

July 12, 1964

Darwin. Inyo County California
no other place in the world like it.

In the 1890's through the 1910's Darwin was a happy little old mining town, some of the original buildings still standing, built of red wood with square iron nails. The town was laid out slightly south-west & north east. The Main Street was wide, too turn freight teams & wagons around on. At the lower end on the north west side of Main St. stood a small blacksmith shop, then next was McBlonds old home with the fine locust trees in front & a white picket fence, the trees were brought small from Lone Pine in the early days. This later became the home of Mr and Mrs Charles Long in 1904 - (in 1912 she married Domingo Etcharren). Next to this old place stood a well built store with ^{covered} porch across the front & down the n.e. side to a ware house room, this on the corner of Main & Fulton, at that time owned by Charlie Anthony. Inside was a large room with a big long iron heating stove in the center, sitting in a box of sand which served as a hot coal catcher and well aimed tobacco juice. just in from the side & front, iron barred doors on the right was the grocery counter, then the fine old bar, brass foot rail & handy brass spittoons & in back above the back bar a very large mahogany framed mirror, in the lower right corner was a bullet hole & crack angling across the corner. Across from the grocery counter in the front

corner was the Post Office and next along the wall the dry goods counter, all presided over by Anthony and his elderly clerk "old man Stevens". One day a lady bought a 5th spool of thread and when protesting at the charge of 25th Mr. Stevens said "but lady look at the freight charges"! This was to be a great joke with everyone, freight rates at that time being 5th per pound, hauled in from Keeler by freight teams - averaging from 6 to 12 animal teams! Out of the back door was a short porch which led to the cellar steps - & large store room dug in the "hard pan", heavy iron doors with chain & padlock, kept wandering drunks looking for a cool place to "sleep it off" in - also others who had no business there. These old cellars were cool and ^{about} every house & building at that time had them. Food kept well even in hot weather and the "holes" are still all over town. The town is built on a lime stone formation, called hard pan and seems to be in layers and little if any danger of caving in. Across the wash to the west & south is good soil - but the town sprang up where the first load of material was dropped and anyway who was interested in soil, it was silver they were after and the nearer to the mines, the less walking.

Going on up the street across from the store was a large hotel building with porch that set rather

high - 5 ft. off the street, the other end level with the street, a large cellar under neath the building.

To go back to the store - a small jog off the main room was Anthony's office and a door into his living quarters consisting of 4 bed rooms, one was Stevens the other two for transients or extra help. In the back yard a fence divided along M. Cloud's property and across the yard was a shed for wood & storage.

Now back to the hotel, the dining room was large, the kitchen in back, then the cook's room & next a wash room, with benches for the tin wash-basins and the roller towel. usually a clean one put up each morning, also a square mirror and the end of a cow's tail with a comb hanging in the curl. To the right of the dining room was a long room with cots for transients at "4 bits" (.50") a night, using their own bed rolls or some were made up with cotton sheet blankets & a dark gray blanket and quilt, called "a shepherd's" quilt as they went crazy trying to figure out the long end." In the back of this room with outside door into the back yard was a well furnished room, beautiful mahogany bedstead & marble top dresser and wash stand with large flowered china water pitcher and bowl, soap dish, chamber pot - known as a "thunder

mug" and a slop jar with bail handle. This was for the "elite trade", lady travelers and known as "The Bride Suite".

Between this building was an alley way & then three old store buildings, wooden walks in front. Originally a restaurant and two saloons, with the bars still there and in front of one a large blood stain - which intrigued us kids! There were rooms in back, we used to play in these old buildings, piles of old newspapers, record books and general junk of no value then - but we should have looked to the future! Under the floors of several of the old restaurants we would find silver ware, sugar bowls & cream pitchers and the lovely old silver casters with 6 bottles for catsup, Worcestershire sauce and meat flavorings & etc. We played with them and later they were polished and used on the tables when Mrs. Loughrey converted these three buildings into dining room and living quarters, also rooms to rent. She & her five daughters & this sister lived there & went to school. Mr. Loughrey (Bill) had died in 1907. He drove stage to Keeler, also to Ballarat in the 1900's until his death. They ran Anthony's hotel before he sold to Etcharren & Reynolds and then opened their own restaurant.

Next to these buildings was Frank Barthery's home, part of the DeFience Estate, of which he was

care taker. His wife, Susie & daughter Eugenia - (Jennie) now Mrs. Jean O'Malley. In Jean's room was a beautiful mahogany bed room suite - marble top bureau, wash stand, table, rocking chair all were shipped around the Horn in the 1870's and hauled by freight team from San Pedro by Remy Nadeau for The Defiance Mining & Smelting Co. Barthery was also care-taker of the Darwin Pipe Line - more of that later...

