

# Grapewine News

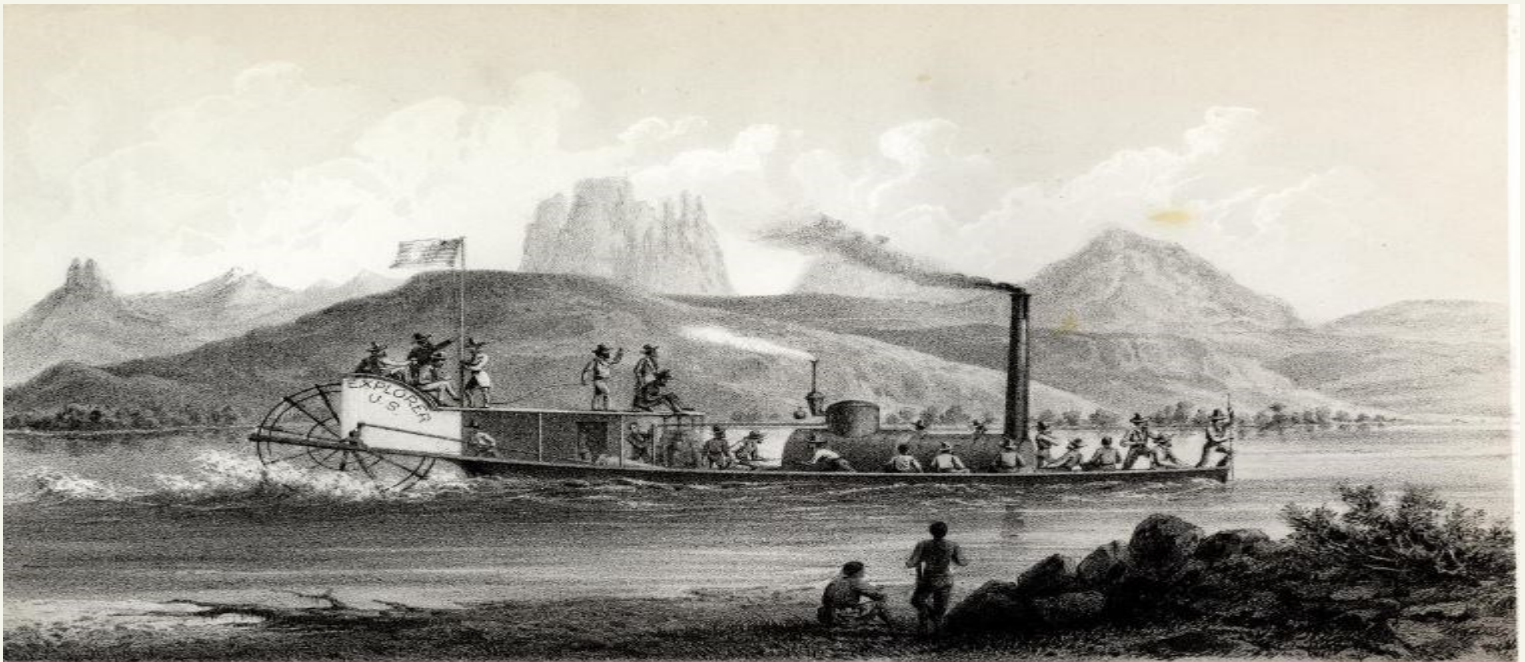


COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY MUSEUM

## FEATURED ARTICLE

Excerpt from the Earle E Spamer's book *Explorer*—Andrew J. Carroll on the Colorado River 1857-1858.  
see at: <https://ravensperch.org/new>

## The Life and Death of *Explorer*



The Philadelphia-built vessel served well on its maiden voyage, even if hobbled by Andrew Carroll's necessary repair work and the whims of an unfamiliar river, surviving even its nearly fatal accident at Explorers Rock. After Lt. Ives discharged the expedition's land contingent at Fort Defiance, he returned to Fort Yuma by the stage route through Tucson and sold the government boat to private interests before continuing to the coast and, eventually, home. Carroll already was on his way, having with Capt. Robinson shepherded the boat back to

Fort Yuma after the land party left the river at Beale's Crossing in mid-March. Thereafter *Explorer* (or whatever it may have been renamed) seems to have served rather ignoble and local tasks compared to its upriver venture. It may even have been more useful as a barge, its hull-filling boiler and the sternwheel removed and repurposed, as these powerless platforms were often used with steamers on the river.

