



The Mohave Museum
of History and Arts
Mohave Memories

January-February 2021

Letter from the Director

Last week, I sent out an e-mail to museums in the tri-state area inquiring how their institutions were coping in the ever changing “Covid” environment. The replies varied slightly and were divided into two schools of thought. The most popular course of action was to shut the doors and maintain a virtual presence and hope for the best. The second and least accepted plan was to open wide these sacred halls of history, mask up and pray for the best and always indulge in bourbon for breakfast.

I am proud to say that The Mohave Museum has subscribed to neither of these proposed solutions, rather opting to do due diligence and take this slow time to fine tune our exhibits with the help of our fine staff and volunteers. The results are showing in the positive comments that we hear from the visitors we do get coming through.

Winter will have arrived by the time you get this newsletter, meaning Christmas will be past and the new year 2021 will have begun. I realize that there might be some residual effect of the “Covid” (I never know whether or not to capitalize that word) governing aspects of all our lives and I pray the part it plays in our lives will be minimal and non-consequential. I am happy to say that the Museum has kept with its mission statement of “preserving the history of the Southwest”. In fact, the Museum neither blinked or hiccupped in its solemn duty to accomplish this task.

I never get tired of saying that this Museum is much more than a beautiful building with precious artifacts. It is a coming together of likeminded people for the sole purpose of reminding us all that we have a past to be cherished and kept alive for future generations to remember the joys and hard work involved in living and thriving in this desert terrain.

Lest we forget, this Museum is a metaphorical fortress whose embankments are formed by the Hualapai, Peacock, Black, Cerbat and Music mountains. It seems almost biblical that this house was built on a rock foundation rather than footings of sand. The flood of defeat will never overwhelm this institution. I am looking forward to 2021. There is a positive collective consciousness on the horizon that forms a barrier to all negativity. CARPE DIEM!

Shannon

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The Mohave Museum would like to take this opportunity to thank Charles Cook for his many years of service. Over the years Charles has entertained us all with his writings and remembrances. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

With that being said, please welcome our new contributor Claire Whitley. You may remember Claire in her past role as a reporter for the Kingman Miner. We are very happy to bring her on board and believe that you will find her writings entertaining and enlightening. Welcome Claire!!

Boxing up Kingman: A Sporting History By Claire Whitley

Muhammed Ali. Sugar Ray Robinson. Rocky Marciano. Joe Louis.

All great names in the world of boxing. They spoke with their fists and left everything in the ring. And the sport isn't something people would often associate with a small town like Kingman, Arizona. But boxing and Kingman have been in the ring together since the 19th-century.

Albeit, the first account of any organized match that I could find wasn't exactly pleasant. Local black resident John Lee went toe-to-toe with a stranger to town called only McCaffrey. The "Prize Fight" was for \$30. And, realistically, no one won. The rumor is that the "prize fight" was more of a brawl than anything. McCaffrey attacked Lee while Lee was in his own corner, so Lee knocked the man out with a whiskey bottle to the head. The crowd wasn't a fan of that, though, and even as they announced McCaffrey as the winner, they proceeded to beat Lee mercilessly.

Luckily boxing wasn't all brawling in Kingman, and this is the only fight that is called as such.

The first article I found in the archives about boxing was from a July 1927 issue of the Mohave County Miner. Mickey L'Amour, a "professional boxer of Kingman," lost his first match of the 1927 season. The article said he lost to Larry Jones on a foul. "Mickey was going fine the first two rounds of the six round semifinal and had Jones all groggy in the first minute of the third when he slipped up and landed a low one, losing to Jones on a foul."

The fight between L'Amour and Jones was the first in a series of bouts that trailed through the 1930s and into the World War II years.

In 1934, Kingman boxing fans gathered in "the ball park" to watch 20 rounds of boxing. The main event: Orville Darr of Willow Beach versus John Spurrier of Needles. The fight lasted all 10 rounds. In the "closing moments" Spurrier won by a knockout. Leading up to this bout, Darr had won 80 matches via the knockout route, and many more in decisions. However, the fight went on longer than it should have, according to the writer. "(Darr) was just a punch-drunk fighter from the fourth round on ... it should have been stopped at the beginning of the sixth and would have been if the judges had been willing. The old boy put up all that he had and it was only his fighting instinct that kept him in the ring in the closing rounds." Apparently the Californian was becoming quite the drawing card for Kingmanites at the time. The writers said that boxing fans in Kingman were always willing to come out when they saw Spurrier's name on the card.

