



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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In the early days of Fillmore, nearly all of the men's faces were covered with beards; after all, a bearded face was easier to take care of than shaving. Haircuts were usually taken care of by a wife or neighbor and were generally not worried about except before a wedding or funeral.

As Fillmore became more like the larger communities to the north, the barbershop became a major business on Main Street. Not only was this the spot for a haircut or shave, it was the gathering place for the men in town, since saloons were not the popular place for most men in town to frequent. Here they discussed the important topics of the day: the weather, farming conditions, politics and business.

It is in this spot that one would find a man who was certainly one of the main Faces of Fillmore for over half a century. In the 52 years he owned his barbershop; Francis Cannon (Can) Melville cut the hair and shaved or trimmed the beard of nearly every man in east Millard County.

Can was born in Fillmore on May 1, 1860, just nine years after it was settled to Alexander Melville and June Dutson Melville. Like many of the early residents of Fillmore, the couple came originally from the British Isles. Alexander came from Scotland and Jane from England. Here they settled in the early 1850's as Fillmore had its beginnings and raised a family of 10 children.

Can married Mary Columbia McBride on January 1, 1885, and the couple was blessed with six children, only two of which lived to adulthood – Francis David and Reuben Alexander

That same year, 1885, Can started his barbershop in one corner of a shoe repair shop owned by Lafe Christopherson and John Cooper.

In the ensuing years, the barbershop moved several times to several different locations but Can's customers and the good humor they enjoyed moved with him.

In 1901, the town honored him with a Friendship Quilt, which currently belongs to the Territorial Statehouse Museum. I went there hoping to see the quilt and saw instead, a colored picture of it.



The quilt took an amazingly long time to complete. It is a sort of tan color, outlined with 24 fancy scallops, and is square in shape. Each of the 49 square pieces that make up the quilt is embroidered with objects and names of Can's clientele. Many squares are stitched with wildflowers, fruits, birds, butterflies, a wine decanter and glasses, a knife and fork, fans, and even a pair of scissors. Names appearing on the quilt include many we have read about in the past: Alonzo Ray, J.M. Warner, Gabriel Huntsman and Riley Huntsman.

After a half century of his barbershop being one of the important stops in town, Can was honored with a splendid gift showing the community's love and respect.