

California Biographies
San Bernardino County and Riverside County

History of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties
By: John Brown, Jr., Editor for San Bernardino County
And James Boyd, Editor for Riverside County
With selected biography of actors and witnesses of the period
of growth and achievement.
Volume III, the Western Historical Association, 1922,
The Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago, ILL

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DAVID GLEN HENDERSON

To such men as David Glen Henderson, an octogenarian now living at Etiwanda, life is a continuous adventure and enterprise, and every new day brings opportunities for work and accomplishment. Mr. Henderson is one of the few survivors of that now distant past when the establishment of homes in southern California meant a persistent struggle with the adverse forces of nature. He was born in Cakler, Scotland, March 28, 1842, son of David and Margaret (Adams) Henderson, and was one of their six children. David Henderson was a coal miner. Born in Scotland, he was seriously injured by a fall of slate and never entirely recovered. In 1848 he came to America, and in 1849 brought his family to this country. He first located at Dry Hill, now within the city limits of St. Louis, Missouri, and he died there in 1850. His widow soon afterward was married to James Easton, a member of the Mormon Church. Early in the spring of 1851 James Easton, his wife and the Henderson children went from St. Louis to a point near Council Bluffs, Iowa, where they joined a train made up of fifty ox teams and embarked for Salt Lake City. The captain of the train forbade the killing of buffalo, and they had no serious trouble with Indians, reaching the Salt Lake country in the fall of 1851. Here James Easton took up farming. In 1853 the second stage of the journey was begun, again by ox teams. On both of these stages of the transcontinental trip David Glen Henderson drove a three-yoke ox team, though on the trip from the Missouri River he was only a youth of eight or nine years old. The second stage of the journey had San Bernardino as its destination. The route was through the desert, and Mr. Henderson has a vivid recollection of some of the hardships encountered. While passing through a canyon in the mountains, a party of Indians met them and demanded food and whiskey. Halt was made in an open spot and a parley ensued. The travelers offered the Indians potatoes and turnips, but this did not please the red men, and from the way they handled their bows and arrows, their only weapons, the party feared an attack. An older brother of David G. Henderson acted as interpreter, and while talking with the savages displayed an old pepper box revolver, showing how rapidly it could be fired. It was a piece of strategy that served to discourage the Indians from any further hostile act, and they withdrew, sullen but peaceful. In crossing the desert from one water hole to another the party filled all the churns, pails, and everything that would hold water, and they traveled chiefly at night, resting the oxen through the heat of the day. Of these early voyagers of the desert few now remain. The journey itself, as well as the work necessary to be done after reaching the destination, was evidence of the great courage and determination that entitle these pioneers to lasting admiration. The Easton and Henderson families settled about a mile

east of the old fort at San Bernardino. Here David G. Henderson came to manhood. Practically the only school advantages he had were in the years from five to seven before he left the Middle West. In Utah and California his program was one of work, but he also studied privately and is today an exceptional penman. He became versed in all phases of woodcraft and hunting, and hunting has always been a favorite sport. Even in 1921 he went into the Sierra Mountains and shot his deer. Perhaps the steadiest employment he had as a youth was driving ox teams in hauling food and provisions. In 1862 Mr. Henderson married Miss Matilda Hawker, who was born July 27, 1845, at Melbourne, Australia. Directly after his marriage he bought five acres, but soon sold that and purchased twenty acres, both tracts being near San Bernardino. During 1864 - 65 he was engaged in placer mining on Lytle Creek, then a boom district, though his own luck as a miner failed him. In the fall of 1865 Mr. Henderson went to the coal mines at Mount Diablo in Contra Costa County, and remained there two years, getting good wages and returning with some capital. He then farmed and did teaming. In February 1884, Mr. Henderson took up eighty acres of state land, proved it up and secured the title and planted part of it. After keeping this ranch for twenty years he sold out in 1904. Then, leaving his family in San Bernardino County, he again went to the frontier, filing on eighty acres of desert land seven miles southwest of the Imperial townsite. This he improved two years later sold. On returning to San Bernardino County he filed on a 160 acre tract, the northeast quarter of Section 29, North of Etiwanda. Later he discovered that this was not government land but was owned by the railroad, and he made arrangements to purchase forty acres from the railroad company. This land lies at the corner of Summit and Etiwanda Avenues, and he has set it to fruit, built a home and otherwise instituted improvements that mark his secure material prosperity. For nearly fifty years Mr. Henderson had the companionship of his good wife, who was taken from him by death on January 10, 1921. Eleven children were born to their marriage, and all are living but one. The oldest, David Henderson, is a farmer at Bishop in Inyo County; Alexander also lives at Bishop; William is in business at Rialto; Walter Scott is a resident of Etiwanda; Nettie is the wife of Edward Purdue, living on a place adjoining the Henderson ranch; Robert R. is a rancher at Etiwanda; Maggie is Mrs. James Anderson, of San Bernardino; Belle is the wife of William St. Claire, of Little Rock, Los Angeles County; Grover C. is a citrus grower at Etiwanda; Earle E. lives at Etiwanda; and Glen is the deceased child.

Pages 1122 to 1123.

Transcribed and submitted by Sally Kaleta, August 2010.