

**GLENDO**  
**1812 1892**  
**“Historic Glendo”**  
**By Virginia Cole Trenholm**

When Robert Stuart and his Astorians plodded eastward on the icy surface of the North Platte River in 1812, they little realized that they were charting the course for the great westward migrations which were to take place in their lifetime. They were chiefly concerned with escaping from the Arapaho, who had fright-ened them from their winter quarters on Poison Spider Creek (near Casper).

Trappers and fur traders had established the natural roadway along the Platte before Horace Greeley made his celebrated state-ment: “Go West, Young Man”. With this slo-gan ringing in their ears, 1,000 recruits joined Marcus Whitman’s wagon train, which ultimately saved Oregon for the United States. It was without doubt the largest caravan ever to wend its way along the Platte. It followed in the wake of John Charles Fremont, “the Path-finder”, who compiled data for the first travelaid of the West, the year before.

Of the thousands who streamed through this area, only one stayed to make a study of the native Indians. Francis Parkman’s account of the Sioux has become a classic—The Oregon Trail. Called the “Great Medicine Road of the Whites” by the Indians, the road to Oregon assumed the name Mormon Trail in 1847, during the Mormon exodus.

The farsighted Saints tarried in the Glendo area long enough to improve roads and build the first of their five mail stations joining Fort Laramie and Salt Lake at Horseshoe Creek. The definite location has never been found, but blueprints show that the settlement amounted to 160 acres (with irrigation ditches, probably the first in Wyoming) enclosed by pickets. The buildings were burned by the Mormons as they fled toward Salt Lake before Albert Sidney Johnston’s advancing Army for Utah.

During the Gold Rush days, the Emigrant Road along the Platte was called the California Trail. Indelible ruts show an ever-widening trail as excitement reached a fevered pitch. Each tried to out-distance the other in his mad race to “the Diggings.”

It was not until travel had slowed down to a more normal pace that the Overland Stage Line was established by Russell, Majors and Waddell, and the roadway became known as the Overland Trail. Stations sprang up along the route, with one of the most important at Horse-shoe Creek. It was manned by the notorious Slade, who is said to have carried his adversary’s ears in his pocket after an altercation with Jules Reni.

A local legend has it that a lone New Yorker held up a stage in the Horseshoe vicinity and was forced to cache his loot (\$30,000 in gold) among the rocks on the side of Sibley Peak, which overshadowed the station. Many a “pros-pector” has dug on the rugged slopes.

One of the most celebrated guests at the Overland Stage, Pony Express and Telegraph Station was Mark Twain, who gives an account of “Alf” Slade in *Roughing It*. Slade is presumed to have had a hideout on the east side of the Platte, not far from the Glendo Dam, where the “Slade Chimneys” indicate that a building may once have stood. It was here that he and his gang were presumed to have preyed upon the emigrants following the opposite branch of the trail.

Slade’s wife, Virginia, saved the Stage Station from being burned while she was living there. The Overland employees got out of hand, after burning out E.W. Whitcomb’s establishment nearby. They dumped one barrel of his liquor in the well at the station in order to have a perpetual supply and proceeded to drink the other. While in a high mood, someone suggested that they burn the Stage Station. Virginia drew a revolver and threatened to shoot the first to make a move. By the time Slade arrived, they were sober. She remained loyal to him until his death, at the hands of the vigilantes in Montana.

Buffalo Bill, while stopping at the Overland Station, made a hunting excursion up Horseshoe Creek. There he encountered a gang of horse thieves, from whom he barely escaped with his life.

After the Overland traffic was re-routed to the Cherokee Trail in Colorado, 1862, the telegraph station continued in operation. It was here that Portuguese Phillips stopped to send a message to Fort Laramie during his famous ride down the Bozeman Trail from Fort Phil Kearny in 1866. Not trusting his message alone, he rode on to “Laramie”, to gain the distinction of being Wyoming’s Paul Revere.

In 1868, Crazy Horse and about 60 Sioux warriors attacked old Horseshoe station and burned it to the ground in a three-day battle which stretched from Sibley Peak to the hills south of the Cassa Flats. The peak, where the Indians were first encountered, was called Sibley because it resembles a Sibley tent used during the Civil War. It is one of the well known landmarks along the Emigrant Trail.

Near this peak, the McDermotts operated a stage station and post office, called Bellewood, between 1887 and 1892. When the railroad was built connecting Wendover and Orin Junction, the post office was moved to the flats and was given the name Glendo, presumably from the glen at Bellewood where the crew was encamped. Upon construction of the railroad, the main street was graded, lots were sold and the new town was on the map.

**GLENDO**  
**1903-1999**  
**(Anonymous)**

St. John's Church in Glendo, Articles of Incorporation are dated June 22, 1903

The small church was located at the edge of Glendo. In August of 1935 the trustees record in the minutes, the need to contact Mrs. Tom McNamara at the Aruba Islands in regard to the Glendo lots. The highway department was wishing to move the small church in order to build the overpass over the railroad tracks. The son, Harry McNamara responded that they would exchange their property on which the church was sitting for lots 9 & 10 plus a strip of land for a Catholic cemetery. (The deed for the strip of land had a contingency put on it saying it had to be used as a cemetery or it would revert back to the family.

In the summer of 1949 electric lights were installed in the church in order that evening services could be held.

In 1950 a building fund drive was begun to obtain money to be used to enlarge and improve the present church. The goal was to collect \$2000.00 by the end of the year.

In the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting, May 1952, it is stated that Bishop Newell had given his permission to apply for a \$3000.00 grant from the Extension Society of Chicago for a new church in Glendo. It was also brought out in the discussion that Bishop Newell insisted on a hometown contractor be given the job of contractor.

In July of 1952 most of the final plans had been made.

The Extension Society of America had promised financial help toward the project. A sum of \$3000.00 had been pledged.

Plans submitted by Lloyd Lantz of Glendo had been chosen for the new church building. Mr. Lantz was also chosen as the contractor for the building.

The new church was not to exceed \$10,000.00 in expenses.

Construction of the new church was to begin as soon as possible. Ground would be broken for the new church after Mass on Sunday, July 27, 1952.

According to the minutes of the June 1953 meeting of the Board of Trustees, the following plans were made for the dedication of the new church in Glendo on Thursday, June 25, 1953.

The dedication Mass would be at 10:00 a.m.

Leo Foy and Bob Twiford would act as ushers for the Mass.

There would be a banquet at 2 p.m. in the Glendo School Dining Room.

Mrs. James A. Moran would be in charge of the banquet.

The Sodality Choir from St. Anthony Church in Hartville would sing the High Mass on the day of the dedication.

The ladies of the parish would assist in the cooking and serving of the banquet.

The December minutes of the Board of Trustees reflect that the trustees realized the name of the new church should be legally changed and recorded as Our Lady of Lourdes Corporation.

(Note: The Corporation of St. John's Church was legally changed to Our Lady of Lourdes Church in 1999.)