

▲ This 1930s postcard, displaying a hand-colored photograph, shows the mammoth scale of Boulder Canyon and Boulder Dam.

BOULDER DAM One project that Hoover approved did make a difference. Years earlier, when Hoover served as secretary of commerce, one of his earliest proposed initiatives was the construction of a dam on the Colorado River. Aiming to minimize federal intervention, Hoover proposed to finance the dam's construction by using profits from sales of the electric power that the dam would generate. He also helped to arrange an agreement on water rights among the seven states of the Colorado River basin—Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

By the time the massive project won congressional approval in 1928, as part of a $700 million public works program, Hoover occupied the White House. In the fall of 1929, nearly one year into his presidency, Hoover was finally able to authorize construction of **Boulder Dam** (later called Hoover Dam). At 726 ft. high and 1,244 ft. long it would be the world's tallest dam and the second largest. In addition to providing electricity and flood control, the dam also provided a regular water supply, which enabled the growth of California's massive agricultural economy. Today, the dam also helps to provide water for cities such as Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

DEMOCRATS WIN IN 1930 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS As the country's economic difficulties increased, the political tide turned against Hoover and the Republicans. In the 1930 congressional elections, the Democrats took advantage of anti-Hoover sentiments to win more seats in Congress. As a result of that election, the Republicans lost control of the House of Representatives and saw their majority in the Senate dwindle to one vote.

As Americans grew more and more frustrated by the Depression, they expressed their anger in a number of ways. Farmers stung by low crop prices burned their corn and wheat and dumped their milk on highways rather than sell it at a loss. Some farmers even declared a "farm holiday" and refused to work their fields. A number blocked roads to prevent food from getting to market, hoping that food shortages would raise prices. Some farmers also used force to prevent authorities from foreclosing on farms.

By 1930, people were calling the shantytowns in American cities "Hoovervilles"—a direct slap at the president's policies. Homeless people called the newspapers they wrapped themselves in "Hoover blankets." Empty pockets turned inside out were "Hoover flags." Many Americans who had hailed Hoover as a great humanitarian a few years earlier now saw him as a cold and heartless leader.