

Boulder City—A Man Made Desert Oasis

Great Construction Camp for Hoover Dam Workers Progresses Rapidly; Planned Community Now Has Population of More Than 2500

By Julian A. Beaman

OUT of the haze of a burning sunshine a city has come to pass on the desolate wasteland near the site of Hoover Dam.

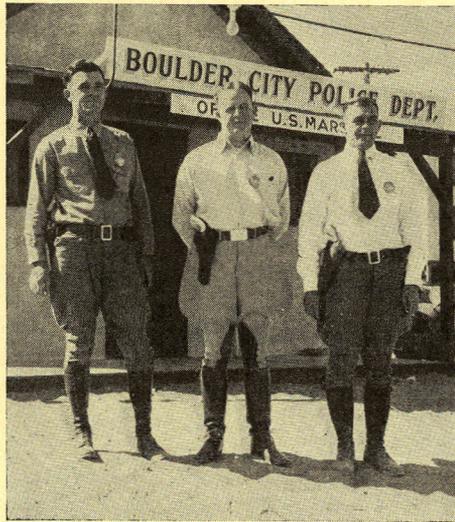
Boulder City, Nev., is now on the postal map. Uncle Sam has waved his magic wand and in less than a year one of the greatest construction camps ever built, where more than 2500 men are making their home, has arisen out of the desert.

One year ago this wasteland in Nevada spread from the banks of the Colorado River across a desolate, barren and sun scorched country. Sage brush, cactus and lava rock formations that poked through the shifting sands made up the landscape of the country just over Railroad Pass, on the highway leading from Las Vegas. That was yesterday.

Easily Reached Today

There was no water, no sanitation, modern day comforts were undreamed of. The highway was a steady stretch through the open spaces. No railroad served the district. It was lost to the world except for a few who ventured across this 27 miles from Las Vegas to go to the river landing where boats took the sightseer to the place where Hoover Dam would rise out of the bed

rock of the turbulent Colorado River. Today a trip to Boulder City can be made in the utmost of safety and comfort either over the Union Pacific or



Boulder City's Finest—Three of the deputy U. S. marshals (U. P. photo)

by motor stage operated by the same railroad.

Hundreds of cottages of frame,

Boulder City, the modern Utopia of the desert, near Las Vegas, Nev., and the home November from the hill where the 2,000,000-gallon water tower has been erected ground are the permanent homes of government engineers near completion.

stucco and stone of modern type appear through the desert haze. Warehouses, machine shops, work shops, administration buildings and office structures dot the landscape. Aside from this one of the greatest mess halls and subsistence camps ever constructed has replaced the grub bag of the desert.

Water Problem Answered

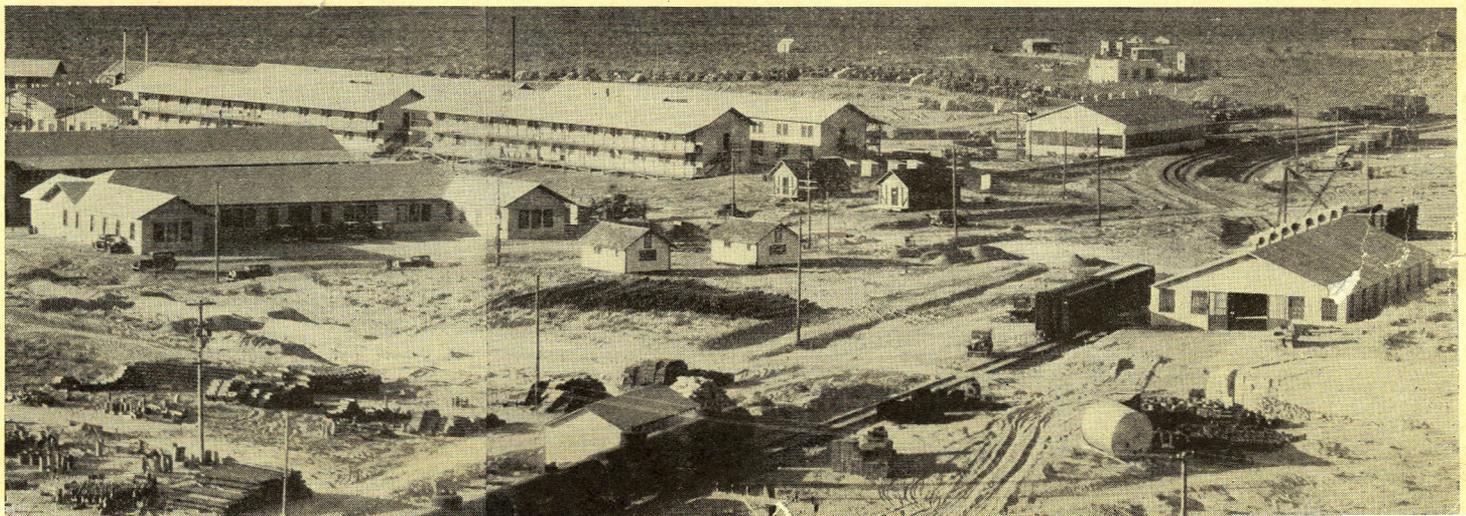
Dormitories resembling the barracks of army camps during the war have been built for the single man who is employed on the \$165,000,000 hydroelectric and flood control project that is being built in the Black Canyon, 10 miles away.

