

Darwin

Darwin was named after Dr. Darwin French who named a nearby wash after himself when he was in the area in the 1860s looking for the "lost" Gunsight Lode. Darwin was a supply center for local mines in the early 1870s until a rich silver strike was discovered in 1874 transforming Darwin into a boomtown. The town almost immediately gained a reputation for violence, with 124 graves in the cemetery, 122 by knife or gun! By 1877 the town had two smelters, 200 frame houses and a population of around 700. The best saloon in town, the Centennial, featured cut-glass chandeliers and a fancy billiard table. One of the town's most prominent citizens was Victor Beaudry, who was one of the prime movers in Cerro Gordo.

The town started to decline in 1878 when Bodie and other camps to the north took off. Mining in Darwin continued intermittently until the 1970s, giving the town a longer lease on life than most mining towns in Inyo. There are still a handful of old homes and commercial buildings left but there are no longer any operating businesses.