Across the way, still going up Main St. on the corner of Market & Main was a vacant lot and on the back end our School House, (still standing) with the old fashioned hand built desks - Teacher's at back of room, 2 windows on right side - large black boards along left wall & behind Teacher's desk. in back of the school room was a shed for wood and a water bucket with dipper, from which we all drank with no dire affects - we were strong and healthy! The teacher or we children brought a fresh bucket of water each morning from the canvas hose attached to the valve by the horse trough in front of the little house. now Petersen's Garage & buildings are there, and the old locust tree that has with stood drought, fire & neglect.

In front of Barthery's (to go back) were two Mexican cypress trees - (tamarisk) brought in by some early

(6)

resident, no one really knew by whom, there were several around town - these two still stand in spite of fire, drought & neglect, are at least 89 yrs. old. (1964/1875)

Now out Market Street - the road into town now, the original road came in on Fulton by the Store, the telephone poles run out of town on the old road now, north of the school house was a large corral and barn - Dojence estate - (original discovery claim) and across the street a big Blacksmith Shop. (Boland estate) next across the street, First St. was Mr and Mrs Simon Campbell's home and son Wallace, and across from them was Mr & Mrs Bice Loughrey's home. (where this writer lived with them in the early 1900's and went to school, my home was 20 miles south at Millsbaugh on Ballard road at head of Shepherd's Canyon. From 1903-05 they ran the hotel for Anthony and we lived there until she opened her own restaurant in 1906.)

On up Main Street was Charlie Bradford's house, (he wore a heavy over coat the year around) then the Thompson House - still standing; it and the school house all that is left of the original buildings. North of these was the 2 large wooden water tanks - 6 ft. high and wide strap iron hoops encircling them; these also belonged to the Dojence estate. They were half full of sand & trash and water, were open tanks.

Scattered around here and there were several old shacks full of interesting things, and some tents that prospectors lived in - nothing of interest to kids there!

Down Main St. again and across from Anthom's Store was his large barn, big doors so teams and wagons could drive in and in back & on south side large corrals with 6 ft. fence all around. In the barn were stalls & mangers & on north side the hay and grain room. Next to this was an old restaurant under which we found silver service from the tables. (later Etcharren used this for his hay & grain room & corral in back, when he & Reynolds dissolved partnership).

Across from here on N.E. corner was The Black Metal Saloon (closed, but later 1904 opened by Henry Keitman and Martine Etcheverry - she latter did hair-cutting & shaving. (25[¢] hair cut - shave 10[¢]) in back was a three room house where Joe & Maggie Stoppel lived. Next to the saloon was a vacant lot, then a 3 room house, a 2 room house and then Jack Gunn's old saloon building with the beautiful mahogany billiard table, huge round legs with slate top covered with green baize. On up the street on the next corner was the horse trough, the two locust trees, the trough had a cover and was kept

(8)

locked with a pad-lock as was the valve on the pipeline, the valve in a box at ground level and a canvas hose to fill trough, barrels & etc - water was 10[¢] canteen 25[¢] per head of stock. There stood a 2 room house also belonging to Defiance estate - several of our teachers lived here also lived with Campbells later on when this house burned down. Rent was \$^{5.00} a month. All these buildings were built in the late 1870's after the town was located, lumber was redwood & square iron nails.

North of town above the road, on the hill, was the Defiance Smelter at that time still in fair condition, cart molds in which the silver buttons were at the bottom of the big molds of slag, much slag was on the dump. From here a graded road ran around the hill - base of Mt. Ophir, to the other side where the incline shaft was, bunk house & cook house superintendents home, black smith shop - ore cars on the track into the shaft. at that time 90 ft. deep. horse power on the whim. A trail went over the hill, north, to the "Lucky Jim" mine. Harry brothers discovery. (Lone Pine men)

In back of the barns & running on the east edge of town is a wash which we called "Burro Alley". A dumping ground for tin cans and the burros delighted in tramping on them & eating the labels.

Mt. Dyke runs up from here - we named it after a little Chinese girl of that name that the other children in the early days would chase up this hill.

A small brewery was on the bank of this wash in the boom days and some shacks along it and the jail with 2 cells, an iron outside door facing south-west, one high barred window and the place was like an oven in hot weather, it stood in the middle of this small wash & frequent cloud-bursts of water came down, carrying everything before it into the main Darwin wash, but the jail house stood solid until 1920's it was replaced by a more modern one of corrugated iron and if possible hotter than the old one! Where the little wash meets the main one a small smelter stood, also a brick kiln.

Up the main wash - n.w. stood the Lucky Jim Smelter and its large slag dump. in the 1960's it began to fall apart, from weather & folks who needed this and that.

On the flat above the wash is our Cemetery. Many are buried there, quite a few Chinese and now our beloved Old Timers. When we were children the names on the wooden head boards were clear-carved in the wood and the fine wooden fences around them still stood. Later in the 20's these were broken down by "strays" and used for firewood.

