



## As Told by the Pioneers

OSCAR FRANCIS TOWNSEND,<sup>1</sup> YUMA

(Letter, 1919)

Yours at hand, and I regret more than I can express that circumstances over which I have not complete control will make impossible for me to meet with you this year. I had hoped to do so, and will be with you in spirit if not in person. There is but few of us left that "hit" Arizona as far back as 1868. It seems but a few days since I rode into Tucson on August 4th, 1868, at 10 o'clock A.M. on the "Quarter Deck" of a Mustang, the end of 90 miles from the evening before, having dodged two bands of Apaches and heard the whizz of arrows coming through the Sienega,<sup>2</sup> near where Benson is now. And I was not stopping to ask any questions. So believe me the little old pile of mud, now the City of Tucson, looked very good to me after a few hours rest in the brush near the Santa Cruz. I, of course, drifted up town to Charley Brown's Saloon<sup>3</sup> that being the headquarters of the Army and "Navy on the Santa Cruz" where the roof was the limit for any game known and lots of players. And if they didn't have a man for breakfast 3

<sup>1</sup> Oscar Francis Townsend, born October 20, 1846, Reading, New York. Came to Arizona 1868. Was express agent at Yuma when he joined Arizona Pioneers in 1886. In 1919 his letter head reads "Notary Public, C. and M. E., Real Estate, Employment Agent." The original of this letter is in the library of the Arizona Pioneers Historical Society.

<sup>2</sup> Cienega.

<sup>3</sup> Congress Hall Saloon on corner of Congress and Meyer Streets.

times a week—the women was too tough—everybody was mad and some was ready, just for pastime, to fight a rattlesnake and even give the snake the first bite. I put in a couple of weeks there until it got too tame. Then “hit the trail” for Yuma and say, she was some town; had Tucson knocked silly. Well the gang flung me into the pot and we cleaned her up—took us about 3 years but we “got there.” Well, Charley, “give my love to all the old Frontier Desert Rats” and I hope to see you all a little later.

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JAMES COYLE,<sup>1</sup> GILA BEND

(Letter)

The camels<sup>2</sup> was brought here from Nevada by Hijoly<sup>3</sup> who was sent out with them by they Turkish government dont remmember when they come here When Bill Johns comes to town will find out and let you know there is none livin now they freighters and cow boys killed sum Dan Noonan Sold 9 to Sells bros circus a man down the river killed and jerked the meat and sold it at gun sight<sup>4</sup> for jerked beef when that mine was workin they ware a failur the sharp sand used to cut there feet Hijoly is dead he was sent out here on contract this goverment was to pay him and send him home when he wanted to but he never wanted he told me all about the history of they camels but I forgot it when I see Bill Johns will find out he never forgets any thing.

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<sup>1</sup> James Coyle, formerly peace officer at Tombstone and guard of Territorial Prison at Yuma, located at Gila Bend in the early nineties and there engaged in many activities such as hotel keeper, saloon keeper, justice of the peace, and mining.

<sup>2</sup> The camels were some remaining from the herd purchased by the U. S. Government in 1856 for experimental purposes in the Southwest.

<sup>3</sup> Hijoly was the English version of “Hadji Ali” who came over from Egypt with the first shipment of camels in order to see that they got proper care.

<sup>4</sup> “Gun sight” was the Gunsight Mine in Pima county.

## MRS. MORRIS GOLDWATER, PRESCOTT

(Reminiscences as told to Mrs. Geo. Kitt, April 22, 1932)

Right after the Civil War my father, David W. Shivers, picked up his family of a wife and four daughters and started for Oregon. It was in the days of the Border War Ruffians in Missouri and there was much talk of the new West. As he reached the parting of the ways—one leading to Oregon and one through Colorado and New Mexico south—he decided to come south to Prescott, Arizona, which had just been opened up through the gold excitement. Father, however, was not a miner but a farmer and expected to make his living that way. We were in Prescott only a short time before moving to Wickenburg, which was the mill camp for the rich Vulture mine, and there father went to farming. At the end of about two years we moved to California but a year there was enough and we returned to Arizona.

Travel was by wagon and hard and on the way back my brother was born. Mother seemed to get along fine on the way but when we got to La Paz and stopped to rest the change from the outdoor air to a stuffy adobe seemed to impair her health and she was very ill. When she was able to be moved we came on to Wickenburg. We did not remain there long, however, before we moved up to the Little Chino valley. Father had taken up a farm there near several large springs. When everything was ready he came back for the family, bringing an escort of soldiers, an ambulance, and a wagon to pack us up.

Going through Hell Canyon, which is deep and narrow at one point, with the road winding up the center, the soldiers were spread out and guarded us from both sides. We saw no Indians while in this narrow pass but when we had reached the open a great war cry and shouts of derision went up behind us from Indians who had lain in waiting for us but had been afraid to attack us on account of the troops.

It was while we were in the Little Chino valley that at the age of sixteen I married my first husband, John Lloyd Fisher. Mr. Fisher had a few years before come to Prescott

from San Francisco. At Los Angeles he had bought a store of tobacco, cigarettes, etc., and a wagon and started out. When he got to Prescott he had everything he possessed stolen and had to find work immediately to keep from starving. He found employment in a restaurant and sent back word to his people that he was working in a "feed house." He never dared tell them the truth. Later he found more agreeable work.

About 1878 we took a trip to San Francisco. On the way back we took a steamer to San Pedro, stayed in Los Angeles until we thought we just had time to catch the boat which ascends the Colorado at Yuma, crossed the desert and finally reached Yuma. It was very hot there and the little adobe hotel with its nearly naked Indian men chambermaids and poor food offered little comfort. When the boat was sighted there was great preparation and excitement. But the Colorado was low and it was two days after that boat was sighted before it reached Yuma. It took us seven days to get from Yuma to La Paz. Only twenty-four hours of that time were we traveling, the rest of the time we were getting on and off sandbars. I do not know that I minded it much as I was the only woman. The purser did everything he could for me, and the other passengers were most courteous.

