

Peter Harmon.

Along the base of the Argus Range on west side of Panamint Valley runs Nadeau's old road - straight, as were all his roads, from Slate Range to the foot of the steep rise up to Modoc. The Minnetta came later - below Modoc - a few miles north of the mouth of Shepherd's Canyon is a box canyon, an acre or so - called Bendire - tho no one called it that - just a box canyon. Shepherds is the only through canyon except "Water" Canyon - south of Shepherds but impassable, except on horse back - In April⁶⁴ 1867. Lt. Charles R. Bendire (Bendere) left Independence on a scouting expedition with 25 men of Co D. 1st U.S. Cal. Cavalry & 4 civilian guides and packers. from Owens Lake they crossed the big flat - later in 1876 to be named Centennial Flat - to Crystal Springs. first called Raney - to old Coso & on the 9th camped at Granite Springs near Coso Mill - then on to Cole Springs - but not called that until the Cole family from So. Fork took up a homestead in 1890's about and rode horses, then they struck out south-easterly 20 miles & across Junction Flat, not named until 1876 - and probably to Margaret Ann Spring - now La Motte. and wound their way down the rock strewn canyon (Water) to Panamint Valley, giving the Canyon the name Bendire in honor of the Lt. but later in the early 1870's when some unknown map maker, cartographer, moved Bendire Canyon north of Shepherds Canyon and is on the map there instead of Water Canyon. "Dr. Bendire Report is a rare one but is also one of the very earliest authoritative accounts through the Coso Area" The Lyle-Wheeler parties came later. & got back to Pete Harmon in 1902-03 this mild mannered blond Dutchman came prospecting and located claims in Bendire Canyon and worked them by himself - the Mts. rises sharply about

2). 4 miles straight up to the ridge - we called it "saddle"
narrow - one of our shafts was there - 100' deep - called
the "K.P.C." - our grade went up from Camp to it and
now the Navy Weapons Center uses the road and has
completely filled the shaft - and has extended the road
over it, only the dump left - and goes on up the steep
side to a sort of Look Out - what ever they are doing at
my old home - one would never know a shaft was ever
there - looking down from this "saddle" to Panamint Valley
to the east and down to Camp (Millsbaugh) to the west -
extending on to the south east is a gentle sloping flat -
several miles in extent - Yucca trees, sage brush and bunch
grass - "Recompence Flat" in the center an incline shaft
90' deep was run in the 1890's named "The Recompence"
thru the flats name. part of the time our horses ran there.
Pete would climb up this steep side of Argus range, directly
above his camp - he began coming every day - insisting
he had a letter - but none ever came, my mother was
Post Master - each time his clothes were more ragged
& he became more queer - we were building our boarding
house at the time and using a big tent - floored and
walled half way up - "Grandpa" Tapman was cooking &
this day he was off with the 4 mule team after wood-
penon - across Junction Flat. Pete arrived, rambling
over & over "the Sun & the Moon and the stars" kept
telling him this important letter was there and Mrs.
Howzer would not give it to him - several of the men
were working in the tunnel & Lou Smith working at
the boarding house, I was playing with my St. Bernard

3) dog, "Queen" - Mama was assaying and went out to tell Pete there was no letter for him - he looked hungry so she came over to the cook tent to fix him some lunch - he followed her in & began dragging her out and at the screen door Queen jumped on him and broke his hold, he reached for the ax on the wood pile - I ran over to the assay office to get Millsbaugh - the furnace made a roaring noise & as he couldn't hear me calling - Queen knocked Pete down and he jumped up and ran down & hid behind the corral, I went up to the big rock on the hill above camp from where I could watch him, he stayed there all afternoon - when the men came off shift they went down & talked to him & brought him up to camp, very peaceful and quiet - ate supper & it was decided to take him to Ballarat to the jail & notify the Sheriff - John Collins - which would take a letter 2-3 days to reach Independence and 2 or 3 days for him to ride to Ballarat and bring him back on the stage from Ballarat to Millsbaugh to Darwin - then to Keeler & Pine Pine & Independence. At the mouth of Shepherd's Canyon they - Al Millsbaugh - Lou Smith and Pete between them in the buggy - stopped to water the horses - midnight & pitch black. They let Pete out of the buggy - he took off in the dark for his camp - but they caught up with him and finally arrived at Ballarat. He eventually was sent to Napa - allowed to work in the kitchen and escaped - did not return ^{home} & later we heard he had died. I sort of go around Robin Hood's Barn in explaining - but want to give the "lay of the land" - so when you do go over

4) To my beloved old home you can see how it was - not
the brick grown spot it is now - only our boiler left &
the well down by the flat rock below our boardinghouse
it always stayed at the same level, no matter how
many head of stock watered from the half wooden oak
barrel, pumped by hand, a pitcher pump - dug on a bet
by a couple of our miners in 1900 - that they would
strike water at 25 ft. so they dug by hand evening after
supper - it has never gone dry - still there in 1971 when
I was at "Camp" last. "Elm"