



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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Rocks – a word that has become the topic of many conversations in Fillmore since the early pioneers first began to till the soil and build homes. It is still used often, sometimes preceded by an expletive to emphasize our frustration as we deal with the abundance of them in town.

This week the Face of Fillmore will look at rocks from more than one perspective.

Popular legend has it that a famous rock was once found on Main Street in Fillmore. Passing through on his way south, Brigham Young told the residents to remove the rock from the street before he returned north. When he came back, it was still there. He is said to have made the statement that Fillmore would always have that kind of attitude and not prosper because of it. Generations of Fillmore citizens have been trying to prove him wrong.

Rocks were commonly used in the construction of buildings in Fillmore, the most prominent being the Territorial Statehouse.

The First Capital Main Street Beautification Committee is looking at rocks, quarried in the same location, for a great addition to their project. The Mark and Nelda Paxton family have donated the rocks that were once the lower levels of the Bishop Noah Bartholomew home just west of Main Street at 100 North to be used as planters and benches on Main Street.

Crews of workers from the jail and city employees recently removed the rocks and they are now being stored on city property on the west side of town.

On June 18, Keith McKay, a renowned stonemason, came to look at the rocks and make more specific suggestions for their use. He is known for his work on the Nauvoo Temple and an impressive list of other temples and important buildings around the world. He will be back to help some with the cutting and placement of the rocks to make benches. It is hoped a group of local people will attend a session he will present for hands-on instruction for cutting and placing the rocks, so that much of the work can be done by local people. Plans for this are still in the talking stages and the amount of his participation in the project is still unclear. He is seen in the picture here with committee member Don Frampton and planner Shannon Miller.

The donated rocks have historical significance. Their original owner was Bishop Noah Bartholomew.



Keith McKay surveys recycled building material for possible uses.

He was one of the first settlers of Fillmore and the first bishop. The first religious services in Fillmore were held in his tent before any buildings were even begun. His original family home was a log cabin inside Fort Fillmore. Eventually he saw the need for a larger home. He learned the art of stone masonry and brick making, building a three level home. Brick work for the upper story was done by Henry Faust. It was located on what is now first north and about first east, just at the top of the hill. It was the most northerly building inside the fort and became known as "Bartholomew Castle". It was used as an inn or hotel, as well as home to seventeen children.



Old Bartholomew foundation about to become building material.



The Bartholomew family was not the typical Fillmore family in some respects. They raised fine horses. Their son George became a performer in a circus, which traveled around Utah. His brother Noah was an acrobat and sister Matilda, a bare back rider.

Time and weather has taken a toll on the show place that Noah Bartholomew built. For several years now all that was left was the lower rock level in less than perfect condition, as seen here. The generous donation from the Paxton family will give these stones a prominent place once again for all to enjoy.