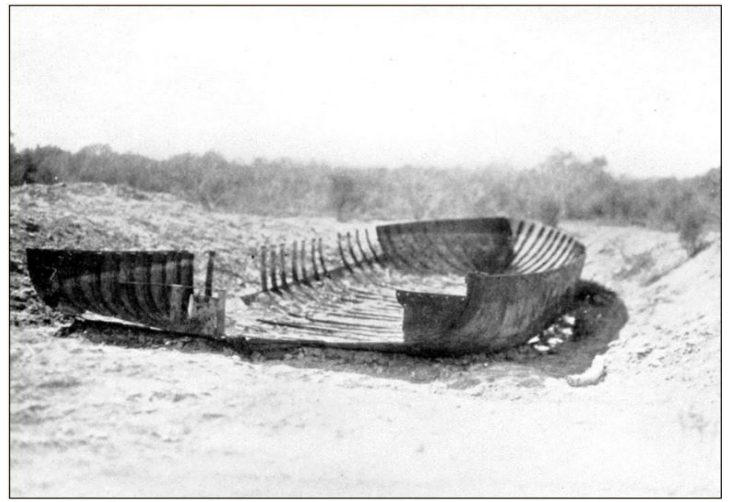
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Godfrey Sykes, 20th century engineer and explorer of the Colorado River delta, surmised that it was probably before 1865 when it was reported that the barely eight-year-old *Explorer* broke loose from a hasty mooring during a flood from the Gila River and drifted away toward the sea. Then, during the winter of 1929–30, a survey party discovered a partially buried iron boat hull, which was investigated more closely during the following July. The wreck was found in Sonora, Mexico, about 30 straight-line miles from Yuma, Arizona, far from an active river channel, clearly aground for a long time. It was nothing but a scavenged, partial skeleton of iron ribs and hull panels. Its wooden parts were long gone; when all this was salvaged and by whom is unknown. The skeleton's form and dimensions were close to those described by Ives; but that was not enough to claim that it was *Explorer*.

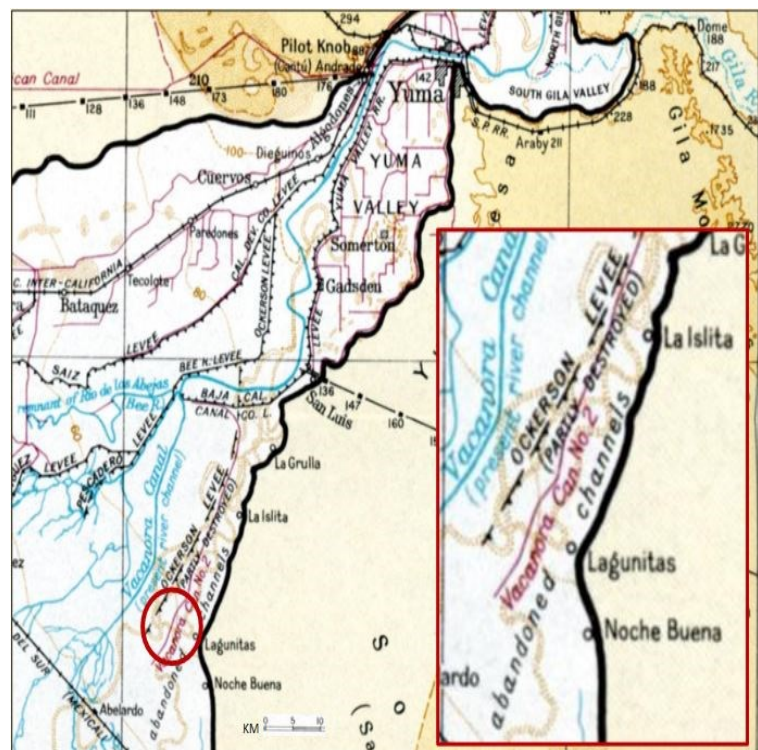
Important identifying elements that did survive were bolts where Mr. Carroll's timbers had been attached when *Explorer* was reassembled in December 1857, which were meant to reinforce the overtaxed hull. An iron patch was found on a surviving portion of the transom, which had eliminated a source of swamping as well as the need for the slot when the pitman arm was raised and bowed. Further corroborating that this was *Explorer*, Sykes continued, "A closer examination showed, however, that the hull had been constructed in eight sections, as Ives had described the *Explorer*, and that these had been rather roughly, and perhaps hurriedly, assembled, suggesting such field conditions as are mentioned in his report."

