September 30, 2011 marked the 76th anniversary of the dedication of Hoover Dam. The dam straddles the border of Arizona and Nevada in the Black Canyon of the Colorado River and was dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935. Rising 726.4 feet from its foundation, Hoover Dam was constructed in five years, beginning in 1931 and completed in 1936. Take a look back at its construction and history.

This is a night view of the Hoover Dam, 1983. (AP Photo/Steve McPeak)
engineer, points to the hills which will be submerged after the completion of the project in Nevada, Aug. 24, 1932. The flat top lone mountain in the center of the photograph will be an island 14 feet above water. (AP Photo)

In this photo provided by Fairchild Aerial Surveys, an aerial view of the region surrounding the site where Hoover Dam would be constructed, March 4, 1931. The announcement was made that the lowest bid for construction of the dam, power plant and appurtenances, was received from Six Companies, Inc., of San Francisco, Calif., The amount was $48,890,995.50. (AP Photo/Fairfield Aerial Surveys)

Huge crowds attend the ceremonies at Las Vegas, Nevada, Sept. 17, 1930, starting actual work on the Hoover Dam. Secretary Ray Lyman Wilbur gave the principal address. Announcing the change of name from Boulder Dam to Hoover Dam, in honor of the President. Secretary Wilbur drove a silver spike into the last tie of the road connecting Las Vegas with the dam site. (AP Photo)

Secretary Ray Lyman Wilbur drives the last spike into the railroad leading from Las Vegas, Nevada to the site of the Hoover Dam - better known as the Boulder Dam, Sept. 19, 1930. The spike, made of silver, signaled actual beginning of construction on the $165,000,000 project. Left to right: Congressman William Eaton, of Colorado; Senator Key Pittman, Nevada; Secretary Wilbur, and left Senator Samuel Shortridge. (AP Photo)

A new post office opens in Boulder City, the new town created in Nevada as work began on the gigantic Hoover Dam of the Boulder Canyon Project. Reclamation Bureau officials called to extend best wishes to Postmaster J.L. Finney, April 15, 1931. Left to right, W.R. Armstrong, general superintendent of the United Pacific; R.F. Walter, chief engineer of the Reclamation Bureau; a carpenter for the Six Company Inc.; Postmaster Finney, Dr. Elwood Mead, Commissioner of Reclamation, and P.W. Dent, assistant to Dr. Mead. (AP Photo)

This is Main Street in Boulder City, Nevada, Aug. 24, 1932, the model construction housing center for the workers on the huge Hoover Dam project. This city was constructed at a cost of $2,000,000. (AP Photo)

Looking down on Hoover Dam site, the parapet is directly over the power plant site, and also part of the Nevada-Arizona highway which will traverse the dam, shown Aug. 24, 1932. Beyond this will be the greatest lake ever created by man. (AP Photo)

An unusual air view showing the extremely rugged countryside and part of the Colorado River (left center) bed dry of any water as the stream's flow is directed through diversion tunnels, Jan. 12, 1923. It is here that Hoover Dam, key of the $165,000,000 boulder Dam project, would rise. The diverted waters of the Colorado may be seen flowing from the mouths of the tunnels at bottom of picture. (AP Photo)
A steel bucket holding eight cubic yards dumps the first load of concrete for the foundation of the Hoover Dam on the floor of Black Canyon in Boulder City, Nev., June 9, 1933. The concrete form is three-sided as the fourth wall will be formed by the live rock of the Arizona reef for the dam.

This view shows the interior of one of the tunnels through which the Colorado River will be diverted around the Hoover Dam site in Boulder City, Nev., April 18, 1932. The project is in the early stages of construction. (AP Photo)

This piece of equipment, named a Jumbo Rig, was designed to speed up the Hoover Dam’s tunnel drilling process. Built on the back of a 10-ton truck, 24 to 30 drills could be operated at once.

Boulder Dam, i.e. Hoover Dam) between Arizona and Nevada. Placing concrete in the sidewall of the Nevada spillway. A 2 cubic yard bottom-dump bucket is being handled by crane. June 1933 (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.)

This undated view, looking upstream through the Black Canyon, shows the giant concrete forms covering the finished base of the Hoover Dam as construction continued in Boulder City, Nevada. The fleet of trucks used to haul materials for the concrete are seen in foreground.

