



## The Face of Fillmore

*By Sherry Shepard*

August 15, 2012

The flower gardens throughout the Face of Fillmore are once again brimming with color. Petunias are a favorite in many locations including Chris and Vickie Carling's yard. Gardens all around town are full of this year's abundant harvest of vegetables and fruits. We all know nothing quite beats the taste of a home-grown tomato. Keeping your car doors locked this time of year is a good idea to avoid a backseat filled with zucchini.



This tradition of gardening began with the earliest settlers who moved to our community. Each pioneer brought as many seeds, cuttings and small plants as was possible to carry with them.

In October, 1853, Ann Dutson Carling moved to Fillmore with a teapot full of black walnuts. She planted them on the corner of First West and Second North. One of them lived to be over 100 years old.



Gabriel Huntsman returned to Fillmore from a mission to Canada in 1857, bringing with him apple and Concord grape seeds, locust seeds, and black walnuts. He also brought a cutting of a flowering plum which was planted and nourished by Ilene Cooper for years afterward. He planted his starts in several locations and they all produced fruit which were enjoyed by many residents for years afterward. He is credited with growing the first nectarines in town in 1880.

James Starley was sent by Brigham Young to Fillmore in 1858 to establish a nursery. With Johnson's army marching toward Utah, Brigham Young carefully selected starts from his own orchard and sent them with Mr. Starley so they would be preserved if anything happened to Salt Lake City.

Joseph V. and his brother Benjamin Robison went on a cattle buying trip to Illinois in 1861 and brought back apple seeds, as well as peach and plum pits to be planted in Fillmore. When he arrived in Fillmore, Joseph began a nursery that supplied plants for many of the towns in southern Utah and Nevada.

Hans and Hannah Hanson left Denmark in April of 1862. Hannah was determined to bring as many seeds as she could. She filled the fingers of three pairs of gloves with flower and vegetable seeds, then tied them securely so they wouldn't become mixed. She planted a grape arbor at her Fillmore home, as well as raising peonies, dahlias, geraniums and roses.

In 1910 the installation of a water pipe system was a great help in beautifying Fillmore.

In the early 1930's the first garden club was organized. Called the Fillmore Rose Club, it had eight members: Geneva Speakman, Fern Robison, Ila Stevens, Jessie Melville, Grace Mitchell, Laura Anderson, Nell Huntsman and Stella Day. This group was responsible for the rose garden at the Fillmore Hospital and the one at the County Court House. In 1948, they received the Tribune-Telegram Award for the most outstanding achievement.

A later, larger version of this organization, The Fillmore Garden Club, was organized in 1947 with Emily Wade as its first president. Other early leaders of the group were Lawrence Peterson, Cathryn Nielsen and Dolores Brunson. One of their first tasks was to help keep the city's walks clean of weeds. They also helped finish the hospital rose garden. Meetings were held once a month, often with a guest speaker who was an authority on some type of plants. Many flower shows were sponsored by the club and its members furnished flower arrangements for all public occasions. Garden tours were also one of their specialties.

One of the lasting remnants of the Garden Club's work was the establishing of the Blue Star Park at the curve on the south end of Main Street. Driving past on a regular basis, we fail to note the purpose of this small, well-kept triangle of green with a few picnic tables for passers-by to use.

The plaque at the park reads: "Blue Star Memorial Highway. A tribute to the Armed Forces that have defended the United States of America. Sponsored by the Fillmore Garden Club in cooperation with the Utah State Department of Highways, District V and the Utah Association of Garden Clubs."

This attractive, yet often unnoticed park, adds a quiet spot of beauty as we enter the south end of the Face of Fillmore.