No true old timer would desecrate a grave. One fine white marble shaft over the grave of Nancy Williams has stood through the ravages of time and target of kids with 22 rifles in the 1940's - but a stop was put to that! Nancy was murdered in her home, long since gone, by a couple of young fellows whom she had helped and who thought she had money hidden. They cut her throat ~~off~~, she was a kind woman with a helping hand. The miners took up a collection and ordered from San Francisco this marble shaft with the inscription - Nancy Williams, Sept. 13th 1877 - age 45 yrs. it came by boat to San Pedro & then by freight team. The sand in the cement base came from the sand dunes at the mouth of the canyon on the Keeler road. The shaft stands tall & glistens in the sun in the center of our grave yard "across the wash". Some of the old graves are completely obliterated, but the greasewood is a fitting marker. Many of our Indians are buried there & their graves receive loving care by the few who are left. On Decoration Day we always went over with wild flowers for the graves, known & not known and the past 30 years on that day, those with loved ones resting there in peace, the graves are raked & decorated - leaving a truly lovely spot. Pauline & Jim Grobien of Olancha

never fail, nor Ted and Bernice Etcharron and the writer when ever she is "up home".

Water was not piped to all the homes and some hauled theirs in barrels from the main valve by the horse trough, the old pipe went on up to the Tanks, but water from them was not used. Some had barrels at our back doors in the 1910's and kept these full for emergency. He paid ⁷3⁰⁰ a month for water, that was the charge, but not always collectable for obvious reasons. Water has always been a precious thing in Darwin, also never wasted. Bill Loughrey had rigged up a 50 gallon wooden barrel with a tong like iron grip at each end & a long handle to pull it with & the barrel rolled along. The children used to take this over to the horse trough & with the old canvas hose attached to the large valve (faucet) fill the barrel - that is if the valve was turned on in the box, then pound the bung back in and haul it back to the house, 2 of us pulling and one pushing as it rolled and bounced over rocks & holes in the street. Most, in fact all the pipe line then was the original laid in 1875. It was 4 inch iron pipe in 4 ft lengths riveted along one side, one end fitting into another. The line was always breaking some where along the 6 miles from the spring and keep Carthery constantly making repairs, using wooden plugs - strips of canvas & baling wire. With the advent of the

Model T in the 1910's, old inner tubes were used in place of canvas, held in place with baling wire, as a rule cut about 4 inches wide, stretched tightly around the pipe where the hole was, on down through the years most of the pipe was inner tubes! and a supply was kept on hand. The Spring is 6 miles south of town in the Cozo hills, named in early days, Santa Rosa, but commonly called the Darwin or Town Spring.

Many Saturdays we children went out with Barthery in his buckboard & team and while he repaired brakes we roamed the canyon and hills, in the wash was the old iron ~~arastros~~ - arrastras that the Mexicans used, several springs up the canyon wash and willows, up above the canyon with a good view in all directions was the old stone fort & several stone cabins below. we found buttons of the uniforms of the negro soldiers stationed there & in Old Cozo, the later 8 miles from Darwin. Much history was made there. We found old rifles & pistols & other Army equipment, played with them & threw them away, foolish, but how were we to know their value!

The first strike and mining was started in Nov. 1874 - some arguments - thus "The Defiance". The first wooden building erected in Darwin was on Feb. 20 - 1875 for E. G. Reddy's Saloon on Main Street, he was Pat Reddy's brother, the noted lawyer of those

days, had lost an arm just below the shoulder - but nothing deterred him - 'an equal to any man'. Until then tents were scattered every where and in the banks of the small washes or draws, caves were dug under the hard pan and made into living quarters called "dug-outs", all down through the years. Several have remained homes for some of our "old timers" who are no longer with us, but what a good bunch of men most of them were. Drunk or sober, they harmed no one. Now the dugouts are empty, the doors sag on their hinges - and the former occupants rest in lasting peace "across the wash".

On July 3rd 1875 the pipe-line was finished and water reached town, every one celebrating and much liquid refreshment inside and water on the outside! It is said 25,000 gallons reached town each 24 hours, but that is debatable, tho the tanks were large and the demand great at 2 1/2 cents per gallon.

There were several China Gardens at the springs in the Cozo hills where Chinese raised vegetables and sold in the town. One in the lower end of Darwin wash, below where "The Hill" - Anaconda's pumping plant is, now called "The Indian Garden" some fruit trees left, peach and "Pete Sam" cared for it many years until his death in Oct, 1949. The well & pumping machinery was set up in 1920 when The Darwin Lead & Silver

Mines and Development Company began extensive building on the hill at the base of Mt. Ophir above Darwin one mile. This Company had the Defiance, The Lucky Jim on the other side of the mountain 5 miles The Lane and other claims.