The dam was built in vertical columns of blocks that varied in size from about 60 feet square at the upstream face of the dam to about 25 feet square at the downstream face. An estimated 215 blocks make up the dam. Adjacent columns were locked together by a system of vertical keys on the radial joints and horizontal keys on the circumferential joints (think “giant Lego set”). Concrete placement in any one block was limited to five feet in 72 hours. After the concrete was cooled, a cement and water mixture called grout was forced into the spaces created between the columns by the contraction of the cooled concrete to form a monolithic (one-piece) structure. (Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation)

In this U.S. Bureau of Reclamation photo, construction gangs on the great Boulder Dam, who work night and day, have pushed past the half-way mark, months ahead of schedule. The foundations for power plants on the Nevada side can be seen in the left foreground, and those on the Arizona side in the right foreground. The dark line running up and down the center of the dam is a crack through the entire dam, left temporarily to aid in the cooling of the concrete in an undated photo. (AP Photo)

Construction of the Hoover Dam continued, a constant stream of large trucks dumping fifty tons of soil a minute, built an earth fill dam across the Colorado...
River, forcing its turbulent waters into two fifty-foot diversion tunnels on the Arizona canyon wall on Nov. 15, 1932. (AP Photo) # (photo18)

This is a downstream view of the Hoover Dam showing the immense concrete blocks rising from the bedrock of Black Canyon’s floor, which will be the core of the dam, near Boulder City, Nev., Aug. 12, 1933. Concrete is being poured into the forms at the rate of about 6,000 cubic yards daily. (AP Photo) # (photo19)

This is an aerial view of one of the four intake towers of the Hoover Dam, Aug. 9, 1934. The towers, two on each side of the canyon upstream from the dam, will measure at 380 feet high. (AP Photo) # (photo20)

Construction continues Jan. 9, 1932 as workers construct the retaining wall that gives support to the road leading over the top of Hoover Dam. Labor troubles were experienced during the huge engineering project on the Colorado River near Las Vegas, Nevada. (AP Photo) # (photo21)

This is a view of the Hoover Dam from upstream as construction continued near Boulder City, Nev., Feb. 1, 1935. The crack in the upper center of the dam is a space left open for cooling and settling of the concrete and will be filled as work progresses. (AP Photo) # (photo22)

A three million pound gate of tunnel no. 4, shown above at left, was ready to close, Feb. 1, 1935, stopping flow of the Colorado River at the Boulder Dam, thus starting filling of a huge reservoir. The above photo taken just before the gate started closing shows a coffer dam built across the entrance of tunnel no. 3, which has been diverting the river through the canyon walls and around the dam on the Arizona side. (AP Photo) # (photo23)

This general view of Black Canyon on the Colorado River, looking upstream toward the site of Hoover Dam, shows a temporary steel suspension bridge in the foreground and portals of the 56-inch diversion tunnel bores which will carry the river water while the dam is under construction, March 12, 1932. The dam will be in Black Canyon, despite the fact that it is generally known as the Boulder Canyon Project. (AP Photo) # (photo24)

This aerial view shows a crest of the Hoover Dam, aka Boulder Dam, showing the highway leading across it on July 16, 1935. The road, soon to be opened to the public, will provide an easy route between Las Vegas, Nev., and Kingman, Arizona. The intake towers jut up on the other side of the dam in Boulder City, Nevada. (AP Photo) # (photo25)

The rarely-seen upstream face of Hoover Dam, May 1935. (Bureau of Reclamation, United States) # (photo26)

Three construction workers putting a coat of paint on a slanted wall of riveted-steel plates on the Hoover Dam spillway. Photo dated between 1936 and 1946. (United States, Bureau of Reclamation, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.) # (photo27)

The Boulder Dam, Black Canyon of Colorado River, is nearing completion, this view showing 500 of its projected 730 feet above the canyon floor, Aug. 28, 1934. (AP Photo) # (photo28)
More than 700 feet over the Colorado River bed, workers put the finishing touches on the Hoover Dam on Aug. 12, 1931. The dam was built by the Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior. (AP Photo) # (photo29)

This is the 3500 horsepower generator in Boulder City on September 10, 1936. President Roosevelt started Boulder Dam by pressing a button in Washington. This was but the beginning, for within a month the giant 115,000 horsepower generators will start power from the $165,000,000 project to southern California, 300 miles away. (AP Photo) # (photo30)

