



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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Sometimes we find connections to our little community of Fillmore in the oddest places.

That happened to me a few weeks ago, as a challenge came to find an ancestor. Thoughts went back over fifty years to our search for the family of my husband’s great-grandfather. A dead end. Nowhere could we find out who his parents were. It was thought he was born in New Jersey, but that appeared to only be speculation and there was no record of it. I wrote letters to the area where he supposedly came from and the record keepers there wrote back and asked if I had ever heard of the Mormon Church.

I had checked out Family Search on numerous occasions but that day there appeared his name and a name in the father’s place – a step-father. Looking more closely at the details, there was a record of his birth parents, from New Jersey, who were married at a very young age. Later they had three more children.

When the great grandfather, Joseph Sutton Brundage, was an early teenager he was, for unknown reasons, attached to the Mulford family.

In the 1851 census of Utah County it listed a boy, Joseph, lived in the same American Fork household with Furman and Anna Mulford.

Furman Mulford moved his family to Fillmore in 1852 and was still living here when the 1860 census was done. He is also listed as a landowner but records of the land and transactions are only available in the courthouse back to 1873, so I was unable to locate the exact piece of property he lived on.

Joseph Sutton Brundage moved several times during his lifetime, eventually living in Green River, Utah at the time of his marriage and later moving to the Uintah Basin.

The Mulford family moved to Richfield and on to Harrisburg near Joseph, where Furman eventually passed away was buried.

More children were born to that family with a son Charles being born right here in Fillmore in 1859. Charles married Dena Smith whose father settled the town of Notom. This ranching area is near Capitol Reef.

The stories of how Notom was named are the stuff that makes old Western legends so entertaining. Jorgen Smith wanted to establish a post office in the town so in filling out the proper government forms, he named the town “Pleasant Dale”. It appears that a Pleasant Dale already existed so in frustration he is said to have filled in the blank, “No Town”, which eventually became Notom.

A more colorful version I have read says that the name came from a girl’s rejection to a young man named Tom, her suitor. When she was asked by him for her hand in marriage, she replied, “No, Tom”.



Joseph Sutton Brundage, stepson to Furman Mulford, Early Fillmore settler

Some say his ghost still haunts the area as he was so upset at this rejection that he drowned himself in one of the natural water pockets up one of the rock canyons.

Searching for pioneer ancestors can be a surprisingly entertaining venture and can bring life to those names on paper.