

## BACK IN TIME

# Logtown Cemetery comes alive!

BY EVELYN BYRNE WILLIAMS WITH JANEEN SATHRE

Several years ago, after Carl Offenbacher made and donated a beautiful wrought iron gate to Logtown Cemetery, plans were proposed to remove the old falling-down fence and install new fencing to go with the gate. Even with some monetary donations and willing volunteers to do some of the work, the project seemed beyond the financial capabilities of the Logtown Cemetery Association. As time went on and more ideas were sifted through, a solution began to evolve that has brought the old cemetery to its new look: a black chain link fence that runs along the front and a no-climb field fence enclosing the three other sides.

**I would like to thank all the wonderful volunteers** who worked on removing trees, brush, and old fencing. Though I have been asked not to list their names, as they seem to be shy about their good deeds, I feel blessed to live in a community with them in it. I would also like to thank the entities that helped the association secure the necessary capital

to buy and install the fence: Oregon Parks and Recreation Division (with an Oregon Historic Cemetery Grant), Oregon Community Foundation (with a gift from Maggie Purves), McKee Bridge Historical Society, and the Logtown Cemetery Association (for keeping the project on the front burner).

**Some of the following history** of the cemetery is from John and Marguerite Black, who were charter members of the cemetery association. For many years Marguerite was the secretary and John was the sexton. They are now buried in the cemetery that they loved so much and donated their valuable time to.

On September 20, 1892, John M. McKee sold his 160-acre homestead at Logtown to Austin Albright for \$600. This included a two-story log house, barns, sheds, farmland, and some mining ground. It also included the graveyard, which by this time contained several rows of graves of miners and early settlers, some of them McKees. However, McKee's deed to Albright did not mention any land set

aside or reserved for a cemetery. Legal ownership of this graveyard was passed along to each purchaser of the property until 1929.

The old cemetery, then called Laurel Grove, was located about 400 feet up the hill on the east side of the Jacksonville-Crescent City road (now Highway 238). In 1929, a group of local people rebuilt the wire fence with new cedar posts donated by Mark Winningham. No written records of burials were kept in the early days, but Elva Smith, who grew up near Logtown and knew everyone, kept track of names and dates on hand-drawn maps as best she could during the 1920s and 1930s. Issac Coffman, long-time sexton of the Jacksonville Cemetery, often assisted with burials in Logtown during the 1930s.

The Logtown Cemetery Association was formally organized at a meeting held at the cemetery on May 14, 1939. Those who attended were Elva and Ed Smith, Pearl and Harry Whitney, Bill and Gertrude Winningham, L. Frank

and Anna Lozier, Emma Smith, E. Igo and wife, Minus and Osie Pence, Leonard McKee, and John and Marguerite Black. They voted to change the name of the cemetery back to Logtown and agreed that all persons who had relatives buried there or owned a plot

were considered members with a right to attend annual meetings and vote.

In a subsequent meeting, the association filed applications for incorporation and made plans to obtain legal title to the south half of the cemetery. Property owners of portions of the cemetery were Walter W. and Edith Bell, residing in California, and Paul E. and Mildred Pearce, residing in the Applegate. Both parties graciously donated land to the association.

**The cemetery has gone through a few facelifts** over the years. In 1939 a rustic archway with a carved wooden sign, donated by the local Civilian Conservation Corps, was installed. In 1949 the cedar archway became unsafe and was replaced with railroad iron and a wire gate. A well was drilled in 1950 and a hand pump installed. In 1958 a group of members planted a row of slips from Maryum McKee's yellow rose bush (Logtown Rose) along the front on the north side of the gate. Later on, the Applegate Garden Club set out more slips on the south side of the gate.

There are only a few of us old-timers left with memories and stories of the people buried there. There are probably more McKees or relatives of the McKees buried there than other families, but there is no doubt that a who's who of the Applegate is etched in stone throughout the cemetery.

**If you have an interesting story** about someone buried in Logtown, send it to Janeen Sathre at [djsathre@gmail.com](mailto:djsathre@gmail.com) or 1517 Palmer Creek Road, Jacksonville, OR 97530.

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*The cedar archway was installed in 1939.*



*The wrought iron gate was made by Carl Offenbacher.*

