



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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This week my column will stray a little from its original intent, but with hopes that it causes the readers to reflect on the coming holiday – Mothers Day – with thoughts of the mothers and grandmothers who shaped our lives and especially those early women of Fillmore who have helped to shape the Face of Fillmore.

Not long ago a cousin in Kemmerer, Wyoming, sent me a copy of a book called *Glenco: Spelling Out Western Coal Camp History*. While reading it I found out something about my maternal grandmother that I had not known before. She was a writer; in fact, she wrote a weekly column for the *Kemmerer Gazette* called *Blazon Happenings*.

While her writing was not like the *Face of Fillmore*, the talent to do that may well have been passed on to her only granddaughter – me.

Grandma's column told of the social comings and goings in the small coal mining town of Blazon, Wyoming, not many miles south of Kemmerer. My grandfather was one of the bosses at the mine and Grandma was always busy. She took boarders into their large home and cooked and cleaned for them as well as for her own family. She was very musical and played the piano for many civic functions.

Excerpts from her columns were enjoyable to read. In the early days of the paper, the columns rhymed and later she used flowery language that we only smile at today. I will share a few excerpts:

“Mrs. Nellie Whalen and Mr. Art Pope had the sad experience of being caught in the blizzard Saturday night. They had to walk back to Oakley, that being the nearest place, and they were nearly frozen.

“We believe that Mrs. Joe Nagy's knee must be better by the way she was seen swinging the men folks around Saturday night at the Odd Fellows dance.

“It looks like cupid has taken up his residence in Blazon. Earl Hanley and Miss Albert Cope of Opal were married at Randolph Saturday afternoon.

“The stork was hanging around for the last few days trying to find a suitable place to leave one of those fine babies that he always has for Lincoln County. After much deliberation, he finally decided to leave it with Mr. and Mrs. John Querry of Lincoln Star Mine.

“Miss Alice Bradak (my mother) was absent from school for two days last week because of illness.”

Grandma was always a rebel. In fact, a cousin asked me just recently if I was aware that she was the black sheep of the family. Her parents immigrated to Wyoming from the coal fields of England after joining the L.D.S. Church. As a young lady, Grandma met Grandpa and they eloped to Paris, Idaho by train. Her father caught wind of the plan and also boarded the train, but the conductor hid the newly-weds-to-be in a closet so he wouldn't find them. Her family was upset at her marrying a “foreigner” and one that was not a member of the church. Grandpa was from Yugoslavia.

Grandma spent her entire life doing her own thing. Well into her senior years, she was very independent, traveling and meeting new people, playing the piano wherever she was asked to, giving memorized readings to clubs, dressing up fancy for all occasions and driving her pink Packard.

Maybe I gained more than I am aware of from my grandma, but I certainly gained many memories of her fun-filled ways.

