

Hine, L. (1933). *Men Working on Norris Dam (Tenn. Valley Authority)*.
The National Archive. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/532716>



Lewis Hine. (1933). *Men Working on Norris Dam (TVA)*¹



SOURCE²

a. Name the photo's date, title, and creator: 1933. Men Working on Norris Dam (TVA), Lewis Hine **b. Guess what type of person might have taken this picture and for what purpose:** Hine is a well-known sociologist and photographer who attempted to use his photos to bring about social reform **c. Guess was it personal or published, candid or posed, amateur or professional:** Published, candid, and professional.

CONTEXT

d. What do you see in the photo, (details, people, action, surroundings, etc.): There are over a hundred men standing, all facing the same direction... A river flows behind the men... A partially-constructed building on the riverbank and a bridge-type structure crosses the river, probably a dam—the Norris Dam—because of the photo's title... The men are dressed in “work-clothes” and many of them are dirty or muddy... It seems to be daytime **e. Next, what you think is happening in the photograph. Support the response:** These men are workers who are constructing the building on the riverbank and the bridge or dam that crosses the river... They seem to be listening to their work assignments for the day **f. Consider how this image serves as a record of the Depression Era:** President Hoover initiated several works projects (San Francisco's Bay Bridge and Nevada's Hoover Dam) as attempts at economic recovery³ however his critics claim he acted too slowly and his efforts were not on a large enough scale to truly turn the economy around⁴ President Roosevelt (defeating Hoover in '32) experimented with long-term economic reform and short-term relief efforts promising a “New Deal” for citizens. His many programs included the TVA--Tennessee Valley Authority--providing jobs to the unemployed and relief to the people in that region⁵... The TVA employed nearly 10,000 workers to build a highway and a dam along the Clinch River (which flows into the Tennessee River) and also developed new fertilizers, replanted forests, and taught farmers new techniques⁶... The Norris Dam

contained (still contains) two hydroelectric generators that produced (still produces) large amounts of energy—the TVA was a successful attempt to lower electricity costs by providing government-supplied power—it turned out that the TVA's price was nearly half that of the private electricity providers⁷... The TVA allowed some of the nation's poorest families to afford power to operate their farm machinery **g. What is the overall message:** Government intervention seemed to help in this case specifically—putting thousands of men to work constructing the Norris Dam and the Norris Highway... Women were not typically employed in construction programs, they were employed in clerical jobs that the government classified as “light and repetitive” and were paid far less (sometimes only 20% of men) which suggests that discrimination and a double-standard existed⁸

CORROBORATE/THINK DEEPLY

i. How does it relate to other photos (evidence)? j. Which others agree? Disagree: Whereas *Migrant* and *Breadline* portray harsh effects of the depression, *TVA* reflects an attempt to help mitigate those effects... *Bonus March* and *TVA* depict crowds linked to secular, 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 realities **k. Why might other photos support/refute this one:** The purpose of this photo seems to be to display the effects of the depression, others concentrate on causes. Also this photo portrays a large group of men about to continue working on the *Norris Dam* in a rural setting while *Breadline* showed the experience and aftermath of financial ruin in an urban setting **l. What does this photo suggest about the topic-specific question:** the government is attempting to help restore the economy by putting people to work and creating infrastructure lowering cost-of-living expenses for citizens **m. What else do I need to know:** Were there other dams and hydroelectric generators built elsewhere?

CITATIONS

1 Hine, L. (1933). *Men Working on Norris Dam (Tenn. Valley Authority)* (Photograph). Retrieved June, 2005, from The National Archive **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** Johnson, P. (1999). *A History of the American People*. New York, NY: HarperPerennial. P. 740 **4** Beard, C. A., & Beard, M. R. (1960). *The Beard's New Basic History of the United States*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, INC, 408 **5** Hart, D. (2002). *History Alive! U.S. History: Teachers Curriculum Institute*. p. 412 **6** <http://tngenweb.org/tva/NorrisDam/norris.php> **7** Johnson, P. (1999). *A History of the American People*. New York, NY: HarperPerennial. p. 757 **8** DuBois, E. C., & Dumenil, L. (2005). *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents*. New York, NY: Bedford/St.Martin's. p. 501