

London Bridge (Lake Havasu City)

London Bridge is a bridge in Lake Havasu City, Arizona. It was originally built in the 1830s and formerly spanned the River Thames in London, England. In 1968, the bridge was purchased from the City of London by Robert P. McCulloch. McCulloch had exterior granite blocks from the original bridge cut and transported to the United States for use in the construction of a new bridge in Lake Havasu City, a planned community he established in 1964 on the shore of Lake Havasu. The Arizona bridge is a reinforced concrete structure clad in the original masonry of the 1830s bridge. The bridge was completed in 1971 (along with a canal), and links an island in the Colorado River with the main part of Lake Havasu City. The "rededication" of the London Bridge took place on October 10, 1971.^[3] At the time of its opening in 1937, it was both the longest and the tallest suspension bridge in the world, with a main span of 4,200 feet (1,280 m) and a total height of 746 feet (227 m).



HISTORY

The 1831 London Bridge was the last project of engineer John Rennie and was completed by his son, John Rennie.^[4] By 1962, it was not sturdy enough to carry the increased load of traffic; the bridge was sold by the City of London in April 1968 to make way for its replacement.^[5]

The purchaser, Robert P. McCulloch, was an entrepreneur and real estate developer who founded Lake Havasu City. He installed the bridge to attract tourists and retirement home buyers to his properties there.^[5]

The Sausalito Land and Ferry Company service, launched in 1867, eventually became the Golden Gate Ferry Company, a Southern Pacific Railroad subsidiary, the largest ferry operation in the world by the late 1920s. Once for railroad passengers and customers only, Southern Pacific's automobile ferries became very profitable and important to the regional economy. The ferry crossing between the Hyde Street Pier in San Francisco and Sausalito The community first started as an Army Air Corps rest camp, called "Site Six" during World War II on the shores of Lake Havasu. In 1958 McCulloch purchased 3,353 acres (13.57 km²) of property on the east side of the lake along Pittsburgh Point, the peninsula, intending to develop the land. But the real estate agents could not bring in prospective buyers, because the land was far from centers of population and had a very hot, arid climate.^[6] McCulloch's real estate agent, Robert Plumer, learned that London Bridge was for sale and convinced McCulloch to buy it and bring it to the area to attract potential land buyers. The initial response from McCulloch was, "That's the craziest idea I have ever heard," but after consideration, he decided to go ahead^[7] and purchased it for £1.02 million (\$2.46 million at that time).^[8]

