

# Grapewine News



COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY MUSEUM

## EARLY TOWNS OF MOHAVE COUNTY

First, let us explore the paradigm of the early settlers in northwest Arizona, later to become Mohave County.

Aubrey, Mohave City, Hardyville and Polhamus Landing were towns along the Colorado River which served as ports for the steamboats (perhaps more accurately known as riverboats) delivering supplies to the local mining towns and hauling away ore from the mines to distant smelters. Also, some towns provided ferry service for those wishing to cross the river.

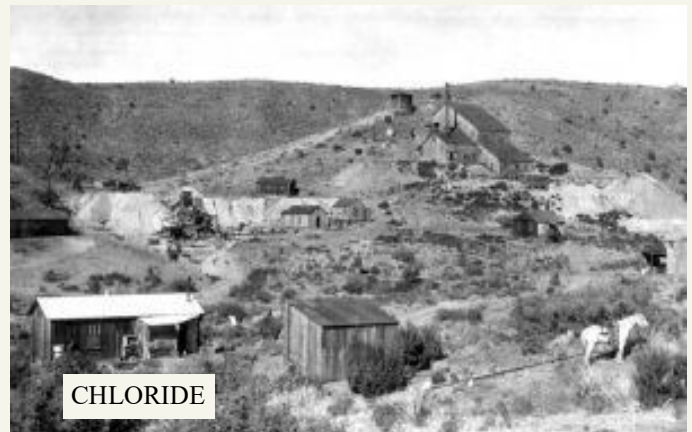
Years later the railroad was constructed, and trains provided more reliable service than the steamboats which depended upon the water level of the river. There was no longer any need for the boats and eventually they and their ports disappeared. There was often seasonal flooding along the river before dams were built and any remains of the river towns were washed away long ago.

The predominate population came here to work in the mines and tended to live within walking distance of their respective mines. There were no streetcars, buses or taxicabs. Owning a horse was expensive and required a great deal of care. Given the necessity of walking to and from the mines each day, small towns grew up near the individual mine. Once the mine became unprofitable to operate, it would shut down and the miners were forced to move elsewhere for work. An interesting fact regarding many of these mining towns – they were often situated below the mine entrance as the weary miners did not want to walk uphill to their homes at the end of the shift.

This area of Arizona had very limited forests and the necessary lumber for building homes was scarce. Quite often when the people of the town

moved, the wood used in building their home was removed and carried along with other household furnishings for use in constructing their new home. Therefore, today the only remaining evidence of these homes is the stone foundations.

Some of the mining “camps” were located near several mines with the resulting larger population of miners and their families. Thus, they became real towns with stores, churches, and schools. The citizens of these towns relied on the single industry, mining, and their fortunes fluctuated with the market price of gold and silver, experiencing many “boom or bust” times. When the United States entered World War Two in 1941 the mines were declared “non-essential” to the war effort, the menfolk were drafted, and the mines were necessarily shut down. Any remaining citizens were forced to move away to find a means of support elsewhere and, for the most part, the towns were deserted.



CHLORIDE

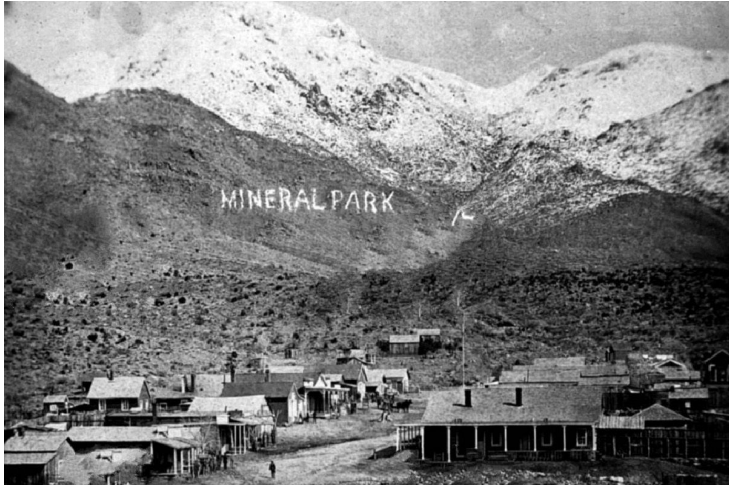
Chloride and Oatman were two such towns that remain to this day. Oatman was fortunate to have Route 66 pass through the town which brought many travelers which helped support the local merchants.

