



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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Without a doubt, the most peaceful spot in the Face of Fillmore is the cemetery. A relaxing and calorie burning walk around the graves gives one a great afternoon activity, as well as a quick lesson in Fillmore's historical past. As I have done this on many occasions, I have thought how exciting it would be if the headstones could tell you about the people buried beneath them. Recently, one of the graves came to life for me via information from a new found acquaintance, Duane Carling, who has shared a wealth of information with me.

The grave I am referring to lies almost in the center of the cemetery and is far enough from a paved road that I hadn't noticed it before. It is that of John Carling, a pioneer with a rich history to share.

John Carling was born on September 11, 1800 in Kingston, New York and died in 1855 in Fillmore. He became a member of the LDS Church in January of 1840 and joined the Saints in Nauvoo. He was responsible for finishing some of the fine woodwork in the temple and was asked by Brigham Young to design the oxen for the baptistery in the Nauvoo Temple.

Mr. Carling had prize oxen. He tied up his favorite and drew pictures of the animal. From this drawing, the oxen which held up the baptismal font in the temple were made. The story of this was told in the July 2011 issue of the Church's *Friend* magazine - The Calling by Corine Plugh.

Not long after the story was published, Duane, his sister Barbara and many other friends and relatives attended the graveside services of their mother Persus Carling in the Fillmore Cemetery. Barbara had with her a copy of the *Friend*, and after the service, she and Duane went searching for John Carling's grave. The original headstone was not one that showed up well. Being made of native red sandstone and only about two feet high, it was difficult to locate. It had long since been tipped over, and it had only his initials carved into it. "J.C."

At this point, the suggestion was made that someone should make John a new headstone. Duane couldn't get the idea out of his head and began plans for it. It had to represent the oxen and the font, while fitting in with the larger headstones in the area around the gravesite.

Duane had had the opportunity to be one of only 150 volunteers to work on the construction of the Nauvoo Temple when it was rebuilt. Knowing John's connection with the temple, he decided it would be only fitting that his headstone be of the same stone as the temple. The stones in the original temple had come



John Carling

from a nearby quarry, which is now underwater because of a dam on the Mississippi River. Stone of a similar kind was found in Alabama and used at the temple. Duane contacted Idaho Travertine who he knew had done the cutting and fitting of the stones for the temple. They had a slab of the stone left over that they had been using and agreed to let him take part of it. One of the pictures here shows the cutting of the headstone section of that rock. Duane took the rock back to Morgan with him and worked on the headstone. He came up with a design that was significant, as well. At the top is John Carling's name and birth and death dates. At the bottom is a "bas relief" of the head of an oxen, similar to those John had drawn for the first Nauvoo Temple. In the center marks signifying the twelve oxen in the temple in a round shape like the font is. The new headstone included the original headstone attached to the back of as seen here. Pictured with the headstone is Duane Carling.



My sincere thanks to Duane and to Ken and Annette Day for the information and pictures for this column about their great great grandfather.