



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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Very little is known of the first Christmas spent in Fillmore. With the original families arriving just weeks before the holiday, that first Christmas was certainly not as festive as 162 that have followed.

Most of the families spent the first winter in the wagons they arrived in. Only the S.P. Hoyte, Orange Warner, and T.R. King are recorded to have moved into their unfinished cabins in the fort.

The month before Christmas Apostle George A. Smith arrived at the settlement on his way home from Little Salt Lake, now Parowan. He met with the new citizens of Fillmore and asked for a report about what they had learned in their new area. After hearing of the plentiful cottonwood trees in the canyon east of the settlement from Orange Warner and Chandler Holbrook, he instructed the men to continue to build the road into the canyon as long as the weather permitted so they could get the lumber they needed to build the fort and their homes. He told them to do it in large numbers for protection from the Indians.

Josiah Call reported that he had seen the tracks of black tail deer. In a rare moment of humor, President Smith asked him if he could tell the color of a deer's tail by its tracks.

In the years that followed, Christmas took on a more traditional look in the community with colorful decorations and holiday programs.

Once again Fillmore is taking on a festive Christmas look. Several store windows that have been painted by Connie Mortensen from Henderson, Nevada, giving Main Street the look of an art gallery of bright Christmas characters, including trees with snowflake branches, ice skating snowmen, and Christmas trees with feet and faces leaning to one side almost like they are dancing. Drive slowly down Main Street and take a look.

City crews will soon be hanging decorations on the lamp posts and the Territorial Statehouse crew will be out placing their dozens of trees throughout the park.

Memory Lane will also decorate the court house lawn. These Christmas trees are adorned with ornaments listing names of loved ones who have passed away or who have won their fight against cancer. These ornaments can be purchased from the Committee of Hope – Julie Olsen, in particular. This is a great way of donating to the fight against cancer at the Huntsman Research Center.

The Christmas season is officially kicked off in Fillmore with a program on the Millard Court House steps at 6 p.m. on November 30. Mayor Gene Larsen will speak briefly to the group and the Fillmore Middle School Sixth Grade Chorus will sing some of their favorite Christmas songs under the direction of Mrs. Kae Starley. Then the light parade will begin, eventually delivering Santa to his place of honor in the American Legion Hall where he will visit with the younger crowd. There will be free wagon rides after the



First Christmas

visit with Santa. Donuts and hot chocolate will be enjoyed by all as they listen to the music in the park.

A great evening activity during this time of year is to drive through the park with your radios tuned to 102.1 FM. This music is coordinated with the pattern of the tree lights in the Territorial Park and is a great way to enjoy both the light and music program.

Driving up and down side streets, you will find many homes highly decorated for the season. Thanks to their owners for sharing their decorating skills with all of us.

All in all, Fillmore is a great place to enjoy the holiday season.