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Both towns promote tourism and are especially busy during the winter months when many guests arrive here to escape the colder climate of the northern states.

The following towns were not so fortunate and today there are very few remains to indicate that they were once thriving communities.



Cerbat and Mineral Park were in the Cerbat Mountains, and both served as the county seat of Mohave County at one time. Cerbat began as a small mining camp in a canyon during the early 1860s and with the opening of more mines became a growing settlement by the late 1870s. By 1877 Mineral Park had become the largest town in Mohave County and now claimed the county seat. In the 1880s, the population reached over 700 and the town boasted a newspaper, hotel, restaurant, and post office. The local mines were eventually bought up by a national mining company which began open-pit mining which caused the once prominent Ithaca Peak to disappear completely.



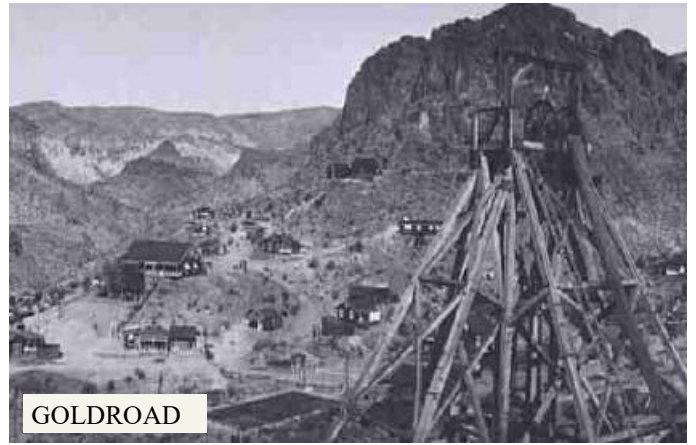
Cerbat, circa 1890.—Courtesy Mohave Pioneers Historical Society

The area is scattered with the rapidly disappearing debris of earlier days, where head frames, mill foundations and tattered cabins can still be seen among the mine tailings. Golconda is another town in the Cerbats which became a

successful mining operation during the late 1880s. Stockton was a mining town on the eastern side of the Cerbats and also served as a stage stop for traffic enroute to the larger towns of Cerbat and Mineral Park.

Gold Basin, Grand Gulch and White Hills were communities much further north of Chloride and were originally known for placer mining. Stories are told of early prospectors being shown sites by the local Indians which they had mined for materials used in body painting and as trade goods.

Frisco was the name of a mine located just west of Union Pass which became rich enough to develop as a town and to have its own post office.



Gold Road, Old Trails, Vivian, and Germa were towns that grew up from nearby mines located near the present town of Oatman. Each experienced varying degrees of success and remained as viable communities while the mines were profitable.

There were over two thousand mining claims filed during the late 1800s and early twentieth century around northwest Arizona and the above towns are just a few of those where the miners lived. Those wishing more information about the history of this area should visit local libraries, museums in the area and/or the internet.

The harsh climate, souvenir hunters, and vandals have destroyed much of the remains of early settlements. Visitors to any of these sites should familiarize themselves with local laws and obtain permission before trespassing on private property. Two useful rules to follow while exploring the desert area are:

- 1) always have a companion with you and
- 2) never enter abandoned mines.

Both rules can extend your life expectancy.

*Special Thanks to members Clif Downes and Carla Lucas for their contribution of this story.*

# WORD PUZZLE

## Early Towns of Mohave County

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

AUBREY  
 CHURCHES  
 FERRY  
 GOLCONDA  
 MINERAL  
 POLHAMUS  
 STORES

CAMPS  
 CITIZENS  
 FLOODING  
 HARDYVILLE  
 MOHAVE  
 SETTLERS  
 VIVIAN

CERBAT  
 CLAIMS  
 GERMA  
 MENFOLK  
 OATMAN  
 SMELTERS

Sept 2023 puzzle answers: Mojave City

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

# PRESIDENTS CORNER

Hi Happy Fall

So many special happenings at the museum. On October 7<sup>th</sup> we had our annual Pumpkin Patch event in the Educational Gardens in conjunction with the Bullhead City Farmers Market. We had a pumpkin walk where the winners won a pumpkin. We also had our docent, Rich Dotson, teaching the kids how to pan for gold at the mining area. Lots of fun!

Laurie Thompson is taking care of the educational garden, adding some new plants recently. More signage is on the way. Be sure to stop by and check it out on a nice day.

