



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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In late September just over 13 years ago, the Face of Fillmore came into being. It began as a method of thanking people in our community for preserving our historic past, in any form, but mostly in preserving the homes and other buildings constructed by the early settlers. While it at times wanders a little from that goal, the Face of Fillmore is still congratulating those who make an effort to continue the heritage we all enjoy.

Usually these people mentioned here are home or business owners, but this week I would like to point out a club group that has been busy with historic preservation. They are the Sand Rock RidgeRiders ATV Club. I know you are going to say, “We have heard about the grant already in the Chronicle.” This is true, but looking at the location of its points of interests, it occurred to me that there are many in the community who do not have the right kind of transportation to see it all in person. The grant included picnic tables, interpretive signs and a kiosk on top of the mountain and was under the direction of Mark Falleroni and Tracy Whatcott.

I would like to share with you today the content of the two historical signs which tell more about the lumber industry which was so vital to early settlers.

Nearly to the top of the mountain at what is known as “The Bars of Paradise” is one of the historic signs. This location also has a picnic table where one can sit and take in the amazing long-distance vistas of the valleys and canyons far below. This spot is called “The Bars of Paradise” because in earlier years, there was a pole fence around the top of this section of Paradise Canyon. In order to go down the road into Paradise, one had to “let down the bars” to drive through.

This interpretive sign tells about the early lumber efforts in the canyon below which still contains a large boiler put there many years ago.



Fillmore residents' names carved into aspen
in The Grove in Paradise Canyon

“In early settlement days, many west facing canyons on the Pahvant Mountain range were home to a rich supply of timber, providing quality lumber to the fledgling valley communities. On site sawmills provided local, accessible timber, along with sustainable livelihoods for mill operators and local builders. When all available timber in an area was completely harvested, sawmill owners would relocate their operation to adjacent or nearby canyons William Newton ‘Jack’ McBride was one such owner.



Boiler in Paradise Canyon

“McBride bought a sawmill in Meadow Creek Canyon, five miles southeast of Fillmore, which he operated for approximately two years. He then moved the mill to Pine Creek Canyon, just east of Fillmore, and operated that mill for an additional two years. When harvesting timber in Pine Creek became too difficult, the mill was moved here to Paradise Canyon.

“The boiler at the bottom of this trail was used to power the saw blades that cut logs into lumber. Transporting the boiler to this location was no easy task. It was placed on skids, then horse teams were attached in front and behind the boiler. The front team pulled it forward while the back team helped brake the boiler on downhill slides.

“One Fillmore resident named Frant (not Frank) Melville sat inside the boiler and drove the horse team from Pine Creek into Paradise Canyon.

“The boiler still rests along the Paradise trail as a testimony to the grit of early pioneer homesteaders in this area.”

A trip down the rugged trail to see the boiler close up requires a machine less than 50 inches in width preferably with four-wheel drive and an experienced driver. The rocks and ruts are impressive. At the very bottom of the canyon, turning to the right is the section known as “The Grove” where large quakies shade the trail. These have been carved by past visitors and one can see the names of many of Fillmore’s citizens there.

Going up a hill the trails tops off at the bottom of a large grassy bowl looking up to the rim around the canyon. This is the location of the boiler spoken of earlier. A side trail to the right connects to the main trail and the drivers must retrace their route up the steep ridge to the top.

The second historic interpretive sign is farther down the Sand Rock Ridge Road, within a few miles of town.

At the spot know to locals as the “ski lift” where the deer experimental station once stood, Trail 409 takes off to the south toward Pine Creek. The first short distance from the main road is beautiful in the fall through stands of maple and then begins its more difficult climb. Deep ruts and tricky rocks make this a ride that gets your attention very quickly.

At the top of the ridge is the sign telling about the Jack Payne Hill. To quote the sign: “Life in the West during the 19th century was difficult and often filled with tragic stories.”

“The story of Jack Payne is one of those stories. John Broadhead Payne (later known as Jack Payne) was born May 19, 1862. He was the third child of Mary Morris Broadhead. Mary’s second husband, James Payne, was a loving stepfather to Jack. Jack eventually took the last name of Payne. Mary had twelve more children (total 15, whew!) with James.

“Jack was a very handsome young man, with dark eyes and hair. As a young, strong, man, Jack worked different jobs. Freighting and logging were amongst those remembered by his relatives.

“On September 4 1888, Jack went to the sawmill in Pine Creek to get a load of lumber. On the road down the canyon there was a steep, off camber, sandstone ledge. Extreme caution had to be taken descending this slope with a full load of lumber. During his descent, with his foot in the breaking rope and his back pressed hard against the seat, the horses bolted and Jack was thrown from the load and crushed as the heavy wagon wheel went over him. He was 26 years old and left two young daughters and his wife Sarah (Sadie) Powell Payne.

“Since then, this hill has been known as ‘Jack Payne Hill.’ ”



Jack Payne and his siblings. Jack is the photograph in the frame, as his fatal accident happened before this family portrait.