



Museums Department

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Mrs. Elizabeth Mecham
Rt. #1, Box 416
Bayside, Ca. 95524

Dear Mrs. Mecham:

Thank you for your letter. The weather is beautiful here; the leaves are beginning to turn yellowish and rust colors. Things are progressing in the Museum; however, there remains much to be done. We are in the process of putting numbers on several unnumbered objects and putting labels on them.

Last month I inspected three sites for the FAA to determine if they had any archaeological remains; the sites were near Lake Searles, in the Slate Range and the last near Ballarat and Post Office Spring. Do you recall visiting these areas?

In your last letter you commented on the way Indians predict weather such as a ring around the moon. Was this a cloud ring? Also you mentioned the use of sticks in the ground as a kind of device to tell seasons or the sun's movements. Did every Indian do this or did just one person observe the course of the sun's rising? They must have had a way to determine when to start collecting seeds or other activities. The details you share will be helpful. I am interested in the Shoshone weather prediction, sun watching and astronomical observations.

Do you recall the Shoshone families owning dogs, and if so were the dogs a different breed from varieties owned by Whites? It is an established fact that many American tribes, if not all owned dogs before the Whites came.

Do you remember a Dr. Sam, an Indian curer who lived in Darwin?

Do you remember who George Gregory's and Charlie Wrinkle's wives were, their maiden names and where they came from? Did Gregory's and Wrinkle's family originate in South Fork Country before they came to Darwin?

Do you remember the Bellas family? They lived at Coso Hot Springs part of the year. They were Coso Shoshone. Did the Indian families at Cole Spring see themselves as a different group from those in Saline Valley and Indian Ranch?

I know you will enjoy the challenge of answering these. I hope to hear from you soon.

Regarding the old school house: the latest report I got was that nothing has been done to preserve it, although it has been cleaned out. I offered to help the people in Darwin with this building by giving them old window sashes and doors. Later, I was made to understand some of them do not want ~~my help~~ from the County Museum. As it was reported to me some of them were afraid the Museum would come and remove the building to the Museum; others were apprehensive about accepting any sashes or doors for reasons I did not understand. The truth is when some visitors from Darwin asked if we wanted the building I responded that it should remain where it is, but should be restored. After all the flap from various residents there, I correctly decided to leave the people of Darwin along. However, I do hope they can organize and restore it. There are so many in the County who want our help that it is not practical or reasonable for us to become involved in a place where our help is not wanted or understood.

We'll be going to Saline Valley in the next few days, I'll be thinking of you and other old timers from Southern Inyo during the trip.

Sincerely,

Charles N. Irwin
Director

CNI/vac