

# Grapewine News



COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY MUSEUM

## Bullshead Rock

by Patricia Herzig



Before Lake Mohave was formed after the building of the Davis Dam, there was a huge formation of red rock and white sand projecting out of the Colorado River. The red rock formation was said to be a complete body of a bull, however, the rock that projected into the river was the head of a bull. The rock has witnessed a long period of history as a landmark on the continent dating back to 1540.

The Mojave Indians used this landmark as a safe place to cross the Colorado River as there was no treacherous quicksand, like in many other places in the river. Some other historical figures that explored the area and wrote of the Mojave Indians were Spanish explorer [Melchor Diaz](#), in 1540 and [Father Garces](#) who was in the area in 1776.

This rock soon became a navigation landmark for the captains of the steamboats. The ships' captains referred to their positions as being above the Bullshead Rock or below the Bullshead Rock. Steamers and freighters which used to run up and

down the Colorado River used Bullshead Rock to guide them safely through the swift dangerous currents.

In 1857, Army Lieutenant Edward Beale, led a caravan of 28 camels after being ordered by the War Department to chart a wagon road from New Mexico to California. It was Bullshead Rock that allowed him to find a safe crossing of the Colorado River with the camels.

A US Army Lieutenant, Joseph Ives, leading a federal expedition from the mouth of the Colorado River in a steel hull steamer named the "Explorer" in 1858, was there to visit the Mojave Indians and as he approached the rock he had this to say, "For several miles our course lay through the foothills, when the river narrowed and entered a canyon through the gate, one side of which looked like the head of a bull." While visiting the Mojave Tribe, Ives noticed Spirit Mountain and asked Chief Ireteba about it as it was a prominent landmark of the tribe located in Nevada, and was clearly visible from Bullshead Rock. The story goes that the Chief warned him that "anyone that dares to visit the mountain would be struck dead."

More recently, Damian Holther, a local engineer was quoted as saying that, "In 1858, Lt Ives Map No. 1, Rio Colorado of the West shows Bullshead Rock to be at approximately 35 degrees, 12 minutes north by 114 degrees 34 minutes west. Today's U.S. Geological Service shows the top of Bullshead Rock to be approximately 35 degrees, 11 minutes north by 114 degrees, 33 minutes west." The elevation of Bull's Rock is approximately 676 feet above sea level, and the Bureau of Reclamation states the maximum surface of Lake Mohave is 646.49 feet above sea level. [con't on pg 2](#)

*con't from pg 1*

This data indicates the crest of Bullshead Rock has never been below the surface of Lake Mohave.

### **How Bullhead City Got It's Name**

You might have seen a bumper sticker that says, "Where the hell is Bullhead City." That could be because there is no other city in the United States that has this name. Hardyville, which was established in 1864, was in the shadow of the rock. In the 1940's the construction town began with the Davis Dam project. The town which sprang up to support the workers at the dam was named "Bullshead." Some believe that Bullhead City got its name after a fish called the bullhead which is caught in a deep calm eddy at the base of Bulls Head rock. One thing that we do know is that it was changed to Bullhead City by the US Post Office in 1946, and the city of Bullhead City was incorporated in 1984.

Believe it or not, at one point there was a plan by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Bullhead City Council to raise part of the rock formation and place it on the Arizona side of the river along the side of the road to Davis Dam. The plan was to refurbish a portion of this formation, a 4 ton rock which is approximately the size of a rock with a 12 foot diameter, and make it into a monument. Needless to say, this rock which was neither raised nor refurbished because of the expense of the endeavor. Since we also don't have a good description of exactly what this rock looked like or where it was located, we can only guess what this story is talking about.

How many people think this actually looks like a bulls head? Obviously many people did in the past because Bullshead Rock was used as a navigational landmark on many earlier maps. Many of us have a hard time imagining what we see when we look at what is visible today in Lake Mohave is indeed a bull's head. We will just have to trust history, what we see in pictures, and the many tribes and explorers who used this famous landmark as a navigational point.

We'll leave it to the reader to decide if the native people and the explores of the past were referencing the entire rock formation of which we can still see the top above the lakes' surface or a smaller outcropping somewhere around this formation that is no longer visible. Think about it, what would be more visible from miles away...



