



The Face of Fillmore

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While on a recent ATV trip with the Sand Rock RidgeRiders, we found another example of people who share our feelings of preserving historical structures for our posterity to learn from and enjoy. In this case, it is the BLM doing the preservation of an old building, which has been transported to Hanksville and is on display for visitors to tour.



As ATV riders we visited the site of the old mill high in a canyon now full of young quaking aspen. Later we drove by the mill in town. I was especially impressed with the huge wheel, over 20 feet in diameter, on the side. Unfortunately, because of the government shut down, we were unable to tour in the interior. We will save that for another trip.

In the early 1900's, a man from Maine by the name of Edwin Thatcher Wolverton came to Utah to look for gold in the Henry Mountains. Wolverton was a mining engineer, and

as such, knew what he was looking for. In a short time, he discovered what he believed was the location of a legendary Spanish gold mine. He tried for about 12 years to file mining claims on the property which was located on Straight Creek on the side of Mt. Pennell. Each time he was told that others had already filed the claim. He patiently waited until the others who had claimed the mine gave up on its value and in 1915 he was finally able to file his own claim.

In 1921, with the help of his sons Norville and Thatcher, Wolverton began construction of a mill to crush gold ore.

Wolverton was a wise man and



knew he had many needs in order to make his venture work. One of those was lumber to build the mill itself. For this purpose, he built a large table saw in one end of the mill. With this, he cut the lumber he needed as well as lumber for many neighbors. He was able through this arrangement to barter for the supplies and services he needed.

This combination ore crushing and lumber cutting made the Wolverton Mill especially unique.

Unique also is the construction of the building. Most log structures during this time period used log notches and overlapped them to tie the walls together.

Wolverton cut his logs off evenly, stacked them, and used steel spikes placed inside them vertically through the ends of the logs to build the walls. These walls were built in sections and braced with posts. This mill's construction was one of a kind throughout the West.

The mill was used to process ore for only a short time. Wolverton's claim was most likely not the Spanish mine he had hoped for. He was able to extract little gold from it. He died at the age of 67 and was buried in the Elgin Cemetery near Green River, Utah. His grave is marked by a granite arrastra drag stone his sons brought from the Henry Mountain mill.

In the years that have followed, the mill still stood on Mt. Pennell, but many problems came about with vandalism. Because of this, in the summer of 1974, the mill was moved to Hanksville and restored. This restoration was completed in 1988.

The Face of Fillmore commends the BLM for its effort to preserve the history of one of the great buildings of that area.