

History Question of the Month

What do you know about the smelter located at Union Fort?

Answer

An article in the Salt Lake Tribune, dated April 18, 1871, tells about a new invention called the “Monitor” for smelting lead, copper and silver ores patented by Dr. T.L.R.Scheuner, metallurgist, that he was going to erect 4 miles south of the city on the Little Cottonwood Creek. The furnace was touted as a revolution in smelting. One advantage to the new furnace was that it was portable and could be moved to any location where it was needed, quickly and inexpensively. Dr. Schuener had previously been employed as superintendent of the Union Iron Works or Pinto Iron Works located 23 miles south west of Cedar City, until it closed down late 1870’s to early 1871.

The Salt Lake Herald on June 16, 1871 reported that the “Monitor” was being taken down to Union Fort, immediately, to be tested. It was projected that the furnace could run continuously day and night for 15 – 21 days before the lining would wear out.

On August 8, 1871, The Salt Lake Herald reported, the new furnace the “Monitor”, was up and working. All it needed was ore to process. Dr. Scheuner began placing ads for galena and copper ores to be delivered to his furnace at Union Fort, 2 miles north of the R.R. Station in Sandy. He evidently never received any ore, since, at the end of a lengthy article that he wrote in the Salt Lake Tribune dated November 25, 1871, he made the statement that his Monitor would have been in operation long ago if it wasn’t for the “croakers” who made so much noise about the science they didn’t understand.

He continued to run ads for ore through mid- April of 1872. The Utah Rails.net, citing the DUP, indicates the smelter was still operational in 1873, then nothing more is heard of it or Dr. Scheuner. That leaves us with the questions: Did the “Monitor” ever smelt ore?. Did Dr. Scheuner pick up his portable furnace and move it elsewhere?