

The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard

As the school year began in 1898, students from Fillmore moved into their new school building, located just east of the Old Rock School. Built in the Second Empire architectural style, this building was somewhat out of place in Fillmore. This style was popular in large cities and built mostly by the very wealthy. The two-story red brick structure was ornately decorated with unusual brick work and wood trim around the windows, doors and the pillars that stood at the entryway. Above the entrance was a bell tower topped with a widow's walk.

Widow's Walks were common in the northeast along the Atlantic Coast. Here the wives of sailors could walk along the top of their homes and look out to sea to watch for their husbands. In that rough weather there, sometimes the husbands didn't come home so it was the widows walking and waiting for them. The widow's walks here on the edge of the desert were only for decoration.

The lower floor of the school was home to the principal's office and classrooms. The upper floor was a large assembly hall used for large gatherings and gym classes. Basketball was played in those days but not football. There was no shop for carpentry and leather working. These were held in the Old Rock School.

The building was home to the Fillmore Junior High School with Albert N. Hansen as principal. Then it became Fillmore High School in 1900 and Millard High School in 1912.

The first graduating class of eighth graders in 1899 consisted of all girls including Jessie Mitchell Holbrook, Pearl Baldwin, Irene Kelly, Bertha Starley Stevenson, Katie Anderson, and Chloe Huntsman Day.

In 1916 the new "Old Main" at Millard High School was completed and the move began. There were no trucks in those days so wagons and teams provided the transportation for all of the furniture, desks, chairs, tables and pianos to get from one building to another. The work was done by students, teachers, and other staff. There were no type or other special classes so there were no typewriters or other electrical equipment to move.

Ward Starley, a Millard High Class of 1918 graduate, provides us with an interesting experience about getting established in the new school. His original article appeared in the Progress. The area around the school building was very rocky. In the spring of 1917, the students helped to dig the holes and plant the white ash trees that were first planted on the south and east sides of the lawn. The grass was also planted that year. Wards says he was part of that work crew. A few freshman boys rebelled against helping with this work and some-upper classmen caught them in a group and cut off all their hair, so there was a few bald-headed freshman that spring.

Ward also said that, "My memory is replete with the happenings at Old Millard High and I cherish everyone from the doing the things that home life required, to the extracurricular activities like debate and parts in plays, to the beginning of a romance that lasted nearly 62 years."

Sometime following the move, the red brick school building was renovated. The bell tower was removed and the bell placed in the Territorial Statehouse where it became the fire alarm for Fillmore. The building became the offices of the school district officials. It was torn down in 1938.

