A small crew installed the abandoned gravestone of a former Hamden, NY woman, Elizabeth B. Russell, who died Oct 30, 1874, aged 27 yrs, 11 mos and 2 days, in the West Delhi Cemetery. Elizabeth and her husband, Robert H. Russell, lived in Hamden but went out to Missouri in the 1870's. They had a child there and were coming back to Hamden when Elizabeth died somewhere along the way. No one knows where she's buried but not around here, as far as I can tell. When Robert got back to Hamden I believe he ordered a gravestone for Elizabeth at one of the local gravestone carvers. Before it was finished I think he moved to Michigan where he remarried, had a family and died there. The local gravestone carver knew the gravestone was meant to be placed in the West Delhi Cemetery. My conjecture is that when he brought the finished gravestone no one was at the cemetery so he left it at the District #7 schoolhouse on West Platner Brook Rd., near the cemetery. I believe it may have been there since around 1875. The current owner of the former schoolhouse, Leanne Nabinger, asked me what to do with Elizabeth's gravestone. I did some research but couldn't find the same family. I asked the Bovina Historian, Ray LaFever, if he could find any Russell's. He was able to locate a descendant of Robert H. Russell and that person contacted Robert's Great Granddaughter, a woman in Michigan who's still living and 91 years old. They said we solved the oldest Russell family mystery - where is Elizabeth's gravestone? I think Robert intended her gravestone to be placed as a cenotaph in the West Delhi Cemetery because his family is buried there. Elizabeth's epitaph is "and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know", John 14:4-26. Steve Fleming, Mike Mills, Brandon Dennis, Leanne Nabinger and Marianne Greenfield installed the gravestone on the Russell family lot, August 26, 2026.



