

## The Mystery of the Gravestone      By Mary Jane Devlin

On June 14, as the Curator Committee was working at our museum, Bill Faker, a resident of Walworth, came in to donate a Class Ring from Walworth 1937. He said the ring belonged to either his mother or aunt. There were initials of "PCP" in the ring. Those initials don't match any of our Walworth graduates' initials from 1937 or 1938. This is also a mystery! Afterward, as we were talking, he mentioned that when he moved into his house in 1978 there was a gravestone in his barn. He tried several times to find out how it got there and where the person was buried. The name on the stone was Dorothy Van Norman, age 2 years and 4 months. Her mother's and father's names (Edith E. and John H.) were also on the stone, but no dates.

I said I knew of a Joe Van Norman in Shortsville. I contacted him to see if he knew anything about it. He said he didn't, but his sister did a lot of genealogy, and gave me her name. I contacted Arlene Van Norman Reeves and two days later she reported that Dorothy was buried in Webster Rural Cemetery, her date of death (September 8, 1913), and her obituary. Since then we have contacted the Webster Rural Cemetery, where her obituary said she is buried. The superintendent of the cemetery said that there is no record of her burial there. However, her parents, Mr. & Mrs. J. H. VanNorman, are buried there. Arlene Van Norman obtained a copy of the child's death certificate from Monroe County. There is no burial date or place of burial listed on it. The undertakers' names were on it. I contacted the Webster Historical Museum, who told me the funeral parlor had changed names several times and was now owned by Anthony Funeral Homes of Brighton. I contacted them but they had no records of the Harris & Nagle undertakers, who were listed on the death certificate.



Apparently the damaged marble gravestone was replaced with a bigger granite stone which only has the last name on it. We have contacted the following organizations, who are not interested in having the stone: Webster Rural Cemetery, Webster Historical Society, and the Walworth Historical Society. During our research we discovered that Dorothy's mother's maiden name was Bradshaw and Milton Bradshaw of Walworth was her nephew. We traced the abstract of Bill Faker's home and could find no connection to the Bradshaws. Other members of the Walworth Historical Society, including Dorothy French and Bob Mogray, helped in the search for information. So after all the research, the mystery of how the stone got to Bill's barn still remains a mystery.

If anyone knows more about the stone or has any questions or comments, please contact the Walworth Historical Society or me at 315-986-1512.

In the meantime Williamson-Pultneyville Historical Society had a house tour and advertised that one home had former gravestones for cellar steps!

**Bill Faker's mystery gravestone**