

Grapevine News



COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL
SOCIETY MUSEUM

The Mohave-Milltown Railroad: A Short-Lived but Vital Mining Line

Brought to you by our Archivist—Pat Herzig



The Mohave-Milltown Railroad was a small but significant narrow-gauge railway that operated in the rugged terrain of Arizona during the early 1900s. Built to serve the growing mining industry, it played a crucial role in transporting valuable ore from remote mines to processing facilities. Though short-lived, this railroad was a vital link in the region's economic development and stands as a fascinating chapter in the history of American railroads.

The Mohave-Milltown Railroad was conceived in response to the increasing demand for reliable transportation of ore from mining sites in the Mojave Desert. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the American Southwest experienced a mining boom, with numerous small mining camps and towns springing up across Arizona, California, and Nevada. However, these remote locations often lacked adequate transportation infrastructure, making it difficult and costly to move extracted materials to markets.

The primary purpose of the Mohave-Milltown Railroad was to connect the Oatman mining district in Arizona with the processing and transportation hubs along the

Colorado River. Oatman was a booming gold mining town, and the need for efficient transport of ore to mills was critical to sustaining its operations. The railroad was built as a narrow-gauge line, which was common for mining railways due to its lower construction costs and ability to navigate rough terrain. The line stretched for approximately 15 miles, connecting Milltown—a small settlement along the Colorado River—with the mines near Oatman.

Despite its short length, the construction of the Mohave-Milltown Railroad presented significant challenges. The arid desert environment, rocky terrain, and steep grades made building and maintaining the tracks difficult. However, with the incentive of profitable mining operations, investors and engineers pressed forward with the project, completing the line in the early 1900's. Once operational, the railroad was used primarily for hauling gold ore from the mines to Milltown, where the material could then be transported via steamboats or other rail connections. It also carried supplies and equipment to the mines and provided limited passenger service for workers and residents.

However, the railroad faced several operational difficulties. The desert environment was harsh, with extreme temperatures, limited water sources, and frequent sandstorms that could cover tracks and damage equipment. The steep and rugged terrain put heavy strain on locomotives, leading to frequent mechanical issues. Additionally, financial challenges plagued the railroad. As mining activity fluctuated, so did the demand for transportation services. The high costs of maintenance and operation, coupled with competition from other forms of transport, made profitability difficult.

The Mohave-Milltown Railroad did not last long. As
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gold production in the Oatman district began to decline in the 1920s, the railroad's primary source of revenue diminished. Larger and more efficient railroads, as well as the expansion of automobile and truck transportation, further reduced the need for the line. By the late 1920s, the railroad ceased operations, and much of its infrastructure was abandoned or dismantled.

Today, little remains of the Mohave-Milltown Railroad except for scattered remnants of rail beds and historical records that document its brief but important role in Arizona's mining history. Though it was short-lived, the Mohave-Milltown Railroad exemplifies the pioneering spirit of the mining era. It provided a crucial link between the isolated mines and the broader economy, facilitating the extraction and transportation of valuable resources. Its story is a testament to the determination and ingenuity of the people who built and operated railroads in some of the most challenging environments of the American West.

NOTE: The information from this article was obtained through CHAT GBT.

Mohave-Milltown Railroad Historical timeline:

March 16, 1903 - Incorporated

June 27, 1903 - Materials for railway construction arrive by ferry boat from Needles.

July 8, 1903 - Grading commences

September 1, 1903 - Laying rails

September 30, 1903 - Construction completed

September/October 1904 - Track damaged by washouts and line abandoned

1912 - Track was removed

WORD PUZZLE

Mohave-Milltown Railroad

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

ARID	DAMAGE	ERA
EXTREME	FINANCIAL	GAUGE
HARSH	MILLS	MILLTOWN
NARROW	ORE	PROFITABLE
RAILWAY	REMNANTS	ROUGH
SUPPLIES	TERRAIN	TRANSPORTATION

January 2025 Crossword Puzzle answers: Lt. Amiel Whipple

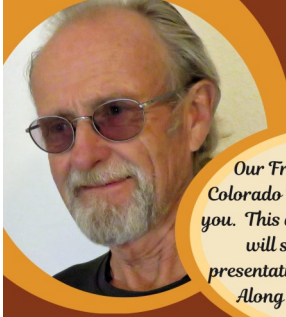
E C Q A A Y B J U G H R B E L
S N Y E V R U S R K E H L D A
V G G R C Q T E P P H P U D R
E H C I S I E I O P P U A M U
C L C S N N G R S I H O C D T
U M Q Q W E T E H T R C G X A
L E I T M S E W T L S J N S N
T T C S M K U R I A M G R C S
U H H E A M L A S R R E W W E
R X I T P A R M Y E I T H D H
E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

EVENTS CALENDAR

All events are at the museum unless otherwise stated

Guest Speaker—John West:

February 25th 2025 - Tuesday 5:30pm-7:00pm(AZ time)



Our Friend John West - The Colorado River Museum welcomes you. This astounding photographer will share a PowerPoint presentation on "Wings & Wildlife Along the Colorado River".

