

May 18, 1979

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

Dear Mrs. Mecham:

Thank you for the informative notes and the return of the maps. They will play a vital role in our forthcoming projects. I will send you some new maps which you may keep.

One of the Darwin Indians came in the other day with his sister and another lady. We had a long talk about Darwin and the Shoshones of the area. Next week I will visit Panamint Valley to explore the Minnietta and Modoc mines and other sites.

We are installing a display on Darwin and the Cosos. Thus far we have an assayer's scale, wagon wrench, photo and one unidentified object in the exhibit. Ultimately we hope to have an entire shelf of Darwin and Coso memorabilia.

Do you recall anyone in your childhood mentioning a Chief Manassee, an Indian headman in the Coso Range, who lived in the 1860s and 1870s? Do you recall the name Oliver Roberts, an early resident of Darwin (1876 to ca.1880)? Do you recall Ned and Pat Reddy? Was Mamie Joaquin, a basketmaker, born in Death Valley? Was Sarah Hunter born in Saline Valley?

Mrs. Elizabeth Mecham
Page 2
May 18, 1979

The subject of the Shoshone practice of cremating the dead came up recently. Do you recall the ceremonies surrounding this custom such as the use of the poles to support the dead and recovery of the ashes a year later? Do you remember anything about Louisiana Butte or Mesa as a place in Shoshone tradition?

In previous letters you spoke of "our Indians" not venturing to Coso Hot Springs. I realize the Panamint Indians may not have visited Coso Hot Springs, but is this also true of the Coso Shoshone?

In a previous letter you referred to an Indian sundial made out of sticks. Could you elaborate on this?

Recently a visitor asked about a photographer named Lloyd or Floyd who tried farming in the Darwin area around 1913. Does the name ring a bell?

I hope I haven't thrown too many questions at you, but "she goes as she looks," and if I further pored over this confusing letter, it probably wouldn't go.

Tomorrow the 40ers are coming to visit the Museum: they will make stops at Commander's House and Edwards House as well. Over Memorial weekend the former pioneer residents and their descendants will visit Independence including the Museum as part of their reunion. I wish you could be here. Perhaps you can make it up home this year and also visit Owens Valley.

I hope all is well with you.

Sincerely,

Charles N. Irwin
Director

CNI:mb