

Whispers Of The Past

Finally, 'tis the season to be super busy is over. Time to get back to work on important things like the Centerville Cemetery inhabitants. Been doing a bit of digging into mysteries out there. For instance, there are 3 old wooden board headstones/headboards, old and cracked and rotting at the bases. In different light angles, you can almost read something on one of them. A random note in one of the museum notebooks says it's the date 1888, and there are three children buried there. Two little daughters of S. Bar Smith, who died in an epidemic, and a son of Job Thompson. This is where I ran off the tracks and into a brick wall.



Genealogy sites and the Montana Historical Society newspaper archives led me to no clues. I did find the S. Bar Smith daughters in Find A Grave but it's hard to find more when you don't know who S. Bar Smith is. Anyone know? Is it the name of a ranch or a person? Do you know how many Smiths there are in the county? A bunch. Absolutely no mention of a son of Job Thompson dying as a child around 1888. I am bereft. In the meantime, I plan to pull up the wooden headstones and

reset them so they aren't knocked down easily. Why? Because they are cool and sort of sad. I'm thinking we'll never know who is buried there for sure. Dang mysteries.

One of the things I've started doing through the Find A Grave page are the photo requests people make through the site. I try to fulfill the ones in Broadwater County but it's been more difficult than I thought it would be. Most of the requests have turned out to be pauper graves which means there are no headstones. I need to stop finding extra things to do.

For those of you who have wandered out to or plan to wander out to the cemetery, the gate does have a chain on it but it is not locked. It has a clip to keep it closed. A warning about two things: there is a lot of cactus out there. I have been chopping it out around the graves I'm working on because it's painful to sit on. And, there are a lot of gopher holes so watch your step. I've been backfilling them with said cactus but both are the bane of my existence.

With this weather, I've been able to resume working out there periodically. I admit it's slow going because I tend to want to make each headstone perfect in my eyes and may spend too much time doing mindless things to my satisfaction. Time to step it up. One of the ideas I've thought about is to put on a 'how to clean a headstone' workshop someday. If you think you would be interested in one, send me an email at rangebabe56@gmail.com. There are several cemeteries in the county we could use for class, with permission, of course.