Aerial view from south of the construction of Davis Dam. Just above the coffer dam one can see the Bullshead Rock formation.



A current aerial view of Lake Mohave from the north of Davis Dam shows the crest of Bullshead Rock ,



Another current view from lake level between Bullshead Rock and Davis Dam. Similar position as the old picture on page 1.

# WORD PUZZLE

## Bullshhead Rock

S C I A E F V T N H P Q Y S S  
 R T M P S U D D O S W X T P U  
 L A N D M A R K I E I O V A O  
 D E C E R U O F T J N T K N R  
 E A X O R Z U L A S C C U I E  
 F L E P N R K F M E O D L S G  
 R A B H L S U E R R R G Q H N  
 A N M I S O T C O P P V X O A  
 U C N O S L R R F F O M Y B D  
 P I I W U I L E U V R N A L Z  
 J R C O O S V U R C A N P G G  
 D E G R E E S F B C T C F X L  
 N O I T A G I V A N E I H G D  
 H I S T O R Y R O D D F O Y G  
 N P H E W B H D M W U O E N Q

BULLSHEAD	CANYON	CONSTRUCTION
CURRENTS	DANGEROUS	DEGREES
EXPLORER	FAMOUS	FORMATION
FOUR	HISTORY	INCORPORATED
LANDMARK	NAVIGATION	ROCK
SPANISH	TON	VISIBLE

Dec 2023 answers: Treasure Hunting in the Desert

S T N E N I T N O C G R G S A  
 R N A X R C M K N S E O A W R  
 F E L I D L I K H R O N T R E  
 N V L E M I L N L F D M X P D  
 F E K T W M G M A F E D Q O L  
 Y L Y M S E M X N C S U N T A  
 W I T V G F J S D F L Y O T C  
 T A L E S O L V S A X O I E T  
 E R O Z G A A Q C S F L V R U  
 F T A S R G G L A L J B A Y F  
 Q U M E E J U R P C I B O L A  
 D E N S Z W I N E D Z D U Q D  
 G I E N I L L A T S Y R C G F  
 M Z T R A U Q K N G F L E F C  
 R A R R O W H E A D S P S F Y

# PRESIDENTS CORNER

Hi and Happy January

With many special things going on such as our new building going up very quickly because of Pueblo Construction and Larry Adams. We are going to have a very nice workshop area comprised of stainless steel sinks, counter tops and shelving. Also, we are looking for a refrigerator for our new building that will be used to store some of our more temperature sensitive archives. Contact Laurie Thompson if you have information of one that can be donated.

The Educational garden area is now going through a bit of a dormant time but should be starting to come to life soon. We have also added new lighting - Love the streetlights.

Now planning great things for our library more to come.

Don't forget January 17th our speaker will be Paul Jackson from our native American tribe to speak, have dancers, and singing. It will be from 5-7 pm. Hope to see you then

I want everyone to know anytime you need to talk or ask questions, please call me at 928-219-2582 and I will try to answer as many questions as possible. Also, don't forget to stop by and visit the museum and shop on our retail shop. May our new year bring great things to the museum hopefully more memberships and donations.

Prayers for our builder Larry Adams and hoping for a speedy recovery. Also best wishes to Robbie, his wife, as she will keep us informed as he progresses.

Again Happy New Year to all!

Sincerely  
 Karole Finkelstein  
 President

## A Note From our Membership Chairman:

Remember, December was the month that your 2023 membership expired. We sent out a reminder letter recently to renew your membership to all of you that are coming due.

Thank you again for all your support!

If you have questions about membership, or you're interested in becoming a member, please reach out to Ellen Brown at 928-542-1160 or see one of the docents when you visit the museum.

Ellen Brown

## GIFT SHOP NEWS

Our gift shop has an excellent array of books that should interest visitors and locals alike. Hiking and off road enthusiasts, we have trail maps and books about local hiking destinations. The winter and early spring times are ideal for these activities.



## EVENTS CALENDAR

*All events are at the museum unless otherwise stated*

### **Fort Mojave tribe - Paul Jackson:**

Paul the tribes historian will talk on the river and Spirit mountain. He is also going to bring some of the Mojave dancers.

***January 17th 2024 - Wednesday 5pm - 7pm(AZ time)***

### **Debbie Miler-Marschke - Olive Oatman :**

Debbie does a full costume presentation of Olive Oatman.