Our collection committee did the annual display cleaning at the museum and making displays perfect for you to enjoy.

Many of our members and volunteers coming back to Bullhead City. Welcome home!

Don't forget next month will be our election. Please be sure to come and participate in the voting process. I want everyone to know anytime you need to talk, or ask questions, please call me at 928-219-2582.

Anyway, have a great October month, stop by the museum, and see you in November.

Karole Finkelstein President

## Seeking Donations for Our Collection

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.

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



## GIFT SHOP NEWS

### Featured item:

#### Basket Weaving Kits

Great gift idea for the upcoming holidays

\$10.00 - \$15.00



## SPECIAL TOUR



**Come join me on a 4 ½ hour driving history tour, Saturday October 28 – 10:00 am**

The tour goes to 12 local historical sites, all within 8 miles of Bullhead City.

We will be leaving (caravanning) from the Colorado River Museum parking lot at 10am Sharp.

Bring drinks and snacks for your party.

Call the museum to sign up for this tour  
928-754-3399

For more information call or email me at  
928-758-4222

[Bhcgrl1940@gmail.com](mailto:Bhcgrl1940@gmail.com)

Mary Ragusa

## EVENTS CALENDAR

*All events are at the museum unless otherwise stated*

### 3rd Annual Patron Event:

Our special event for our Patron members

**October 23rd 2023 - Monday 4:30pm - 6:00pm**

### Guest Speaker - Robert Bilbray of Laughlin Nevada:

Long time resident Robert Bilbray talks of his history in the Tri-state area.

**November 7th 2023 - Tuesday 4:30pm - 6:30pm**

### Annual Membership Meeting

Mark your calendar. Come out and vote!

**November 13th 2023 - Monday 10:00am - 11:00am**

**Colorado River Historical Society Presents: Robert Bilbray**

Mr. Bilbray will share his personal and professional life in the Tri-state area including his first visit in 1954 as well as the challenges both States faced in the coming decade. He will talk about how he, along with Don and Betty Laughlin, did their best to contribute to the betterment of the lives of both thousands of Laughlin's residents and millions of visitors over five decades.

There will be historical display boards and Mr. Bilbray plans to take the audience on a visual and verbal journey of, not only from where we came, but more importantly share his thoughts and dreams of what lies before us all.

**November 7th 2023**  
**Tuesday - 4:30pm**

1239 Hwy 95  
Bullhead City, AZ 86429  
928-754-3399  
In Community Park

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Have you been by to see our Educational Gardens yet? Our volunteers have done a phenomenal job creating a beautiful space highlighting local floral and fauna, a Cactus Hill, a Prehistoric display, mining displays, a wonderful mural wall and much more! Your donations made this space available! If you haven't become a member of the Colorado River Historical Society yet, now is the time.

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.

Membership Chair - Ellen Brown



**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: [coloradoriverhistoricalsociety.org/](http://coloradoriverhistoricalsociety.org/)  
Hours of Operations:  
Tuesday—Saturday 10:00am - 4:00pm  
(last admittance 3:00pm)

Grapevine News Editor - Laurie Thompson

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

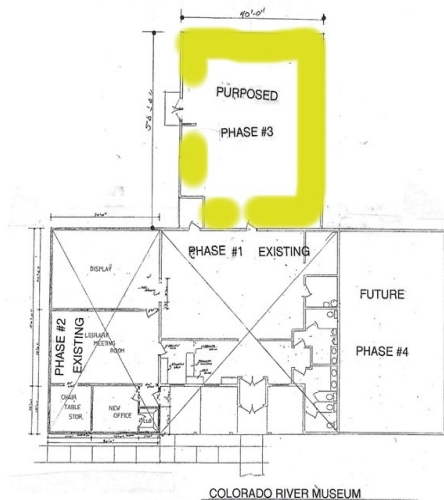
- Karole Finkelstein – President
- Ralph Patterson – Vice-President
- Ellen Brown – Secretary
- Carla Lucas – Treasurer
- Laurie Thompson – Director
- Robbie Adams – Director
- Denise Vallon – Director
- Barbara Brandt - Director
- Jim Lucas – Director

*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 Phase 3 Update**

We are pleased to announce the funds have been raised to start our next phase of the museum building. This addition will store our archives and collections not presently displayed in the museum. Also, with this addition we will also have an area to do maintenance and repair on our artifacts as needed.



**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
- Gardener
- Teachers
- Handyman
- Data Entry
- Marketing
- Fundraising & Event Coordinators