



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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To say that in the past the Face of Fillmore was dotted with gas stations is a major understatement. Before the freeway bypassed the town and even earlier, gas stations were plentiful all along Main Street.

I sat with Allison Robison one recent afternoon and he drove down Main Street in his memory, telling me of the stations he remembers and their locations. He has a wonderful collection of pictures of these and shared some with me for this column.

Beginning at the south end of Main Street near the flower shop, there were two gas stations, one across the street and one where the lumber yard is located. Around the corner going north on Main, there was a station where the Dollar Store sits and one diagonally across the street which was run for years by a man named Lassen. This one was also a car dealership.

The station that eventually was moved and became Allison's home was located where the alley is just south of Mt. Catherine Manor. North of the Manor, Tony Dearden Sr. began his gas station and garage business and just north of him where the old Arctic Circle was there was a station run by Cummings Day. Across the street to the north in front of the old Robison Hotel was a station run by the Brinkerhoff family. Even earlier this was a Sinclair station run by Vern Cluff. Across Main Street from the Arctic Circle location, there was a Conoco station in the spot where the old Zion's Bank building sits.

Going north from the Robison Hotel corner, there was a station at the entrance to the Spinning Wheel Motel and another gas station sat where the real estate office is. Of all the stations in town, I'd like to take a closer look at the one where the real estate office is now located at 35 South Main. This building has seen a variety of uses in its day. Most of the long-time residents of Fillmore remember this as the Progress office owned by Jane McBride Wilson. At that time the building was also home to the law offices of Vance Wilson.

In its earlier days the Progress newspaper was located across the street in the Fillmore Bank Building and the building we are looking at was the Shell station, picture here, with an old truck refilling the fuel supply tanks.



In the location of the flower shop on Main and Center, there was a Zion's Oil Station and across the street where the bank is now located was Vico Oil Company.

Just half a block on to the north, a gas station occupied the location where the drug store is and another one was just north at Warner Motors. Yet another was on the north corner of that block. There was also a station at the

Arrowhead Motel, which was located between Warner's and the drug store.

Across the street there was a station next to the old Kimball and Company store. Both burned in one of the largest fires Fillmore has seen.

Just south of the lumber store was a station run by brothers Dale and Turby Ashman. It was in this building that Duane Bartholomew began his first store.

On the corner of Main and Second North there was a station in the building now used by an insurance company. This was run by Clark Maycock. Back across the street and slightly north there were two stations. One was where the old antique shop is and one by the creek. This one was owned by Burt Cluff and LaMoyne Melville and was also a Chevy car dealership.

A couple of blocks north on the west side of the street is the station earlier owned by Don Turner and across the street was the Shell station. The old Whiting station used to be located right where the north freeway interchange is.

If my counting is correct, there were twenty-five gas stations along Main Street in earlier days.

It is interesting to note that these early stations were often located a little differently in relation to the street than those built today. When looking at pictures of these stations, one realizes that the buildings were right up to the sidewalks and the gas pumps were on the edge of the street.

Presently there is one of these stations in the middle town and the one at the old Turner station location in operation. If you want gas other than that you have to drive to either one of the interchanges, where there is a cluster of stations and eating places to draw customers from the travelers going up and down the freeway.

