

The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard

This week the Face of Fillmore pays tribute to a man who contributed much knowledge to the Face of Fillmore in past years – Rollo Henry Brunson.

Rollo passed away this last week and his contributions, especially in the beginning of my column, were amazing and very welcome. Rollo called fairly often with information and stories about his family and their ancestors, also sending pictures from time to time.

I knew if I had a question no one else seemed to have the answer to, I could call him and he usually had exactly the information I needed.

This week I could like to share one example of that from years ago.

I had found a picture of an older home and was looking for information about it. I had hoped one of my readers would know the location of the home and who it had belonged to. I thought perhaps the number F553 on the picture would be a significant clue. In my search for the answer, I went to visit several people I thought would be of help.

I also scanned the photograph and sent a copy to Rollo. With roots here in Fillmore and expertise in Utah history, I thought he would be of help, as he usually was. Rollo told me that the unknown house follows the pattern of old English homes. Several were built in that style in early Fillmore. He sent a picture of an older home that could possibly be the one in the first picture. When studying each closely, the windows look very similar and in the same location on the homes. While it was never positively identified that the home in the second picture with the monuments was the same home as in the first picture, there is certainly a distinct possibility that it was.

This home was located on the property where the old credit union building still stands. It was built for Lewis Brunson probably in the 1870's or 1880's. In the photo here, we see the family cemetery monument business being displayed in front of the house. Pictured here are Peter L. Brunson standing in the center. This was his business as he was a skilled craftsman at stone carving. His son P. Lorenzo (Uncle Ren) Brunson is standing next to him and another son, Rollo's father Henry, at about age six in the hat on the right. A very small child – LaMar - is hidden among the monuments. Lewis Brunson, father of Peter L., was born in 1831, the second child of Seymour Brunson Sr., in Portage County, Ohio. His family was among the first converts to the LDS Church. They among others were forced to leave Far West, Missouri, moving to Quincy, Illinois and then to Nauvoo. When Seymour died, Lewis and his brother Joseph went to live with Hyrum Smith and his family for a time, but were reunited with their own family when their mother remarried. The family saw much tragedy with two boys dying within a year of their father, and a new baby girl after the second marriage. The family moved to Adams County, Illinois and then to Council Bluffs, Iowa where they lived until 1847, when they went on to Winter Quarters and then to Utah in 1851. While at Winter Quarters, Lewis met Amanda Park. They courted

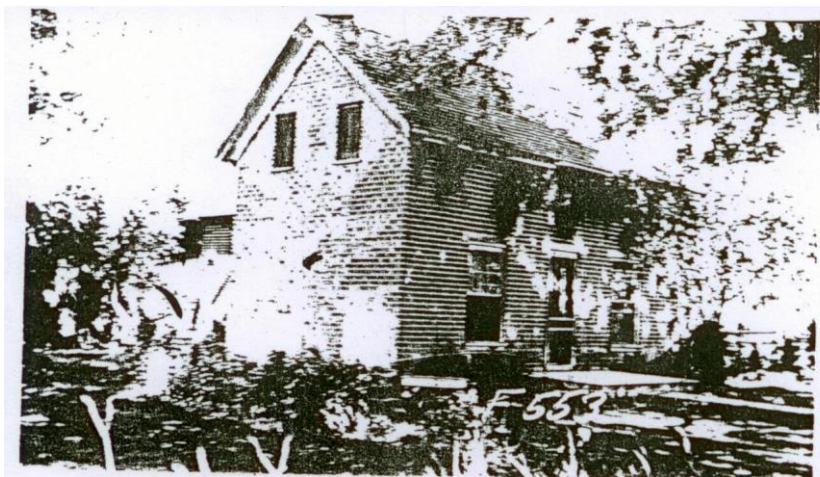
for 3 ½ months while their families crossed the plains and settled in Provo. They were married there in October 1851. In 1853 Lewis and Seymour Jr. were called to settle in Fillmore, Utah. In 1860 he was called on a mission to the Eastern States. On his return in 1862, he was the captain of a company of pioneers which left Florence, Nebraska, in June and arrived in Salt Lake City in August. Lewis was called to be the second bishop in Fillmore. He also owned property in Deseret and lived there for a time. He died in Fillmore in 1888, just shy of his 57th birthday.

While the home has long since been torn down, the monument business is still part of the Brunson family tradition here in Fillmore.

My thanks go out to Rollo for this and other stories he shared with me. His love of history and willingness to share it added greatly to the Faces of Fillmore I have written. He will definitely be missed.



Rollo Brunson





LaMar, Peter, Ren & Henry – Lewis Brunson Home Circa 1906