

Glenrio, a town in Texas and New Mexico

Glenrio is one of my favorite places on Route66. I am fascinated by ghost towns and I always wonder who built which house, what their family situation was and how many happy moments they might have had in the shell of the building that is now left.

I hope this document will tell you a bit more about the buildings in Glenrio and will enable you to see more than just the crumbling walls!

Most the photos were either found on the internet, I made them myself or I have to thank Gary Daggett for them! If there are photos that you own and that you want to be taken away or want to be recognized for please do let me know. Also, if you have any additions or corrections please do let me know.



*A final request: The whole area is fragile in a lot of places and has been there a long time before we came to visit. Hopefully it will still be there a long time after we visit so please follow the old saying: **Take only memories, leave only footprints.***

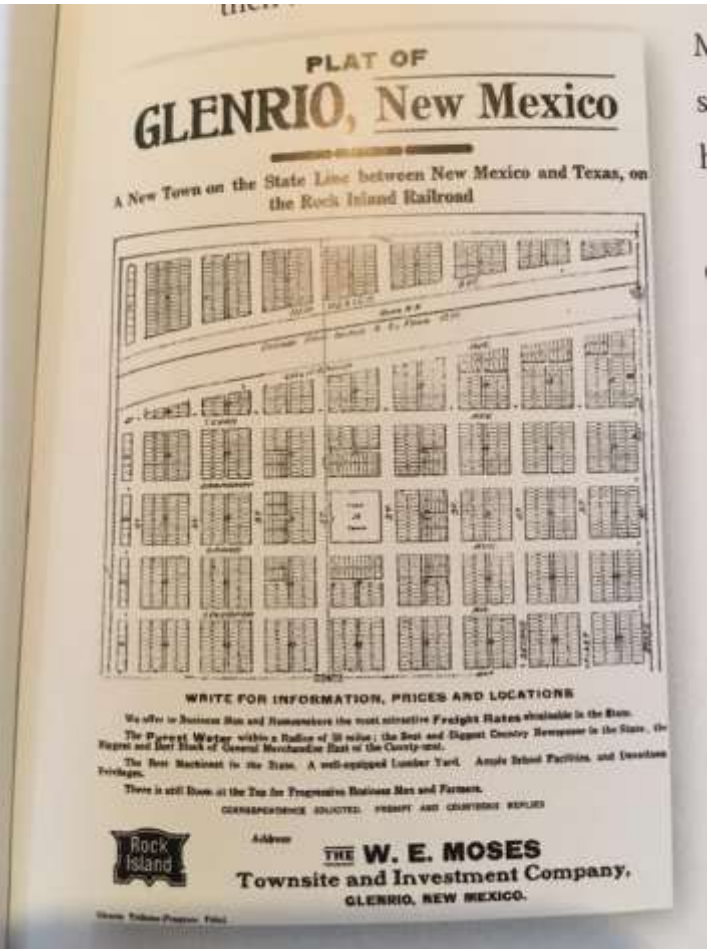
Enjoy!

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Description of the town

Glenrio sits on the border of New Mexico and Texas. It is at an altitude of 4,286 feet, 73 miles west of Amarillo, Texas and 41 miles east of Tucumcari, New Mexico. The community is located in the northwest corner of Deaf Smith County, Texas and on the eastern edge of Quay County, New Mexico. It was bypassed by Interstate 40 in 1975 which put the highway 0,2 miles north of the town.

