

FACE OF FILLMORE

By Sherry Shepard



Among the most fascinating interviews I enjoy in my writing the Face of Fillmore are the ones that include experiences with paranormal visitors to the homes in Fillmore. It is surprising how many I have heard. Some seem quite far fetched while others make more sense to me.

Here in Fillmore, we have ghosts that are friendly with the families they "live" with, and tease the children in the household. There are some who are more confined to only certain parts of the house, seem lonely and just want a human to communicate with.

There are some who appear to be guarding their old homes and once the new owners bond with them and explain how they just want a pleasant, peaceful place to live, the ghost leaves them alone. There are photographs, I am told, where there are more people in the picture than were actually present to pose for it. Some family member who didn't want left out of the family portrait even though they have passed on.

In some cases, the other worldly visitors have malevolent plans in mind.

Thanks to the Friends of the Territorial Capitol for once again adding Shadows of the Past: A Candlelight Tour of the building to our social calendar. This year it also included professional storytellers, Suzanne and Sam Payne,

as well as games and refreshments for more family fun.

As this witching time of year comes to a close, I would like to add one more story to the collection.

Evening's darkness had come on quickly with the impending storm on the horizon. Clouds boiled overhead, at times blotting out the light from a waning moon. Winds gusted and howled in the trees, whipping their branches wildly. Lightning flashed ominously in the south, foreshadowing what was to come and silhouetting the outline of the imposing hotel against the fading evening light.

The rain had not yet begun in full force as the stagecoach drew up in front of the hotel, its occupants scurrying to grab belongings and family members to rush to safety before the deluge began.

Among other travelers on the stage, a young family hurried inside the hotel. The young mother and father with two small children and an infant in arms.

Huddling together, they entered the foyer and were greeted by the owner. The aroma of freshly brewed soup and hot bread met them as well, and they were escorted into the downstairs dining room for a warm meal.

Following supper, the group was led to the stairs where they carried their luggage to their rooms. At the first land-

ing, the group divided.

The men stayed in a dormitory-style room in the upstairs south wing. The women and children turned to the north where two rooms were available. One was for the adult women, and the other a nursery at the front of the house for the children. The visitors were exhausted, and after putting the children to bed, the young mother collapsed onto the one she was to sleep in, but sleep did not come easily, as torrents of rain pelted the roof and splashed against the windows while thunder boomed above them and lightning lit the room.

The mother could hear her infant whimpering, so she arose to comfort him through the storm. Walking the nursery floor with him in her arms, she whispered to him that all was well, even though she questioned how much worse the storm would get before it subsided.

As she stood next to the leaded-glass window pane, lightning struck with simultaneous thunder. Just as cameras of yesterday year imprinted images into the lead glass plates, hers was now imbedded in the glass of the window.

The damage from the storm or the destination of the travelers was never recorded, but it is said that during particularly violent lightning storms when conditions are just right, a person can see the image of a young mother cradling a tiny baby in her arms in the upstairs window of hotel.

Is this just our imagination, an image in the lead glass, or is it really a ghost?