
MARY GUILD CROSS

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Mary Guild Cross was the first child born to Marie Madaline Cardon and Charles Guild in the Salt Lake Valley in 1856. She spent her first ten years among the Mormon pioneers who had come to Utah in 1847.

Her parents moved to Wyoming in 1866 where she assisted her father at the Pony Express Station and thrilled to the sight of the cowboys riding in from the east on a dead run, switching their saddles to fresh horses almost faster than the eye could see, and then racing off to the next station with a sandwich in one hand and splashing coffee in the other.

When her parents decided that there was a need for a hotel in the small settlement of Piedmont, Mary worked beside her mother cleaning the rooms, carrying water from the well, and hand washing all the linens.

In the back of the hotel there was a small building containing one large laundry room and several small rooms. The small rooms were rented to the Chinese who were not allowed to mix with other boarders. The Guild's were considered "very modern" for even letting them rent rooms in their hotel! The Chinese were doing the hand labor on the construction of the railroad and were only paid twenty-five cents a day, so many of them would sleep in one room in order to save money.

Mary married John Cross and added the jobs of wife and mother to her already busy schedule. She and John had seven children with their daughter, Mae, being the one who would spend most of her life helping her mother and grandmother in the hotel.

Mae also opened a store and became postmistress in Piedmont. When automobiles first came to Uinta County, Mae saw an opportunity to make money selling gasoline. She had gas shipped in by the barrel to Spring Valley. Motorists had to hand pump the gas out of the barrel and into their cars. Mae was probably one of the first service station owners who combined a store with a gasoline pump.

Three generations of Guild-Cross women were entrepreneurs. They diversified their businesses each time an opportunity arose and they made successes of each venture with little assistance from the men in the families.

About 1900 the Union Pacific began digging a tunnel through the Aspen Mountain that eliminated the steep winding grade from Piedmont to the summit. The tracks bypassed Piedmont by several miles and the population dropped from two hundred people to only thirty-five

Although the small community struggled to survive until the 1940's, lack of business forced the closing of the Guild Mercantile Store and eventually, in 1951, the hotel was sold to Joseph Slade who tore it down and moved the lumber to Lyman.

Mary had died in 1944 and did not see the demise of her beloved hotel and town but Mae lived until 1953 and it was one of the saddest days in her life when she saw the magnificent Piedmont Hotel come tumbling down and the last remnants of her long and successful career vanish into the sagebrush.

Information submitted by Delmar and Mary Dean.