

*Sweat dripped from his brow in the early autumn heat as Tony poured cement from a wheel barrow into carefully measured wooden forms. Tony's large, dark hands were skilled at brick laying and coal mining, and were now building a foundation strong enough to not only withstand Wyoming winds, but to anchor a family in tradition, determination and to weather any storm. The indigenous peoples of the northern Arapaho, Cheyenne and Sioux who camped along the Box Elder in pursuit of the bison were gone a quarter of a century earlier-removed to the Wind River, Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations. The last plumes of smoke from the coal fired steam engine of the Colorado and Central Railroad rose decades ago to upper thermals along a north eastern ridge toward Cheyenne and dissipated into the prairie sunlight forever. Tony may have been unaware that both the Natives and the C & C engine roared past his homestead below Round Butte many years ago. It may not even have mattered. His focus was on raising his family. To the south a dust devil raises itself from the empty earth like an angry spirit from its tomb. The bareness of the prairie is swept up and hurled in a counter clockwise direction toward Tony. He stands and wipes his wide brow, dark chestnut colored eyes squint in the sunlight towards the swell. A chi bene crede, Dio provvede-. Ancient ancestral voices whisper. Have faith and God shall provide.*