



## Face of Fillmore

*By Sherry Shepard*  
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It seems lots of activities in our lives are interconnected. A couple of weeks ago I told a scary story in the dark on a Friday the Thirteenth ATV ride. The story began with the truth of things that happened at the Deer Pasture and then morphed into odd details I dreamed up to scare the people on the ride. It may have been difficult for some to decide where truth ended, and my imagination took off. Since that time, I have been questioned about whether or not I knew the truth of what happened there. So, this week I am revisiting an old article, one I found interesting to investigate and write.

Many of the homes that make up the Face of Fillmore have interesting beginnings, even though they might not be in the early pioneer era of our city. I was surprised at the history behind one of the homes in town which sits quietly on Second West.

In 1940, a deer experimental station was built at Maple Springs near the foot of Sand Rock Ridge in an area appropriately called “The Deer Pasture”. This was supported by funds from the Pittman-Robinson Wildlife Act. It was operated under the sponsorship of the U.S.A.C. as well as federal and state wildlife organizations. It was the largest operation of its kind, covering some 700 acres.



Location of the house at the Deer Pasture - only a faint line of the foundation can be seen

A home was built there for the man in charge of the station and large deer pens were built all around the area. Different types of browse were fed to the deer in each pen as an experiment to see what types of food they thrived on as well as observing their habits. Early in the afternoon of September 16, 1942, a few local farmers in Meadow were burning brush to clear some privately-owned land and the fire got away from them. They had started their project on a calm day, but weather conditions soon changed, and a stiff wind began to blow the fire out of control. It burned across the face of the mountains heading northeast, and all along the foothills and into the mountains, finally burning itself out in Chalk Creek Canyon as the wind abruptly changed. Nearly 10,000 acres burned along with 60 power poles belonging to the Telluride Power Company, which came across the top of the mountain from Richfield. Residents described the fire as looking like “the whole world was on fire”. Crews under the direction of District Ranger Ivan

Christensen succeeded in stopping the advance of the flames as they reached the Fillmore Cemetery and threatened to spread into the town. The fire was brought under control within 24 hours.

The fire reached the deer experimental station about 2:30 p.m. Authorities worried about the safety of Everett Doman and his family who lived in the home there. The house was bypassed by the flames, but all of the other structures were destroyed, as well as several deer, which were found in their pens, as seen in this picture taken of a forest service employee and the remains of a deer after the fire. The Doman family was safely in Oak City Canyon, where they had gone earlier in the day to count deer.

Adding to people's concern, was the fact that on that day, Bertis Frampton had a cart out in the hills, picking browse to feed the deer at the experimental station. With the flames fast approaching, he was unable to reach his father's car, so he saddled his horse and headed for the top of the mountain. When nearing the summit, he was again hemmed in by flames. He later told that he lost control of his horse and continued on foot. The fire raged for hours and hours, and, according to some accounts, Bertis's horse, minus rider, showed up in Fillmore at its home. Family and friends feared the worst and continued searching for Bertis. Through the night and into the next day, hundreds of people on horseback and on foot combed the hills for signs of him. Everyone was certain it was not possible for him to have survived the conflagration. Newspaper articles about the search were seen in all of the major newspapers. In the September 17 issue of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Fishlake Forest Supervisor Blaine Betensen was quoted as saying, "There is little hope of finding him alive."

Bertis had, in fact, made it to the top of the mountain and found a couple who was herding sheep. He stayed with them overnight and then headed back down the ridge by Pine Creek. When he reached the highway, a local businessman, Mr. Lawson, picked him up and drove him to Fillmore, where he drove up and down Main Street hollering at the passersby to let them know he had found Bertis.

The fire gutted the corrals at the Deer Pasture, but, thanks to Bertis's quick actions before leaving when he turned on the hoses and soaked down the house, it was not touched. The forest service had the structure moved from the location at Maple Springs as seen in the picture where only a few chunks of cement remain to show the spot. If you look closely, you can see the outline of where the home stood. The building was transported into town in sections and was reassembled at its present location at 245 South 200 West. At first it was occupied by forest service employees but was sold and has since been used as a rental property.



House where it is located in Fillmore