Since 1930, no one reported having had returned to the grave, an unceremonious end to the vessel that set in motion the first organized trip to the Grand Canyon. "She remains," eulogized Sykes, "as she was discovered, in an open flat, surrounded by dense thickets of brush and trees of mature growth, with no evidence in the immediate vicinity of any recent channel or lagoon"—its final stop on the receding waters of the flood six decades earlier, or perhaps its final rest after idling about, untended and undetected, on other freshets in the river between the 1860s and 1930s.



Partial skeleton of Explorer

Sykes provided coarse geographical coordinates for the boat's resting place: 32° 20' N, 114° 56' W. This approximate position, as seen on Sykes' map, lies just off the east side of Sonora Route 40 about 1½ km northeast of Laguna del Sultán and 5 km west-northwest of Lagunitas, approximately 15 km southwest of the city of San Luis Río Colorado. Consideration should be given to the fact that the precision of these coordinates is only to the minute, thus the views presented here only approximately point out the location of Explorer's Halt. A satellite and various ground views of the area show the region is a now irrigated farmland. *Explorer's* remains must have been cleared out by the middle of the 20th century.



# WORD PUZZLE

## Life and Death of the Explorer

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

ANDREW	BOILER	CARROLL
COORDINATES	DEFIANCE	DELTA
EXPLORER	FORT	GILA
LAGUNA	MAP	PLATFORMS
ROCK	SKELETON	SONORA
SURVEY	SYKES	VOYAGE
WRECK	YUMA	

February 2023 puzzle answers: Davis Dam

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

## 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.

## EVENTS CALENDAR

All events are at the museum unless otherwise stated

### Bullhead City Early Media:

Join us for a discussion with Rick owner of Murphy Broadcasting and Susan Murphy former General Manager of the Ramada Express.  
**March 29, 2023 - Wednesday 5:00pm - 6:00pm**

### Former Mayor of Bullhead City - Tom Brady:

Join us for a discussion with former Mayor Tom Brady.  
**April 26, 2023 - Wednesday 5:00pm - 6:00pm**

## PRESIDENTS CORNER

Hi everyone  
 March is here, and the educational garden is coming right along. So excited about this project. It becomes more real every day and is on track to be open this spring.  
 The Chamber Mixer last month was such a success. We hosted a fun event with DJ Loki and lots of yummy food and drink. There must have been close to 100 people in attendance.  
 The museum has been seeing quite a few more people and we are excited about that. Every day we have people coming in from all over the country and the world.  
 On the 16th of March at the Bullhead City Chamber will be the Winter Expo for seniors from 8 -1. The museum has been a part of this event for several years and look forward to seeing you there this year.  
 On March 29 at 5 pm we have Rick and Susan Murphy of Murphy Broadcasting as speakers at the museum. Should be interesting conversation and hope we see a good turnout.  
 We're also looking for some new fundraisers so we can complete some of our other projects with the museum – specifically our next phase of the building. This phase, Phase #3, will be an area to house our collections (not on display), with a work area that will allow us to work on items in need of repair and/or cleaning. This will also give us an area to design and build new displays to move on to the display floor.  
 If anyone has anything they'd like to discuss please call me 928-219-2582. I am always available and normally at the museum on Friday the whole day. So, let's have a good month and spread the word about our membership benefits to our friends and family.

Karole Finkelstein -President

## COMMITTEES UPDATES

### From The Desk of Our Curator:

Recently the museum received a grant from the Arizona Historical Society in the amount of \$2,000. The funds were used to purchase new archival boxes and sleeves for the preservation of our paper collections.

So far we have been able to get multiple years of The Laughlin Times and The Laughlin Gambler donated by the Laughlin Library stored in these boxes preserved for future generations.



## Seeking Donations for Our Collection

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

◆ 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.

We are actively seeking local historic photographs and Mohave Valley Daily Newspapers before 2010.

## GIFT SHOP NEWS

### Featured Item:

#### Colorful Tote Purse

Available in the gift shop now.

Price: \$20.00



## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Reminder, all memberships expired at the end of the year (Dec 31st 2022). If you haven't had a chance to renew for the year of 2023, now is the time.

Since we have an all volunteer staff that oversees the operations of the museum, all the monies collected from membership fees go directly to the costs of the operation of the museum (other than staffing), new display items, and future expansion of the museum. We have 2 more phases left of the museum to build so the more we can expand our membership and fundraising efforts, the sooner we can get this additional space added.

Thank you again for all your support!

# MUSEUM PROJECTS

Things have been progressing with the Educational Gardens project. Home Depot has finished the irrigation installation and Star Nursery has most of the plants we are using on the way. We are on track for the opening of the area this spring.