Further on down the wash and at the head of Darwin Falls, Jerry Fitzgerald of Lone Pine had built a cabin & planted fruit trees, grapes and vegetable garden in the 1890's and sold the produce in Darwin. One dark night in the summer of 1898 a cloud burst came down the wash, and Jerry must have ran out of his house to get across to high ground, but the water caught him and he was carried over the falls and out 7 miles on Panamint Valley, he was never found until the late 1930's when Bill Reid of Panamint Springs came across a pile of human bones and so at last Jerry was buried in a dug grave. Had he stayed in his cabin he would have been safe as the rushing water cut a bank 12 ft. high exactly even with the edge of his front porch, everything else was carried away. But celery still grows along the little creek between the middle & lower falls from "Jerry Fitz's" garden, now we call it "wild celery". His little cabin sat on the edge of the high bank for many years and then was gone?

Frank Carthery us to take we kids down there

for the day and we explored the country, the wash then was clear of overgrowth and easy to get to the upper fall - 75 ft. high - the middle one 35 ft. and lower 25 ft. and one time Jess McElroy and the writer climbed down the upper falls, a dangerous stunt and harder to come back up - but what is a child's life with out adventure!

In 1907-08 Harry Floyd had a garden at Jerry's old place and in 1912-13 he and his wife, who taught school in Darwin in 1909-10 and married Harry, had a camp and garden in the wash below the falls. In 1915 they left for England, his home land, and were there during the war & until his death in 1947 and she returned to California, died in 1959.

Quite a bit of prospecting went on all down the years after everything was shut down in the '40's and leasing close, a couple of miners doing the work together. Dick Kennedy leased The Minniette for a number of years, shipping the ore out by mule pack-train over the old Modder road on the west side of the Argus range - this was before the Skidoo road was built - after that it was hauled out by freight team to Darwin, on to Keeler and shipped north on "The Slim Princess".

"The Custer" was worked off and on in the 1900's by owner John Thorndike - he too married one of our

fine teachers, Mary Thorndike. later to make their home for years at Mahogany Flats, high in the Panamint Mts. above Wild Rose Canyon where the Kilns are. Occasionally the old Columbia down the wash 2 miles from town, just off the old road to Modoc was worked by leasers and also at "The Jim" and later "The Christmas Gift" just over the hill n. e. of "The Jim". Several claims in Lane Canyon east of town a mile, below what is known as Lane Hill and the narrow steep grade down into the canyon.

In the fall of 1904 Mr & Mrs Charles Long drove in one evening from Randsburg via Shepherd's Canyon with a pair of mules & buck board piled high with their luggage & bed rolls, all covered with canvas tarp & lashed down & on top a wooden crate with a pair of Mexican doves, lovely soft grey "La Paloma" called mourning doves, and on top of the crate a round wire cage with a green parrot, "Polly" who for years entertained us all!

Longs were on their way to Tonapah and Goldfield, then booming, but stayed over several days to "look around" and became interested in some property in Lane Canyon and settled down for the rest of their lives. They bought the McCloud property with the fine locust trees in front, planted 25 or 30 years before, they made the place a lovely

home, garden, grass & trees. In the early 1910's they put in their own pipe-line from "Long's Well" 4 miles south-west of town in the edge of the Cross hills. Their galvanized tanks still stand at the upper end of Main St. & now used for the towns water supply.

A book could be written of Darwin's water problems, floods & the 6 years when no water came into town except what was hauled in by Ted Etcherrin in his tank truck. Eventually the school repaired the line, bought the tanks and we had water, but the pipe-line required constant work done "free gratis" by some of the men and Pete Sam, who never failed to do his share so the Indian Camp could have water also. The women would get together & cook fine meals served at the school house as their donation. A \$^{3.00} charge was made per month, but hard to collect. At the beginning of the '50's Anaconda supplied some pipe and men to lay it. Now Darwin has water if the line does not break!

The streets of Darwin run north west by south east in true direction course. The main street called Main runs south by west and on the 20th day of December 1907 the town site was surveyed from Monument Marker in center of Main and Fulton Streets as follows.

"E.M. Hardwell, being first duly sworn, deposes and says that he is the Surveyor who made the survey of the Townsite of Darwin as laid out on the accompanying map and that said map correctly and accurately sets out & describes said townsite of Darwin as surveyed by him and in accordance with the field notes of said survey."

signed - E.M. Hardwell

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 20th day of December A.D. 1907 - Ben H. Yandell.

"There are (100-18 ft) 10,018 ft. of alleys 12 ft. wide. corner N.E - S.W. All street lengths given regardless of crossings. Alley lengths given, minus street crossings. We hereby accept the streets and alleys of the town of Darwin as per this plat and in accordance with dimensions and directions given above and dedicate the same to Public use.

signed - Supervisors? 1907.

This is from the original and Silas H. Reynolds must have signed as he was Supervisor of the 5th District at that time.

