

Oct 4th 1978

Dear Mr. Irwin - We are fog bound up here - a bit of drizzle - the leaves cling tightly to the trees - we are due for a big wind one of these days to blow them away and the dead needle spray on the red woods - to litter the ground. And the Museum is getting a new coat of paint - the gray would blend in better with the surrounding desert rocks and sand. I doubt if any archaeological - that a 4-bit word - remains will be found near Searles - or Lake Range & Ballarat or Post Office Springs. I've been to all places - and our prehistoric Indians in Death Valley & Panamint did not build - they lived in wickie ups or in the open - and all together, probably, just a hand full of people widely scattered in individual camps - not in communities - that's the way Indian George used to tell us. and no ruins in my part of "up home" - except along the base of the Malpais a few metates & manos and lava piled up as the for breast works. Their way of predicting weather was by the moon - the way the crescent sits in the sky - a large circle around the moon with one or more stars in it, told the number of days before rain - it works too! the thickness of the fall coat on stock - light, a mild winter - heavy, a cold winter, the amount of food stored by the chipmunks and trade rats - snakes hibernating early - busy red ants storing food all summer - we had no black ants - Argentine so called came in later with produce from So. Calif. If a flock of blue birds went screaming by - a storm was coming - the ring around the moon is just a bright circle - ring. in a clear night sky - all the Indians had dogs - generally small ones - at less & then when they could "catch um" - bones & stuff thrown out - the dogs had an aversion - probably odor - much barking

as we rode up to the camp. They generally had a crow in a wooden cage or staked out with a throng around one leg. They would capture them when young and when moving camp the crow in the cage rode on top of the pack or high on the wagon load. In 1912 we bought a new wagon - red wheels & new harness and broke our saddle horses to drive & took provisions etc. - from Los Angeles to "up home" to do the assessment work at camp. (Millsbaugh) later decided to stay & got a little house in Darwin as we were making a deal with Summers & Butler of Bishop to sell all the buildings at camp - they were buying the Junction from Orming Etcharrison & his cows and bringing their stock down for winter range and line camp at Cole Springs - but to get back to the wagon & harness - we didn't need it any more so gave it all to Indian George Hanson - - The dogs were all breeds, as I say - mostly small - but our Indians had none before the white men came - according to George - He use to tell of 1849 when he was "about 5". how he & his father sat on a hill and watched the Jayhawkers struggling by - afraid to help these strange looking people, as word had come ahead of their robbing camps that they came to - before reaching Death Valley... Coyote pups were caught and "tamed" - before they had dogs... Pete Ram, Medicine Man, a fine quiet man - always helped on the pipe-line in late years. Came to Darwin after the old Soda works shut down in Keeler in 1910's. Selas Ness, if he will, can tell you of Pete Ram - Saline Valley and Hunter Ranch people - just a few - as were the Death Valley Indians, where they came from George did not know. But thought originally "over east" - no doubt a branch of the Utes in prehistoric times - Pete Ram was born in Hunter Ranch district - died Sept 30 1940 at Mt. Whitney hospital - Pine Pine

3) of pneumonia. 80 yrs. old. a good kind man. George Gregorio's wife was Marnie - Coso Indian. The probably different branch or clan than George. I knew her from childhood - a dear friend and their daughter Annie was married to Mike Hanson (George Hanson) son Mike in 1900's - they seem to marry out of their clan - thus our Panamint Indians and the Coso Indians could mingle - I never heard Marnie's maiden name, if she had one - or Mary Brunkle's - Charlie's wife. They were from Saline Valley and I know of no connection with South Fork, Kern river tribe with our Darwin Indians. Each seemed a few people unto themselves. The Bellas family were Keeler & Lone Pine - do not remember any connection with ours. She maybe came from Saline Valley also - seems to be a lot of Bellas in the valley & Lone Pine - and their connection with the Coso Hot Springs is probably the same as the Owen Valley Indians. Our Panamint Valley Indians did not go to the Hot Springs - out of their territory - later years maybe - but not when I was little. So they knew about them and their healing power. The Panamint - Coso and Saline Valley Indians were different groups, but did marry into other groups instead of their own. After the young ones went to school and branched out they liked our way of life - probably more & faster than other branches, so few of them in my life time, they acquired our way of dressing and the women could sew & copy our dresses. I've always disliked and refuse to use the word "squaw" - it is degrading - so they used it. I can't. I'm reading your letter as I write so "she goes as she looks". A couple years ago I received a letter from Froquios Institute wanting to know about Coso Hot Springs. About Darwin - from what I hear it is no longer the dear old town it once was - now full of "strays" and certainly

