



# *The Las Vegas Tourist Guides Guild*

## **Deaths during construction of Hoover Dam**

Information from <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/hooverdam/History/essays/fat1935.html>

“Many people who visit Hoover Dam ask: 1) How many people died building the dam? and 2) How many of those are buried in the concrete? The second question is the easiest to answer -- none! No one is buried in Hoover Dam.

The dam was built in interlocking blocks, each five feet high. The smallest blocks were about 25 feet by 25 feet square, and the largest blocks were about 25 feet by 60 feet. Concrete was delivered to each block in buckets, eight cubic yards at a time. After each bucket was delivered, 5 or 6 men called "puddlers" would stamp and vibrate the concrete into place, packing it down to ensure there were no air pockets in it. Each time a bucket was emptied, the level of concrete would rise from two inches up to six inches, depending on the size of the block. With only a slight increase in the level at any one time, and the presence of several men watching the placement, it would have been impossible for anyone to be buried in the concrete. So, there are no bodies buried in Hoover Dam.”

“However, the record regarding the number of fatalities that occurred at Hoover Dam during its construction is just not that clear. The following information comes from the Hoover Dam Project History, volumes 1 through 5, 1931 to 1935, and provides the best information The Bureau of Reclamation has available on this subject.”

### **Year: 1931      Deaths: 47**

The total fatalities from the beginning of the project to December 31, 1931 was forty-seven, 16 of which were due to heat prostrations, 4 from drowning, 7 from blasting operations, 6 from falling rocks or slides, 3 from other industrial accidents and 11 from natural causes.

### **Year: 1932      Deaths: 68**

27 Industrial

41 Non-Industrial

### **Year: 1933      Deaths: 39**

22 Industrial

17 Non-Industrial

### **Year: 1934      Deaths: 36**

20 Industrial

16 Non-Industrial

### **Year: 1935      Deaths: 22**

11 Industrial

11 Non-Industrial

## **Total: 213**

This total does not take into account deaths that occurred off the jobsite which may have been tied to construction related illnesses or injuries. Note that deaths at the jobsite continually declined after 1932, in part due to the development of safety advancements such as the “hard hat,” first developed and used at the Hoover Dam Construction site.