



Lone Pine Cemetery

EST. 1899 · BIGFORK, MONTANA

127 years of Bigfork stories, written in stone.

1899

FOUNDED

Thomas and Fannie Collins established this cemetery — back when the town was still being spelled "Big Fork" with two words.

5,500

BURIAL PLOTS

The original cemetery was just 1½ acres. It has expanded twice and now spans a full hillside facing the Swan Range.

180

VETERANS BURIED HERE

From the Civil War (at least 4 veterans) through Vietnam — American heroes from every major conflict in U.S. history rest at Lone Pine. The oldest burial dates to 1891.

\$1

PRICE OF THE LAND

The Collins family sold the cemetery to a local church for just \$1 in the early 1900s — that's the equivalent of about \$39 in 2026.

NOTABLE PEOPLE BURIED HERE

Eva "Harkness" Gates started making homemade jam in 1949 from her backyard strawberry patch — her family's shop still sells preserves today. **Andrew Jackson Eslick** fought in the Civil War and has descendants still living in the Flathead Valley. **Everit L. Sliter**, descendant of Bigfork's very founder, rests here too — the Sliter name still graces a downtown park and businesses across the valley today.

A LIVING COMMUNITY — THEN AND NOW

Many of Bigfork's oldest families have ancestors buried at Lone Pine and descendants who still help care for it today. Families like the Rosts, the Foxes, the Ripkes, and many others have tended these grounds for generations. Over the years, marriages and name changes mean many of today's volunteers carry different last names — but the same deep roots in Bigfork history.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The town has been spelled both "**Big Fork**" and "**Bigfork**" since its earliest days — and you'll still see both versions used today!
- Roy Ripke, one of Bigfork's earliest settlers, served as caretaker of this very cemetery for many years — and is now buried here alongside his parents.
- Some graves here have no names — volunteers know people are buried there, but records were lost to history.
- Since December 2024, Lone Pine has been part of the **Wreaths Across America** program. In 2025, wreaths were placed on all 180 veteran graves thanks to Ron Wenzel of Bigfork VFW.

Kids' Scavenger Hunt — can you find one of each?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> An animal on a headstone | <input type="checkbox"/> A name older than 1900 | <input type="checkbox"/> An American flag |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A stone bench | <input type="checkbox"/> Two people with the same last name | <input type="checkbox"/> A headstone with flowers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The oldest date you can find | <input type="checkbox"/> A veteran's marker | <input type="checkbox"/> The Swan Range view |