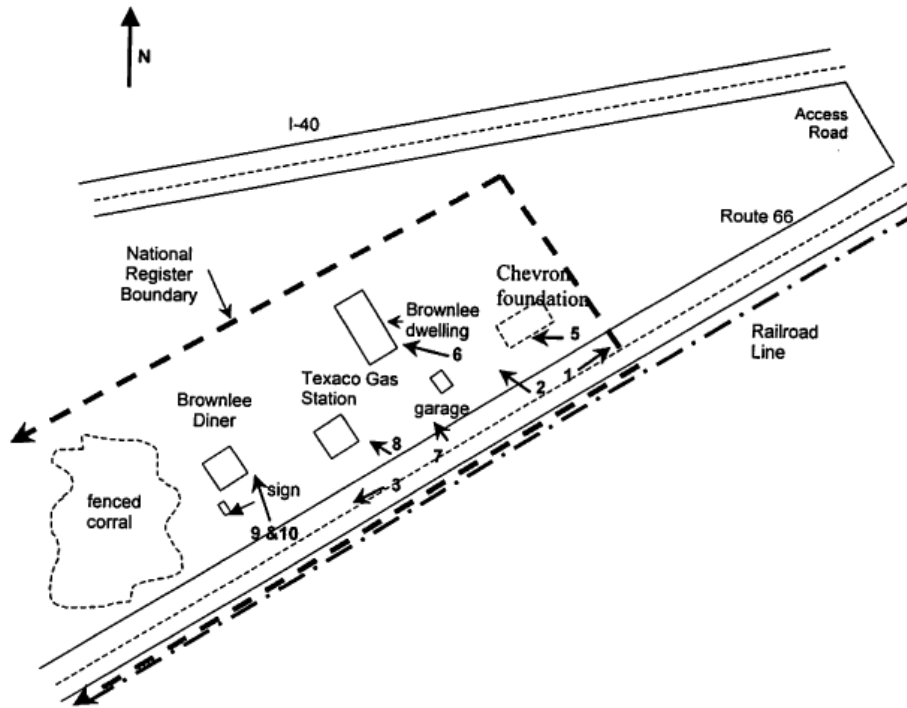
<p>1903</p>	<p>The community began as a line camp along the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad, commonly known as the Rock Island line. Construction of the Amarillo-Tucumcari mileage — 113 miles in length — was begun in 1903 and completed May 9, 1910, establishing a through route from Memphis to Tucumcari, where a connection continued to the Pacific Coast. To railroad officials the site held possibilities to be a shipping point for area farms and ranches. The railroad created the Rock Island Town site and Investment Company and appointed Colonel Wells E. Moses of Denver to promote settlement of the community.¹ Moses came to the site in 1907 and first named the community Rock Island in honor of the railroad. Moses platted the town of Rock Island, located entirely on the New Mexico side of the state line. This plan included eight streets running north and south and seven streets running east and west. A public square occupied the center of the community.</p>	
<p>1905</p>	<p>150 acres parcels of land are being sold around the railroad station.</p>	
<p>1908</p>	<p>J.W. Kilpatrick built the Hotel Kirkpatrick within the new community of Rock Island. This was followed by several stores, a restaurant, and a post office with Austin Moses, brother of W.E. Moses, appointed postmaster.</p>	
<p>1910</p>	<p>The railroad built a depot in 1910, the same year it decided to rename the community Glenrio. A new town hall was built and a reception was held in the building on May 9, 1910. The town around the station expanded rapidly to roughly 100 inhabitants. At around this time the Angel House was built. A newspaper, the Rock Island Tribune (later the Glenrio Tribune-Progress), began publishing. In December of 1910, the newspaper stated that "The Glenrio section is settling fast. The town already has a depot, shipping pens, and an artesian well is now sinking. The town company has its local office, storehouse and other improvements complete."</p>	

