

## The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard

While weather this time of year is usually toasty during the day, the evenings are pleasant and perfect for a walk around what used to be Old Fort Fillmore. The route is less than a mile but can also take you back almost 175 years in time if you let your imagination wander a little.

As part of the Fillmore Sesquicentennial Celebration in 2001, Jeff Lindgren put together an informative pamphlet about Fillmore, taking much of his information from *100 Years of History of Millard County*, printed by the DUP in 1951. Much of the information here is part of his description.

Little can actually be seen of the old fort, but the historical information helps us to “see” what existed here.

The tour begins at the DUP Monument on the southwest corner of Main and Center Streets. This marker originally pointed out the southwest corner of the fort. It was moved 18 feet southeast of its originally location during construction of sides, curb and gutter in 1986. This puts the south wall of the fort near the south edge of the asphalt on Center Street going east.

Cross to the north side of Center Street and go east along the sidewalk. Settlers’ homes were built with common walls between them and the south side of each was the outside south wall of the fort. These small homes were actually located where the street is now.

Some accounts suggest that rather than a common wall between homes, there was a space that was filled with pickets, rocks and mortar along the outside wall for protection.

According to records, the fourth home from the west was the home of Orange and Mary Warner. Their daughter Emily Warner was the second baby girl born within the fort in July of 1852.

At the northeast corner of Center Street and First East, there is a footpath that crosses Chalk Creek. Near the beginning is what remains of an abandon irrigation ditch used by the early settlers and was used to bring culinary water into the higher part of the fort. As people left the fort and built homes in other locations, the ditch was used to deliver water for irrigation. It was used until the early 1980’s when the city constructed a pressurized irrigation system. Because of the diversion dam used for the pressurized system, the creek is often dry late in the summer.

This spot is also approximately the southeast corner of the original fort.

An old pioneer mill was situated upstream from the bridge a short distance not far from the Wildlife Park on 200 East and 100 South.

After crossing the bridge, turn left and walk north along the asphalt road. In about 1855, the fort was expanded and the east wall ran northeast down the hill near the bridge across fields to your right. This part of the fort was used for livestock corrals and to provide more living space as the population grew. East of the road and north of a line of fruit trees, there were once dugouts built within the fort.

The road you are walking on was once part of the city's boundary line. Until 1871 Fillmore residents did not have title to their land. A congressional townsite act allowed settlers to purchase the land. The entire city townsite was purchased for \$1400 in November, 1870. After receiving the paper work from the federal government, Mayor Joseph Robison then signed deeds to grant each lot its respective resident.

The cottonwood trees you see along the creek were used to build homes and other buildings. In 1852 a road was constructed about 10 miles up Chalk Creek to obtain better lumber.

At the next intersection, turn left. Before the Chalk Creek Bridge crossing take note that this was approximately the property belonging to Samuel Hoyt. This is a notable location as the first Pioneer Day celebration in Fillmore was held here.

Look east to a home on the hill on the north side of 100 North. This is the location of the northeast corner of the fort after the expansion. From that corner the fort wall ran to the northwest, across Chalk Creek, and up the hill.

As you proceed across the bridge and up the hill on 100 North, you will see an electric substation to your left. The south side of the station was the site of the adobe church and school, formerly the center of the old fort.

Original foundation stones from this building form a DUP monument in the Fillmore City North Park on the north side of the amphitheater. The monument states that the building was constructed in 1854 and existed until the 1970's when it was removed.

At the top of the hill to your right, there used to be a foundation of the old Olsen home, built sometime after 1870. The old irrigation ditch near the footbridge continued past the east side of this building near the top of the hill.

At Main, stay on the east side, turn right and walk along the sidewalk a short distance to the north to the first home. Behind this home was the early home of Bishop Noah W. Bartholomew built in 1855. You can see some of the originally sandstone basement was east

just of the hill. This building was used as a hotel as well as a home for a family of seventeen children. Stones from the home were donated to build the stone benches you see along Main Street.

The northwest corner of the fort is only a short distance north of here since the Bartholomew home was the most northerly home in the fort.

Outside the fort was the Hoyt tannery close to this location. The Bartholomew grist mill was located east of the hill near the creek.

The map shows a western arm of the Chalk Creek that no longer exists.

Walk south along the sidewalk which is located west of the old fort's west wall and runs parallel to it. Along this wall there were other residences as we saw on Center Street. Josiah and Henrietta Call lived in one. Their daughter Colombia Fillmore Call was born in January, 1852 and was the first child born in the fort.

Just north of the drug store was the main entrance of the fort. It consisted of two heavy doors built on a crossbeam, opening from the inside.

Continue south along the sidewalk to the DUP Monument where you began.

An interesting sidenote is the fact that across Main Street to the west is Eagle Market, which was originally ZCMI. At the northeast corner of the building is the spot where Brigham Young placed his cane and told Jesse W. Fox to commence his survey of the public square and to continue on surveying the rest of the town.

After writing this, I had a few additional questions, which many of you may also have.

What happened to the old fort?

Not surprisingly, the building materials used in the old fort were disassembled and used for other buildings in town. The pioneers were especially good at "repurposing", a modern term for making good use of all of the materials at hand.

What was the fort built of?

A description of Fillmore Fort according to a DUP account reads:

"The fort was built of large stones, put together with mortar, or mud. The walls, which were from 8 to 10 feet in height, were strongly but crudely built. The east wall was built of mud, straws, and stones, (basically adobe) and followed the foothills in a circular shape. The homes were so arranged that the wall of the fort formed the back walls for the houses. A large court was left in the center where gardens were planted, livestock corralled, and a few buildings located, including the mail station and a church."

How large was the fort?

The first fort covered approximately one acre of ground with a corral near the fort containing about 2 ½ acres of ground. Later the size grew to 660 feet by 346 feet. After expansion in July 1853, it grew to 1188 feet north to south by ½ mile east to west.

Take this description along for reference and walk with your family for a short trip into Fillmore's past.

