

## The curious cemetery stone

If you are a lover of puzzles there's one about two and a half miles west of Crosshill that's bound to intrigue you.

There, tucked away in the south-east corner of Rushes Cemetery, is what must be one of the most unusual tombstones in Canada -- a white marble marker, the inscription of which is almost entirely in code.

Edgar Hammond, of 12 Grosch Street, Milverton, chairman of Rushes Cemetery Board and supervisor of the cemetery's care, says the stone has been there since the 1860's.

"My father, John Hammond, who farmed near Crosshill, was the cemetery caretaker for many years. One time when he was in the cemetery waiting for a funeral cortege, he wrote the inscription down and took it home to figure out. It took him several months.

"Mrs. Anderson Dewar, of Wellesley, also has decoded it," he said.

"My father didn't know the complete family history of the man who erected the stone but he passed some of the facts on to me," Mr. Hammond said.

According to the story handed down in the Hammond family, the tombstone was put up by a Dr. Samuel Bean in memory of two of his wives, both of whom died in their twenties.

The doctor's wife was Henrietta Furry, believed to have been born in Pennsylvania in 1842. She married Dr. Samuel Bean in Philadelphia, then moved to Linwood where he set up a practice.

At one time he lived on the farm where Ezra Steckley now lives.

Henrietta died after seven months of marriage on September 27, 1865. The doctor then married Susanna, believed to be Henrietta's elder sister. Susanna died nineteen months later on April 27, 1867.

The idea of using code in a memorial message apparently came to Dr. Bean following his first wife's death when he had funeral cards printed in a simple code.

Following his second bereavement, Dr. Bean decided to use a more complicated code for the memorial that would last down the years.

The message, a tribute to both Henrietta and Susanna, consists



Pointing out a puzzle, Edgar Hammond, of Milverton, points to the code on a tombstone in Rushes cemetery, near Crosshill. (Sun Photo)

of 15 rows of letters arranged 15 letters to the row.

To decipher the code one must begin with the seventh letter from the left side in the seventh row from the top. It begins in a counter-clockwise manner, then changes to a zig-zag pattern, changes again to straight lines, then reverts to the zig-zag style. It ends with the invitation, "Reader! Meet us in heaven."

### Dr. Bean's code

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

The curious stone begins with the seventh letter from the left side in the seventh row from the top.

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 & 15 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 SB to meet them there.



# A sequel to the “curious stone”

Edgar Hammond, of Milverton, chairman of the Rushes Cemetery Board and supervisor of the cemetery had a visitor recently. The man was a decendent of Samuel Bean M.D. who erected the gravestone in cipher in Rushes Cemetery in memory of his two young wives: Henrietta and Susanna.

Mr. Hammond learned that the Beans originally came from Switzerland to Pennsylvania. The family name was formerly Beihn. Dr. Samuel Bean had practised in Philadelphia and opened a practice in Linwood in the 1860's. Mr. Hammond said that Henrietta and Susanna were not sisters, as has been believed. He was also told that Samuel Bean and his third wife are buried in a cemet-

ery in Strasbourg . (The only place of that name we can find is Strasbourg, Saskatchewan).

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