



Of the dozens of ghost towns in the Death Valley National Park, Panamint City is one of the best known. A rootin', tootin' place in its heyday of the 1870s, it was said to have been first started by bad guys on the lam from the law from all parts of the West.

Someone claimed to have found silver in nearby Surprise Canyon, and legend has it that the bad guys put down their guns and took up shovels. In 1874, there were 2,000 people in the town, and a certain percentage of them had their mug shots on post office walls all over the West. What little silver there was ran out within a year, the miners and bad guys departed. A year later, a flash flood wiped out most of the town, and it was abandoned. Today there are some broken-down wooden and tin buildings, woodsheds and outhouses, with the lonesome scene centered by the brick chimney of the silver smelter.

For more information about Panamint City and other ghost towns, such as Rhyolite, Chloride City, Ballarat, Skidoo and others in Death Valley National Park, call 760-786-2331, or online go to www.nps.gov