A crowd is assembled in the power house of the Hoover Dam in Boulder City, Nev., during ceremonies in which U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt pressed a button in Washington, D.C., starting the 3,500 horsepower generator in the foreground, creating the first power from the dam in Boulder City, Sept. 11, 1936. (AP Photo) # (photo31)

Photograph of the Boulder Dam from Across the Colorado River; From the series Ansel Adams Photographs of National Parks and Monuments, compiled 1941 - 1942, documenting the period ca. 1933 - 1942. (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration) # (photo32)

This is an aerial view of the Hoover Dam in an undated photo. (AP Photo) # (photo33)

Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt is shown at the dedication of the Boulder Dam on the Nevada-Arizona border, Sept. 30, 1935. (AP Photo) # (photo34)

Pres. Franklin Roosevelt viewed the Boulder Dam project for the first time in Nevada at its border with Arizona, Sept. 30, 1935. Walker Young, in charge of the work for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is shown at left pointing out points of interest to the president. The president’s military aide is at right. (AP Photo) # (photo35)

This is an aerial view of the Hoover Dam of the Boulder Canyon project situated in Black Canyon on the Colorado River, on the border of the states of Nevada and Arizona, in Boulder City, Nev., March 13, 1936. A portion of the Mead Lake is shown behind the 731-foot high concrete structure. Water from the lake flows at the ratio of several thousand gallons per second from outlet valves on the Arizona side, below dam. Intake towers are behind the dam on each side. (AP Photo) # (photo36)

In this photo provided by the Department of the Interior, the high-voltage switching yard at Boulder Dam, with the steel etched against a black desert sky, April
27, 1937. Power from the generators at the top of Boulder Dam left this station on the main line to Los Angeles at 287,500 volts. Four 115,000 horse power generating units were installed and placed in operation by the Bureau of Reclamation in the Boulder Dam power house. The ultimate installation would consist of 15 units of this size and two of 55,000 horse power. (AP Photo/Department of the Interior) # (photo6)

Boulder Dam’s mighty water intake towers, rising 395 feet into the air, are in picture of the gigantic power project shown, April 14, 1938. Through these towers flows the water which operates the huge generators in the powerhouse below the 727-foot dam. On the shores of the 110-mile long lake impounded, the government has established the boulder dam recreational area. (AP Photo) # (photo37)

These six 82,500 kva generators in the Nevada wing of the power house at Boulder Dam were the biggest in the world on Feb. 7, 1939. Power produced at the dam by these generators and one in the Arizona wing, amounted to 130,000,000 kilowatt hours of energy each month which sold for $290,000. The Bureau of Reclamation which built and operated the dam, received $3,297,289 in two years. Production at that time was approximately one-third of the ultimate capacity. (AP Photo) # (photo38)

Planes of a sheriff’s aero squadron fly on patrol over Lake Mead and Boulder Hoover Dam, July 13, 1948. The squadron patrols more than 8,000 squares miles in the southwest, over some of the most desolate territory in the country. Its planes had gone in search of rustlers, people who have become lost in the desert, hitchhikers who had held up motorists, planes which have been forced down far from food, water and shelter. (AP Photo) # (photo39)

Hoover Dam at Dusk, Sept. 20, 1950. (AP Photo) # (photo40)

Top of Hoover Dam towers almost 600 feet above as the Rhythmnettes, precision dancing group from nearby Las Vegas, Nevada High School kick high during a routine on what must be the world’s largest “stage” June 8, 1957. The girls have performed in many U.S. cities since formation of Rhythmnettes six years ago. (AP Photo/V) # (photo41)

Magnificent man-made scenic favorite is Hoover Dam, May 11, 1953, one of this century’s outstanding triumphs of engineering and construction. At its foot is Lake Mead, the world’s largest man-made body of water. Popular with anglers and fans of boating, Lake Mead is fast becoming a favorite vacation playground. Gateway to the Hoover Dam. Lake Mead recreational area is fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada on the main line of Union Pacific Railroad. (AP Photo) # (photo42)

In this photo provided by Union Pacific Railroad, known as one of the world’s largest electrical power plants, gigantic Hoover Dam also provides a variety of pleasures for visiting vacationers, as shown Feb. 26, 1957. Lake Mead, stretching above the dam for 115 miles, offers excellent fishing all year and is a perfect...
Daredevil Steve McPeak is shown at the Hoover Dam, during his protest of the Reagan administration’s policies, Dec. 8, 1982. (AP Photo/Frank Walters) # (photo44)

