Badwater Basin, Death Valley

“here the thirsty drunk and died.”

Hiromitsu Suetake, Prof. James Beccera, LA
**Ancient Seas:**

Badwater Basin contains the lowest point in the North America, at 282 feet below sea level. Geologists say the oldest rocks here, from at least 1.7 billion to 500 million years ago, indicate that this area was once a warm, shallow sea. The land began to form and sea slowly receded by uplift movement caused by tectonic plates which also formed Rocky Mountain and the Sierra Nevada. Around 3 million years ago, the faults movement shifted to “pulling apart” which resulted the valley floor to be subsided along the Black Mountain resulting such dynamic landscapes. Here the highest recorded temperature 134 F is established on 10 July, 1913 in Greenland Ranch, Death Valley.

"I will go to hell with you, but not through Death Valley!!"

The first recorded sight of Death Valley belonged to the party of explorers led by John C. Fremont and his guide, Kit Carson, on April 27, 1844. Since then, some impatient Forty Niners attempted to go through the forbidden sink but none was successful until the Bennett-Arcane party who became the first Anglo-Americans to cross Death Valley. Until the opening of the Eichaum toll road from Lone Pine to Stovepipe Wells in 1927, Death Valley was practically unexplored and untraveled due to an evil reputation from suffering of deserters.
Land of Thousand Stories:

This place is full of human stories featuring people who seek opportunities to people who had no choice but to move out there. Before the Anglo-Americans, there was the Timbisha Shoshone Indians who lived there for centuries. The Indians, who saw Death Valley first, called it “Tomesha” which means Ground Fire. “They warned adventures, explorers, and trappers that it was a vast sunken region, intolerant of life” (Caruthers 20). Tales of rowdy miners who seek gold are enticing. William Caruthers wrote in his book, “Loafing Along Death Valley Trails” that, “Certainly those found in Death Valley county reflected in their persons and in their character the niggardly land and the struggle for survival upon it. They were treacherous as its terrain. Cruel as its cactus. Tenacious as its stunned life.” (Caruthers).