



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
June 29, 2016

This week the Face of Fillmore looks at the northeast corner of the “public square” block – the corner of Main and Center and a location that has been part of Fillmore’s history since very early days.

I recently frequented the store that is now in that spot and asked Joe, the owner, when the new plaque was placed on the outside of his store. His answer surprised me, “Oh, over ten years ago.” That shows how unobservant I am and maybe others share that problem. We have so many historic things around us, it is easy to pass them up.

The plaque reads:

“Historic Marker – Z.C.M.I. Co-op Building 1891-1960
Official outlet of Z.C.M.I. (Zions Cooperative Mercantile Institution) ‘America’s First Department Store.’ Since 1891 this building has housed the Fillmore Co-operative, the Stevens Mercantile and now (1995) the Pioneer Market. It was part of the ZC MI cooperative system serving more than 150 communities in the Intermountain area with retail commodities and services beginning in 1868 to 1960.”



The plaque put there by ZCMI



Old Stevens Store when it was called “Red and White Store”.

Inside the store there is also a large sign to go along with this: “Holiness to the Lord. Zions Cooperative Mercantile Institution.”

The store has changed owners and some of its services in that time. Once it even was home to the post office. In the fall of 1888, David R. Stevens opened a general store, known then as “The People’s Store”. On January 18, 1889, he bought the Fillmore Co-op store and moved his stock into the building. Mr. Smith managed the stores until January, 1897 when Daniel Stevens took over the

management of the store for his father. In 1908 the building was nearly doubled in size. The name was also changed to the Stevens Mercantile Company. In 1912, Daniel, the son, purchased the business and its name from his father. In 1931 Daniel Stevens retired and divided his properties among his family members but retained his interests in the store in Fillmore and the other in Delta. He later sold them to William J. Starley and LaVoy Kimball. In 1989 the store was purchased by Joe Ashman, the present owner, from LaVoy Kimball's son Dan.



Old Stevens Store with hitching post. Note the missing top bar, which evidently was removable to prevent injury to excited horses.



Inside the old Stevens Store. Note the mezzanine opening in the ceiling.

In the process of changing owners and merchandise, the store has also changed in appearance, having been remodeled and enlarged during its existence. One change that is interesting to note, is that at one time the main part of the store, now located on the Main Street side had a mezzanine around the top with small apartments there that were rented out. At that point the store itself occupied only the front section ending about where the cash register counter is today.