

## The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard

No one will forget Christmas in Fillmore. Bits and pieces of Christmases past will dot our memories and bring feelings of joy in our little community.

The first Christmas in 1851 was a bleak one as far as many events went. Food was scarce, the cold intense, living conditions poor, but the settlers were excited to be beginning a new settlement and grateful for those around them.

Each year as it was celebrated, Christmas became more and more elaborate. I can just imagine on January 30, 1913, 111 years ago, the first electric lights were hung on Main Street. These were strung from the moving picture show in the State House to Main Street and then to the Court House. At some point after that there were colored electric lights to help celebrate the holidays.

The celebration in the park never ceases to delight all who attend. Familiar Christmas carols ring out from choirs of children, lights twinkle, neighbors greet each other, Santa appears to delight the children, tasty treats are enjoyed by all, and, if we are lucky, snowflakes drift down to add just the right holiday touch.

Snippets of memories add to the overall scene.

I remember well the Christmas we had recently moved to Fillmore. We had left for Christmas but called neighbors to check on things. We had had three feet of snow, they reported. We honestly didn't really believe that, but we arrived home a day or so later to three feet of snow and a neighbor – Paul Stevens -who with his tractor had dug out our driveway.

I think back to ward suppers and the smell of a bouquet of eating delights. The programs were always exciting for children and grownups alike. Bunches of shepherds dressed in their bathrobes, some carrying stuffed toys. Then there were the cherubic angels in their white with the halos sparkling. Wise men, also in robes, but carrying themselves much more regally entered last, all to visit Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. Many years there were large crowds of each.

My husband taught Primary for many years and the class always reenacted the story, but no one in the class wanted any of the regular parts, they all wanted to be the bright twinkling star, a new tree top our daughter had given us.

Sometimes after the usual program, the ward party has turned into a talent show and some were very memorable. I will never forget the year that an older lady in our ward, Jetta Brunson, volunteered to sing "The Pig Song". It was hilarious! To the laughter of the audience, she snorted her way through an encore with her pig impersonation.

My favorite all-time performance was done by the Dean Shields family. Kris and Sherri did the hula in their grass skirts while Tiffany sang the Hawaiian Christmas song, "Mele Kalikimaka." Best of all was Dean, dressed as a palm tree, swaying to the tropical breezes in the background.

I remember the year a group of youngsters came into the hall as they tables were being taken down. They insisted we all be quiet because they could hear Santa's bells on the roof.

A personal favorite was our oldest daughter running into the church. She had been carrying decorations to the car and was surprised at what she had seen. She screamed, "Somebody call the police! Santa is stealing Duane Bartholomew's truck!"

May you make wonderful Christmas memories this year to add to your collection!



