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TIMELINES

Family feud proved deadly at old Glenn Ranch

TERRY CARTER

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Richard Dawson and subsequent emcees might have had fun with the idea, but family feuds can be quite serious. I'd venture a guess that many families, mine included, have the cranky relation who won't talk to anybody else. From there, things can escalate to the level of tragedy.

Early Cucamonga settlers witnessed two fatal "domestic disputes." In one, legendary local innkeeper "Uncle Billy" Rubottom killed his abusive son-in-law. Rubottom's warnings to the wife-beater were ignored, so Uncle Billy fetched his daughter back home. The husband armed himself, came after her, and ignored Rubottom's warning not to come any closer. That was the abuser's last mistake; Uncle Billy shot him and the sheriff was satisfied that it was self-defense.

The other deadly quarrel was set on Glenn Ranch, up on Lytle Creek.

Lytle Creek was named for Capt. Andrew Lytle, prominent member of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, often called Mormons but usually called "Saints" back in the 1800s. Lytle first saw the Inland Empire as a member of the Mormon Battalion, an infantry unit raised in Utah for Mexican War duty. The battalion arrived in January 1847.

Contrary to some local versions of the tale, Lytle was not the commander of the Mormon Battalion. That post went to Brevet (Acting) Lt. Col. Phillip St. George Cooke. Lytle was the senior company commander, which made him second in command of the battalion.

Lytle liked the Inland Empire and talked Brigham Young into founding a colony at San Bernardino in 1851. That was when Lytle named the creek in question. Though he left the area almost immediately, the name stuck.

The Glenn family arrived in 1865. They had left Texas in 1860 for the Texas colony of El Monte. The year 1860 ended in the "secession winter," and many people north and south could see the Civil War coming before that. California became popular as a haven from

violence. The state would support the Union cause with 18,000 troops, but no battles would be fought within its borders. When war ended in 1865, California briefly lost population as 10,000 pacifists returned home.

The Glenn family remained, moving from El Monte to Lytle Creek. The family patriarch was Silas Glenn. His wife's first name, Mourning, suggests that she was born after her father's death. Silas died in 1878 and Mourning Glenn gradually turned things over to her son-in-law, James Applewhite.

The Applewhites and their son Oliver made a huge success of Glenn Ranch, which they turned into a resort. Trout fishing, horseback riding, hiking and bathing in warm mineral water were among the attractions.

Sadly, the lead taken by James and then Oliver Applewhite alienated the two Glenn boys, Silas Jr. and John. They had not bothered to remain on the ranch, but grew resentful over not being allowed to share in the profits from the labors of their sister, her husband and her son.

Things finally came to a head June 23, 1893. Their hatred was focused on their nephew, Oliver. Having previously made several public threats to "get" him, they finally moved to make good on their deadly threat. They went to the ranch but found Oliver gone, so they laid in wait all night by the canyon road, pistols ready.

Fortunately, Oliver came home by a different route and Mourning had him lay low. Frustrated, Silas and John Glenn left their ambush site and stormed back to the Glenn home, breathing fire. Unwilling to listen to their mother, the boys continued shouting until angry voices reached Oliver's hiding place. Fearful that his uncles would turn on his father or even the women of the family, Oliver emerged from hiding. He was greeted by a pistol shot from John. Oliver returned fire, killing John outright. Silas remained threatening until James Applewhite fired a shotgun at him, causing injuries from which Silas died two days later.

The family somehow lived through the trauma, and the resort outlived Mourning Glenn (who died in 1905) and James Applewhite (1906). Decline only started with the flood of 1938 and forced closure during World War II. Glenn Ranch reopened but never recovered its popularity, and was finally subdivided.

The coroner said the killings were in self-defense. Not everybody accepted the verdict, and for years the old-timers continued to argue over the tragic events at the Glenn Ranch.

• **TERRY CARTER** is an Inland Valley historian. You can reach him by leaving a message at 484-7081 or at carter_timelines@hotmail.com.

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