



The tombstone in Crosshill cemetery for Henrietta and Susanna Bean.

Record Photo

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CROSSHILL MARKER ECHOES 1865 BURIAL-CARD PUZZLE

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CROSSHILL — If you've never received an invitation to heaven, you need go no further than the Rush Cemetery at Crosshill.

Many visitors to this "city of the dead" have been stopped short by a gravestone in the southeast corner which bears the inscription, "Reader! Meet Us in Heaven."

More puzzling than the "invitation," however, is the arrangement of the lettering on the white marble slab under which are buried Henrietta and Susanna Bean. The letters don't make sense when read conventionally. But there is a hidden message in them.

SEARCH IS ARDUOUS

There are 15 letters across and 15 letters down.

Learning the story about this unique stone has taken about six months, making motor trips around the country and writing letters.

Elmer Ogram of RR 1, Wallenstein, first told us of the stone. He said it has always been a local curiosity. Upon the first visit it was found the letters had grown in with moss and were hard to read.

Mr. Ogram said the message started with an "i" in the exact centre and could be deciphered by reading counter-clockwise. He added that Charles R. Terry, a retired 90-year-old farmer at Clarkson and a native of Crosshill, had

an exact copy of the stone's inscription.

Mr. Terry sent along a black-bordered old-fashioned "funeral" card, a keepsake from the family Bible.

CARD, STONE DIFFER

The puzzling thing about the funeral card was that it had 19 letters down and 19 across and was the funeral card for Henrietta Furry Bean, whereas the tombstone had 15 letters each way and marked the grave of Henrietta and Susanna Bean.

Mr. Terry was unable to reconcile the discrepancies but suggested that we contact his friend, W. A. Raymo of the Preston Springs Home, another native of Crosshill, who might have the answer.

Mr. Raymo was willing to help but unable because he said he had left Crosshill when only about seven.

"But," he said, "the superintendent of staff here, Miss Jean Hammond of Crosshill, knows something about it for I have heard her talk about it."

Miss Hammond, too, was puzzled by the apparent difference but she said her father, John Hammond of RR 1, Millbank, near Crosshill, had once "broken" the code of the stone.

COPIED BY CARETAKER

Mr. Hammond, 83, was a former caretaker at the cemetery. He recalled that while awaiting the arrival of a funeral cortege he had copied the inscription, took it home and over the course

S V W E T B S A 15 S T M O R E
E I R T E 2 Y D & H N S 10 H E
M I A D 17 & S H T N O A R M T
N A Y D H D N E F S M Y E H E
E N S O W M A B E O 2 D 26 T T
E V & E I R O M I F S G E E E
H R S 27 D I I E T W R 7 A O M
D A U H T A N M L S A 8 6 O T
H T S E S M E R E T E L I E S
Y E A L P H N I T A Y R I P M
E W N 8 6 5 A G E D 23 A P E L
E R N H S N W F W O I D T D H
I G A L E D I E H D E 27 H G O
T F R M O B T R N W N E V N A
F S O G D U A E O I H A E M Y

Here is the lettering that appears on the stone.

F E F I L Y L D O G A D E V I L - S E.
O O R R O S R E H Y B D E T T E R Y B
R W M 2 S R A E Y 23 D E G A S K G A T
5 I O O O W N I L N I D E I D E E D I
Y N N D N A C O T M I H H T - E R L O E
E G T T A P L E D A L I H I D W H & T
A H H H D H O B N A E B P W N I L C S O
R U S E A I R N E H M Y N T I F U H M
S S & 27 L A N R M N A R I N H O M T O
& B 17 T E T I I E I E R D E E S - N S
D A D H A O N E M O R U E W B S O O -
I N A O V S P T T A H F I & S E O M S
E D Y F I A E N N M A R R D D N O 7 E
D & S S N M U E L B E A N M N L I D H
H A S E G A L L H E R F R I E L F E S
A L H P I 8 6 5 A F T E R A N I O I A
P L E W A S A M O D E L W I F E L R R
P W H O K N E W H E R - W A S M A R E
Y I N T H E L O R D - P E A C E T O H

This is the Henrietta Furry Bean funeral card.

of several months figured it out.

It was a different message than appeared on the funeral card of Henrietta Bean and much more difficult to decipher.

Here is his surmise:

Henrietta Furry was born in Pennsylvania in 1842. She married Dr. Samuel Bean in Philadelphia. He came to Linwood to practice. Mr. Hammond said there was always some question whether he was a qualified medical man.

Henrietta died after seven months of marriage on Sept. 27, 1865, and Dr. Bean had the unusual funeral cards printed. The code was easy to break by reading counter-clockwise from the centre letter.

DIED IN TWO YEARS

The good doctor married Henrietta's older sister, Susanna. She died two years later.

This time Dr. Bean commemorated the occasion of his bereavement by a means that would last down through the years. He had erected a stone for both which contained another hidden message—but this time it was a "toughie."

It begins seven letters from the top and seven letters from the left-hand side and starts counter-clockwise but then goes into a zig-zag pattern and ends up with the invitation, "Reader! Meet

Us in Heaven."

The problem of making the stone readable for photographing was solved by scraping off the moss-grown letters with a wire brush.

There are several spelling discrepancies.

Funeral Card Code

Here is the deciphered inscription of the funeral card:

"In memoream Henriettah Furry Bean born in Penn. Married in Philadelphia to Samuel Bean M.D. & went with him to Canada leaving all her friends behind—Died in Linwood the 27th of Sep. 1865 after an illness of 11 weeks aged 23 years 2 months & 17 days she was a model wife 1 of 1000—Much regretted by her sorrowing husband & all who knew her—Was married 7 months & 10 days—Lived a godly life for 5 years & died happy in the Lord—Peace be to her ashes—So mote it be."

Tombstone Code

Here is the deciphered code of the tombstone:

In memoriam Henrietta 1st wife of S Bean MD who died 27th Sep 1865 aged 23 years 2 months & 17 days & Susanna his 2nd wife who died 27th April 1867 aged 26 years 10 months & 15 days. 2 better wives 1 man never had they were gifts from God but are now in heaven may God help me so to meet them there."