



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
March 6, 2013

The beginnings of life at 130 West Center began in the usual way for a piece of property here in Fillmore. The land was originally deeded from President Ulysses S. Grant to Mayor Joseph V. Robison and then to the new individual owner. In this case, the property owner was Gabriel Huntsman who paid the sum of \$3.83 to the mayor on March 2, 1867. The actual deed was dated June 28, 1871. A local historian explained that because of the space of time between the two, the land was probably homesteaded.

While properties and the houses on them are the focus of the Face of Fillmore, they would not be nearly as interesting without knowing the people who owned them and lived there.

Gabriel Huntsman was a prominent businessman in Fillmore. He owned the mercantile store which was eventually located in the Bradshaw Auto Parts building.

The property was kept in the Huntsman family through the early years of ownership: Gabriel to Orson to Frances to O.L. and Orlando. At some point during that time, the family built the house. It looked much like it currently does without the garage. It was sold to John and Ilene Cooper on November 29, 1947, and according to Ilene's history they paid \$5000 for it.

Marvin Peterson, Dad's brother-in-law remodeled it for them right after they bought it. The garage and the playhouse were added. They also built the brick fireplace in the back yard and then put in the red patio. They later added a big picture window in the dining room that looked out over the patio and yard and brought the beauty of the year indoors.

Behind the large iris and flower beds was the horse corral, but all the flowers camouflaged the corral and the chicken coop where all the horse equipment was kept.

The lawns were perfectly groomed with curved borders filled with never-ending flowers, mostly roses and iris – Ilene's favorites. The lot to the west where their new home would eventually be built became an enormous lawn bordered with flowers and a rot iron fence. The backyard was also filled with



Cooper/Perkes Home

flowers and trees surrounding the patio where the family and friends enjoyed many meals.

There was also an orchard back behind the old house.

This amazing transformation turned the home and its yard into an amazing scene resembling the cottages in the art work of Thomas Kincaid. In fact, Ilene was Salt Lake Tribune's Gardner of the Year in 1957 because of the way she beautified the yard.

The home was always perfectly furnished and a gathering place for friends and neighbors.

Memories fill the home. John and Ilene raised four daughters and a son there. The upstairs of the home was one large bedroom that the girls shared. Jolene Cooper Stephenson, daughter number three, tells of how excited she was to “graduate” to the upstairs with her older sisters. One can only imagine the giggles and fun had there.

The house is entered through an enclosed entryway they called the “vestibule”. Jolene tells of watching from the upstairs window as the young men brought their older sisters home from dates, but she said they lost sight of them as they went into the vestibule.

Jolene and her cousin Kathie Warner Utley both told of the fun they had as youngsters playing in the playhouse in the backyard with small furniture and dishes. They especially loved dressing up for the occasion. Ilene saved old costumes and dresses, big slips, high heels and all the accessories.

This building also doubled as the home for Ilene’s yard tools and when the playhouse became messy, they knew Ilene would straighten it up right away so she could find what she needed. It was like having a maid to clean house for them.

In the mid-1960’s, the Cooper’s built their new home to the west and the house at 130 West Center was sold once again, first to Donald Rasmussen and his family. Here again the personalities of the occupants make the home even more interesting. Don was the Seminary teacher and his wife was the perfect hostess. When you entered their home you were greeted so warmly it was like being a long-lost, best friend, even though they might have seen you just hours before.

The Rasmussen’s sold the home when they built a new one on East Center Street and the new owner who owned it only briefly was Delton Roberts who sold it very quickly to Edwin Bolton. The Bolton’s time there was also short lived and on October 26, 1979, they sold the home to William and Nadine Perkes.

William Perkes was a reader and the home was always full of books, as well as Nadine’s extensive genealogy and her beautiful poetry and the music she composed. She was also a gourmet cook, specializing in decadent desserts enjoyed by friends throughout the neighborhood and beyond.

The home sits empty at this writing, but certainly has a great potential for being a favorite spot in the Face of Fillmore.