Hoover Dam, once known as Boulder Dam, is a concrete arch-gravity dam in the Black Canyon of the Colorado River, on the border between the US states of Arizona and Nevada. It was constructed between 1931 and 1936 during the Great Depression and was dedicated on September 30, 1935, by President Franklin Roosevelt. Its construction was the result of a massive effort involving thousands of workers, and cost over one hundred lives. The dam was controversially named in honor of President Herbert Hoover. # (photo47)

A white "bathtub ring" encircles Lake Mead near the 395-foot-tall intake towers of Hoover Dam as the lake fell to historic low levels on September 24, 2004 near Boulder City, Nevada. (Photo by David McNew/Getty Images) # (photo48)

The Arizona Intake Towers (L) and Arizona Spillway at the Hoover Dam on July 30, 2007 in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Arizona. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images) # (photo49)

Millions of gallons of water flow through the upper Nevada penstock of the Hoover Dam, Thursday, Feb., 26, 2004. The release was a test of the structure of tie rods in the penstocks, or large pipes. (AP Photo/Joe Cavaretta) # (photo50)

Millions of gallons of water gush from bypass tunnels near Hoover Dam, Thursday, Feb., 26, 2004, in Nevada, as part of a Bureau of Reclamation safety test. (AP Photo/Joe Cavaretta) # (photo51)

An aerial view of the Hoover Dam and the Hoover Dam bypass under construction June 12, 2009 in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Arizona. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images) # (photo52)

An aerial view of the Hoover Dam and the Hoover Dam bypass under construction June 12, 2009 in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Arizona. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images) # (photo53)
An aerial view shows the Mike O'Callaghan-Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge part of the Hoover Dam Bypass Project behind the Hoover Dam October 26, 2010 in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Nevada. The 1,900-foot-long structure sits 890 feet above the Colorado River, about a quarter downstream from the Hoover Dam. The USD 240 million four-lane bypass project to relieve vehicle traffic on the Hoover Dam began in 2003, and opened to traffic on October 19. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images)
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This entry was posted on Tuesday, October 11th, 2011 at 12:38 pm and is filed under Captured. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed.

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Showing 17 comments

Wow! those pictures are awesome!!!

3 weeks ago (#comment-332748532) 1 Like (#)
The new bridge is outstandingly beautiful!

Moclad

Very nice!!! I'd like to visit it someday!

Loomis47

Yes you should, it is beautiful and really something to show our children on how you can accomplish anything when you put your heart and sole into it

Mikemcauley

It is worth the trip. I have been twice in the last year while passing nearby....

Stillman Clark (http://www.facebook.com/stillman.clark1)

An amazing collection of photographs, Stunning in their beauty and scope ! As photographers we thrilled to feast our eyes on this tribute to a great symbol of American achievement!...........

Plan41

What a mighty effort in culling all those most fascinating historical and valuable engineering photographs that truly inspire any engineer worth his salt! Kudos to the USBR and the planners, administrators and constructors of this unique and magnificent mammoth facility nearly eighty long years ago...!

Drhenze

that was quite an undertaking

Jfflanney

This is unbelievable and compares to some of the great things I have seen in other parts of the world

Helene G.

Phenomenal photo album!

Maddisonrae76

During my Vegas trip I had the most amazing helicopter tour over the dam.... which then set down and landing for a Champagne brunch.... Something I will never forget!!

Laibhai7

This is what has made this nation great on the planet.
I have taken the Dam Tour. Driven across the Hoover dam many times going back and forth from Phoenix and Las Vegas. The last few years it would take sometimes almost two hours to get across the dam because of pedestrian traffic visiting the dam and taking the tour. It is turely an amazing engineering feat. I have also taken the new bypass and you do not slow down at all except for Boulder City. When you cross you have no idea what is below. And you are across in seconds. A real time saver for getting back and forth from Arizona and Nevada.

Built in the 1930s. Absolutely amazing. 0.0

Awesome pics

I’ve been there years ago & the pictures are great but nothing like being there in person

Thank you for sharing. My children really enjoyed looking and learning about the construction of the Hoover Dam.
[...] 5. The making of the Hoover Dam [...]

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