Charlie Anthony's store - block 27 - later Etcherren and Reynolds - was on the north west corner of Main & Fulton Sts. and his big hotel building across Fulton, n.e. block 26. Where Thorsons Out-Post store & cabins are now on n.w. corner of Main & Market Sts. was Frank Cartherij's home - originally a store & saloon building, between that and the hotel were three buildings mostly saloons, wooden walks in front. In 1905 these 3 stores were bought by Roughtreys and converted into a restaurant & rooms for lodging and living quarters.

Across the street (east) where Taylors place is now, (part of which is the old Union Hall built in 1912 -) stood Jack Gunn's old Saloon of early days with the beautiful mahogany billiard table & grey slate marble top covered with green baize. also fine bar & back bar over which hung the usual large framed mirror. The billiard table was still in the building and burned in the 1917 fire.

Where Theo Petersen's Garage is now, was the small house and the horse trough and 2 large locust trees -

In the 1900's the population stayed around 35 to 50. Several families, miners leasing and prospectors in and out all the time and always the annual assessment work to be done. Some properties were patented. Hearst sent a man out each year, John Kelly - a delightful Irishman, to do the assessment work at Modoc. Gata cornered from Anthony's store, east, was the "Black Metal Saloon" opened in 1905 by Henry Heitman, a "hard rock" miner and for a time, a partner, Martin Etcheverry, who did hair cutting, 25[¢] shave 10[¢]. In 1913 he sold to Jack Gunn, owner of "The Minnietta" and who operated a saloon in Independence.

In all the years of Darwin history - its ups and downs, it was never without a store - "General Merchandise" until 1949 when the leasers of the "Out Post" closed the store and opened one on "The Hill" in a Quonset Hut. Domingo Etcharren and Silas Reynolds dissolved partnership in 1908 Domingo retaining the Hotel and half the barn & corral and the cattle & Junction on Junction Flat 16 miles south on the Ballarat Road.

When Skidoo was booming 1905-07 the ranchers in Owens Valley decided if fresh produce could be hauled over there, 80 miles as "the crow flies" they could profit. Silas Reynolds was Supervisor

of that district, the 5th. so a road was surveyed
 and a grade built, starting out of Darwin Wash
 below Lone Flat, up and along the steep upper
 end of the Argus range - now called "Zink Hill".
 then coming back down into the wash below
 Darwin Falls. A well built but narrow road -
 sharp turns & steep pitches, all hand work,
 sweat & black blasting powder, Fresno scrapers
 with mule power. A big dining & cook tent and
 bunk tent was set up on a point of a hill just
 above the wash. It was a wonderful sight to watch
 a 12-16 jerk-line team of mules negotiate those
 turns. This road cut off many miles to the Death
 Valley country from the original one into Panamint
 Valley. which went south from Darwin to "The
 Junction" on Junction Flat, up over a low pass
 in the Argus range to Millsbaugh and down
 Shepherd's Canyon into the southern end of
 Panamint valley & across to Ballarat or at the
 mouth of the canyon left on the old Nadeau road
 to Modoc & Minnietta. Nadeau built his roads
 as "straight as a die" and never turned out for
 any obstacle if he could go through it. For years
 they could be seen along both sides of the Argus
 range & straight across Indian Wells valley from
 his grade built a few miles north of Mt. Spring

Canyon into Indian Hells Valley from a small flat west of Junction Flat, passing a red cinder cone named "Sunset Mt." on the south side of road. on what was known as "The Hamilton Road" named for the engineer who built it, was a fine piece of grade work over & down the Malapi about 4 miles north of the mouth of Mt. Spring Canyon. It was repaired in 1946 or '47 and now used by The Navy Ordnance Test Station to their set-up at The Junction. All this old country is now in the "Bombing Range" and restricted.

"The Junction" acquired its name when just south of it, a mile Nadeau's Modoc road and the old Cozo road crossed & Shepherd's Canyon road forked to the east. People by the name of Green from Lone Pine were established there in 1874 when the roads were put through, serving meals and accommodations for travelers; they planted the locust trees, a garden & fruit trees, bringing the water down from a spring 2 miles, from the base of the Middle Matarango peak in a half inch iron pipe, still in use until 1908 when a 4 inch pipeline was laid from a spring further north to bring water to The Inyo-Lake Gold Mining and Milling company 5 miles south west of the Junction in a canyon just off the original Old Cozo road.

to Shepherd's Canyon. The old house was used down through the years, Domingo Etcharren and John Barricart's home. In 1913 Summers and Butler of Bishop bought the homestead, water and cattle & in 1914 tore the house down and moved the boarding house from Millsbaugh - still used by NOTS. watchman. Summers & Butler bought the buildings at Millsbaugh in 1914.