Spurrier wasn't the next Needles boxer to be reported on in the Mohave County Miner, though. A few months after the Spurrier fight, a headline in the Miner read "Needles Boxer KO's Phoenix Boy at Oatman." The fight was between one Ernie Duarte and Ernie Green. The main event sounds underwhelming given the writer's distaste for it. The writer said it was far from the best bout on the card, and seems to not like Green very much. "Green, who professed ... to be Arizona champion in his weight, showed no boxing skill against Duarte and hardly got in a solid blow, most of the time being spent in shoving and clinching, Duarte finally forcing Green to hang over the ropes and earn a technical knockout." Ernie Duarte would go on to be featured in at least one more big fight card in the county. He fought against Moe Hammons in December of 1936.

Cont...

A few matches lead into the fight, and the 1936 match would be their third time facing each other. In the first match, Hammons lost on a foul, and the second match was a furious 10-round fight that led to a draw.

In this third match-up, Duarte ended up losing on a technical KO after the fourth round. The fight had been even between the two, but somehow Duarte ended up with his left eye bleeding “considerably.” Duarte’s seconds persuaded Duarte to not continue the match when it became obvious the cut would only get worse.

The December 1936 card featured “four of the best fights ever to be offered on one card” according to the “old timers.” Two more fight cards took place in the 1930s, but the boxing seasons seemed to take a lull in 1938 and 1939. The next large article came from 1943, when soldier boys from the Kingman Army Airfield were featured on a card. “Former top-notchers in sport, now soldiers, admission for reserved seat is bond purchase,” read the headlines.

The entire night of boxing was scheduled as a bond campaign during World War II. Reserved tickets were on sale at Central Commercial and the State Theater at the price of a bond. And the tickets were selling fast. Six hundred general admission tickets were also on sale the night of the fights to servicemen for \$1 in stamps. Reports suggested that the gathering would draw in approximately 1,100 servicemen and civilians.

This was one of two such fights that took place in the Kingman area. The second took place a year later in 1944. Then, there was another mention of a boxing match in 1948, before the sport in the county appears to have quietly faded away into the pages of history.

Bob Boze Bell, author, artist, Arizona historian and former Kingman resident, has generously donated one of his paintings as well as one of his books to benefit the Museum through our annual fundraiser.



The painting entitled: “Doc Holliday in Colorado” along with his book titled: “The Illustrated Life and Times of Doc Holliday” will be raffled Friday February 12th, 2021.



Bob Boze Bell will be on hand to give a talk, sign books and draw the winning ticket.

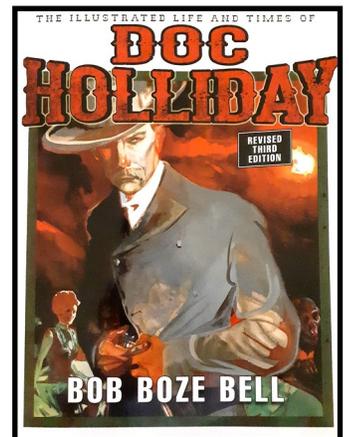
Tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20.

You may purchase tickets at the Museum or by phone at 928-753-3195. Raffle tickets would make a great stocking stuffer!

Items are currently on display at the Museum and will be raffled as a pair.

Due to possible Covid restrictions, the Bob Boze Bell event is subject to change. However, the raffle will be held February 12th as planned.

Need not be present to win.



50 YEARS AGO FROM THE MOHAVE COUNTY MINER

1971

Back in 1971 it was certainly less expensive to visit the grocery store than it is these days!
And when was the last time you got “all you can eat” anything for \$1.79???

DISCOUNT PRICES SAVE YOU MONEY!

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HOLIDAY INN OF KINGMAN
3100 Andy Devine Ave.

80 YEARS AGO FROM THE MOHAVE COUNTY MINER

1941

- February Yesterday Attorney Frank X. Gordon left for Phoenix where he will take his oath of office as Special Assistant Attorney General. He will do some work in connection with that office and will return the latter part of this month. Mr. Gordon has twice previously held that appointment.
- February Will H. Cook, who owns valuable mining properties in the Weaver District, spent several days this week in Kingman awaiting the return of Mrs. Cook and baby from Los Angeles. They departed to their home on yesterdays train. (originally printed in “Ole Diggings” Feb. 1941 Mohave County Miner)

