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## Old Ephraim Trifold Pamphlet: The Legendary Grizzly of the Bear River Range

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## WHO WAS OLD EPHRAIM?

He was a large grizzly bear who gained a reputation for killing sheep that grazed in the Bear River Mountains in the early 1900s. Frank Clark trapped and killed him, probably during the summer of 1922.

## WHO WAS FRANK CLARK?

Clark was a local shepherd from around Malad City, Idaho. He spent nearly 10 years trying to catch Old Ephraim, who occasionally stole sheep from his flock. Stories say Frank Clark killed 43 bears in his 34 years on the range.



An illustration of Old Ephraim by Marianna L. Israelsen, 1959. *General Book Collection, 979.2524 C882, USU Special Collections and Archives*



A boy posing at Old Ephraim's monument, c. 1970. *USU Photographic Services collection, P0376, Box 71, Folder 16737D-006, USU Special Collections and Archives*

## WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OLD EPHRAIM?

Visit the legendary grizzly's skull at the Merrill-Cazier Library's Special Collections & Archives, or view the digital exhibit at [exhibits.usu.edu/exhibits/show/oldephraim](https://exhibits.usu.edu/exhibits/show/oldephraim)



## WANT TO VISIT OLD EPHRAIM'S GRAVE?

Scan here for hiking and driving directions or view the digital exhibit at [exhibits.usu.edu/exhibits/show/oldephraim/directions](https://exhibits.usu.edu/exhibits/show/oldephraim/directions)

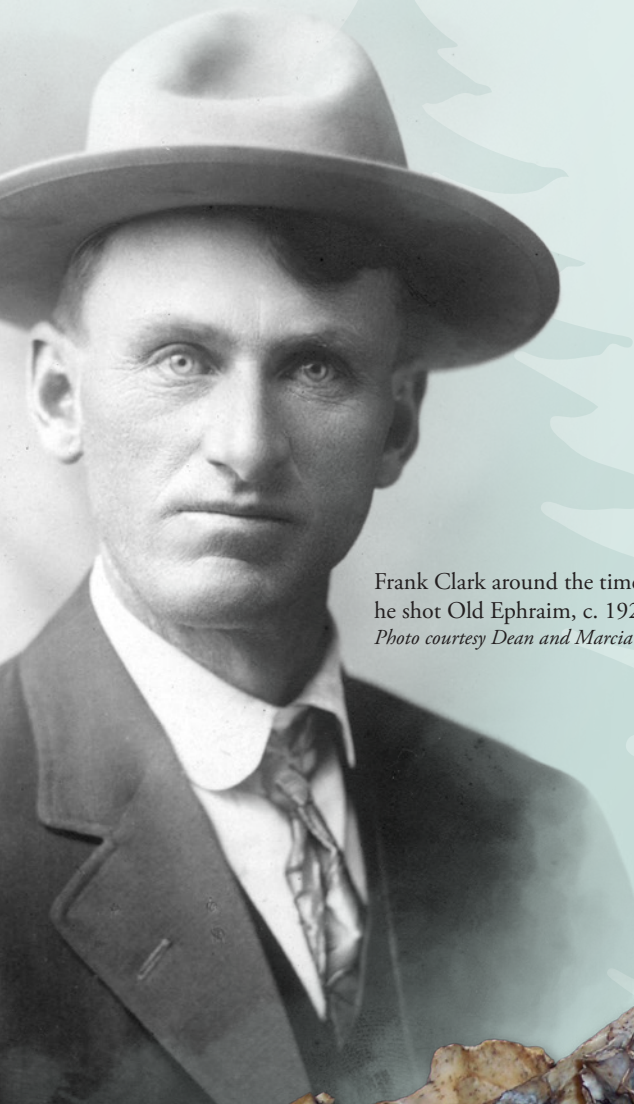


# — OLD — EPHRAIM

THE LEGENDARY GRIZZLY  
OF THE BEAR RIVER RANGE

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Frank Clark around the time he shot Old Ephraim, c. 1920.  
Photo courtesy Dean and Marcia Green

## WHY WAS HE CALLED OLD EPHRAIM?

“Old Ephraim” was not in fact a name unique to the Utah bear; it was a general term for grizzlies used in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American West. In his 1885 book, *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman*, Teddy Roosevelt used the name to identify a different bear that roamed Wyoming’s Bighorn Mountains, though Clark claimed the Utah grizzly was named for a bear in a P. T. Barnum story. Either way, the name was probably derived from Ephraim, a figure in the Bible’s book of Genesis.

## HOW BIG WAS HE?

Many stories say that Old Ephraim stood at 9 feet, 11 inches tall and weighed half a ton. However, based on the size of his skull, grizzly bear experts estimate he was approximately 7 feet, 6.5 inches tall and weighed around 550 pounds. He was still a larger-than-average grizzly, but probably not as big as the stories suggest.

## WHERE DID HE DIE?

Frank Clark killed Old Ephraim in Long Hollow along the Right Fork Logan River. A stone monument at the bear’s gravesite, erected by local Boy Scouts in 1966, marks the general area where he was killed.



Old Ephraim’s skull.  
Photograph by Becky Skeen  
USU Special Collections and Archives

## WHEN DID HE DIE?

Most versions of the story, including Clark’s later accounts, say that Old Ephraim died in August 1923, a claim repeated on the monument and signage at the gravesite. However, in a letter to the Forest Service in November 1922, Clark said he killed a bear “that gave [him] . . . trouble for 9 years” in August of that year. Clark makes a similar claim in a 1928 *Nature Magazine* article; that retelling places the event in July 1922, a date supported by the Smithsonian tag on Old Ephraim’s skull.

## WAS OLD EPHRAIM THE LAST GRIZZLY BEAR IN UTAH?

Evidence suggests he was probably not the very last, but he was certainly one of the last. In 1925, the United States Forest Service estimated that there were still 10 grizzly bears in Cache National Forest, but by 1930 there were none. Clark’s own account suggests he saw evidence of grizzlies in the Bear River Range as late as 1941.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SKULL?

A couple of months after Old Ephraim died, local Boy Scouts heard the story and decided to dig up the bear’s skull. They sent it to the Smithsonian where it remained for more than half a century. Then, in 1978, at the request of U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch, the Smithsonian agreed to loan the skull to USU. It has been housed in USU’s Special Collections & Archives ever since.