

Unknown Photographer. (1932). *Bonus Army stages huge demonstration at empty Capitol.*
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016649901/>



Unknown Photographer. (1932). *Bonus March on the Capitol*¹



SOURCE²

a. Name the photo's date, title, and creator: 1932. *Bonus March on the Capitol* **b. Guess what type of person might have taken this picture and for what purpose:** A participant of the march or a reporter covering it **c. Guess was it personal or published, candid or posed, amateur or professional?** Published, likely candid, and likely professional.

CONTEXT

d. What do you see in the photo, (details, people, action, surroundings, etc.): Several hundred people—some with signs reading ‘No Pay All Stay’—standing on the steps of a large building... The building on the far left is the Capitol in Washington D.C. This seems to be a protest or a movement that people took to the nation’s capitol **e. Next, what you think is happening in the photograph. Support the response:** A near-riot protest of the federal government... The date of the photo places the event in the early-to-middle of the depression era, perhaps in an attempt to persuade the federal government (president or congress) to do something to help the economy recover and help people survive the devastation **f. Consider how this image serves as a record of the Depression Era:** Walter W. Walters organized a campaign/protest on behalf of army veterans demanding that a bonus they were given in 1924, not to be redeemed until 1945, be paid in full immediately. Nearly 20,000 veterans and their families marched to Washington, D.C in the summer of 1932 and camped across the Potomac³ River from Capitol ... The House of Representative passed, but the Senate refused to pass a bill offering to pay the bonus (Hoover announced he would have vetoed the bill anyway)... Some of the veterans and their families left, however many stayed in the capitol⁴ ... Hoover ordered the veterans’ camp dispersed—a task to big for the local police—thus federal troops under Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur (Majors George Patton and

Dwight Eisenhower were involved too) pushed veterans out of their camp. MacArthur’s troops drew their swords, rolled in tanks, and used tear gas to move the veterans and their families. They burned the veterans’ tents and belongings—several people were killed and thousands were injured⁵... The government’s actions against its own veterans seems to have made an indelible imprint on citizens of the day⁶

CORROBORATE/THINK DEEPLY

i. How does it relate to other photos (evidence)? and j. Which others agree? Disagree: Whereas *Migrant* and *Breadline* portray harsh effects of the depression, and *TVA* reflects an attempt to help mitigate those effects, *Bonus March* depicts a crowd protesting the secular, federal government intervention while *Breadline* shows religious, private efforts...Both *Migrant* and *TVA* are products of two of the most well-know American photo-journalists who sought reform (fame?) through exposing reality **k. Why might other photos support/refute this one:** The purpose of this photo seems to be to display a proposed remedy to the effects of the depression. Also this photo portrays mostly men (Army veterans) and alludes to their families; other photos single out different social groups for display (women, children, farmers, migrants, etc.) **l. What does this photo suggest about the topic-specific question:** The federal government was unwilling to provide this type of help (pay bonuses early) to its veterans and their families, they too will experience the full devastation of the depression **m. What else do I need to know:** How was this photo used... How did the nation, at the time, react to the Bonus March? Was this photo taken before or after congress voted against the bonus? **n. What questions does this photo raise in my mind:** Did the veterans ever get their bonuses? What was the rationale offered to explain why the bonuses were not paid early? Were state governments also “marched on” to provide economic relief?

CITATIONS

¹ Unknown Photographer. (1932). Bonus Army stages huge demonstration at empty Capitol. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016649901/> ² Source, Context, and Corroborate/Think Deeply historical thinking steps suggested in: Wineburg, S. (1999). Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts. Phi Delta Kappan, 80(7), 488-500 ³ Zinn, H. (2003). A People’s History of the United States, 1492- present. New York, NY: HarperPerennial. p. 391 ⁴ Johnson, P. (1999). A History of the American People. New York, NY: HarperPerennial. p. 745 ⁵ Zinn, H. (2003). A People’s History of the United States, 1492-present. New York, NY: HarperPerennial. p. 391 ⁶ <http://pbs.org/wgbh/amex/macarthur/peopleevents/pandeAMEX89.html>