



The Face of Fillmore

By *Sherry Shepard*
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Tucked away just off Main Street is a home I have passed several times in the nearly forty years we have lived in Fillmore. This home is located at 55 West 300 North, just southwest and across the street from the Chalk Creek Bridge.

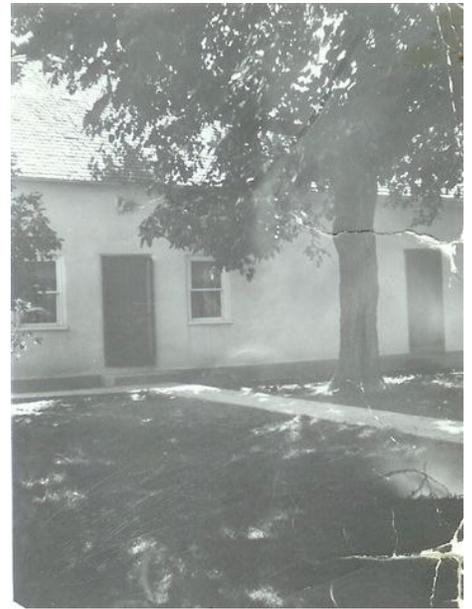
Built in 1894, this home's builder is unknown but a Mr. Alexander owned the property when it was built. Constructed of adobe and stucco with a steeply pitched roof, the home is smaller than some of its day that stood prominently on Main Street, but it has an interesting past.

The fact it has two front doors conjures up ideas of the possibility of a polygamist family. I also thought that it could have been one of the earliest apartment buildings in town. In reality, it was a private school. I decided that perhaps one door was used for the home and the other for the school. Then I called Carl Camp at the Territorial Statehouse Museum and found out some fascinating facts about early private schools in Utah. He also solved the double door mystery. It seems that in the early schools, boys entered through one door and girls through another.

Following the Civil War, several sects including Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians sent members to start private schools with the intent of indoctrinating the young people against the practice of polygamy. These groups were quoted as saying there were "twin relics of barbarism", those being slavery and polygamy. Since the Civil War had taken care of slavery, they were now trying to rid the country of the other problem.

As school begins again this year, it is entertaining to look back at some of the punishments given out to students in the 1840's. Each violation of the rules was given a set number of lashes. According to the list, the most serious offense was playing cards at school or "misbehaving to girls". Both of these were worth ten lashes. Three others worth eight lashes were telling tales out of school, "swearing" at school, and drinking spirituous liquors at school. Some lesser offenses included wearing long fingernails, coming to school with dirty faces and hands, and gambling or betting at school.

The original appearance of this early school, which later became a home, has changed very little in the ensuing years as seen from the pictures. It was remodeled and enlarged in 1941. The present owners Rondo and Brittany Harrison are currently repainting the exterior. The lilac bushes in the front yard as well as the giant mulberry tree have been there since 1938.





Several people have owned the home since its beginning, including Will Critchley, Art and Stella Wade, Gail and Mildred Edwards, and Helen and Bill Adams, from whom the Harrison's bought the home a few years ago.

Again we see a family carefully preserving one of our pioneer homes in Fillmore.