City for a public park.

Sources:
Portraits in Time: Logan Canyon, a Historical Guide. Published by Bridgerland Travel Region and the United States Forest Service Logan Ranger District.


