



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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With the coming of spring each year, the Face of Fillmore takes on a patchwork of floral colors. As the season changes from tulips to daffodils to lilacs and the pinks and whites of blossoming trees, May gives way to the brilliant fuchsia of peonies. It is this flower that has inspired this week's column.



Lucretia Robison

Revisiting the lives of Joseph and Lucretia Hancock Robison, whose home on Main Street across from the courthouse was the first stone structure built outside the fort; we find some fascinating information about their lives, as well as a heart-warming story about the love of a son for his mother.

The Robison family left their prosperous farm near Crete, Illinois, with its comfortable home and beautiful gardens to join the Saints on their trek west, taking with them seeds for planting an apple orchard and other seeds and plant starts that would be the beginning of a new life. Lucretia felt a sadness as she drove off, leaving a large field of her favorite peonies or "pinies" as she called them. These were her connection to her childhood home in upstate New York and the father that had disowned her when she joined the Church.

Leaving in the spring of 1854, they arrived in Salt Lake City on July 16th. They camped in the southeast part of the city and reported to Brigham Young. They were soon instructed to go to Fillmore and help the fifteen families already there build the fort.

The Robison's were well supplied and were generous with the early Fillmore residents. They planted the first orchards in Fillmore and many of their seedlings were used in the first nursery.

After some time it became necessary for Joseph and his oldest son to ride back to Missouri to obtain supplies and feed for their cattle. While they were there, young Joseph thought what a wonderful surprise it would be for his mother to have some of her precious



peonies at her new home. He rode horseback to Crete to their former farm and dug up some of the starts. He packed them in saddlebags and kept them moist on the long trip back to Utah.

It was snowing in Fillmore when they arrived, but he brushed away the snow and planted the starts in a protected spot near the barn. He told his mother nothing about them. In the spring, he was excited to see three green shoots appear. He kept them a secret until the following spring when a few of the large red blossoms appeared. Imagine her surprise as he presented them to her.

Lucretia lived to be over 90 years old. Every year the first blooms from her peonies were taken to her. Starts from these original plants were given to many family members to enjoy including those pictured here in the front yard of Phil Robison, Lucretia's great grandson.