In the early 1910's zinc was discovered and a mine developed just above the Skidoo road, and the hill was called Zinc Hill and continues to be, tho the proper name is "Skidoo Road". What strangers will do to a country when they come in & miss-call all the original named places! It later became the road to Death Valley and scared the life out of the tourists who drove their cars over it, after Reichbaum built his Toll road from Panamint Valley over "Townsend Pass" - now called Towne's Pass in 1925 into Death Valley and his resort named Stove Pipe Wells but is 5 miles from the real Stove Pipe Well.

In 1904-5 Domingo Etcharren and Jack Keane were prospecting in Death Valley country and camped by Daylight Springs - and while hunting their mules, intending to break camp they found some good looking "float" and so discovered "The Keane Wonder".

It is true a good many rich locations were discovered while the prospectors were hunting their "jacks". "40 years prospecting - 30 spent hunting burros"

The Keane Wonder is on the west slope of The Funeral Mts. at the edge of Death Valley just south of the Day Light Pass road into Nevada to Bullfrog - Rhyolite & Beatty. They sold the claims for \$25,000⁰⁰ - divided equally and Jack took off for a visit to the "old country" Ireland and Etcharrren went into partnership with Silas Reynolds and they bought out Charlie Anthony "lock, stock, & barrel". They dissolved partnership & Domingo returned to his old home at the Junction and in the cattle business, which he kept & the Junction, half of barns & hotel in Darwin while Reynolds kept the store & half the barn and a mortgage.

Anthony also had the stage and mail contracts from Darwin to Ballarat & Darwin to Keeler. In 1906 Frank Howard had the Darwin to Ballarat one and Frank Warthery to Keeler, which he continued with until his death in Feb. 1917 - when George Reynolds took over.

In the summer of 1909 a violent cloud burst hit Shepherd's Canyon, washing the road out beyond repair. Howard made a few trips with

the mail on horse back and then quit, tho his contract ran until July 1st 1910. Al Millsbaugh applied to the Post Office Dept. to have the contract finished or transferred from Millsbaugh P.O. at the head of Shepherd's Canyon to Brown, Kern County on the new railroad being completed from Mojave to Lone Pine for Aqueduct Supplies. This was granted & on January 1st 1910 this writer carried the mail on horseback 40 miles a day, 6 days a week, to Brown on Mon. Wed. Fri. & return Tues. Thurs. & Sat. via Mt. Spring Canyon & across Indian Wells Valley. Brown was a lively "town" with all the Aqueduct workers & the one saloon going full blast 24 hours a day. By Jan 1910 the railroad had reached Hainlee & from there the Automobile Stage met the Combination Train - one coach with a big coal burning heating stove in one end and everyone slept "as is". This writer spent one night in that coach while on her way to George's Creek to pick up her horses, a friendly brake-man "dug up" a couple of blankets & begged sandwiches & apple pie from the cook at the Aqueduct Commissary for me & one other lady who was also marooned until 6 A.M. when the stage arrived which should have met the train at 6 the night before - but had "broke-down". The brake man kept that stove red-hot

as it was cold!

The railroad siding at Brown was named by George Brown, when the Aqueduct crew moved on he opened an "Eating place" and he had a good cook. All along the way were Company Commissary but only the work men could eat in them.

On Feb 16th 1910 Silas Reynolds and Mamie Hession were married and Darwin became her home until July 7th 1918 when everything was destroyed by fire. "Our Mamie" who from 1919 until 1949 was the "old timers" beloved County Recorder. The rooms in back of the store were re-modeled for their living quarters. The bar taken out and store interior cleaned up. In early days the walls & ceilings were lined with cheese cloth and as time passed these ceilings would tear loose and hang around. Later pink or blue building paper was used & still later flowered wall paper covered the ravages of time!

A little increase in the population, several new homes built, we built a big "garage", the first in Darwin - hauling the corrugated iron from our mill at Mills Paugh & my husband repaired cars, sold gas, 35¢ per gallon, siphoned out of the 50 gallon drums by a hose. Our garage was on the corner at the South end of the barn & corral.

The Indians moved their camp out of the wash and built a nice place, comfortable houses at the lower end of town, all kept very clean.

But as so often happened to the old towns, fire hit ours on August 17-1917 at 11 A.M. and 2 full blocks were destroyed from the barns on up the street to the saloon, 2 houses and Jack Gunn's old saloon where it stopped at the Union Hall. which we saved, being built of corrugated iron as was our garage. There happened to be water coming in that day & quite a few men in town and they formed a bucket brigade and saved the building on the other side of the street. When a fire starts in Darwin there is no getting inside to save anything. one just tries to save the other buildings or has to stand and watch everything go up in flames and if inside, lucky to get out in time.

The freight team had unloaded eleven drums of gas in front of our garage the day before, but failed to pick up the empties, so in the heat of the fire these empties blew up with sheets of flame. A strange man, Vic Belin & I rolled the full drums down the street - "if the empties blow up what will the full ones do". I did not know as much about gasoline then - but it was "carefully explained" to me later after the fire and excitement.

had died down.

