

Whispers Of The Past

I'm going to start this article a bit differently this time. First off, my ospreys, Benny and Joon are back!! They arrived on May 1. Well, one of them did. I haven't seen both birds yet. I'm wishing them great success this year!

I did survive knee replacement surgery and took my brother down to the cemetery to show him what I've been up to. We were walking around, me talking his ear off, when we noticed a guy with a couple of big dogs walking down the road from the RY storage units. Didn't think much about it because usually people turn around at the gate when they see my dogs, Maizy and Tank, corgis, and me out there.

When I next noticed him, he and his two big dogs came into the cemetery. Maizy went to greet them, Tank followed and the next thing I know is there's a dog fight. The bigger dog picked Maizy up by the neck and took off with her, shaking her. My brother yelled at the guy to call off his dog, to which he said, "f-ing dog attacked mine".

Maizy is 22 pounds; his dog was over 100. My brother ran after his dog and Maizy, yelling at it to drop her. The guy started walking away towards the old RY office where his car was parked and his dogs followed. I've never seen him before and I hope I never do again.

In hindsight, I should have put my dogs in the car when I first noticed them. Nobody comes out there when I'm out working on headstones. In 3 years, I've seen 2 people. I will carry bear spray from now on and I will put my dogs in the car if anyone comes out there with dogs. I hate so many things about this encounter. Maizy is okay now, some bruising but no punctures. I don't blame the dog; I blame

the adults, myself included. But now, my peaceful place feels tainted. It will take a while for me to feel safe out there again.

My brother told our mom and now they are both telling me not to go out there. I get it. But I took the dogs out there this week, and we were fine, but it felt different. I hope, in time, it will go back to how it felt before.

Now, back to our regularly scheduled history headstone of the week.

Walter Morgan's name showed up in the list of photo requests in my Find A Grave account. He wasn't on my previous list or any other list I've gotten when someone tried to figure out who was buried out there. This tells me, once again, I will never get a complete list or number of people buried at Centerville. I'm starting to accept I may not finish this little, simple project, which has become full of surprises.

Walter came from New York and served in the Civil War. Yes, another Civil War vet! Born in 1831, he signed up in the 62nd Illinois Volunteers in 1861 and served throughout the war. He was shot through both lungs and suffered with asthma, which later turned to consumption.



Okay, here is where I have to turn to Google to find out the definition of these old medical terms. Consumption is tuberculosis.

Anyway, he came out to Montana thinking it would help with breathing and settled for a couple years in Helena before moving to Townsend.

He married Mary Ellen Decamp in 1854 and went on to have five children, of which only two daughters, Fannie and Eldora, lived into adulthood. The family lived and farmed at Confederate Gulch, eventually ending up in Townsend.

Walter, Mary and son James are all in Centerville. James was only 25, but I couldn't find out how he died. Mary died at 63 years old and was followed by Walter at 65 two years later.

What I love about these people is how their obituaries speak of them as kind and good and had a lot of friends who would miss them. Now I miss them and I don't even know them.