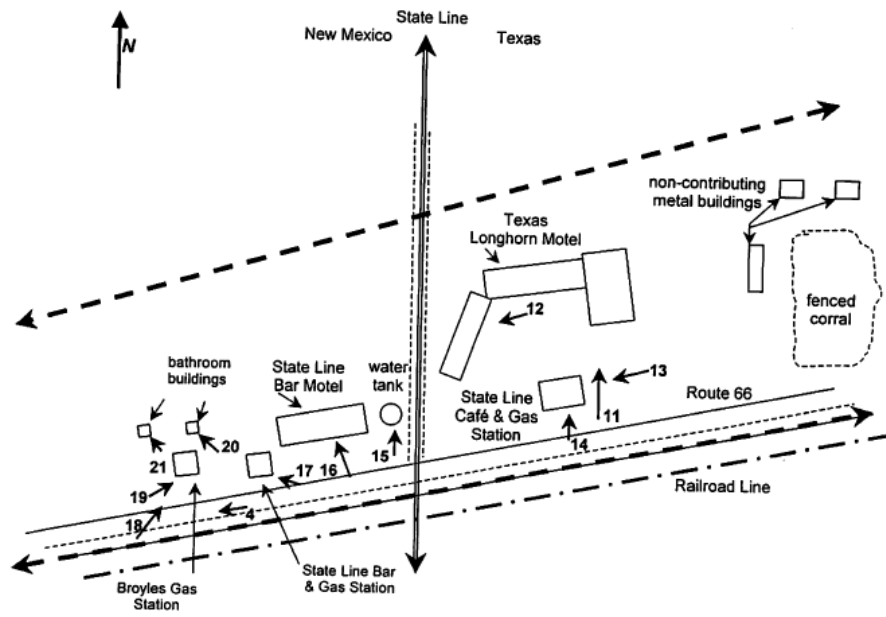
1912	The Methodist Church opens.
1915	The population grew so a school was built.
1916	The two-story Hotel Glenrio was built by Henry J. Streu and managed by Mrs. M.J. Bigoness
1917	By now Glenrio consisted of a hotel, a mercantile store, post office, machine shop, barbershop, bakery and restaurant. The town contained around one hundred residents
1918	The school recorded twenty-five pupils.
1919	An electric plant opens. A literary society and commercial club were formed in these years to promote business and learning in the community.
1920s	During the 1920s, a number of Glenrio businesses south of the railroad either closed or moved north to be closer to the increased activity along the highway.
1924	John Wesley Ferguson came to Glenrio to serve as the railroad station master.
1925	Most of the Ozark Trails in Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma was designated U.S. 60 between Chicago and Los Angeles.
1926	The highway is renumbered U.S. 66.
1925 - 1930	John Wesley Ferguson builds the State Line Bar plus associated Motel and the Boyles Mobil Gas Station. He also built a dance hall and bar on the New Mexico side which he leased to a man named Kline (the building disappeared over the years)
1926	The road through town (the Ozark Trail) becomes part of Route 66 and many business were built on the north side of the road.
1939	Businessman Homer Ehresman purchased the State Line Bar and operated it for several years before selling the property to Joseph Brownlee.
1946	J. W. Ferguson Jr. erected a gas station which still stands on the New Mexico side of Glenrio. Jack D. Rittenhouse's guide to U.S. 66 lists the population at 84 residents and a community that provided a store, gas, and that all of the business establishments are "west of the state line."
1950 - 1952	Brownlee built a Texaco Gas Station and diner between 1950 and 1952. Both of these buildings were influenced by the Art Moderne style of the mid-20th century. In the Texaco gas station this influence is limited to the curved vertical panels on top of the drive-thru bay. The diner displays a more pronounced influence of this style with its curved concrete corner walls and curved metal canopy above the storefront. He also moved a bungalow from Amarillo to Glenrio to live in with his family.
1953 - 1955	Ehresman constructs the State Line Craft and Gas Station and Texas Longhorn Motel just east of the State Line Bar. The cafe and gas station were housed within a one-story building with a gable roof and large steel windows. The Texas Longhorn Motel took on a "U" shape and is one-story with a gable roof. Like many motels of the 1950s it was built with wide eaves supported by wrought-iron posts to provide shelter to the walkway beneath. The rooms featured air conditioning and modern bathrooms. The cafe in front of the motel contained a small restaurant, an office for the service station, and a garage.
1955	The Rock Island Railroad station closes.
1960s	The town boasts 2 motels, 3 restaurants and at least 7 petrol stations. The State Line Bar is remodeled with the addition of a concrete block veneer on the main facade. The rails from the Rock Island Railroad are removed.

