



COLORADO RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 8

OCTOBER 2021

CAPTAIN ISSAC POLHAMUS DIES



Obituary Excerpts - January 16, 1922

Despite his advance age, Captain Polhamus had been well until the last few days. Sunday, members of his immediate family felt that the end was near. Physicians told them Sunday night that there was scarcely any hope for recovery. Monday morning death came.

Captain Polhamus was married in 1865 to Miss Sacramento Sambrano, a daughter of the historic Farrar family of California, owners of an immense cattle ranch at La Paz, on the Colorado above Yuma.

It is told that, there being no priest in this section, Captain Polhamus sent to San Diego for a father of the church to perform the ceremony. A special stage brought the padre at a cost of \$500. Mrs. Polhamus died last year at the age of 76.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karole Finkelstein – President
Ralph Patterson – Vice-President
Brenda Warneka – Secretary
Carla Lucas – Treasurer
Dick Warneka – Director
Laurie Thompson – Director

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Time is really flying by! There is a bit of nip in the air in the early mornings and evening. A welcome relief.

As we roll towards Thanksgiving, I want to remind everyone that we will be selling our tasty Honey Baked Hams for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Proceeds benefit our building fund! Please call Susana Van Sloten at (928)- 234-4807 and get your order in!

I also want to remind all members that our Annual Election of board members is coming up on Monday, November 8 at 10:00 a.m. at the museum. There will be a guided tour of the museum to follow and light refreshments.

Our fall schedule for the museum is Tuesday-Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you would like to join our docent team please give us a call.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

Karole

The couple had born to them four sons and four daughters.

Captain Polhamus was born in New York City in 1828 and spent the days of his boyhood on steamers on the Hudson River, working for his father, whose home still stands in Albany.

He joined a crew of hardy souls who set sail for San Francisco in the late forties. The trip around Cape Horn consumed 327 days. A few months were spent working the placers of the American River, but a sudden rise carried away the grub caches of Captain Polhamus' party and he went back to the steamboats, spending the new few years on the Sacramento River.

In 1856, he came to Yuma, then a mere steamboat landing on the Colorado River. At that time a steamship line, the Colorado Steam Navigation Co. was operated from San Francisco to Port Isabel at the mouth of the Colorado. River steamboats picked up the cargoes there and carried freight as far north as the Boulder Canyon (during spring flooding only). There was but one house in Yuma when Captain Polhamus made his first landing here. Second to Captain Polhamus in command was Captain John Alexander Mellen, who became his partner in later ventures and a lifelong friend.

During the Indian Wars he mixed with the warring tribesmen and maintained friendship with them all. Under him during those early years was William Mulholland of Los Angeles infamy, who acted as mate on one of the boats. The steamers were named the Cocopah, Colorado, Mohave and Gila.

The coming of the Southern Pacific railroad in 1877 drove the steamship line out of business and Captain Polhamus continued to operate small steamboats on the Colorado until 1904 when construction of the Laguna Dam by the Reclamation Service above Yuma closed the river to traffic.

Captain Polhamus was age 93 when he passed away. He and his wife are both buried in the Yuma Pioneer Cemetery in Yuma, Arizona.

Fair winds and following seas Captain!

COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

Cheryl Mangin – Curator
Laurie Thompson – Archivist
Carla Lucas – Asst. Archivist
Richard Dotson – Asst. to the committee
Jim Lucas – Asst. to the committee

DONATION GUIDELINES

What we are looking for is 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.

Please keep in mind, these are the guidelines we use if you choose to donate an artifact in your possession:

- Is it of museum quality?
- Is it pertinent to our area of interest?
- Do we already have as good or a better prime example of the artifact?
- Does the provenance of the artifact or material increase its significance?
- Is the donor the legal owner of said materials?
- Do we have enough resources to maintain/store/display it.
- 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.

Excerpts were gathered from The Morning Star newspaper of Yuma, and the Mohave County Miner of Kingman, AZ. Circa 1922.

NEW STEAMBOAT DISPLAY



The Mohave II at Fort Mohave.

The museum is now offering an all new steamboat slide show of the boats that ran the Colorado River between 1852 and 1916. Historic photographs, descriptions and even a couple of sound effects can be enjoyed on a 32-inch monitor. The show is about 20 minutes long and includes 79 slides.

OUR NEWSLETTER

We are now posting our newsletter on our Facebook page and our website for you to read and/or print. Therefore, we will not be mailing out hardcopies any longer. We will continue to send the newsletter out on email. If you have not provided us with an email address yet, please do so as soon as possible at: crhsmuseum@outlook.com

TIME CHANGING IN THE TRI-STATE

Our neighbors in California and Nevada will be undergoing the fall time change on Sunday, November 8 at 2:00 a.m. from Daylight Savings Time to Pacific Time. Arizona time will remain in Mountain Standard Time. Please remember to adjust your schedules accordingly.

CHECK US OUT

E-mail: crhsmuseum@outlook.com

Facebook:

[Colorado River Historical Society Inc](https://www.facebook.com/ColoradoRiverHistoricalSocietyInc)

Website:

coloradoriverhistoricalsocietymuseum.org

Museum Phone Number: 928-754-3399

Address: 1239 Highway 95 BHC, AZ 86429

UPCOMING EVENTS

On Monday, November 8th at 10:00 a.m. we are holding our annual election of board members. Come out and vote! There will be a tour of the museum afterwards and light refreshments will be served. Yes, it is the second time we have mentioned this in this newsletter!

On Saturday, November 20th Simon Garcia of the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe will be at the museum from 1:00-3:00 p.m. to demonstrate the Bird Dance. He will be accompanied by his wife and daughter. Come out and see this ancient custom of the Mojaves and listen to the history behind it. One of Simon's hand-crafted rattles is on display.

We also have a new Mojave Indian slideshow with over 75 photos for you to enjoy while you are here.

On Saturday, December 18th from noon to 2:00 p.m., Walter the Orphaned donkey of Oatman, AZ will be here dressed in his Christmas regalia to take photos with his adoring fans.

Owners Brad and Kelly Blake will be here to answer questions, sign books and visit with you. We haven't finalized all the details yet, but we are hoping Walter's second book will be out, and there is a good possibility that Santa may make an appearance!