Murray Lohay & John Niski had the "Black Metal" Saloon then and lost everything, later went over to Skidoo & got a building & hauled it over and re-built their place. The County was dry, but we had "local option". This building later became the Darwin Store after the 1918 fire when Ronnie Lee opened a general store - he had a butcher shop in our old school building. In 1924 he sold to Corbett Bland - whose brother Wayne & Lockran held up the Lone Pine bank in 1927 and the big man hunt that followed! In 1928 Bland sold to Mr & Mrs Oliver L. Thorson - "Bob".

In 1938 they bought "The Out Post" from Charlie King and moved the stock into what had been the restaurant, at various times they leased the store to others.

The old store burned down one Sunday morning in 1945 and as always nothing was saved. Prince Albert "Jucker" "Juck" had his "Gin Mill" in it and was lucky to get out with a cigar box full of cash.

The quiet of a peaceful Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock July 7 - 1918 was shattered with a loud explosion and then frantic screaming, I ran outside & saw smoke pouring out of Etcharren's home next to the store and when I got up there the interior was a mass of flames & impossible to get inside. Mr & Mrs Etcharren were sitting on their front porch when

a sheet of flame shot out of the door and across her face, singeing her hair & eyebrows, her first thought was of Theodore, 6 years old, that he was in the house but he was playing out by the barn with his wagon. They lost everything but the clothes on their backs, Mattie had kicked off her shoes & they burned on the porch. Domingo had a beautiful watch, the case made of polished gold & quartz with large nuggets on the chain of gold from his discovery of "The Keame Wonder". Later we sifted the ashes where their bedroom, recently built, had been and found the diamond from her ring - but no melted gold - tho some one did!

Mamie was standing in her bedroom door which opened into a little yard. I ran in saying "lets get your things out, the store will go next yet" and gathered all I could carry in her bed spread and took it down to my house while she got the Post Office books, stamps & cash out. Frank Willis of Independence was clerking in the store, not many men were in town that day & no water pressure, he & a few were getting the cash register, sales books & some merchandise out & across the street Mamie had been baking bread, we found the loaves later in the oven where the stove had fallen through the ^{floor} store. I looked in at my son asleep in his crib -

hollered over to Amy Etcheverry who was hosing
 down a tent, to turn off the water, we needed it
 up the street & to keep an eye on Dick and my
 house for stray sparks & hurried back to Marnie's
 by then it was burning fiercely and what the men
 & women had saved of her furniture, they lined
 up in the middle of the street where it burned
 when the fire leaped across the street to the hotel -
 and all the buildings in that block burned, Doughreys
 & Cartherys. Frank had died in Feb. & his wife 2 weeks
 later. in March their daughter Jennie and Martin
 O'Malley were married & were living in their own home
 at the upper end of town and Buddabacks were living
 in her old home. After it was all over, at 5 o'clock we
 had a thunder & lightning storm & hard rain. Two
 Chinese were running Domingos hotel & had \$700⁰⁰
 in a tomatoe can hid in the cellar, it burned and
 for a week the canned food in the cellar kept blowing
 up. A freight truck going to "The Jim" - which was
 working - saw the smoke when he came over the summit
 & when he got to the Jim - hollered "Darwin is on fire".
 Al Belin & my husband & a couple other men who
 were on top, jumped in their car, but by the time
 they got to town every thing was gone. The few groceries
 that was saved we put in our garage & that for a
 few days was the store until Bonnie Lee could move

into Murray Olaj's building and so establish a new Darwin Store.

This fire had started in the attic where gas fumes had built up from a new gas lighting plant Etcharren's had put in earlier that spring and neglected to open the vents at each end of the attic. They received some insurance and built a fine new home - which is now in Lone Pine. Ted moving it there in the late '50's

The 1917 fire had started in the three room house where our son was born 1916 - which was next door to The Black Metal Saloon which Jack Gunn was running. George Reynolds & his wife were living in the 3 room house which Charlie Long owned, who had a chicken ranch across the wash on his pipe line about where the air port run way is now. Mrs Reynolds was packed up to leave & had filled the kitchen stove with letters & papers, lit it and went across the street to Buddabaek's (Bartheri's house) George was asleep on the bed in the front room which had no outside door, only a window in front. It was a hot day and nothing could be done to save that side of the street & all efforts being made to keep the fire there. As we stood watching she suddenly said "George is in the house" - we called Henry Heitman & Buddabaek & ran over to the front window, the

men trying to pull George off the bed and he trying to save his bottle at the head of the bed under the mattress where he had "hidden" it - he lost and they got him out, stomach down - I can still see his bare pink bottom hanging out the window as the boys tried to get a pair of overalls on his kicking legs as he continued to hang onto the foot of the iron bedstead and get that bottle! They too lost everything, even her suit cases & her clothes setting just inside the side door.

