

DARWIN SCHOOLHOUSE

The old school house in Darwin was built in 1876-77 of redwood and square nails as were all the original buildings- for a restaurant and after the boom ended and the town died down, stood empty - the Defiance Corral was next to it on north side and the huge barn - these stood until in the 1920's and finally torn down - in 1896. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Loughrey were married and moved in for their home - the front room all purpose and the kitchen in rear and onto it was a shed for wood etc. They lived in it until 1899 when the school burned down - the first one- and so it was selected to be our school and Loughreys moved up the road to the last house going out of town. The desks were well built - about 20 if I remember- Ida Cunningham came up to teach in 1900-01 met Ray Carrothers and they were married 1901 and she came back to teach in 1901-02. My first year was with her then and it continued to be our school until 1914-15 when Ted Cook came out and built the "fine" one on the hill above town and which was torn down last year by a bunch of foolish people. The old school survived the bad fire when 2 blocks of original buildings on the south east side burned down Aug. 17, 1917 (see my story of Darwin) and it also survived the second fire July 7, 1918 2 blocks on the other side of the street and so all the original buildings of early days were gone - only our school house and the old Thompson house up the street by the water tanks are left. After the second fire it was used as a butcher shop by Lonnie Lee until he bought and moved into the building brought from Skidoo after the first fire and which became a store on the site of the Black Metal Saloon. Lee bought it 1918 and opened a General Merchandise Store - in 1923 sold to Bland who sold to Thorsons in 1928 and so the old school was used as a store house and later families lived in it. At the time of the 1917 fire John Niskey and Murray Clay had a Store in the Black Metal Saloon - County was dry and they sold soft drinks - shirts, overalls etc. for

2. Darwin Schoolhouse

for miners and card tables - then when it burned and they lost every thing - they got a building at Skidoo and hauled it over. If you have been on the Skidoo road (Zinc road) you can picture hauling it up the grade - turns and dips! So they put it together on the corner where the Black Metal was - restocked it and John left and shortly after Lee took it over and it was the Darwin Store until when '38 Thorsons bought The Out Post from King and moved the store and Post Office to it - In the '40's Tucker had it for a "Gin Mill" and on the morning of Aug. 1945 it burned down. He saved the music box - but when our buildings burned we just watched - could not get inside to save anything. It is amazing "The Black House" has stood all these years and even though the present Darwin Citizens protest it's being taken away from them! They do nothing to protect it. So I hope the Jenkins and Thorsons found you home this week when they stop by in Independence.

Mrs. Elizabeth L. Mecham

November 23, 1971

Bayards, Calif.