The water problem has been answered. A modern system of sanitation is being installed. Streets are being paved, curbs and gutters are replacing the drainage ditches on this stretch of open country. These will carry off the rains of this time of year into sewers which have been installed.

Electricity for heating, cooking and lighting has been brought from San Bernardino, Calif.

Homes Are Completed

It is the government's model town and already is known as the "busiest little city in the world." It is a thriving, hustling community, laid out in a triangle with its apex pointing toward a 2,000,000 gallon water tank that has been built on top of a hill overlooking the city.



Beneath the water tower at the base of the hill the government engineers' homes, permanent structures, are now being completed. They are of Spanish design of concrete and stone. To the south hundreds of uniform homes, for the workers and their families are being built. They are of frame and stucco construction.

At the base of "Water Hill" it is planned to build Wilbur Park, named for Ray Lyman Wilbur, secretary of the interior, which will act as an apex to the triangle shaped town. Just beyond this spot, the Bureau of Reclamation administration building of modern design and construction, is being finished.

A Planned City

The Nevada highway is one arm that will reach out from this building, to be a boundary for one side of the city. On the other side will be Utah street. New Mexico boulevard will be the base of the triangle. In the center of the town, which has been mapped for business zones, Colorado and Arizona streets will dominate.

Plans have been made for a recreation center, playgrounds, schools, athletic field, aviation field, the industrial district, business section and the residential district. Boulder City is not "just growing," like the many ghost cities of the Nevada mining days.

Before a single stone was turned, a complete plan for a modern city, adapted to the particular needs and conditions of the desert, was worked out by S. R. DeBoer, city planning consultant engaged by the Department of



Sewers are now being laid. Water storage tank seen in background holds 2,000,000 gallons and was built by Lacy Manufacturing Co., Los Angeles. (Union Pacific photo.)

the Interior. The plan of the town is based on the fan-like shape of the topography. The site consists of a saddle overlooking the future lake to be formed by the dam, located between two small hills about a thousand feet apart. From it the easy slope of the town spreads out fan shape.

Town Has Double Purpose

The purpose of the town is a double one; it must house the construction crews during the building period, and afterward it will become a permanent home for a smaller number—perhaps two or three thousand permanent residents. For that reason it is planned in units.

Many unique features are incorporated in the plan. For instance, the business district is built on the plaza idea, and no automobiles will be parked on the streets; alley loading is provided; residential blocks are unusually long, as there is little need for cross

