

JOHN GLEN (MONO JOHN) - 1825-1910

By Beveridge Ross Spear

"Mono John" was a colorful Paiute Indian. He lived at the mouth of Tuttle Creek, and claimed 160 acres of land.

He came from Mono Lake as John Glen, but the Lone Pine people called him Mono John, indicating his origin.

Andrew Glen, his youngest son, and I were "long time good friends." I never met his older brother, Willie, who lived further north.

Andrew told me the same story twice, but years apart. He said his "Papa" talked peace to the Indians, not war. "My Papa said no fight white man, he peacemaker."

According to Andrew, his father traveled with Kit Carson, as a peacemaker. He went as far south as "Nittle" Lake, (Little Lake) with Carson.



Nellie Glen – wife of John Glen doing wash at the R. C. Spear home.

She always enjoyed a big dinner prepared by Mother. Nellie finished about three or four o'clock in the afternoon.

When everything was gathered up and put away, she received a bright silver dollar which was standard pay then. Grateful for it she walked the two miles home.

Later, Mother got a big, awkward washing machine. It turned by hand. Nellie never seemed to like it. She seemed to like the old way best.

That was about 1845. It might be that Mono John came first to the valley with Kit Carson for the very purpose of talking peace with the Indians.

John Glen built his houses of branches, never with lumber. He farmed and had gardens. It was usual to buy watermelons from him. His largest were 25¢ each.

He may have claimed Tuttle Creek as his stream because his family first lived above the Alabama Hills where there are springs, rich land, and beautiful watercress.

Nellie, Andrew's mother, was a kind, quiet, hard working soul. She did the Reub. Spear family laundry on Monday morning for years. She worked under the large locust trees that surrounded our home on Joseph's Market corner.

Nellie walked the two miles from Tuttle Creek, arriving early. She heated the water on a wood stove in the yard, and spent hours rubbing on the old scrub

The Edwards family acquired the McCall Ranch that lay below Mono John's land. Tuttle Creek ran through the Indian's ground and then onto the McCall Ranch.

Andrew told me this story: Edwards put pressure on his father that he should leave and go away. Edwards said Mono didn't own the land; it belonged to him. This was repeated many times. Pressure built up until Mono loaded a horse and went over and camped on Lone Pine Creek, but a mile distant.

It so happened that Roscoe Parkinson, the Forest Service Ranger, came along. He asked why Mono was camped on Lone Pine Creek. Then he told the ranger in his simple way what Edwards was telling him, and he didn't know what to do.

As quoted to me by Andrew, Parkinson said, "John, you go back to Tuttle Creek and stay there. Don't you let Edwards scare you. Don't be afraid. That's your place and you stay there." That ended the feud.

An Indian legend says that in the distant past a great earth-quake convulsed the valley. It was raised, or lowered, or both, forming Owens Lake, cutting the river off east of Olancho. Such a possibility is reasonable knowing the changes made in the valley in 1872 when Diaz Lake was formed south of town.

As a child I walked along the earth fault north of town, where the up and down movement created a wall 10 to 20 feet high like the side of a building. This fault zig-zagged up to the spillway at the point of the mountain.

You can still see this, but it has eroded into a steep bank. It is clearly seen where the Pangborn Road branches off Highway 395. You climb up this bank going to the mass graves of the earthquake victims.

The fault is water-bearing, for often when excavated, they strike water. One way of tracing the quake fault through the valley and south into the desert is the reoccurrence of springs of water. The most noticeable one is Portuguese Ranch on the west side of Rose Springs Valley south of Haiwee Dam.

For many years the Indians used this place to leave their wagons, and go with their horses into the mountains hunting deer and gathering pine nuts.

This was probably as far south as Mono John ever traveled. It's only three or four miles further to "Nittle" Lake.