

# More information gained about mysterious Crosshill gravestone

by Sheila Kenyon

If you are interested in history you have to be somewhat of a detective to get at the facts. When you have the facts you can tie all the ends together — this is what we can now almost do in regard to "The Curious cemetery stone" in the south-east corner of Rushes Cemetery near Crosshill. The memorial on the stone is written in a cipher.

In the 1860's Samuel Bean M.D. erected the stone with the cipher message for his two wives, who both died in their twenties. Grace Schmidt, assistant chief librarian of Kitchener Public Library kindly provided more information.

A "Historical Sketch of the Biehn Families and their Descendants" 1700-1947 was compiled by Mr. Samuel U. Bean, she says. Samuel Bean M.D., 1842-1904, was his ancestor and was the fifth son of Abraham Bean. Abraham was the second son of John Biehan, a native of Switzerland, who came to America with his parents in 1742 and later married. In 1800 he and his wife and family came to Canada and settled one mile west of Doon. At some time across the years the family name was changed to Bean.

John Biehn purchased a large tract of land which became known as "Biehn's Tract". Abraham, Samuel Bean's father, lived in Blandford, Oxford County. He and his wife, Susannah Graybill had 11 children. Samuel Bean M.D. (he later became a minister and is sometimes referred to as Rev. Bean) was the fifth son of Abraham and Susannah. He was born in Wilmot Township March 24, 1842, and was married three times.

The "curious cemetery stone" is in memory of his first two wives. His first wife was Henrietta Furry. She died within a few years after their marriage. His second wife, Susan Clegg, or Susanna, on the tombstone, who was believed to be the elder sister

of Henrietta by the Hammond family of Crosshill, bore one daughter, Susannah, who married and died in Chicago, Illinois.

After the death of his first two wives, Samuel married Annie M. Wankmiller on June 28, 1870. She died in 1914.

Samuel Bean M.D. was engaged in the teaching profession and later studied medicine, graduating from medical school in Philadelphia. He followed the medical profession for several years and practiced in Linwood. Later he entered the ministry of the Evangelical Church, and received his license as a preacher in 1868. In 1972, he was ordained as an itinerant elder. For some years he was active in New York and Iowa Conferences. He is known as having read the Bible "through 65 times" — "equalled or surpassed by few".

While on a visit to his family in Florida, he had occasion to go to Cuba. On the return journey the boat capsized, and he was lost off the coast of Cuba in January 1904. All efforts to recover the body were futile.

Samuel Bean M.D. and his wife Annie had five children, many of whom married and settled in Florida, but there is no reference as to where Annie is buried. Perhaps she is buried in Strassbourg, Ontario.

It is interesting that the inscription on the curious cemetery stone resulted from a similar coded message on a funeral card distributed by Dr. Bean in memory of his first wife, Henrietta Furry.

The card reads: 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 and 17 days she was a model wife 1 of 1000 — Much regretted by her sorrowing husband & all who knew her — Was married 7 months and 10 days — Lived a godly life for 5 years & died happy in the Lord — Peace be to her ashes — So mote it be.