

October 31, 1978

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

Dear Mrs. Mecham:

Thank you for the long and detailed letter dated October 4. Your letters are the best because you have so much to say.

I recall in a recent letter you mentioned an Indian "sundial" made of sticks by which the Indians could tell the time of day and the seasons of the year. Could you describe this in more detail? Also, anything you recall about the Indians' view of the stars, constellations, moon and shooting stars would be most helpful.

Also, I am interested in the colors used in baskets. Do you recall which plants the different colored strands come from, such as the lemon, reddish and black colors? Did the Indians ever comment on the origin of petroglyphs and the meanings of the designs on the rocks?

Do you recall if the Shoshones had head men or chiefs and who they were? Did the Indian families congregate and live in villages during any season of the year. Perhaps you recall visiting their camps and villages, the kinds of Indian structures and the number of Indians in different locations.

I hope I have not asked too much. You may wonder if I will ever run out of questions and subjects.

We visited Saline Valley three weeks ago; it was a bit warm still. I miscalculated; I should have waited until November. We stopped at Hunter Canyon and the hot springs.

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Lower Warm springs is being maintained by a young couple. There is no charge for going into the outdoor pools. I am hoping to return later in the fall to continue field research. Also, I intend to visit the Modoc and Minietta mines in the Argus.

I I went by Searles, the Slates and Ballarat this summer. If I am not mistaken, we went into Shorty Harris' former cabin; it was open and was in good condition.

I have been to Indian Ranch in the Panamint Valley but not to the hot springs near there. Did George Hanson ever talk about them? I wonder if they had the same meaning attached to them as did the Coso Hot springs?

Sincerely,

Charles N. Irwin, Director
Eastern California Museum

CNI/vac