

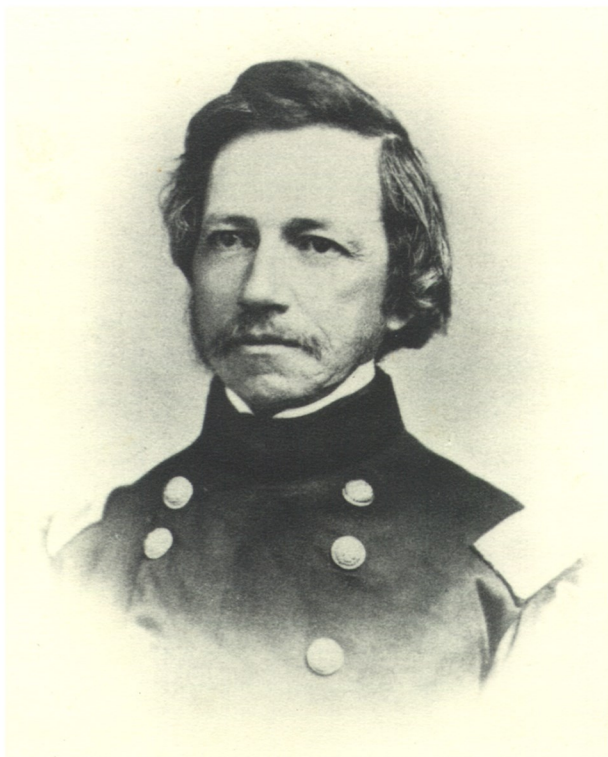
Grapevine News



COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL
SOCIETY MUSEUM

Lt. Amiel Whipple's Journey Through the Mohave Valley

Brought to you by our Archivist—Pat Herzig



Lieutenant Amiel Weeks Whipple, a U.S. Army officer and topographical engineer, made significant contributions to the exploration and mapping of the American Southwest during the mid-19th century. His work in the Mohave Valley, a region straddling modern-day Arizona, California, and Nevada, is a critical chapter in the story of westward expansion. Whipple's expeditions not only provided invaluable geographical and scientific data but also left an indelible mark on the history of the region.

Born in 1817 in Greenwich, Massachusetts, Whipple graduated from West Point in 1841. He joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and participated in a series of mapping and surveying missions, many of which were essential to the burgeoning American interest in territorial expansion. By the early 1850s, Whipple was selected to lead a survey for a proposed transcontinental railroad along the 35th parallel. This ambitious project aimed to determine a feasible route connecting the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean.

The Mohave Valley became a focal point of Whipple's survey due to its strategic location and natural challenges. The region, marked by rugged terrain, the Colorado River, and the Mojave Desert, presented both logistical obstacles and opportunities to study Native American cultures and the Southwest's unique environment.

In 1853, Whipple's expedition set out, consisting of soldiers, scientists, artists, and support staff. Their journey into the Mohave Valley was fraught with difficulties, including extreme heat, limited water supplies, and interactions with the region's indigenous Mojave people. Despite these challenges, Whipple's team made remarkable progress in mapping the area and recording its features.

Whipple was meticulous in his observations, documenting the valley's geology, hydrology, and flora. His reports described the Colorado River as both a lifeline and a barrier, with its strong currents and deep canyons presenting challenges to transportation and settlement. He also identified the valley's potential for irrigation, which would later shape its agricultural future.

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One of the defining aspects of Whipple's time in the Mohave Valley was his interaction with the Mojave people. The Mojave, known for their agricultural expertise and distinctive culture, were both curious and wary of Whipple's group. Whipple's reports reflect an attempt to understand their customs, trade networks, and relationships with neighboring tribes.

While Whipple's writings are tinged with the biases of his time, they provide valuable insights into the Mohave way of life. For instance, he noted their reliance on the river for sustenance, cultivating crops like corn, beans, and melons. He also observed their intricate tattoos and body art, which held cultural and spiritual significance.

However, Whipple's expedition foreshadowed the upheaval that indigenous communities would face as settlers and infrastructure projects encroached on their lands. The mapping and exploration of the Mohave Valley were harbingers of the dramatic changes that would soon follow.

Whipple's work in the Mohave Valley extended beyond cartography. His team included naturalists and artists who documented the region's biodiversity. The resulting sketches, maps, and scientific notes became valuable resources for future explorers, settlers, and policymakers. Whipple's data also contributed to the eventual construction of the transcontinental railroad, which would transform the Southwest by connecting it to the broader U.S. economy.

Amiel Whipple's expedition through the Mohave Valley exemplifies the dual nature of exploration in 19th-century America. On one hand, it represented a triumph of human determination and scientific curiosity, shedding light on a remote and challenging landscape. On the other, it marked the beginning of profound disruptions for the indigenous peoples who had lived in harmony with the land for centuries.

Whipple's meticulous surveys laid the groundwork for future development while preserving a snapshot of the Mohave Valley during a pivotal moment in history. Today, his work is remembered as a blend of exploration, science, and cultural documentation, providing a window into a transformative era in the American Southwest.

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

PRESIDENTS CORNER

Hi, Happy January, 2025

Nice to start off the new year was such beautiful weather, of course we don't like the wind, but it's still beautiful compared to most other parts of the country.

Happy New Year to everyone, may this be the best. If you have any questions, please call me 928-219-2582 or 928-754-1534 take care and see you next month.

Sincerely
Karole Finkelstein

EVENTS CALENDAR

All events are at the museum unless otherwise stated

4th Annual Patron Event "New Year at Your Museum":

January 21th 2025 - Tuesday 5pm-7:00pm(AZ time)

Please RSVP by 1/18/25



WORD PUZZLE

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 I 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

ARMY	ARTISTS	CULTURE
CUSTOMS	ENGINEER	GREENWICH
MAPPING	NATURAL	RAILROAD
REPORTS	SCIENTISTS	SETTLERS
SKETCHES	SOLDIERS	STRATEGIC
SURVEY	TRIBES	WHIPPLE

**December 2024 Crossword Puzzle answers:
Christmas Tree Pass**

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



COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

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

Grapevine News Editor - Laurie Thompson

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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

COLLECTIONS CORNER



I wanted to share with all of you a recent donation from Larry and Robbie Adams of a beautiful, beaded neck yoke that was made in the early twentieth century by an unknown member of the Mojave Indian Tribe.

This is an exceptional addition to the Colorado River Historical Society's collection of Mojave artifacts, many of which were gifted to the museum by Larry and Robbie. We are grateful beyond words for their support. A special thank you to Larry for the many hours he spends searching for Mojave artifacts and making these purchases to enhance the museum collection. If you have the opportunity, stop by the museum to see the yoke which is currently on display.

Carla Lucas
Collections Management Curator