

The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard

On a steaming hot, July day in 1972, we pulled into Fillmore to take a look at the place we would soon call home. I-15 was under construction west of town and the town was filled with construction workers. We had been looking for hours for a place to park our mobile home, but found nothing. The trailer parks were overflowing. A friend had put down a deposit on a spot only to find out it was designed for a camp trailer and our long one would have protruded into the street. We were exhausted and discouraged. Looking for a place to spend the night was almost impossible but we did find an empty motel room across from the Armory. We checked in and I headed for a refreshing shower only to find it was already occupied – by a cockroach! Maybe tomorrow would be a better day.

It was, in fact, just that. We stopped in at the Robison Trailer Park (now Wagons West). The manager was there as we stopped. LeRoy Robison and his wife Sharon were ever so friendly and he said he had a great idea. There was a large grassy area west of the office and the hook-ups were there to use. We could stay there until something better came along. What a blessing!

We headed back to our home in Monticello, looking forward to the coolness of the mountain and familiar surroundings. I cried all the way to Scipio. I really didn't want to move to Fillmore.

On August 7, we made the move to the heat of Fillmore. It was quite a change for us. We also found out something about the town that we were pleasantly surprised by. Not only were LeRoy and his wife friendly, there were many others who treated us the same way. It turned out the town wasn't such a terrible place after all.

The family of LeRoy Robison turned to be like many others who owned and operated their own businesses and passed them on to their children. Floyd, LeRoy's dad, owned the dry-cleaning business at that point. It had been started by his relatives, Ashby and Ray Robison, who were brothers. When Floyd decided to retire in 1980, he sold it to his nephew Kary Kesler, who with his wife Susan have run the cleaners for over 40 years. Not many months ago, Kary sold it to a couple who are now living in the family home behind the cleaners. It is no longer a dry-cleaning business but a thriving laundromat with plans for more in the future.

Kary called me a few weeks ago. He was getting ready to sell the dry-cleaning machine and asked if I would like to see it. I had no idea what to expect but found a very large machine, about the size of a Volkswagen bug, attached to tanks that stood beside it. It turns out dry

cleaning is quite a complicated process. I was especially impressed with the idea that the solution used to clean clothes can be used over and over. When it becomes dirty, there is a complicated process using the tanks beside it to refurbish the solution so it can be used again and again. This particular cleaning machine was made in 1954.

Modern dry-cleaning machines are automated and do what was once a complicated process with the just the push of a button.

Kary explained to me what was happening next. “Rather than thinking I could sell the historic dry-cleaning machine, I was trying to find a museum that would like it as a donation. But after much inquiry, I found none. It is too old to be used again so except for a few souvenirs, its metal can be scrapped and shaped into something new. “



