



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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During the hot summer months, many of us think of the canyons to the east of Fillmore as an extension of our own back yards. Cool breezes follow Chalk Creek down the canyon, making natural air conditioning under the canopy of the forest. Residents are often seen there, camping, fishing, picnicking and just relaxing away from the heat and stresses of everyday life in town.

Early residents used the canyons and their natural resources almost immediately after settling Fillmore. Roads were promptly built into the canyon to harvest lumber for use in building the fort and their homes inside it.

On Tuesday, November 25, 1857, Samuel P. Hoyt wrote to President George A. Smith, “We are all well and still live in our wagons. We have got a road made into the canyon and I have nearly enough logs drawn for one house and have commenced to lay it up.”

In later years, the canyon was also used for recreation - a retreat from the summer heat of the valley. Four campgrounds were eventually established by the forest service to give people a destination for their activities. I have often wondered who or what gave them their names.

A look at a Fishlake Forest map will answer two of those questions. To the south of Copley’s Cove Campground, a small stream enters Chalk Creek – Copley’s Creek. The “new” road hides its entrance into Chalk Creek, but certainly the campground was named after it and the cove it sits in along the main creek. It is unclear who exactly Mr. Copley was. There seems to be no record of him and interviewing long time forest employees brought no answer to that question.

A prominent feature of Copley’s Cove is the huge boulder and the footbridge that was built near it. Remembering back to the floods of 1983 and 1984, the question about this campground everyone was asking at the height of the flood was whether or not the bridge, pictured here, had washed away.

These floods changed the character of the canyon. Before them, there was a paved road to the white bridge at the mouth of the canyon then a forest road continued to the campgrounds. After the flooding the old road eventually became the ATV route and a better road was built high on the canyon hillside where it could not wash out, dropping into the canyon just above Copley’s Cove.

The next campground up is Shingle Mill. Again this is named for the geographic feature it is situated close to. Higher up the mountain above the campground is Shingle Mill Spring, which was the site of one of the early lumber mills that were built in most of our canyons, and then transported to another canyon as the need arose.



The last campground in the canyon is Pistol Rock. I am certain there must be some rock formation shaped like a handgun that it was named after although much searching has not brought about any rocks that resemble one. One feature of this campground was removed in recent years – the old wood burning cook stove. The cement pad it sat on was poured by the Lions Club of Fillmore years ago.



The remaining campground to discuss is Buckskin Charlie. Since the floods, this campground contains just one picnic area. I decided right off that Buckskin Charlie must have been an early resident of Fillmore. The name sounded like he must have been a hunter or trapper. I was amazed as I did some research about Buckskin Charlie, which revealed that he was the Ute Indian Chief who succeeded Chief Ouray in 1880. He rode with Geronimo in Theodore Roosevelt's 1905 Inaugural parade and also received the Benjamin Harrison Peace Medal in 1890. He is pictured here sitting on the right.



As the summer months begin, many of us will enjoy Chalk Creek Canyon and look at it as an extension of the Face of Fillmore