One of the most famous residents of Logan Canyon was a grizzly bear named Old Ephraim. Old Ephraim was big even by grizzly bear standards. He was said to stand 9 feet 11 inches tall and weigh approximately 1,100 pounds. However, since grizzlies normally range from 225 to 670 pounds, this estimate is quite possibly an exaggeration used to make a good story even better. It is safe to say, though, that Old Ephraim was intimidatingly large.

Like other bears, Old Ephraim was considered a nuisance by the sheep herders grazing their flocks in the canyon because he had a tendency to eat their sheep. Many Logan Canyon bears were hunted and killed by sheep herders trying to protect their flocks. One particular sheep herder named Frank Clark was no exception. Beginning in 1911, Frank took his sheep into Logan Canyon every summer. In the 45 summers he grazed his flock in the canyon, there were only two summers that he failed to kill at least one bear.

In 1913, Old Ephraim began to visit Frank's flock. For 10 summers after that, he continued to eat Frank's sheep. And for 10 summers, Frank used traps and guns, attempting and failing to rid himself of the clever and unwelcome visitor. When Frank found Old Ephraim's wallow, a muddy shallow pool of water where the bear spent time, he thought victory was close. He set up a bear trap in the wallow. But Old Ephraim was very clever and picked up the trap without setting it off, dropping it nearby before getting into his pool. Frank tried more traps in the following years with the same result.

The conflict between Frank and Old Ephraim continued until 1923 when the grizzly created a new wallow. Frank decided to try his old trick at the new location. The next night, Old Ephraim fell into the trap. One mile downstream, Frank awoke, in his words, “an awful roar and scream” of “mingled pain and misery.” Frank grabbed his rifle and ran through the dark to the wallow. There, he saw Old Ephraim lunging about on his hind feet. Ephraim's right front foot was caught in the trap and wrapped with 14 feet of chain. Still on his hind feet, the bear began to walk up the bank towards Frank. Terrified, Frank fired his rifle, hitting Ephraim with several shots. The giant bear fell dead. Frank described the death of Old Ephraim in these words. “I sat down and watched his spirit depart from that great body, and it seemed to take a long time, but at last he raised his head just a mite, gasped and was still.”

Frank then ran off to find his nearest neighboring herdsman in the canyon, and when he returned, they skinned the bear and burned the carcass. Then, Frank buried the remains at this site now called Ephraim's Grave. Later on, a Boy Scout troop went to the grave site and took the 15 inch skull. They sent it to the Smithsonian, who confirmed that it had belonged to a grizzly bear. In 1978, the skull came back to Logan on a long-term loan from the Smithsonian. It now resides on display in the basement of the Merrill-Cazier Library at Utah State University.

Only later did people realize that Old Ephraim was Utah's last grizzly bear. When telling his story afterwards, Frank Clark expressed regret over killing the bear. Today, Old Ephaim's grave stands as a tribute to the grizzly bears that once roamed Logan Canyon.

Sources:

Recorded account of the killing of Old Ephraim written by Frank Clark at the request of the Forest Service. Can be accessed on Utah State University's Merrill-Cazier Library website: http://digital.lib.usu.edu/u/?/Ephraim,78.