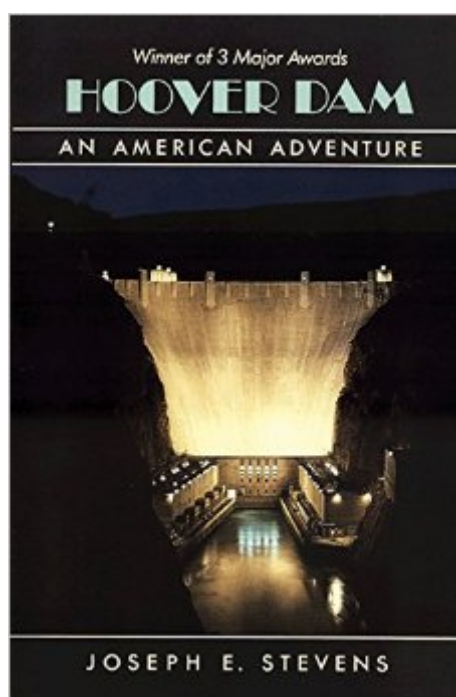


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# Hoover Dam: An American Adventure



## Synopsis

In the spring of 1931, in a rugged desert canyon on the Arizona-Nevada border, an army of workmen began one of the most difficult and daring building projects ever undertaken; the construction of Hoover Dam. Through the worst years of the Great Depression as many as five thousand laborers toiled twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to erect the huge structure that would harness the Colorado River and transform the American West. Construction of the giant dam was a triumph of human ingenuity, yet the full story of this monumental endeavor has never been told. Now, in an engrossing, fast-paced narrative, Joseph E. Stevens recounts the gripping saga of Hoover Dam. Drawing on a wealth of material, including manuscript collections, government documents, contemporary newspaper and magazine accounts, and personal interviews and correspondence with men and women who were involved with the construction, he brings the Hoover Dam adventure to life. Described here in dramatic detail are the deadly hazards the work crews faced as they hacked and blasted the dam's foundation out of solid rock; the bitter political battles and violent labor unrest that threatened to shut the job down; the deprivation and grinding hardship endured by the workers' families; the dam builders' gambling, drinking, and whoring sprees in nearby Las Vegas; and the stirring triumphs and searing moments of terror as the massive concrete wedge rose inexorably from the canyon floor. Here, too, is an unforgettable cast of characters: Henry Kaiser, Warren Bechtel, and Harry Morrison, the ambitious, headstrong construction executives who gambled fortune and fame on the Hoover Dam contract; Frank Crowe, the brilliant, obsessed field engineer who relentlessly drove the work force to finish the dam two and a half years ahead of schedule; Sims Ely, the irascible, teetotaling eccentric who ruled Boulder City, the straightlaced company town created for the dam workers by the federal government; and many more men and women whose courage and sacrifice, greed and frailty, made the dam's construction a great human, as well as technological, adventure. Hoover Dam is a compelling, irresistible account of an extraordinary American epic.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I was a young boy who lived in Boulder City for five years when my father helped build the dam. This is an excellently written - maybe one of the best I have ever read - and very accurate account of the construction, the people who did it, and life at the time. I stop and reminisce every time I go through Boulder City and drive over the dam. I loved my Dad and am very proud of his participation there. This book took me back in a very instructive and entertaining manner. It did the entire project proud. I won't hesitate one second to recommend this book to anyone who appreciates excellence in writing, or who loves America and its history. For this was a truly great undertaking, excellently and excitingly performed. And by people who, in my opinion, are prime examples of the so called "Greatest Generation". Detailed accounts of the construction of the dam are available, and are also excellent. But that is not the focus of this book.

Excellent book. I have read a number of science/engineering histories and this is one of the best. It follows the building of the Hoover Dam from start to finish. If I ever go to Las Vegas, it will be because I wanted to see the Dam. It has just the right amount of detail, both technical and political to keep me interested. It read faster than its size would suggest.

Author Joseph Stevens has conceived the perfect blend of technical detail, historical information, inspiration, intriguing anecdote, and literary entertainment in this very engaging story of the construction of one of the world's most spectacular engineering achievements: Hoover Dam on the Colorado River. You wouldn't think that a book about a dam in the desert would be that interesting, and yet this book holds one's attention from start to finish, with its story of how men and machines labored in the harshest of natural environments to build a structure that is still the definitive archetype of a dam. The book serves as both a reference and enjoyable reading material, and has something for everyone, from engineer to student to adventurer.

According to the jacket, this is the first book for this author. You can't tell after turning the last page. Well written, easy to read history of the Hoover Dam project. Never overly technical, yet highly informative.

What a wonderful book. As a civil engineer, if I had been born 50 years sooner, I probably would have gone in dam-building, but by the time I came along, the great dam-building era in the US was over. On a recent trip to Las Vegas, my wife and I visited Hoover Dam three times, we were both so fascinated with this monumental structure. So I bought "Hoover Dam - An American Adventure" by Joseph E. Stevens. The author does a great job of describing the technical details without getting too technical for laymen, and he also covers the human details and the political background of the huge project. One thing that really made the book so enjoyable was the liberal use of photographs, and unlike many books where the photographs are all in the middle of the book, the photographs are located throughout the book in the appropriate chapters. This book made me proud to be an American, with the roll-up-your-sleeves-and-get-the-job-done attitude that typified the early dam and bridge builders. If you have the slightest interest in major engineering feats, read the book, it's a good one.

An extremely well written tale of the inception and construction of Hoover Dam. It covers the political aspects, the big business aspects, and especially the human aspects of building the dam in a time frame that would be virtually impossible today. One cannot help but marvel about the orchestration of men, material, and machines in close concert as the construction surged ahead.

This book was really interesting. The author on occasion made attempts to be a bit flowery with his writing, but his description of all that was involved in building Hoover Dam is in great detail and he obviously did a LOT of research. I found it particularly interesting living in the Las Vegas area, having visited the dam on a number of occasions, and visiting Boulder City often as well. This book adds a lot of color not only to the building of the dam but the political atmosphere as well. I found the information about down stream very interesting as well, the efforts to control the river, venturing into Mexico, and the great benefit the dam (and others along the Colorado River) have had on farming in California.

I believe that this is one of the best books on the subject of Hoover Dam. It doesn't just give the basics, it goes farther than that into the details of construction and personal accounts. This book will

keep you on the edge of your seat from start to finish. This is truly a wonderful book.

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