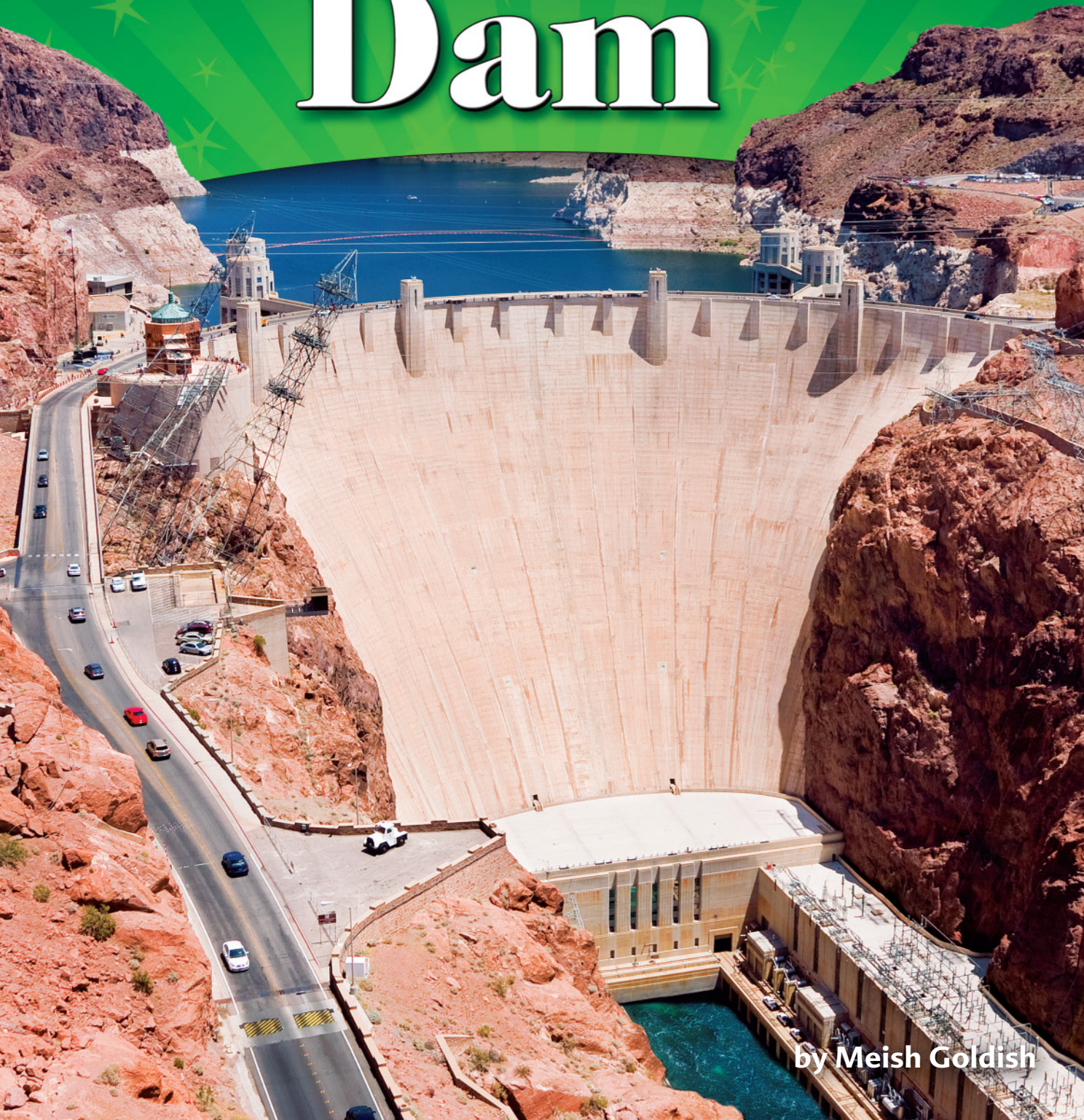




# The Hoover Dam



by Meish Goldish



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# The Hoover Dam



**by Meish Goldish**

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# Canyon of Danger

On a spring day in 1933, a group of workers hung from long ropes along the walls of the Black **Canyon**, dangerously high above the Colorado River. The men were in a desert on the border between Arizona and Nevada—one of the hottest and driest areas of the United States. Using **jackhammers**, the workers, called high scalers, drilled holes into the rock. One wrong move could mean disaster.

High scalers drilled holes about 3 inches (7.6 cm) wide and at least 3 feet (1 m) deep.

A high scaler with a jackhammer





After the drilling was done, other workers called powder monkeys carefully placed **dynamite** into the holes. Then everyone took shelter, and the blasts were set off. Boom! Boom! The earsplitting noise echoed off the canyon walls. When the cloud of dirt and dust cleared, the men returned to remove any loose rock that stuck to the **cliffs**. What were these brave workers doing? They were building one of the biggest structures in the world—the Hoover **Dam**.

Workers at Black Canyon risked their lives to build the Hoover Dam. Handling dynamite was dangerous, and falling rocks could injure or kill a person.



The Colorado River flows through the southwestern United States and northern Mexico.



# A Wild River

Why was there a need for such a huge dam? It was difficult for people to live or work near the lower Colorado River. In spring, melted snow and heavy rain sometimes caused the river to flood. Its **raging** waters often destroyed homes and crops. Then, in summer, very little rain fell. The land dried up, and many crops died from lack of water.



Many farmers lost their crops when the Colorado River flooded.

Melted snow from the Rocky Mountains runs into streams and small rivers that eventually flow into the Colorado River.



A large, strong dam could solve many problems. It would hold back the river's rising water and prevent floods. It would also create a new lake for farmers to use to water their crops, and for people to use for drinking and washing. The dam could also be used to make electricity for people living in the Southwest.

Before the 1930s, people had built dams made of earth and mud along the Colorado River. However, over time, the river's powerful waters destroyed the dams.



**Dams can help provide water for growing crops.**



**There are thousands of dams in the United States. This dam is in West Virginia.**