



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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As I opened last week's Chronicle and saw The Face of Fillmore, it dawned on me how much people are missing if they only see the exterior of the American Legion Hall in Fillmore. Although it is an unusual shaped building and stands out because it is a log cabin, the interior is just as unique and an interesting lesson in United State history.

I called long-time friends Dave and Vicki Allen and asked a favor. Within minutes, we were on our way for a guided tour of the American Legion Hall.

Dave is currently the commander of Post 61 and his emotional attachment to this building and those it represents is obvious as you listen to him tell about it. Among other things he mentioned were the men who serve with him as officers of the post: Tom Memmott as first vice, Wayne Jackson as second vice, and Craig Bartholomew as adjutant.

As you enter the east doors, your attention is drawn to a large American flag suspended from the ceiling's exposed beams. It is a fitting reminder of where you are.

The interior of the log construction is visible throughout the main part of the building with its dark pine logs and white chinking. I couldn't help thinking of the people in our community who paid \$5 apiece for those logs to build this building. Two large rock fireplaces were placed on either end of the building to provide heat for the large room.

A large credenza has been placed next to one of the fireplaces with a collection of military memorabilia inside. The fireplace mantles are also filled with interesting artifacts from the past. An old ship's bell that has been passed through generations of a family stands in one corner.



Commander David Allen by the POW MIA chair



American Legion light

One wooden chair, which I found especially interesting, has been etched with the initials, "POW MIA". A chain has been placed across from one arm to the other, showing that no one is to sit there. Dave explained that the chair is to remain empty until all of our soldiers are home.

All around the eight walls of the room is an historical art collection. Original paintings, mostly by local painter Frank Thomas, are large colorful reminders of the wars that our country has been part of, from early Revolutionary War depictions to the more recent conflicts in Vietnam and the Middle East. If you are familiar with Mr. Thomas's work, you will realize that many of the faces in the paintings are those of people who live right here in our area. Some are more easily spotted than others. The first I discovered was one of the artist himself, as a frontiersman meeting with a group of Native Americans.

Perhaps my favorite painting in the room is of a friend I miss, Colonel Sam Starley. The painting is by Courtney Lunt and is of Colonel Sam bending over to hand a flag to a small boy. (The boy is Courtney's son Mason.) The title of the painting is "Passing the Challenge".

Dave explained to me the commitment that Post 61 has to the community in many areas like sending young people to Boys' and Girls' State, the color guards that precede each local parade, the final honors paid to veterans at the cemetery, as well as other civic contributions.

I was most impressed with the obvious reverence and honor Dave feels for those who have served our country. It was contagious. The few minutes spent at the American Legion Building was a great history lesson for me and a deeper appreciation for those who help make our country great.



Painting by Frank Thomas



"Passing the Challenge" by Courtney Lunt