

FACE OF FILLMORE

By Sherry Shepard



I love a good mystery. I especially love the kind I can't easily solve and am surprised at the conclusion when I find I was wrong about "who done it."

If you look carefully, you can find mysteries around Fillmore. One of those has been bothering me for years and I decided to get to the bottom of it.

When standing on the north side of Eagle Market and looking up, you can see a door far above the level of the sidewalk but there are no stairs leading to it. Certainly, a person wouldn't want to open that

door from inside the building and take that next step. By my calculations, it must be at least 30 feet to the ground below. What happened to the stairs that were obviously needed to use that door? Why were they removed? Why are there no markings on the building that show where they would have been attached? Were they a simple stairway or an enclosed one with a roof over it? What, exactly, was at the top of the stairs inside the building?

I decided it was time to get to the bottom of this mystery so I attempted to call Joe

Ashman, figuring he would be the logical one to ask. It turns out Joe is not easy to find, so I called his son-in-law, Milt Lawhorn. He agreed we needed to figure out the mystery of the stairs and told me he would talk to Joe and get back to me.

Just the next day, Milt called. I was shocked when he told me there were never any stairs. It seems that when the Stevens' Store sold furniture in their department store, the furniture department was located on an upper floor.

Milt told me to take a closer look. There was an obvious clue above the door. Above that door and hanging out over the sidewalk, is an I-beam with a pulley attached. Furniture was hoisted to the upper floor and the furniture department. After being purchased, it was lowered to the sidewalk level for shoppers to take home.

Since 1891 this building has housed several businesses including the Fillmore Co-operative, the Stevens Mercantile, Pioneer Market and more recently Eagle Market. It was part of the ZCMI cooperative system serving more than 150 communities in the Inter-mountain area with retail commodities and services beginning in 1868 to 1960. The

store has changed owners and some of its services in that time. Once it even was home to the post office.

In the process of changing owners and merchandise, the store has also changed in appearance, having been remodeled and enlarged during its existence. One change that is interesting to note, is that at one time the main part of the store, now located on the Main Street side had a mezzanine around the top with small apartments there that were rented out.

A brief history of the building points out that in the fall of 1888, David R. Stevens opened a general store, known then as "The People's Store."

On January 18, 1889, he bought the Fillmore Co-op Store and moved his stock into the building. Joseph D. Smith managed the stores until January, 1897 when Daniel Stevens took over the Old Stevens Store management of the store for his father. In 1908 the building was nearly doubled in size. The name was also changed to the Stevens Mercantile Company. In 1912, Daniel, the son, purchased the business and its name from his father. In 1931 the business was sold to William J. Starley and LaVoy Kimball. In 1989 the store was purchased

by Joe Ashman from LaVoy Kimball's son Dan.

In 2021 the market was sold to Dee Penney with great ideas for some interesting renovations.



December 7, 2022