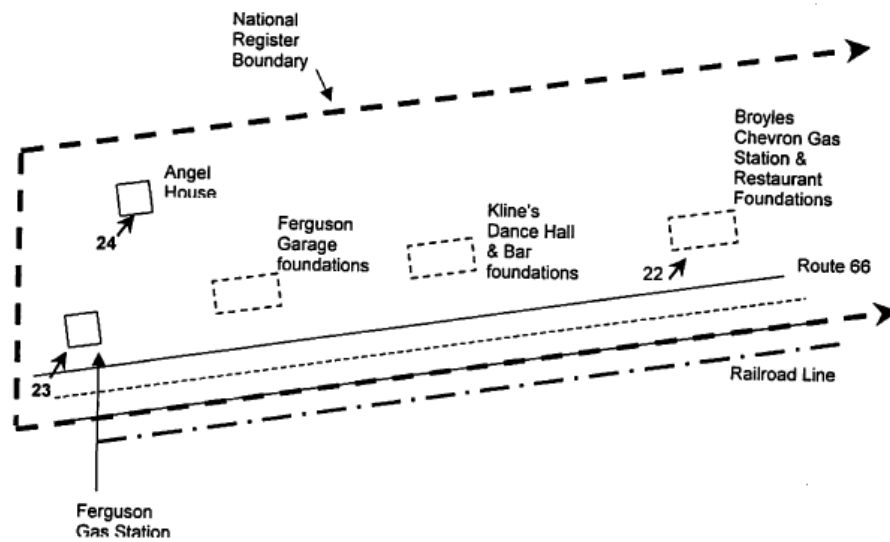
1945 - 1975	<p>Former resident John Paul Ferguson worked during the summers for his father and Joe Brownlee at their gas stations in the 1950s. He recalls constant traffic during the daytime with cars often lined up five or six in a row waiting to get gas." Roxie Brownlee, wife of Joe Brownlee also remembers those years at Glenrio as "extremely busy and it was all we could do to keep up" as the family ran the gas station, bar, and diner.</p> <p>The extended Brownlee family lived in the State Line Bar Motel during these years. The Brownlee family eventually closed their diner in the early 1960s and Mrs. Brownlee then operated a curio shop in the building for a number of years.</p>
1975	<p>The interstate opens just north of town and after that day "the traffic all but dried up."</p>
After 1975	<p>Within the next two years all of the businesses owned by the Ehresman, Ferguson, and Brownlee families closed. Homer Ehresman and his son Allen moved to Endee, New Mexico where they opened a new motel at the 1-40 interchange. The Ferguson Gas Station was abandoned as well as the Angel House nearby. Roxanne Travis, daughter of Joe and Roxie Brownlee, continued to reside at the Brownlee home. She and her nephew Greg Gudgeall owned (still do?) most of the town.</p>

Building descriptions

You will see a map of that section of town plus a picture from Google Maps showing the same section of town.







Texas side of town

The first road through Glenrio was a dirt track which was gradually improved in the 1920s as part of the Ozark Trails highway. In 1926, the alignment was federally designated as U.S. 66, with a two-lane paved road completed through Glenrio by the late 1920s. Due to extensive traffic and commercial activity in Glenrio in the 1950s, Route 66 was widened to four-lanes with a concrete median added on the New Mexico side. This asphalt-surfaced, four-lane highway remains extant and is approximately 125' in width. The roadbed is in good condition.

Chevron station

The first structure we see are the foundations of the Chevron station together with what remains of a sign. It is not much...



Joseph (Joe) Brownlee House

This house was originally built ca. 1930 in Amarillo, Texas and moved to this location by Joseph Brownlee in 1950.



It is a bungalow with a metal roof, an exterior of aluminum siding and a poured concrete foundation.

Texaco Gas Station

Approximately 40' to the southwest of the Joseph Brownlee House is a gas station built in 1950.



This gas station is of concrete block construction and has a flat roof and exterior of painted concrete block. The south facade has a metal and wood drive-thru bay. This bay rests on a concrete pad and the canopy above displays curved corners. The canopy is supported by two steel posts. The steel posts rest on a gas pump island made of poured concrete. Approximately 13' south of the island is another oval concrete island with the remnants of three gas pumps. The front side of the building contains the original garage door. On the east side is a steel and glass window which opens onto the office area. Here are two entrances leading into the men and women's bathrooms. Inside an original door connects the office section with the garage.

