



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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With the celebration of Fathers' Day just past, the Face of Fillmore looks this week at the man who might easily be called "The Father of Fillmore". That man is Anson Call.

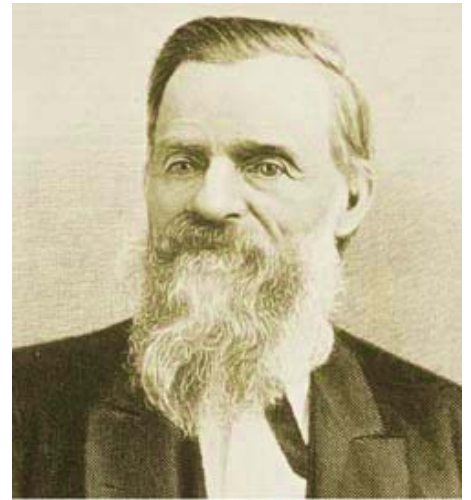
Anson Call with a company of thirty families under his direction began the settlement of Fillmore City in the fall of 1851. By February 1852, about thirty houses and a log schoolhouse were completed. In 1852 a post office was established, and by 1853 the population of Fillmore was listed as 304. Farming and stock raising quickly became its principal industries. Because of Indian problems, a fort was constructed in 1853-54 of stone and adobe, and all local people were located within its walls for safety.

Anson Call's responsibility as given to him by church leaders was to settle the area. Before he left for Salt Lake City, Brigham Young instructed Call to build the city as it had been outlined. Streets, houses, public buildings, and, most importantly, the territorial capitol had to be built. During the next year the Fillmore settlers worked to create a city out of a wasteland. The immediate need of building homes and public buildings took up most of the time and energy of the workmen. Because of this, construction of the capitol was delayed until the following spring.

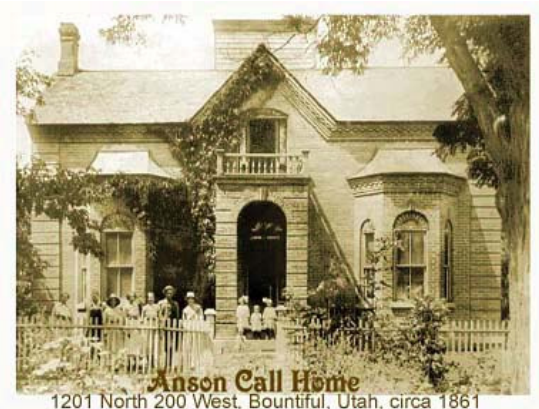
In 1854, three years after the selection of the site, the walls of the capitol were finally completed, but construction was further delayed because of a shortage of funds. Though Congress had awarded the territory \$20,000 to begin the project, no further funds were given to continue construction. After months of hard work and limited supplies, local workmen finally completed the roof on the east wing of the capitol in the summer of 1855. The interior was hurriedly completed to prepare for the Utah Territorial Legislature to convene in Fillmore. On December 10 the fifth annual legislative session was held in the new territorial capitol--the only complete session held there. Tradition says that the next day Brigham Young officially dedicated the building.

The organizing of the settling of Fillmore was not the only assignment given to Anson Call. In fact, during the year of 1842, Anson Call witnessed Joseph Smith prophecy that the Saints would leave Nauvoo, Illinois and then go to the Rocky Mountains.

According to church historians, Joseph Smith told the group that once the Saints arrived to the Rocky Mountains, they would become a great and mighty people. Anson Call was one of the few people who recorded this prophecy.



Anson Call



Anson Call Home
1201 North 200 West, Bountiful, Utah, circa 1861

Anson wrote these words about Joseph Smith describing the Rocky Mountains, "There is Anson. He shall assist in building cities from one end of the country to the other...and you shall perform as great a work as had been done by man, so that the nations of the earth shall be astonished, and many of them will be gathered in that land and assist in building cities and temples, and Israel shall be made to rejoice."

Anson Call fulfilled this calling and these prophetic words. He helped colonize the city of Bountiful and the building of the Bountiful Tabernacle. He was responsible for raising the money in one year's time and to help push the project to completion. He was able to raise between \$40,000-\$50,000 to complete the Bountiful Tabernacle. In addition, Anson Call assisted in the building of Parowan and Call's Fort, Utah.

The story of Anson Call would not be complete without adding another person's biography, that of Emma Summers.

Emma was born in Worcestershire, England and, as a young lady, was employed by a wealthy family as a house maid. By 1856, she had saved enough money to take her to America and the Salt Lake Valley. Her brothers, George and Edward Summers had already traveled there in the early 1850's.

She arrived to New York City in June, 1856, and joined the Willey Handcart Company. At this time, she was 28 years old. She was a tiny young woman only five feet tall with a frail build and medium brown hair and soft blue eyes.

On July 9th, 1856, the Willey Handcart Company set off for the Salt Lake Valley. The first tragedy occurred on September 4, 1856 when hostile Indians attacked them and took all the beef cattle and cows which were the main source of food. It was impossible to replenish the stock, so the entire company was placed on rations.

On October 12, 1856, early snowstorms stalled the handcarts and made travel impossible. Their clothing and footwear were worn out. The Willey Handcart Company traveled as far as possible each day, pausing only to bury those who died of exhaustion and malnutrition. The snowstorms continued and the food diminished. On October 19th, 1856, the last of the flour was eaten.

More belated and farther back along the trail was the Martin Handcart Company, whose sufferings were more intense than the Willey Handcart Company.

On October 3, 1856, Brigham Young called for volunteers to help the people in the Willey Handcart Company and the Martin Handcart Company. Anson Call furnished two wagons and teams and also most of the food provisions with which there were in them. He drove one team and George Summer (Emma's oldest brother) drove the other. They headed off to the suffering people in the handcart companies. The next day in Salt Lake, 27 men, 16 wagons loaded heavily with food and clothing, were assembled to assist the handcart companies.

Anson Call and George Summers arrived first to the Willey Handcart Company where the people were starving. After reviving the Willey Company, a call was made for volunteers to proceed east to help the Martin Handcart Company. In response, Anson Call and George Summers joined others to go to their aid.

The Willey Handcart Company arrived into the Salt Lake Valley on November 9th, 1856. Emma Summers was still wearing her bonnet which had been burned in places by the camp fire to avoid freezing and her dress hung in shreds below her knees. She was taken to the home of her brother, George Summers in Bountiful, Utah. The following year, 1857, Anson Call married Emma Summers.