JOHN WEST

John West has been published by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Arizona Fish & Game, Wooden Boat Magazine and other publications. He lived and worked at Grand Canyon National Park and volunteers at several National Wildlife Refuges along the Colorado River. His photography has been featured in birding brochures, National Park Service kiosks, National Wildlife publications and Arizona Game and Fish calendars.

Tuesday - February 25th, 2025
5:30 pm (AZ time)

1239 Hwy 95 (in BHC Community Park)
Bullhead City, AZ 86429

Please join us at the museum. There will be light refreshments.

928-754-3399 www.coloradoriverhistoricalsociety.org

FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Historic Bus Tour:

April 27th 2025 - Sunday 1:30pm(AZ time)

Cost \$25

Leaving from the Museum

LAUGHLIN & BULLHEAD CITY

HISTORIC BUS TOUR

PRICE \$25

APRIL 27, 2025

- TOUR LEAVES FROM THE MUSEUM 1239 HWY 95 BULLHEAD CITY
- PROMPTLY AT 1:30 PM (AZ TIME)
- SNACK BAGS WILL BE PROVIDED
- NO CHILDREN UNDER 12 PLEASE
- HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY

PLEASE JOIN US for this unique opportunity to explore historical sites in Laughlin and Old Bullhead. See where the towns first citizens lived and thrived in this desert landscape. This bus tour will be narrated by local historian, Mary Ragusa, and will last for 3-4 hours with educational stops and restroom breaks along the way.

DUE TO LIMITED SEATING (20 GUESTS), PLEASE CALL GALE AT 928-303-0242 TO VERIFY AVAILABILITY AND SECURE YOUR TICKET TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT. PREPAYMENT IS REQUIRED. TICKETS WILL BE HELD AS WILL-CALL AT THE MUSEUM.

DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND END TOUR DATE

"MANY THANKS TO SILVER RIDER FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN PROVIDING THE BUS FOR THIS TRIP"

PRESIDENTS CORNER

Hi Everyone

Happy February! The weather is getting to be perfect to enjoy.

All kinds of things are happening at the museum in the way of Events and Fundraisers. John West will be coming back on February 25th to continue the wonderful presentation on Wings and Wildlife, bringing the beautiful photos he has taken.

Our new Historic Bus Tour is coming in March which sold out so we have scheduled another one that will be in April and if that fills up, we'll do another one in October. Also, we are holding the Honey Baked Hams Fundraiser for Easter again this year. Please see all the details in the Events and Fundraisers sections of this newsletter.

It is so wonderful to have the participation of the community for the different things we have here at the museum.

Any questions call Karole (928)219-2582

Or the museum (928)754-3399

Respectfully

Karole Finkelstein President

Honey Baked Hams for Easter:

Order by April 17th 2025 11:am(AZ time)

COLORADO RIVER MUSEUM FUNDRAISER

GET YOUR EASTER DINNER FIXINGS FROM US AND HELP THE MUSEUM

CONTACT SUSANA VAN SLOTEN (928) 234-4807 TO ORDER BY APRIL 17TH - 11:00AM

PICK UP YOUR ORDER APRIL 17TH BETWEEN 4:00 - 7:00PM AT SUSANA'S 1837 ARCADIA PL BULLHEAD CITY AZ 86442

...EST. 1957... THE HONEY BAKED Ham CO



COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

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Phone: 928-754-3399
Email: CRHSmuseum@outlook.com
Web: coloradoriverhistoricalsociety.org/
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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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.

MEMERSHIP INFORMATION

It's the time of year for friends, family, food and renewing your museum membership! If you have not renewed yet, please take a moment to log onto our website, www.coloradoriverhistoricalsociety.org or drop a check in the mail.

Remember, we are staffed entirely by volunteers, so all your contribution dollars are used for the ongoing operation of the museum, the Lil' Red Schoolhouse, and the Educational Gardens. Please note, membership dues have increased to \$20 for individuals and \$30 for families

Happy Holidays!

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

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
Fundraising & Event Coordinators	