100 YEARS AGO FROM THE MOHAVE COUNTY MINER

1921

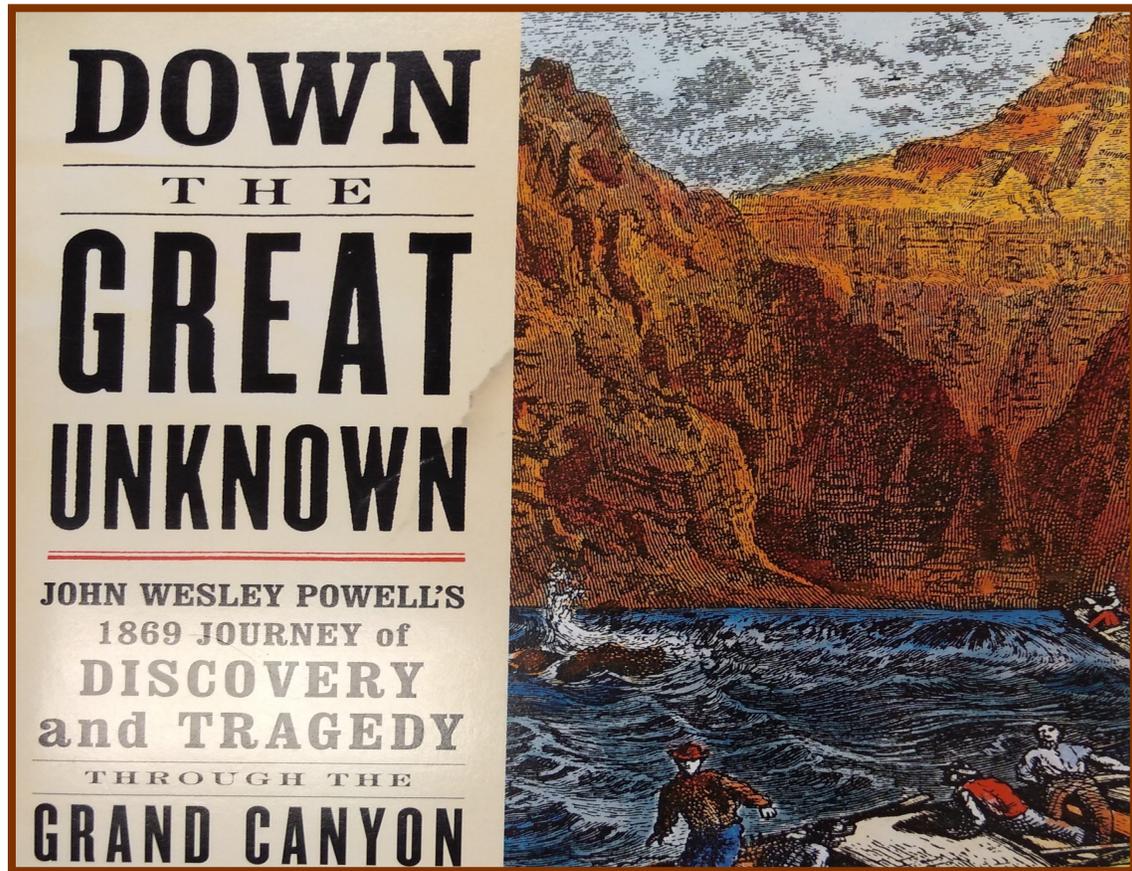
- January George Bonelli left Tuesday for the coast where he was called in connection with contracts for his patent cement pipes.
- February The “Abe” Lincoln window of the C. C. Co. is worth mentioning. Rail splitting axes, properly arranged with a background of Lincoln’s picture surrounded by trees, made a very pleasant effect.

On sale now in the Mohave Museum Gift Shop

“Down the Great Unknown:
John Wesley Powell’s 1869
Journey of Discovery and Tragedy Through the Grand Canyon”

By: Edward Dolnick

\$13.99



“This stirring tale of John Wesley Powell’s 1869 ten-man expedition by boat 1,000 miles down the unmapped Colorado River through the uncharted mile-high Grand Canyon is as dramatic as the adventures Conan Doyle dreamed up for Professor Challenger in *The Lost World*. Six tired, half-starved adventurers who had started the trip as rowdy, hollering mountain men came back from an ill-equipped expedition that had taken them ninety-nine days of whitewater terror, fire, feuding, thirst, hunger—and which had cost them the lives of three of their companions. Until their unexpected reappearance they had been given up as lost. Dolnick keeps his narrative flowing like a strong current, pioneering in prose with much of one-armed Powell’s own self-confidence.”

—*The Times* (London)

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Mrs. Frank X. Gordon, Jr., Phoenix, AZ

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Mohave Memories

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invites you to participate in preserving our past and building our future.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

January-February 2021

Everyone here at The Mohave Museum of History and Arts,
The Route 66 Museum as well as The Bonelli House,
would like to wish everyone a healthy, prosperous and
Happy New Year!

