



## The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard  
June 5, 2013

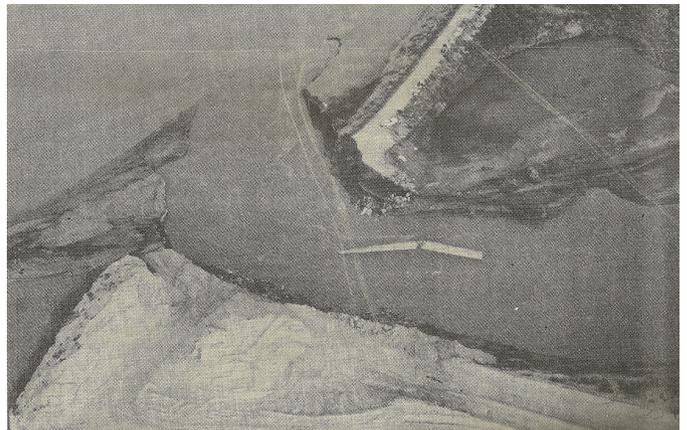
Thirty years ago the Face of Fillmore was in emergency mode as the floods of 1983 and 1984 affected the lives of its residents and changed some of the landscape forever.

Residents of our little community were amazed as the high run off began with streams filling to more than capacity. Hot, dry winds cut the snow banks on the mountain at an alarming rate of speed sending the large volume of water toward town. Volunteers by the hundreds gathered at the North Park when fire sirens rang out to fill sandbags. On one occasion when the loads of sand had been exhausted and an important cement irrigation structure was being threatened, volunteers spent the entire night filling sand bags with cement and putting them into the place.

Crews in heavy equipment worked around the clock to deepen the channel of Chalk Creek and reinforce its eroding banks. Volunteers fixed lunches and delivered them to the workers. Posse members and volunteers spent night after night on bridges in town watching for trees and other debris. Those on a bridge would radio to the next one downstream telling them what was on its way toward them and those volunteers would watch anxiously, hoping it would pass under their bridge, as well. Then they would radio to the next bridge to warn them. Backhoes and other equipment were placed at each bridge in case a tree became lodged against it.

During the floods of 1984, the road surface over the Fourth North Bridge was removed on May 15, the night the creek crested in order to save that structure. Since that time the level of the roadway has been heightened to prevent this from happening again.

Chalk Creek Canyon was caught in the path of destruction as flood waters raced between its narrow walls. The paved road through the section of canyon nearest Fillmore was washed out and only small sections of asphalt remain. Dozens of large trees were strewn about all along the length of the canyon. As the canyon narrowed to the east, huge sections of the roadway, an estimated 20% of the road, fell into the raging waters with sections from four to twenty feet missing. Portions of campgrounds were washed away, including more than



half of the Buckskin Charlie Campground. Rumors of the favorite bridge at Copley Cove being gone as well as the huge boulder it sits on. These rumors proved to be false. However, the bridge did have some undermining and the parking lot had washed away. A few forest service employees and other brave hikers made their way up the canyon to survey the extent of the damage.

With all this water headed toward low-lying Flowell, families in that area were evacuated for their safety. Thousands of acres of farm land were underwater in that area and south of Fillmore I-15 was closed for a short time.

According to the local officials, the flooding and property damage of 1984 was more than double that of 1983. In early May of 1984 the dam at Kanosh broke as well as the huge DMAD Dam and the breaching of the Gunnison Bend Dam. Property damage in Millard County soared. Although it was a tense time for residents of Fillmore, their situation cannot be compared to the losses in other areas of the county.

While these years are remembered as a time when everyone in our communities worked together to help each other under serious conditions, it is also hoped that this disaster will never be repeated.

The caption for this aerial photo after the DMAD Dam broke written by Ed Kanet, sums it up. "After the water had stabilized in its 'normal' flow, an eerie scene appeared. The river through the channel had calmed leaving only a defunct concrete spillway memorial of the disaster downstream."

