



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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The Face of Fillmore this week celebrates babies! New little people have been on my mind a lot lately with the birth of our seventh grandchild – Cooper Billy Shepard – on June 16.

Thoughts went back to the years ago when the first babies were born in Fillmore in wagon beds or crude cabins in the fort. Even after more “luxurious” homes were built, babies were born at home under less than favorable circumstances than we have now. As I have interviewed owners of pioneer homes I am often told that people stop by and tell the owners that they were born in their house.

The first baby born in the new settlement Fillmore was Columbia Fillmore Call, the daughter of Josiah and Harrietta Call. She was born January 28, 1852. Unfortunately, Columbia’s family met tragedy just six years later when her father was scalped and killed by Indians near Chicken Creek.

Later on in Fillmore’s history, many babies were born in the home of Dr. Evans whose home was also the hospital at that time. On August 9, 1929 the Progress records: “New Hospital Completed. The entire upstairs of the T.M. Ivory home, which was recently purchased by Dr. Evans, has been remodeled and equipped for a modern hospital...The hospital will provide for six beds and will have an operating room and kitchen...The lower portion of the house will be used for living quarters.”

The old Robison Hotel on First South and Main Street became a maternity home and hundreds of Fillmore’s citizens who are now in their early Social Security years were born there. This home began early during the World War II years when Dr. Evans, who was the only doctor in the county at the time, approached Mr. and Mrs. Christensen about turning the hotel into a maternity home. Dr. Evans was in need of help and Mrs. Christensen was a mid-wife. Estimates in the number of babies born in the maternity home range from 500 to over 900 babies. The cost of a baby being born and a ten day stay in bed at the home was only \$50, a far cry from the cost to have a baby these days.

For several years, the building where the Fillmore City Library and City Offices are now housed was the hospital and saw the birth of hundreds of babies.

Twenty-six years ago the existing Fillmore Community Medical Center was built on the south end of town. Our first grandchild – Arthur Burton – was the first baby born there on March 12, 1986.

With the many changes in the hospital systems in Fillmore one fact remains, babies have always been a top priority in the Face of Fillmore.