Brownlee Diner (Little Juarez Cafe)

Approximately 50' west of the Texaco Gas Station is an Art Moderne-style diner built Joseph Brownlee.



This building has a flat roof of corrugated metal and exterior walls of concrete block. The main entrance is an original two-light and single-panel steel and glass door. At the corners of the main façade are concrete block extensions with curved shoulders. Adjacent to the entrance is a concrete block pier, which extends to join a curved sign panel at the roofline. This sign panel is aluminum and the painted letters "Diner" remain visible on the west and east facades. The east facade also displays a painted Mexican style sombrero and the words "Little Juarez." The interior is divided into two rooms. Approximately 25' to the southwest of the building is a steel sign erected in 1952 with three support posts and a plywood sign panel. No legible signage remains extant.

Horse Corral and Agricultural Buildings

West of the Brownlee Diner is a circular horse corral and three metal buildings erected ca. 1980. The agricultural buildings are used for hay storage and implement storage.



Texas Longhorn Motel

Homer Ehresman built the Texas Longhorn Motel in 1955, which remained in operation until 1976. Up until recently the office was used as a residence but it is now all abandoned. The motel is "U" shaped and consists of a detached office wing on the east and thirteen individual motel units which comprise the north and west wings. The motel has a poured concrete foundation, a gable roof of asphalt shingles and an exterior of concrete block.

The motel is composed of two sections. The west wing contains original windows and original five-panel wood doors. The interiors feature small kitchens and baths with three-panel doors and drywall ceilings and walls and carpeted wood floors.

The units on the north wing are of concrete block and have solid wood doors and original nine-light casement windows. The interior of these units reveal concrete block walls, original baths, concrete floors and drywall ceilings. Across the width of the two motel wings is a shed roof porch supported by wrought-iron posts. Extending in front of the units is a concrete walkway.

State Line Cafe and Gas Station
2015:



The State Line Cafe and Gas Station was constructed in 1953 by Homer Ehresman and built directly in front of the Texas Longhorn Motel facing Route 66. The cafe is a one-story concrete block building with a gable roof of wood shingles. In the front of the building there are two entrances. The west side of the building contains an original garage bay with a glass and wood paneled overhead track garage door. The interior of this bay retains an original hydraulic auto jack.



In front of the building are a concrete pad and two concrete island bays with foundations and pipes for gas pumps.

Directly in front of the building is a steel sign erected in 1955 which said "Motel - First Motel in Texas- Cafe" facing west and "Motel - Last Motel in Texas- Cafe" facing east.

New Mexico side of town.

Water Tank and Windmill

Approximately 50' west of the Texas Longhorn Motel is a wood water tower and windmill built ca. 1945. The windmill is supported by four wood posts and is missing its blades. The water tower rests on wood support posts.



