Victor Gustav Bloede was one of those rare people who, having built his own fortune through hard work and ingenuity, sought to endow his fellow man with useful institutions. Born in Germany, he was brought to the United States as an infant in 1849 when his parents, like many others, fled a repressive and tyrannical German government.

As a chemist, he was both an educator and the inventor of many useful chemical products such as adhesives and dyes. He came to the Baltimore area in the 1890s and became active in finance, public utilities, and chemical manufacturing. Early in this century, he organized the Patapsco Electric and Manufacturing Company and oversaw the construction of the hydroelectric generating plant and dam which bear his name.

Mr. Bloede devoted the second half of his career to worthy social causes. He supported medical research into tuberculosis and encouraged rehabilitation of the blind. Always interested in the practical application of science, he set up scholarships and other constructive programs to aid young students in the scientific fields. He belonged to a number of organizations which promoted scientific studies and contributed numerous articles on chemistry to scholarly journals.

Bloede Dam was recognized in 1907 as the world’s first underwater hydroelectric plant. It was also one of the earliest reinforced concrete dams built in the United States. The hollow interior allowed the generating machinery to be placed under water directly below the water intake pipes. The water flow dropped efficiently through the...