



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
December 5, 2012

I spent a very pleasant afternoon in the home of Robert (Ag) and Afton Nielson to get information for the Face of Fillmore. For me, this is the best part of this column, sitting down and hearing stories of a family home, which, of course, turns out to be the life story of the people living there.

I was standing in line at a local hardware store when Ag walked up and stood next to me to wait. He invited me to come to their home that they had an unusual story to tell about it. He didn't have to ask twice.

The home is located at 285 South 100 East and like many others in town, the property has changed hands several times before the present owners moved there.

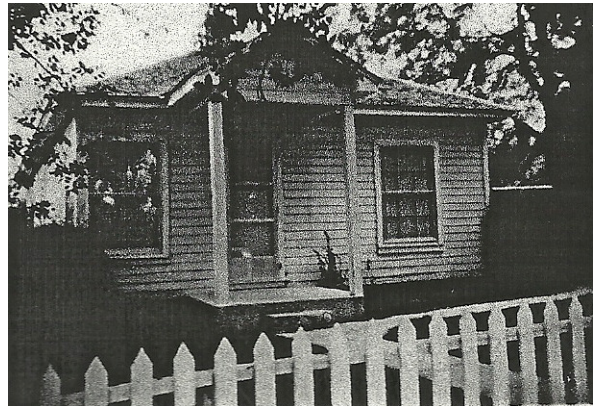
The property was originally deeded from Mayor Joseph V. Robison to George Croft, then to John Jackson, Jr., then Douglas Tomkinson, Celestial Tomkinson, John Vernarda, Joseph Smith, J. Blake Davies and then to his daughter Dawn Carling, who was the wife of Fred Carling, a current resident of Fillmore.

This is where the unusual part of the story begins. In 1937, Fred's barber told him about a house he owned, located on south side of "Bald Mountain" about three or four miles northwest of Fillmore. The house had been occupied at one time, but more recently had been used as a turkey roost. The Carling's decided it would work for them, so they bought it for \$300, with payments of \$5 monthly. After a thorough cleaning, the fathers of the young couple stepped in. Fred's father, Merritt Carling, and Dawn's father, Blake Davies jacked up the house and put in on two wagons which were each pulled by a pair of work horses. The fathers drove their teams and unusual cargo into Fillmore, down Main Street and on to its present location, where Blake had prepared a stone foundation for it.

In the ensuing years new windows were installed, a bathroom added as well as a utility porch, which later became the kitchen. New wiring was also put into the home.

In 1950 Fred and Dawn sold the house to Nord and LaRue Brockbank for \$6000 and three years later it was sold for the same price to Robert and Afton Nielson, who are the current owners.

The home looked like the early picture here when the Nielson's bought it in 1953. It was a tiny home and soon they added a small one car garage to the north for an additional \$600. In time it was obvious that they were a little cramped in the home with their family of two daughters, so a major remodeling job took place in



1960, shortly after the building of the Fillmore Stake Center. The same contractors built the addition to the Nielsen home – Ren Hansen and Willis Black. Living there became much more spacious and comfortable for the family.

Ag and Afton’s lives had some interesting events to mark the way, as well. The couple just celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary on October 23.

Afton’s father Clarence East grew up in the Ogden area and was the mission companion of Howard W. Hunter. When Ag and Afton were married in the Salt Lake Temple, President Hunter was scheduled to perform the ceremony but got called away unexpectedly so the temple president married them.

Afton tells that one “interesting” thing happened on their way back from Salt Lake that day. As they were traveling past Eureka, Bob hit a skunk and the rest of the ride home was miserable from the smell. He says he didn’t hit it, the car did.

Both of the Nielson’s grew up in Oak City. Ag tells one of the first mistakes he made when he began his teaching career at Millard High School was that in the introduction about himself he gave at the opening of school assembly he introduced himself as a Delta High graduate. He says it didn’t take long until the students managed to make an Eagle out of him.

One would never guess looking at the outside of this attractive home that it had its beginnings long ago as a turkey roost. The pioneer spirit of creating something out of little is certainly alive and well and evident in this and many other homes in Fillmore.