



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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Autumn seems to bring about gatherings. Several communities have found the weekend following Labor Day to be the perfect time to celebrate.



Stagecoach ride at the Living History Fair

Here in Fillmore the 21st Old Capitol Arts and Living History Festival has been underway all weekend. Driving by the Territorial Statehouse State Park during the middle of the day was a problem traffic wise. Several busses have brought school children to learn about their pioneer heritage or perform in the park. Smaller busses have brought groups of senior citizens to enjoy the day. These busses have come from several locations around the state and more seem to catch on and come each year. Local citizens are also crowding the park to enjoy the “living exhibits” where they have a hands-on opportunity to do things the way their ancestors did. The gun show is always a big hit, as well as the art and quilt shows, and lines of park goers can be found at each food vendors’ booth.

Thanks to the Friends of the Territorial Statehouse State

Park and the staff at the park for their great efforts each year.

Additionally, this time of year brings family reunions. Several people I talked to are attending one somewhere this month and our family is no exception.

This is unusual for us. The last time we had a reunion my aunts and uncles were all still living as well as my parents. Since then all have passed on and the “old folks” at this one are in my generation. Unfortunately, some of the cousins now reside in care centers in a couple of different states and will not be there, but those of us who come will be enjoying a great meal and getting to know other branches of our family tree.

Strangely enough, some of those family connections were made right here in Fillmore at the National ATV Jamboree, of all places. A cousin who I didn’t know even existed came with her husband for the first time several years ago, and we got acquainted. Peggy explains that we were friends before we were cousins. A year or so later through the television show “At Your Leisure”, Peggy and Aaron won a trip to revisit somewhere in Utah that they had enjoyed vacationing, so they chose the Jamboree. Peggy explained the trip to her Aunt Joyce who immediately connected it with us. (Joyce knew everything about all of us, including which date we had our



Alice Bradak Ball 1917-1986

tonsils removed.) Peggy's dad, Joyce's brother, turns out to be my dad's first cousin. Our grandmothers were sisters.

I had heard tales about my Grandma (Milly) and her grandma Martha. They came to America aboard a ship with their mother and other siblings to meet up with their father in Southwest Wyoming where he had gone to seek work as a coal miner. Their mother was expecting a baby and not feeling well so Milly, the oldest helped take care of the young ones. The family always said that Milly carried Martha all the way to America.

One year when at Jamboree time, Peggy brought with her a life story written by her first cousin about that cousin's mother who was celebrating her 80th birthday. In a matter of a few minutes, I realized that the subject of this biography, Mary Peterson Groutage, was related to both sides of my family. Mary is my dad's first cousin and her husband was my mother's first cousin. At this point, I became acquainted with the writer, Julie Cooper as well as her sister Elaine. A wonderful find!

This weekend as we gather to celebrate the 100th anniversary of our mother's birthday, my brother and others will have the opportunity to meet a handful of relatives they have never met before.