



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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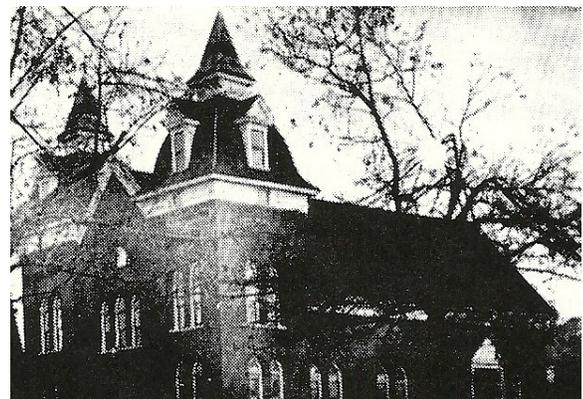
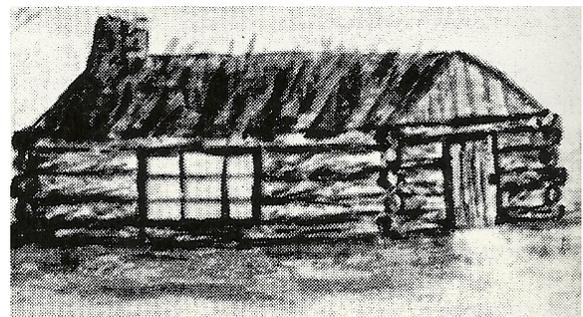
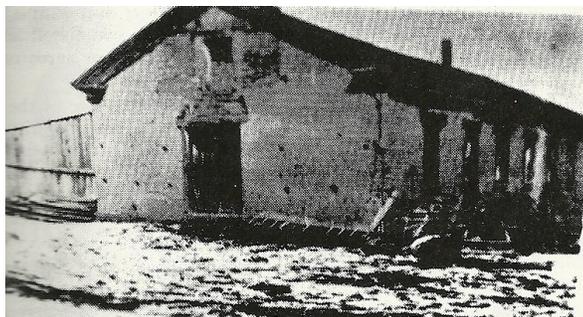
In answer to a question by a good friend and newcomer to Fillmore, the Face of Fillmore this week looks at where the people of town attended L.D.S. church services before the two buildings now in existence were built.

There were actually five church buildings built previous to our present-day chapels.

The first church service in Fillmore was held on November 2, 1851, a short time after the settlers arrived. It was held in the tent of Brother Bartholomew with President Anson Call presiding. The first church building which also served as the school was begun about that same time. It was built of cottonwood logs with a dirt roof and floor and was situated within the fort about 150 yards east of Main Street just north of First North on the banks of Chalk Creek. Anson Call wrote that they began this structure within fifteen days of their arrival and the writings of Volney King say they began school there on December 22, 1851.

The second church was also known to local residents as the Old Adobe Meeting House and was located near the log church about where the substation currently is. It served many purposes including church, school and amusement hall. The first meeting to be held there was on March 4, 1854. This building was the gathering place of the citizens of Fillmore for many years.

In May, 1871, a meeting was held to discuss the possibility of building another church building. It was decided to build a new meetinghouse that would be 45 feet by 75 feet with a 20 foot vestry. The building would be two stories high with a gallery around the top of the chapel. This building would seat 800 people. It would be built of a red sandstone foundation with red brick walls. The foundation of this building was built right away in a spot between the present National Guard Armory and the Fillmore City Office/Library about where the mental health building is. The structure remained uncompleted for several years because of a debate about that being the correct location. Finally, in 1896 Bishop Thomas Callister called for a vote of the people and the majority voted in favor of completing the building. In June of that year, work



resumed. The building was finished and dedicated on August 2, 1908. The dedicatory prayer was offered by Elder Joseph F. Smith that Sunday afternoon. Lorenzo Snow was the first missionary to report his mission in this building later in 1908.

The people of Fillmore continued to enjoy meetings in this chapel until August 14, 1926, when Vern Bartholomew's hall was burned. A canyon breeze from the east carried the fire to the chapel and within a short time it was reduced to a pile of charred rubble. For the space of time until new buildings could be built, the congregation met in the junior high school.

The people of Fillmore were faced with the task of building a chapel for each of the two wards. The First Ward Chapel was built on Main Street where Mt. Catherine Manor now stands. It was dedicated on May 29, 1927 by President Heber J. Grant. The Second Ward Chapel, built just west of Main Street on First North, was dedicated June 3, 1928 by Elder Stephen L. Richards. Both of these buildings served the church members until the present chapels were built.

