



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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Memorial Day brings an interesting opportunity as we visit the gravesites of our relatives and decorate them as a sign of love and respect. While we visit, it is an excellent time to tell our children and grandchildren about the people interred there. Certainly just reading the information on the headstone doesn't give a person a complete picture of the person whose life it represents.

Here in Fillmore, as in other pioneer communities, these are the stories of crossing the plains and being the first to settle areas, thus being part of the original history of our community.

Looking back at relatives, mostly aunts and uncles, parents and a grandmother, I wished time and again that I had asked more questions about their lives and others who they knew. Maybe I just should have listened more closely, as that information may have been talked about when my young mind was elsewhere. At any rate, I hope you took some time with your family to fill in the gaps of information that will someday be of importance to them.

These thoughts came to me as I was standing before the grave of my maternal grandfather. His headstone reads simply, "MARIUS H. BRADAK SR". How fortunate I am to have heard many stories from his life – about his birth in what was then Yugoslavia, his parents and sisters, his education, his love of books and learning, his travels, his emigration to the United States.

I remember being told about the day he and my grandmother were married. They boarded a train in Kemmerer, Wyoming to ride to Paris, Idaho to elope. My grandmother's father caught wind of their plans and also boarded the same train. While he searched in all of the train cars for them, the conductor hid the young couple in a storage closet.

Standing at my grandfather's grave, I also thought of his untimely death in a coal mine explosion in 1945. I had read a newspaper account of the disaster which began, "On a day when the world celebrated the end of World War II in Europe, the Sunnyside No. 1 Mine exploded when methane gas ignited at 3:12 p.m., just as the day shift was preparing to leave. Mine officials had taken safety precautions in the mine, but the explosion occurred nevertheless, killing twenty-three men and injuring several others."

I hope I will remember to tell each of my family about him and his life so that they will have more than a name on a headstone to remember him by.



A Question

During our weekend trip through several Utah communities, I was reminded of a question that comes to me often. The question sounds like the lyrics to a 1960's song, "Where have all the flowers gone?" The ones I am referring to are the beautiful hanging baskets of petunias that so colorfully lined Fillmore's Main Street during the summer of 2009. The stories, or excuses, are varied, but it all comes down to the fact that without exception, the towns we traveled through had baskets or planters of flowers adorning their Main Streets, while ours lasted only a short time. I would be interested to know exactly why that is and how that can be changed.