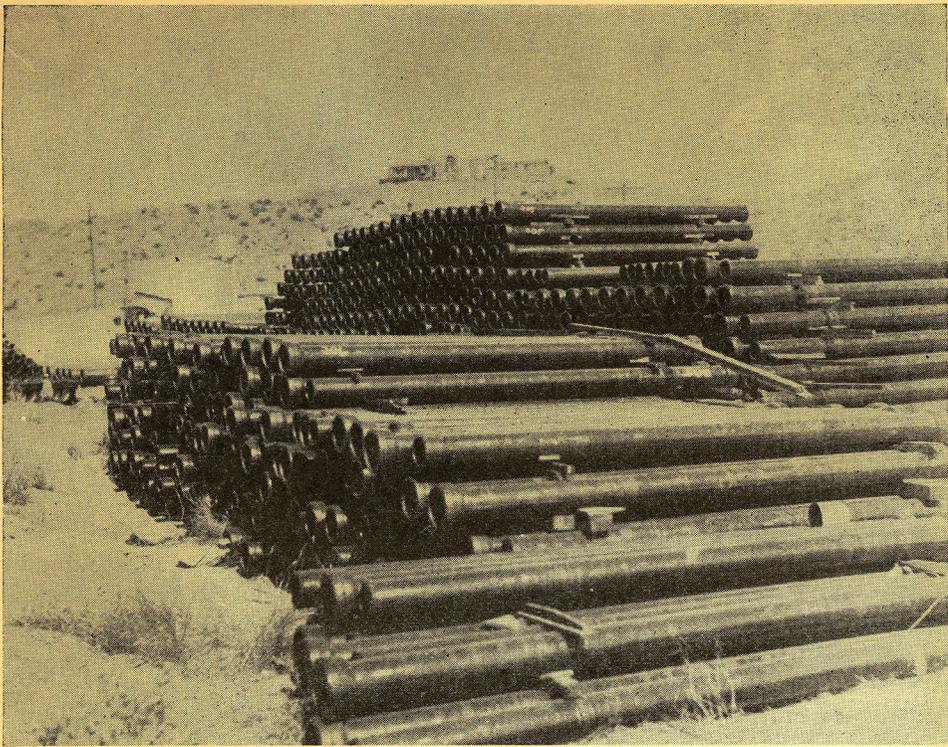
circulation of traffic; areas are zoned for apartment houses, multiple family homes, and single residences. Ample park and playground areas are provided.

Modern Water System

In a few days the water system will be completed. Here again the government called upon distinguished engineers, and appointed Burton Lowther, Denver, as consulting hydraulic and sanitary engineer. The underground distribution system is practically completed. Water is to be pumped from the Colorado River by three pumps with variable suction lifts, to get water with the least amount of sediment into the first desilting works. After preliminary settling, it is pumped through a 10 and 12-inch line to the Purification Works, where it will be aerated, softened, filtered and chlorinated (see Western City, July, 1931) and then pumped to a 2,000,000 gallon storage reservoir located on a hill at the edge of the town. Distribution will be by means of gravity, with the distributing mains all of cast iron, and service lines

of the workers on Hoover Dam, as it appears today. This photo was taken in and shows the larger portion of the business and industrial district. In the foreground Uncle Sam is spending \$2,000,000 to make this part of the desert livable. (Union Pacific photo.)





Most of this cast iron pipe for the water distribution system is now underground. All in the picture is six inch pipe in 12 foot lengths. It was made in the Provo, Utah, plant of the Pacific States Cast Iron Pipe Co.

of copper pipe. The system is designed for a peak summer demand of 400 gallons per capita.

Treatment Process of Interest

The system has been entirely completed except for the Purification Works, now under construction and expected to be in operation in January. The Boulder City treatment process, because of the heavy load of sediment carried by the Colorado and the hardness of the water, is being watched with great interest by sanitary engineers.

The New Mexico Construction Company has the contract for the laying of the sewer and water distributing system, and for paving the streets. The street paving program is extensive, and provides for four classes of surfacing. In the business section there will be standard two course hot mix asphaltic concrete, 5" thick. On secondary streets there will be a 2" asphaltic concrete wearing surface laid on a macadam base. Class Three surfacing will be a two course oil processed gravel, and Class Four will be a 4" water bound macadam. Business streets will be 56' from curb to curb, and secondary streets will be 30' wide.

U. S. Spending \$2,000,000

The sewerage system of vitrified clay pipe, now being laid, will terminate in

a disposal plant of the separate sludge digestion type, to be located about 2000 feet from the city limits. It is designed for a dry weather flow of about 75,000 gallons daily.

Uncle Sam is spending \$2,000,000 on the city. Aside from the water system, it has been estimated that the street paving program will cost \$485,000; the sewerage system will eclipse \$150,000 and then the government will spend \$51,000 for street lighting.

Control of the city is maintained by the federal government. Sims Ely, veteran Arizona publisher has been appointed city manager. The police department operates under a United States marshal. A fire department has been organized and equipped.

First a Construction Camp

Boulder City is first of all a construction camp, practical and utilitarian. But is also rapidly becoming a livable city.

When completed and construction forces at Hoover Dam are operating on full schedule, under the terms of the contract of the Six Companies Inc., general contractors on the dam and the organization that has built the main part of Boulder City, this town will house more than 3500 workers and their families. And still another 1500 or 2000 are expected to come to the place to live off the pay dirt of the desert.