State Line Bar Motel

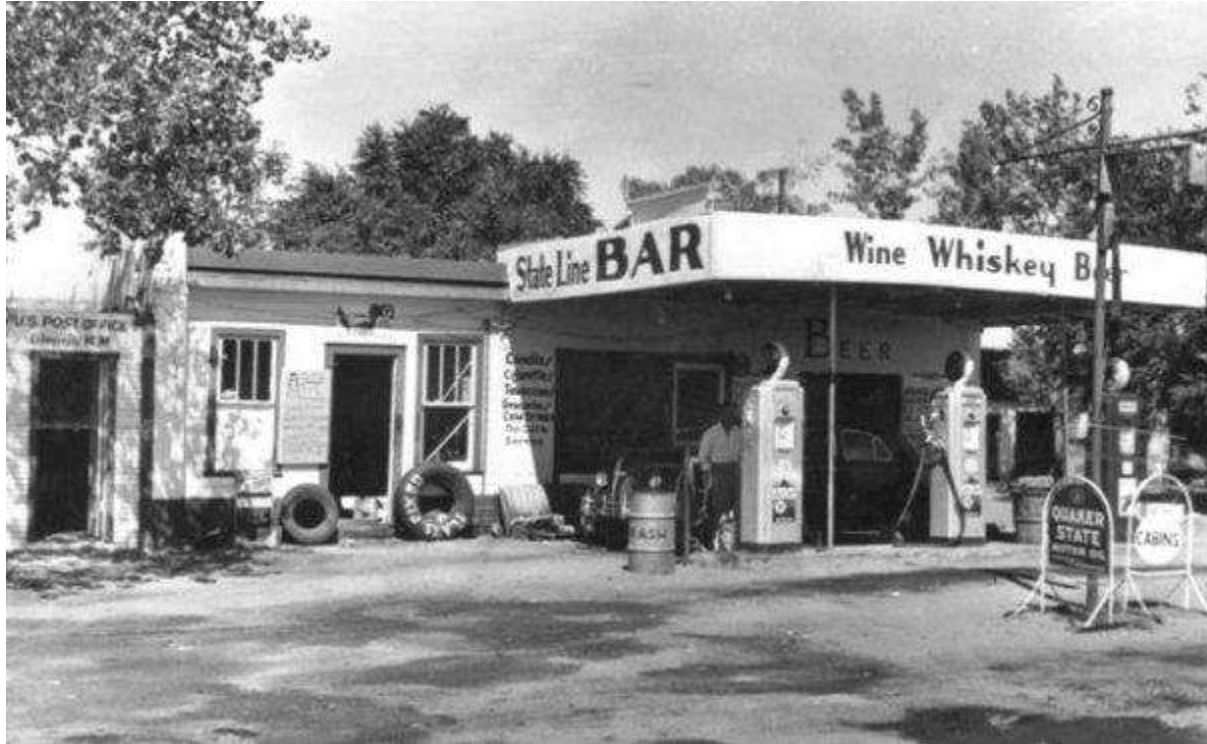
To the northwest of the State Line Bar is an abandoned eight-unit adobe motel.



The motel has a concrete foundation and the main facade has nine entrances. The west entrance has a ca. 1960 door and leads to a storage area. A concrete sidewalk extends across the front of the building. The interior of the units reveal adobe walls, drywall ceilings and concrete and linoleum floors. The interiors were subdivided ca. 1950 with bathrooms that contain toilets and sinks.

State Line Bar / Texaco Gas Station / Glenrio Post Office

Just to the southwest of the State Line Motel is the State Line Bar built ca. 1935 by John Wesley Ferguson and remodeled ca. 1960 with a concrete block veneer on the front. The building was originally constructed with a drive-thru bay containing pumps for a Texaco gas station, also housed in the building. The west side once contained a small, frame wing containing a post office. This 1950s photograph of the State Line Bar shows its original appearance.



It looks different now with a concrete front and aluminium and glass door.



Broyles Mobil Gas Station

Just east of the state line is a gas station of adobe and stucco construction built ca. 1925.
2011:



John Wesley Ferguson constructed the building, which was later by Jim Broyles as a franchise of the Mobil Oil Company. On the front is a drive-thru bay with a wood canopy roof extension. This is supported by two original wood posts. Between the two posts is a concrete gas pump island with remnants of two pumps and a water pipe.

To the north of the gas station are two outbuildings, both of which were built as restrooms.

Approximately 40' north of the gas station is an adobe building built ca. 1925.



It has a dirt floor and walls of adobe and was built as a restroom with an interior dividing wall of adobe. Inside you can still find the foundations of the toilets...

Approximately 60' northwest of the gas station is a ca. 1940 frame and stucco bathroom. The interior is divided into two bathrooms and the wall sinks remain on each side.



Ferguson Gas Station

This building was constructed in 1946 by J.W. Ferguson Jr. who operated a Mobil gas station at this location.



This is a rectangular building. The front is made out of concrete block blocks while the rest is stuccoed wood.

Angel House

This dwelling was constructed ca. 1910 and its original owner is unknown.



During the 1930s and 1940s it was owned by the Angel family who provided domestic help for the John Wesley Ferguson family. The property was occupied until the 1970s and it is presently vacant and abandoned.