The battle over a rock should have been a pebble-sized debate but became a boulder-like controversy.

But, thankfully, this debacle that pitted Ohio against Kentucky and gained national attention has almost crumbled away.

Criminal charges have been dropped because prosecutors decided they weren't even sure this 8-ton sandstone rock removed from the Ohio River in the fall of 2007 was what they thought it was.

But lots of time and likely a fair amount of money has been wasted in the process.

At the heart of this stone was Ironton resident and amateur historian Steve Shaffer. It was Shaffer who started this avalanche when he removed a rock he believed to be the famed Indian Head Rock from the river.

That rock, which historians say bears native American drawings, is a historic artifact protected under state and federal laws.

So the battle over a rock, which currently sits in a garage in Portsmouth, ensued.

Last June a specially called Greenup County grand jury indicted Shaffer for removing and appropriating an object of antiquity. That indictment was later amended to included disturbing an archaeological site. Shaffer faced up to five years in prison for the felony crime.

Let's not forget this rock had been submerged for the better part of eight decades.

Shaffer now faces a civil case filed by Kentucky's Attorney General Jack Conway for the rock removal. Curtis is expected to file a motion asking for the dismissal of that case.

Shaffer may have made a mistake in how he approached this but the entire fiasco spiraled out of control because politicians on both sides of the river had to get involved.

Rather than sitting down and rationally working this out, it came to legal wrangling and grandstanding.

At least for Shaffer, he avoided hard time over a rock.