***Coming this Spring - Date TBD***

## SEEKING COLLECTION DONATIONS

We are always looking for any artifact that is pertinent to our Tri-state area. This includes, but is not limited to, photographs, family histories, mining equipment, Davis Dam, Native Americans, steamboats, ranching, fossils, explorers, highways, historical maps, churches, service clubs and businesses.

- ◆ We cannot accept an artifact with stipulations on it such as it must be displayed in a particular way or time period.
- ◆ We do not accept loans.

Give us a call at the museum if you have an artifact or historical item you would like us to consider.

## CURATORS REPORT

We are all anxious for the completion of the new Collections storage addition to the museum. This addition will provide sufficient room to accommodate our current collection, with plenty of room to grow! The Collections Committee is developing plans to move the Collection into the new space, which will be a considerable undertaking.

The Committee is also working on plans to revamp old displays and add some new ones. I'll keep you informed, so you can stop by to see what is new!

I am also pleased to introduce our newest volunteer Irene Holiman. Irene brings a wealth of experience, and we are very fortunate to have her on the Collections Committee team serving as our Librarian.

Carla Lucas, Curator



*Hello, my name is Irene Holiman, a new volunteer at the Colorado River Historical Society Museum. I am a California native, recently retired, and a new resident of Arizona.*

*My husband and I moved in 2023 from Ontario, CA, to Ft. Mohave, AZ. While we're still adjusting to living in our new community and state, we know we've made the right decision when night falls, and we're gifted with the beautiful night sky and stillness of the desert behind us.*

*My interest in the Colorado River Historical Society Museum comes from both my career and my desire for lifelong learning. I spent the majority of my career working in libraries, with my most recent role as the librarian at the California Botanic Garden in Claremont, California, from which I retired after 23 years. My time at the garden library provided me with the incredible opportunity to care for a collection of not only books but also archival materials such as documents, personal papers of local botanists, media materials (photographs, slides, film, etc.), artwork (originals and prints), as well as a few artifacts.*

*As a new volunteer at the museum, my main focus is the library collection, which is a great resource for studying and learning about the area. I hope my experience in library work, archives, and research will aid in enhancing the museum's impressive educational materials for users and will attract new visitors to the museum.*

*In the short time that I've been involved with the museum, the volunteers have given me a warm welcome, and I'm eager to become part of your wonderful organization.*



**COLORADO RIVER  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MUSEUM**

1239 Highway 95 PO Box 1599  
Bullhead City, AZ 86429 Bullhead City, AZ 86430

Phone: 928-754-3399  
Email: CRHSmuseum@outlook.com  
Web: [coloradriverhistoricalsociety.org/](http://coloradriverhistoricalsociety.org/)  
Hours of Operations:  
Tuesday—Saturday 10:00am - 4:00pm  
(last admittance 3:00pm)

Grapevine News Editor - Laurie Thompson

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Karole Finkelstein – President
- Barbra Brandt – Vice-President
- Ellen Brown – Secretary
- Carla Lucas – Treasurer
- Laurie Thompson – Director
- Robbie Adams – Director
- Denise Vallon – Director
- Jim Lucas - Director
- Mary Wall – Director

*Mission Statement*

*The mission of The Colorado River Historical Society shall be to operate a museum to promote interest and knowledge concerning the history of the Lower Colorado River area, most specifically the Tri-state area.*

**New Building Addition Update:**

The building is painted inside and out. Doors are all on. The ducting, lighting, and drop ceiling have all been installed. Looks like the roofing, and inside floor finishing are about all that is left on the To Do list. Oh, and yes, the final inspection. Getting exciting.



**CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS**

The Colorado River Historical Society Museum is seeking volunteers. If you enjoy history and want to learn more about the area, the society needs you. This is a chance to meet area visitors from all over the world and form friendships with a wonderful group of volunteers. Many of our volunteers are part-time residents and retirees. Hours are flexible and duties are as easy or challenging as you would like.

Examples of the types of volunteer we need:

- |                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Docent                           | Handyman   |
| Gardener                         | Data Entry |
| Teachers                         | Marketing  |
| Research                         | Librarian  |
| Fundraising & Event Coordinators |            |