

Aug 28, 1904 TRAVELERS' FRIEND GONE L. A. Times

# DEATH ROBS DESERT OF HUMAN LANDMARK.

**D**EATH has closed the career of Freeman S. Raymond, one of the best-known men of the deserts of California, at the end of four score years. When a strike of apoplexy carried him away last Saturday, hundreds of men lost a friend who had succored them in times of distress.

For thirty-six years Raymond had been a part of the desert in the vicinity of Mojave. In that time he made not one enemy, but endeared himself to all the men who knew no law but the guns they carried.

He was the lord and master of Freeman, Cal.—better known to the old prospectors as Coyote Holes. He was its founder, postmaster and head of the sole family which comprised it.

In him travelers found one of the most interesting characters they had ever met. He knew the desert like a book. He felt he could not live away from it. He had that inborn hospitality which forbade him to turn the stranger from his door. His vast fund of tales of the West, when it was truly "wild and woolly," never failed to be entertaining.

Death came to him like a flash of lightning. He was at work when he was stricken, with apoplexy. The body was brought here Thursday and funeral services were held. Interment was in Inglewood Cemetery.

He was married fifteen years ago and his widow has come to live with her niece, Mrs. George Retzer of No. 1254 Ionia street.

## WATCHMAKING TOO TEDIOUS.

Raymond was born in Boston in 1829. His father was a watchmaker and taught him the trade. But he was not born for city life. Putting together small wheels and pinions was too tedious for him. He longed for the freedom of the country.

At the age of 20 he started out for the West, of which he was hearing such wonderful things. That was in '49 and the discovery of gold in California was acting like a magnet.

After a long and stormy voyage in a small ship around the Horn, he landed in San Francisco. For many years he prospected, with the northern city as his headquarters. Twenty-two years' search after the elusive golden metal yielded him little more than a bare living, and he drifted into the Mojave district, where he became a stage driver. In those times it was a perilous occupation, with highwaymen lurking in the hills to rob the stage of the gold it carried.

## VALLEY OF BEAUTY.

Fifty miles north of Mojave is a little valley. Its beauty appealed to Raymond and he took up a claim of



Freeman S. Raymond,  
popular desert character, whose life  
ended suddenly.

160 acres from the government. The place had been called Coyote Holes by wayfarers because coyotes visited the springs there in droves to quench their thirst. In 1890 the government established a postoffice there and designated the station Freeman—Raymond's first name. He was made postmaster and held the position until his death. He also conducted a stage station, and drivers were always glad to come within sight of the place.

The Los Angeles Aqueduct cuts directly through the little garden near his house, and Coyote Holes has attained some little fame since this work was begun.

Raymond's house was damaged and he narrowly escaped death eight years ago, when a cloudburst came sweeping down through Walker's Pass. With a roar the flood carried away half of the building. He was driving a team near by and was swept away with the animals. He grabbed a plank and floated ten miles. At last the waters spread out on the desert and he was able to touch bottom. He was severely injured and did not recover entirely for a year.

He will be missed for years to come by the travelers who were accustomed to stop at his house in passing over the desert.