



The Face of Fillmore

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The Face of Fillmore takes a step back this week to look at early industry in Fillmore. With a large number of settlers moving into the area and the community being nearly self-sufficient, the need arose for flour mills to grind the homegrown grains into flour to feed the population.

A number of mills were built in Fillmore on the banks of Chalk Creek. Owners and operators of the mills often did not get along with each other. It does not take much imagination to know the root of the problems – water.

The first flour mill in Fillmore was owned by Noah Bartholomew. It was situated just east of Main Street near the center of town.

The second was built by Jake Croft and was located east of the old Croft home, two blocks east of Main Street. This mill supplied Fillmore and the surrounding towns with flour for many years.

One of the most colorful stories associated with the building of mills comes from the mill built by Samuel Hoyt. Mr. Hoyt was “counseled” by his church leaders to build the mill. He began this venture on June 18, 1860 by having crews construct a millrace to get water to the mill. This work was poorly surveyed. Reports were that the mouth of the millrace was higher in elevation than its source. The water system began at the Bartholomew Mill and ran northwesterly across Main Street. “The crossing of which was not bridged and became very obnoxious to the town people and many complaints were lodged with the city council because of the imposition.” He was asked to build a bridge, but did not. Complaints and counter-complaints ensued and discussions over who would pay for what until finally the mill idea was abandoned. “Thus ended Mr. S.P. Hoyt’s great flouring mill enterprise, a ridiculous affair from start to finish.” (Quotes from The First Twenty-Five Years in Millard by Volney King.)

The “Upper Mill” was built near where third east and Canyon Road are now. It was completed in 1871 and was called the Upper Flour Mills Company. It was first owned by Amasa Lyman, father of Apostle Francis M. Lyman.



The building's construction was supervised by William Gibbs, who also was the first miller for about two years. This pioneer miller would never charge the Indians a toll for his work; he always gave the same weight in flour that the Indians brought in wheat. His family persuaded him to give up the business as he seemed to be giving away most of the profits.

Remnants of the old mill still exist. The lower rock walls form stone-lined terraces in the back yard of Bruce and Charley Christensen and overlook Chalk Creek above the Wildlife Park. Pictures of the building appear much larger than would possibly fit on the rock foundation. Another interesting observation is the fact that the stream has drastically changed course in the last 130+ years, as the present location is over 100 yards north of the old mill site.

Water was brought to the mill by way of a ditch and flume system crossing the present Canyon Road near 300 East and poured out of a flume over the water wheel to give the mill power to run its grinders before joining Chalk Creek at the mill's base.

Bruce Christensen and Lloyd Frampton have constructed a working replica of the old mill, which sits in the Christensen's yard. Built of barn wood, it stands about six feet high and is complete with tiny stairways, windows and other intricate details.

Charley has collected some other memorabilia relating to the mill. One of which is a card made from the familiar photograph "Old Mill" by George Edward Anderson (1860-1928) taken in 1900. The picture on the card is a lithographic reproduction of the antique photograph.

Mr. Anderson's comments in a journal entry give us all the inspiration to take pictures of our town, as it is today. He said, "I must have a picture of this spot. When I return, all will have changed."

