

Gateway students probe cemetery

By Carol Davis
Sentinel staff writer

A three-year project of identifying — some positively, others tentatively — those buried in the tiny, aged Gateway Cemetery ended this week when the cemetery was dedicated.

About 50 Gateway School students and teachers joined community residents trekking up the steep trail Wednesday to the Gateway Cemetery overlooking the hamlet.

No headstones identified the graves. No flowers dotted the gravesites, which are arranged in no particular pattern. Those buried there seemed to be gone and long forgotten.

Three years ago, however, some students, trying to think of an excuse to get out of class, talked their teacher, Genny Sine, into walking up to the cemetery. She became interested, asked questions and soon launched the class project.

The history of the class research was recited by student Tammy Hubbard at Wednesday's 15-minute dedication, along with thanks given to those who helped. Byrl Casto, who owns the cemetery property, was singled out for his cooperation with the project.

A cemetery plaque and individual grave markers, made by shop teacher Barbara Brown and her students, were placed at the site. On each marker was carved a dove and the words "Rest in Peace."

No names were placed on the markers because the students don't have positive identifications or know the location of each grave.

The last person buried in the cemetery, which contains either five or seven plots, was laid to rest in the 1940s. It's not known



Photo courtesy of Dan Westesen

Students Brenda Colcord, kneeling, Virginia Hubbard, right, flank cemetery plaque ...left to right in back, instructor Genny Sine, Joann Platz, Tammy Hubbard

who was buried there first.

In fact, only one grave has been identified. The only markers consisted of rocks circling seven graves, but vandals moved the rocks several years ago.

The only name the students could positively identify through newspaper clippings was a rancher named George Albert Bliss, who had lived in the area less than three months. His death notice appeared in *The Daily Sentinel* Jan. 20, 1940, and mentioned that he was buried in the Gateway Cemetery.

After meeting with several longtime residents of the Gateway area, the students learned of others who might be buried there. One might be a 3-year-old boy who died in a fire in 1913. An infant of the same family died 13 years earlier of pneumonia and might be buried there. Two unnamed babies and an unknown man also may be buried there, said Sine.

"The kids learned a lot," Sine said. "They learned historical (research) methods and the importance of using primary sources."

Gateway Cemetery student research



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