



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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The Face of Fillmore this week centers on a home that is currently entering Chapter 3 in its lifetime. This home is located at 270 West 200 North.

Chapter 1 of the home's history began at the little settlement of Clear Lake. This townsite was located just west of Highway 257, directly west of Clear Lake itself. It was built as a farming community and grew even more because of the railroad and the stops the trains made when coming through the area. Foundations of the buildings are still visible if one looks carefully.

The Salt Lake Railroad Company and the Union Pacific Railroad signed an agreement on the new alignment for the railroad in 1902. Building the railroad line was begun at Salt Lake on the north and at Los Angeles on the south. The two lines met 34 miles west of Las Vegas on January 20, 1904. On February 9, 1905 the first train passed by the town of Clear Lake and on May 1, the first passenger train used these rails.

According to Venetta Bond Kelsey in her book Life on the Black Rock Desert: A History of Clear Lake, Utah, the town Clear Lake was a thriving community in 1905. Canals had been built to supply water to the fields. Jack Watson and his family operated a hotel in town. Hugh and Laura John had a home and farm just west of Pot Mountain where they raised alfalfa hay and seed. Barclay and Mary Ann John and their three daughters lived on their newly developed farm. He also worked on his father Hugh's farm. Emory John was the ranch foreman. Mabel Robinson was the ranch secretary as well as having a store and being the postmaster. There were a number of well-kept homes along Main Street west of the railroad and a school where social gatherings were held. Hyrum and Lovina Bond's first home was across the lane from the section foreman's house which had been built by C.J. Aldrach. The railroad section foreman was John D. Bushnell, who was a brother to Lovina Bond. He lived in the foreman's house with his wife Jennie and daughter Venice. This is the home of interest this week – the section foreman's house, pictured here where it once stood for nearly forty years in Clear Lake.

Chapter 2 of this home's history happened in the late 1930's or early 1940's when it was moved to Fillmore.

This story has its beginnings in Nebraska with a man named Johnny Nutch. His family was immigrants from Germany. During the dust bowl years, he looked for other



work and found that houses were being moved from Clear Lake, Utah. He moved to Delta to find work as part of this project, being experienced in house moving. He was later joined by a brother-in-law James Dohn. Interestingly enough, James met Nora Wise from Fillmore at Van's Dance Hall in Delta and they were married. (Nora is a sister to Jack Wise.)

Johnny Nutch and James Dohn were responsible for moving the section foreman's house and four others to Fillmore. These included the Robison home on First West now owned by Nyle Steiner, Beth Cahoon's home, the home at 75 West First North, and the home at 180 Canyon Road. This last home was recently purchased as a second home by a contractor from St. George and is currently having a new coat of paint.

The basement for the Clear Lake railroad foreman's home was dynamited and then dug using a team of horses and a Fresno scraper by Bill Hare. The home was put in place and the family of Otto Kesler are believed to be the first to move in. Since the Kesler's, several families have occupied the home. But in the past few years, it began to deteriorate until it was nearly uninhabitable.

This is where Chapter 3 for the home begins. Bevan Johnson bought the property in 2009 and began the restoration of the house. The interior walls were gutted as seen in the picture here, and new electrical and plumbing work was done before new walls were constructed and finished. The home is now completely redone inside and out, with its vinyl siding and new roof. Surprisingly, it is nearly 3000 square feet on three levels with six bedrooms. The garage was also covered with siding to match the home. A visit to the home's open house on August 26 will show just what a pleasantly livable home this has become.



It is exciting to see the changes to modernize these older homes while keeping their original historical look. Thanks to those who put forth the effort to do just that and thank you to those willing to share their stories to help piece together the history of these older homes.