not in a close with our old timers - As for the old school house - last time I saw it, several years ago, it was "leaning towards Fisher's barn" windows broken - door hanging on one hinge - instead of letting the Museum have it several years ago & would have been preserved, "they" thought of it as a "tourist attraction" - so there it sits - As we can just "consider the course" as an old timer use to say - and let them stew in their own juice - I get anxious about Francis Black there alone - and Lucy Rowrance is frustrated in every direction - I ask her why she bothers - but Darwin has always had a fascination for people - old days folks were passing through and stayed the rest of their lives and rest in peace now "across the wash" - my beloved old friends - Second playoff is coming on so adios for this round - hope it answers your questions - do have a fine trip to Saline Valley - weather should be good - years since I have been there - we used to go out to Hunter Ranch years ago when Silas Reynolds & Jens Ness had their winter cow camp there & cabin nestled in the pines - cattle wintered in Cottonwood Cañon and upper end of Death Valley and Ten Mt. I'm getting "winter cramp"! Our Indians did not live at Cole Springs at any time - back in 1890's Dave and Mary Cole & their numerous boys came over from the South Fork & took up 160 acres homestead and ran their horses there - in 1898 Dave froze to death on his wagon half way between old Coso & Cole Springs - the boys found him the next day - 4 horses patiently waiting, hooked to the wagon in the snow storm - Dave had been to Darwin for grub - visited the Baloon & at old Coso, miners wanted him to stay over - but he insisted "Mary will be waiting" is buried on the side of a low hill up from their house - also oldest son Edward, who died of typhoid fever in 1905 - what a bunch of wild ones those boys were. But

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Good, just the same. after Edward died they returned to So.
Fork for good, their horses, our horses & the Indians ran
together & improved the blood of George & Mike's horses. Do
a couple "memories" started that I'll send on later - you
may enjoy them, but just from "Elm"... If you see Elodie
give her my best - and the same to you. Sincerely
Elizabeth L. Necham

P.S. Reading the Bulletin - In some ways
I'm glad the Navy has my old home country
in their bombing range. Keeps vandals
out - but the Hot Springs should be open to
all as it always was, prospectors and our
miners went there to clean their bodies - heal
rheumatism etc, sober up - drink that
"awful" water, cook their beans in the
boiling pot holes, in 5 gal. lard cans, hung
on a stick by the bail, over night in the
bubbling hot water. dried fruit or their
mulligan's - delicious, the water was
purple - violet, reddish or just plain
dirt color, a frame of sties set up with
barley racks cut open & wrapped around as
reculation around the mud holes, a one room
shack open to all who wanted to camp in it.
now restrictions and we are steadily losing
our freedom and rights to use our land.
but we know what would happen if places
were not protected, a different class of
people these days to what our old timers
were. No one must beg and get permission
to go where we want to go. NOTS wasn't so bad
but the new name weapons Center - well, if the Geothermal starts messing

around with Our Coso Hot Springs they will ruin them. If I remember the hot springs could not be "located" - always open free to the public - but in 1910's an outfit from Los Angeles was there bottling the water & selling it for \$5.00 a 5 gallon bottle - then in the '30's a Jew had a resort there - built some houses, leased probably. Last time I went over to the Springs was in 1937. John Learricart was working for the Jew there as maintenance man. we went over to see him & Marie - soon after he came back to the Junction. his old home - made a lovely place of it, flowers & garden - brought the fruit trees back to life - and then his tragic death July 19th 1945 on his way home after visiting his son & getting grub to bring home, he & Marie so happy there - and my child hood friend gone.

"Elm"

"Are you there Charlie". If you survive this you are toughened for anything! Maybe I should read over what I write - still if I did, nothing would be sent! RO "She goes as she looks" as our miners would say after loading a hole, lighting the fuse & taking off to a safe distance.