I wanted to give everyone a glimpse of what the storyboards for each display area will look and give a big THANK YOU to each of the sponsors. These boards have been sent out to the builder and we should see them hopefully by early April.

## Storyboard Sponsors

Vickie Thomas  
Steve & Orchid Comitz  
Joe & Rosemary Vanassa and Mary Ragusa  
The Tedford Family

Larry & Robbie Adams  
Dot Foods  
Barbara Tedford  
Valley View Medical Center

Norman & Karole Finkelstein and Dr. Terry Coyle & Rose Jacobs

**COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM = MAMMALS OF THE DESERT**

This storyboard includes detailed information on six desert mammal species, each accompanied by a photograph and a descriptive text block. The species featured are Mountain Sheep, Black-tailed Jackrabbit, Cottontail, Kangaroo Rat, White-tailed Kitten, and White-tailed Squirrel.

This Storyboard Sponsored By: Vickie Thomas

**COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM = REPTILES & INSECTS OF THE DESERT**

This storyboard provides information on five desert reptiles and insects, including the Spiny-tailed Horned Lizard, Colorado Desert Sidewinder, American Giant Water Bug, Western Spined Gecko, and Spiny Green Rattlesnake. Each entry includes a photo and a text description.

This Storyboard Sponsored By: Steve & Orchid Comitz

**COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM = BIRDS OF THE DESERT**

This storyboard features information on six desert bird species: Greater Roadrunner, Gambel's Quail, Canyon Wren, and others. Each species is illustrated with a photo and a text block.

This Storyboard Sponsored By: Joe & Rosemary Vanassa and Mary Ragusa

**COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM = CACTUS OF THE MOJAVE DESERT**

This storyboard details six types of cacti found in the Mojave Desert: Prickly Pear, Red Barrel, Desert Agave, and others. Each species is shown with a photo and a text description.

This Storyboard Sponsored By: The Tedford Family

**COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM = THE MOJAVE PEOPLE AND THE PLANTS THEY USED**

This storyboard explores the relationship between Mojave people and the plants they used, featuring images of people and plants like Piñon Pine, Yucca, and others.

This Storyboard Sponsored By: Larry & Robbie Adams

**COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM = DAVIS DAM**

This storyboard is dedicated to the Davis Dam, featuring a portrait of Arthur Powell Davis and images of the dam and its surroundings.

This Storyboard Sponsored By: Dot Foods

**COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM = PREHISTORIC TIMES IN THE DESERT SOUTHWEST**

This storyboard covers prehistoric times in the desert southwest, including a geological time scale and images of prehistoric animals like mammoths and horses.

This Storyboard Sponsored By: Norman & Karole Finkelstein and Dr. Terry Coyle & Rose Jacobs

**COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM = PIONEERS OF THE LOWER COLORADO RIVER VALLEY**

This storyboard depicts the lives of pioneers in the lower Colorado River valley, showing images of covered wagons, mining equipment, and other aspects of pioneer life.

This Storyboard Sponsored By: Barbara Tedford

**COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM = THE EARLY DAYS OF THE GOLD SEEKERS**

This storyboard focuses on the early days of gold seeking, featuring images of mining activities and equipment.

This Storyboard Sponsored By: Valley View Medical Center



**COLORADO RIVER  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MUSEUM**

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Hours of Operations:  
Tuesday—Saturday 10:00am - 4:00pm  
(last admittance 3:00pm)

Grapevine News Editor - Laurie Thompson

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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- Ralph Patterson – Vice-President
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- Laurie Thompson – Director
- Robbie Adams – Director
- Denise Vallon – Director
- Barbara Brandt - Director
- Jim Lucas – 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.*

**\*\*\* MUSEUM FUNDRAISER \*\*\***

The historical society is currently in the midst of a fundraising effort, the monies of which will be used for construction of the next phase of the museum. This addition will store our archives and collections not presently displayed in the museum.

These items are currently stored at the Davis Camp site. Mohave County has generously renewed our lease on that building for an additional year, expiring in July 2023. We are in need of a new home for these artifacts, which require multiple storage racks. The Historical Society also stores various other supplies and tools in this facility.

In the coming months the museum’s fundraising Committee will be using a variety of methods to raise money for our building fund. In the meantime if you are interested in assisting us with a donation it would be highly appreciated. Your contribution may be tax deductible, please confirm with your tax consultant.

It takes a village and we are counting on you to help us make this a reality.

