



The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard

April 21, 2010

The Face of Fillmore this week looks to the interior of some of the blocks around our community to find even more relics of the past. As you drive down the street, you might want to do the same, for many fascinating stories are hidden there.

In the early days of Fillmore, it was necessary to have an icehouse to keep perishable food in, such as milk and eggs. Many of these are still standing and most are built of the native stone like the statehouse. Other outbuildings of cedar logs or boards are found in some blocks. Granaries were also a necessity and several of those are still standing. There are a few large wooden barns in the center of some blocks, as well as old wooden fences and hay derricks.

One of the most interesting outbuildings of all is tucked away behind the Robison Hotel on the corner of Main Street and First South. This brick building looks just as it did when it was built in about 1860.

In those days tithing was paid in commodities. One tenth of a person's harvest of whatever kind or the eggs from their chickens or their butchered meat. These were brought to the tithing house, which is what the two story brick building behind the hotel was used for. The home at that time was the property of Joseph V. Robison, who not only was the stake president, but was also the mayor. The tithing building was probably built there because of its central location.

During part of the time the home on the corner was under construction, Joseph and his family lived in the tithing building. This structure is quite unusual as there are no windows on the ground floor, but two are found on the second story, which could be used as a lookout to watch for Indians. As the first settlers moved from the safety of the fort, they were no doubt a little leery about the possibility the Indians were not as friendly as they appeared.

Joseph V. led a life not unlike some other men in town. He was a polygamist, having two wives. With polygamy being against the law, it was necessary to go into hiding from time to time. He had the perfect set up to do this. Underneath the floor of the tithing house was a cellar complete with a bed and some food items. The entrance to it was well hidden beneath the stairway to the upper floor. There was also a tunnel from one of the back rooms of the home to the tithing house. This, too, was very well hidden and kept a secret.

The tithing building has been very well preserved in its original state since its construction. The present owners, Lee and Kay Davis, use it for storage of lawn and garden equipment as well as other items. Lee spoke of plans to turn the upstairs into an art studio sometime in the future, while leaving the exterior just as it has been for over a century.

