

Lost City Museum Overton NV

The Lost City Museum is part of the Nevada Division of Museums and History within the Department of Cultural Affairs.

Some Internet sites relating to the Lost City Museum are:

http://museums.nevadaculture.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=397&Itemid=125 – The official Lost City Museum website.

<http://www.sunsetcities.com/lost-city-museum.html> - This site gives a general overview of the museum and also shows images of the pottery collection plus some other historic photos.

The following is the text from the site, <http://www.realtown.com/chrisshouse/blog/lost-city>.

The Lost City Museum was built by the national Park Service to exhibit artifacts that were being excavated from the Pueblo Grande de Nevada. These Anasazi Indian sites were being threatened by the waters of Lake Mead as it backed up behind the newly built Hoover Dam. Eventually, when the lake was filled to capacity about five miles of sites had been inundated or undercut by the water.

The Civilian Conservation Corps assisted in the excavation of the sites and the construction of the museum building. The building was constructed of sun-dried adobe brick in a pueblo-revival style. The museum also served as the park headquarters for the Boulder Dam State Park that was established at Lake Mead.

The museum is currently owned and maintained by the State of Nevada as one of its six state museums. Programs include ongoing archaeological research on the remaining Lost City sites, school tours and outreach programs, changing exhibits and archival library and collections, research capabilities. Festival Americana, celebrating Native American and pioneer crafts, music and food, is held the first Saturday in November.

Nevada's Lost City

Nevada's "Lost City", officially known as Pueblo Grande de Nevada is a series of Anasazi Indian ruins situated along the Muddy and Virgin River Valleys in southern Nevada. The site area is located at the northern end of man-made Lake Mead and continues up both valleys for a distance of approximately 30 miles. There are more than a 100 recorded sites along the Muddy River and over 50 recorded sites along the Virgin River. The Lost City was occupied by the Virgin branch of the Anasazi, originally by the Basketmaker people sometime after the first century A.D. and later by the Puebloans from A.D. 700 to 1150. Some of the sites were reoccupied by the Paiute Indians who

moved into the area after A.D. 1000. The Basketmakers lived in sub-terrain pit houses that were 10 to 15 feet in diameter and approximately 6 feet deep. They used spears for hunting and their name is derived from their use of baskets as storage vessels. The later Puebloans lived in above ground pueblos (houses made of sticks and adobe). They had the additional knowledge of the bow and arrow and manufactured ceramic vessels for storage and cooking.

The Anasazi farmed corn, beans, squash, and cotton on the marshy valley floor and built multi-roomed pueblos on the gravel benches along the valley margins. In addition to farming and hunting natural resources, the Lost City Anasazi mined salt and turquoise both for their own personal use and as a highly valued trade item. Remnants of all these activities were found during the excavations of the site ruins.

The Lost City ruins were first noted by explorer Jedidiah Smith when he traveled throughout the area in 1826-27. He reported finding stone tools in salt caves along the Virgin River where Lake Mead stands today. Smith's report later aroused the interest of Nevada's Governor James Scrugham. He inquired about the locality and two brothers from Overton, John and Fay Perkins announced their "discovery" in 1924. Scrugham arranged for M.R. Harrington, a New York archaeologist who was excavating in northern Nevada at the time, to investigate the sites.

Harrington immediately recognized the artifacts as belonging to a Puebloan culture. Until that time, it was believed that the Puebloan Indians had not settled west of the Colorado River in southern Nevada. Harrington named the complex Pueblo Grande de Nevada because of its large size, but the media picked up the term "Lost City" and that became its popular name.

Harrington, under the auspices of the Heye Foundation, Museum of the American Indian in New York City, began excavations of the Lost City in 1924 and continued work there even after his move to the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles in 1928. In addition to his work on the Anasazi sites, Harrington found time to excavate several caves in the area and an ancient salt mine. From 1933 to 1938, he supervised members of the Civilian Conservation Corps as they aided in the excavations and built the Boulder Dam Park Museum(now Lost City Museum of Archaeology) in Overton to house the artifacts.

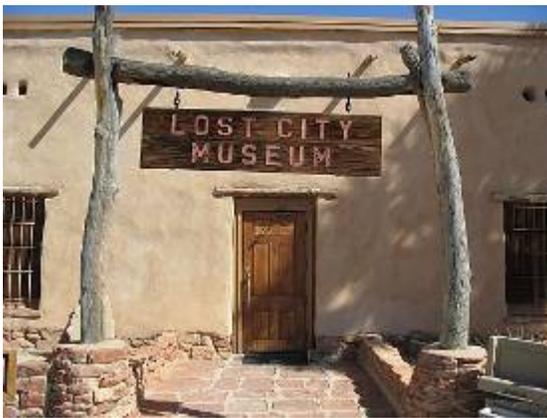
The Park Service withdrew from the operations of the museum in 1952 and ownership was transferred to the State of Nevada in 1953. Today the museum stands as one of the most popular tourist attractions in southern Nevada. More than 50,000 visitors a year find their way off the beaten track to learn about the ancient cultures that once occupied this corner of Nevada.

Archaeological research continues to be an important aspect of the museum's operations. Museum staff members can often be found one step in front of bulldozers as the ancient sites are removed to make way for modern housing tracts. The museum, through receipt of a grant from the Fleischmann Foundation, was able to purchase several sites in recent

years in an effort to preserve them for future generations. Research, preservation and education remain the primary goals of the Lost City Museum of Archaeology.

Dena discussed the history of the museum and showed us various exhibits including the reconstructed pueblo, pottery and other exhibits. She said that most of the artifacts in the museum were collected after Nevada took control of the museum in 1953.

For more information about the Lost City, go to <http://dixierockart.webs.com/Technical%20Presentations/The%20Lost%20City.pdf> which is a summary of Dena's October 2010 talk to the club.



Museum Entrance



Reconstructed Pueblo



Reconstructed Pueblo



Backside of the Pueblo



Pottery Collection



Pottery Collection