



## Face of Fillmore

*By Sherry Shepard*  
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This week we take a look at one of the early citizens of Fillmore who made a difference to the Face of Fillmore and to another famous site nearby.



Ira Nathaniel Hinckley is a name that appears over and over again as you read the history of Fillmore. He was born October 30, 1828 in Leeds County, Upper Canada and joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1844. Early on in the church's settling of Utah, he came west. In 1867, Hinckley was living on his farm in Coalville, Utah, when Brigham Young asked him to build a fortified way station at Cove Creek. He left for his assignment just days later.

The site for Cove Fort was selected by Brigham Young because of its location about half way between Fillmore and Beaver. It provided a way station for people traveling the Mormon Corridor. A town would have been constructed at the Cove Fort site, but the water supply was inadequate to support a sizable population. Another factor was the existence of a wooden-palisade fort, Willden Fort, which provided shelter and safety for the work crews who constructed Cove Fort.

One of the unusual features of the fort is the use of volcanic rock in the construction of the walls, rather than the wood used in many 19<sup>th</sup>-century western forts. This difference in construction is the reason it is one of very few forts of this period still standing.

Following his assignment at Cove Fort, Ira Hinckley moved his family to Fillmore where he bought the home across from the present-day National Guard Amory from Thomas Callister. The home was begun about 1870 and was not completely finished until after the Hinckley's moved in.

Mr. Hinckley is mentioned in Fillmore's history as the original owner of the Almon Robison Ranch southwest of town. He was involved with a sheep co-op in the late 1870's. He served on the Millard Academy Board of Directors among many other civic and church positions. In 1877, he became Mayor of Fillmore as well as the Stake President of the Fillmore L.D.S. Stake. Two enormous



responsibilities. Additionally, his family life must have required a considerable amount of time as he was the father of 21 children.

In the early 1890s, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints determined the fort was no longer needed and leased it out. It was sold to W.H. Kesler after the turn of the 20th century. In 1989, the Hinckley family purchased the fort and donated it back to the church. The church restored the fort, transported Ira Hinckley's Coalville, Utah, cabin to the site, constructed a visitor center, and reopened the fort as a historic site. This site was dedicated by Ira's grandson, Gordon B. Hinckley, who was President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Ira N. Hinckley died on April 10, 1904.

On September 8, 2001 in commemoration of the sesquicentennial of Fillmore, President Gordon B. Hinckley visited a large gathering in the Fillmore City Park. In his comments he told of his pioneer heritage. He made this statement, which I find uplifting: "It is well that on this 150th year, you celebrate remembering those who walked here long ago. This has been home to generations of men and women whose strong character, high values, significant accomplishments and great faith were virtues planted within their hearts by wonderful parents who were pioneers of Fillmore and Millard County. May future generations who come from this community be as strong as their noble forbearers."