These were the two most disastrous fires, but before and since we have had others. In 1918 Theo Petersen had built a nice rooming house in back of his property with bath room & in the cement basement a big hot water heater, kerosene type, so in 1922 this boiler blew up and the rooming house burned down. Alex ^{Ruona} Ruona's nice house burned down Nov 8th 1943. This was next door to Petersen's buildings. Indian George Gregory's home burned early one evening June 13th 1944 nothing saved, a neighbor managed to get in and pull George out, unhurt, but badly shocked. The old Campbell home burned in 1936. It stood on the corner of Market & First Sts, north of town on the Keeler road. It had been their home since the 1880's. Wallace grew up in it. His father disappeared when coming home from his claim, May 17th 1924 and in spite of wide and extensive search by many men, no trace of him

has ever been found. Another mystery of our desert.

The 2 original buildings of the early days are still standing, the Thompson house, once the Thompson Estate, at the upper end of Main Street and on Market St. the old school house, across from the Out Post. the school house was used from the '80's: Wallace, Jennie, the Loughrey girls, Jess McElroy and I learned our "reading, writing and arithmetic" at the hand built desks. In 1917 the new school house was built above town.

That is now the Out Post building was built by Al Ross in the early '20's & in 1929 purchased by Charlie King, enlarged into a 'Cafe', cabins built and named the Out Post. This was when all Death Valley travel went through Darwin and down the old Skidoo Road. In 1938 they sold to Thorsons, who moved their stock & Post Office from the old store into the 'Cafe'. Tourist travel slackened off as the new Death Valley had been built & dedicated in Oct. 1937. This road forks from the Darwin road 6 miles north of town.

The Darwin Lead and Silver Mines and Development Company came into being in 1915-16 and re-opened The Lucky Jim, later The Defiance and The Lane, three of the original locations of 1874. and in 1920 extensive building was done above Darwin.

on "The Hill" at the base of Mt. Ophir. a tunnel run through to tap the Defiance incline shaft on the other side. All closed down in the late '20's

In 1940 Signal Gas & Oil Company bought the "old Darwin Mines". Arthur J. Heck and Shirley D. Parker, hired a large crew, opened the Boarding House and Bunk House and Darwin was "picking up".

July 16th 1945 they sold to Anaconda at the "reported price of one million dollars, embracing 20 claims & nearly 1000 acres of mineralized ground" and once again the old town boomed, a couple of short shut-downs and in 1955 "the Pin" was pulled again, leaving a few for maintainance and in 1964 it is still closed down.

In all the 75 years of Darwin's ups and downs it was never without a store until 1949 when the people who were leasing it moved all their stock up on The Hill into a Quonset Hut and that was really the beginning of the end of the dear old town - the few left drive to Lone Pine for groceries & gas to get back home & enough gas to take them to town on the next trip! But it is not yet a "Ghost Town" and what is left is well guarded. So vandals beware!

The last big fire occurred Christmas Eve 1945 when Theo Petersen's buildings burned down, his

Gaze and "Gin Mill" which Taylors were leasing John and Cora were in Los Angeles at the time. The Garage and Service Station, all Tools and equipment and more than 40 years of hard work on his part was completely destroyed in half an hour, nothing saved of stock or furnishings. Arson was suspected, but never proven. Once again his little cabin stood unharmed as it had through previous fires.

And last but not least. In 1918 Mr and Mrs William Reid & their little daughter Florence came to "The Falls" mine, 5 miles north west of town. In the 20 odd years they were there they never failed to give a hand to help in any way they could, gave work to our men and women, traded at the store and Darwin folks were many times in need of help.

In 1937 when they built their resort from the ground up at Panamint Springs, bringing the water at first from Whippoorwill Springs, later a 4 inch pipe-line from the lower Darwin Falls; their friendliness and hospitality was given to all.

It was always a pleasure to drive down to Reid's and spend a few hours visiting. A deep feeling of loss was ours when Bill died suddenly

in January 1945 and three months later in April early Easter morning the main building, restaurant and Service Station burned to the ground, the Motel rooms were saved. The women in Darwin rallied around with pots and pans, dishes and silver ware and Mrs Reid was back in business and soon a new concrete block building rose. Panamint Springs is an oasis in the desert. And then in 1955 she sold out and Panamint Springs will never be the same again with out Agnes Reid.

After Anaconda came our little town ceased to be the same, strangers came and our old timers, one by one, some tragically, some quietly in their sleep, taking the long trail of no return as their remaining friends carried them "across the wash" and laid them to rest in lasting peace.

Then many of us moved away, bidding the old town farewell, but the memories of it and of beloved friends from child hood days will always be with this "old timer"

Travis.

Elizabeth L. Meckam.

July 12th 1964.

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