



## The Face of Fillmore

*By Sherry Shepard*  
May 20, 2009

Perhaps the Face of Fillmore's most peaceful place is the Fillmore City Cemetery. Located at the southeast corner of town, this serene spot offers an inviting look into the past of the early settlers as well as their descendants.

Just a few years after the settlement of Fillmore, plots were laid out as a final resting place for the residents. In the years that followed grass was planted, the pine trees donated, planted, and watered by hand by Oscar Anderson and his grandsons. A sprinkling system was added later on to help keep the grass green and the trees watered. Constant care is still given to keep the cemetery one of the most attractive in the state.

A visit to the cemetery reveals much about those resting there.

The first burials took place in 1854 with four that year. A special thank you to Lisa Crosland, who carefully leafed through the original hand-written records to make certain they were in chronological order.

The first person interred in Fillmore's cemetery was George Nixon. He was buried there on January 19, 1854. The records showed he died from "inflammation" at the age of 35.

George Nixon was born in Valenciennes, France, August 16, 1818. He was the seventh son of William and Margaret who were originally from Leek, England. George lived with his parents until he married Fanny Hart in 1839.

In 1840 they were baptized into the LDS church by an elder named R. Rushton. In September 1844, they left England with their two children, Charlotte and Emma. After traveling for 60 days they arrived in Nauvoo. A son, George William, was born to the couple in St. Louis, Missouri in 1847. The family came west with the Saints, and in 1853 they moved to Fillmore. After George's death, his wife and children moved to Holden in 1855 and were among the first ten families there.

Next came the burial of young John Russell on February 1. This three-year-old died of scarlet fever as did his one-year-old brother William. Allen and Harriet Hutchins Russell have six children buried side-by-side. After John and William (who was buried on June 1, 1854), a third child died in 1856, two more in 1862 just ten days apart and a sixth was stillborn. Stopping by these



Fillmore City Cemetery

graves, one cannot help think of the heartache these years must have brought to the Russell family.

Cynthia Eldredge, originally of New York State, was buried in Fillmore in April that first year the cemetery was in use. She was among the earliest of Fillmore's settlers, coming in 1851.

Taking a stroll through the historic graves in the Fillmore Cemetery can be a relaxing and educational step back into the past.

Following an article about the Fillmore City Cemetery and the first person buried in it, there was a letter to the editor, signed by Robert L. Hatton, explaining that I was wrong and giving a very interesting detailed history about who the first person really was. I probably should have explained in my original column that I had obtained my information from the official records in the Fillmore City Offices and had assumed it was correct. Thank you to Robert L. Hatton for setting the record straight.



Dear Editor,

While visiting Fillmore this weekend, to decorate family graves, we came across an article in your paper entitled "Faces of Fillmore" by Sherry Shepard. Although this was an interesting article it was factually incorrect. The first "white man" buried in the Fillmore cemetery was William Hawthorn Hatton who died on September 13, 1853 while standing guard at Fort Fillmore. The word "white man" is in parentheses because according to family history, there were a couple of Indians buried there first in unmarked graves. William H. Hatton and his wife Adelia Almire Wilcox Hatton were traveling to California and stopped in Fillmore for a rest and supplies. William was reportedly killed by Indians although there is some question as to the truth of that. Adelia was a member of the Mormon Church, unbenounced to William, and a theory surfaced that he was killed to get his wife away from him, a non-believer, and keep her and her two kids in the Mormon faith. A new headstone was placed on the grave of William H. Hatton by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers many years ago, and is the only one I remember every seeing although I was told it was originally made of stone. The Daughters of the Utah Pioneers also placed a plaque on Main Street honoring William H. Hatton and stating that he was the first person buried in Fillmore. I'm not sure if it is still there or not. Adelia remained in Fillmore and later entered a polygamist marriage as the second wife. This turned out to be an abusive situation and she was granted a temple divorce by Brigham Young. She was later sealed to Heber C. Kimball, believing that she needed to be sealed to a good man to obtain her salvation. She never lived with Heber C. Kimball as a wife but is buried in Kanosh, Utah as Adelia Kimball. Adelia's kids later had her sealed to their father William H. Hatton. There followed a long line of Hattons from the Fillmore area.



Sincerely,  
Robert L. Hatton  
June 3, 2009