

William may not have considered himself a lucky man, but there were a few times in his life that he had a guardian angel sitting on his shoulder watching out for him. One time he was blessed was when he went through two horrific years of warfare and came through it as whole a man as he went in. Secondly, while he was in the army serving his country, he avoided getting any fatal diseases that shortened his life span. Thirdly, he was protected from any injury when the train he was on as a passenger collided head-on with another which resulted in three dead and five badly injured. He was, indeed, a lucky man.

Born on February 14, 1838, St. Valentine's Day, in Champlain, New York, William was the only male child of Alva Hinman (1802-1841) and Mary Moore (1806-1843). ^[1] He only had two sisters, both older, for siblings. Sarah E. (1832-?) was his oldest sibling followed by Lucy Ann (1836-1927) who was two years older than he. ^[2] William was the last child born in the family and the only male. Alva, his father, had been born March 3, 1802 in New Haven. He died at a very young age even by nineteenth century standards. He was only thirty-nine when he passed in 1841 at Chazy, New York. ^[3] He had been a farmer his whole life. His wife, Mary, also died at an early age in 1843 also at Chazy. She was only thirty-six at the time. ^[4] With both parents gone, the orphaned children were on their own at an early age as well. It was not clear exactly what happened to the two girls, Sarah and Lucy, but William ended up living with his grandparents, David or Daniel Moore and his wife, Elizabeth. They had a modest farm in Champlain, New York. That's where William was living in 1850 at the age of twelve. A twenty-six year old hired man lived with them at the homestead. The family farm was only a \$1,000 one man operation, but Daniel was seventy-three in 1850 and so Francis Laplant's help was crucial to keeping the farm productive and supported the Moore family of three. ^[5] A boy of twelve could never had done the necessary work to maintain a farm all by himself.

By 1860, William was a grown man of twenty-two years. But he was alone. His grandparents were very old people in their seventies. His sister, Sarah, had moved in with the Moore's, but she had brought a husband with her, one James Bird. There was another Moore now living with the rest of the family. His name was Nelson Moore, aged twenty-two. His father was Nathaniel Moore who may have been related to Daniel in some way.

With all this hearty manpower around, the farm had been improved substantially. Worth only \$1,000 in 1850, it had grown in value to \$6,000 by 1860. And Daniel's personal property had increased also to be worth another \$2,000 by itself. ^[6] The elderly couple were in pretty good financial shape in their "golden years". Maybe that's why William wasn't too concerned about leaving the Champlain farm and his grandparents to go off to war in Virginia.

At the urging of the Selectmen of the town of New Haven, William signed up for three years with the Union Army on December 14, 1863. He was twenty-five and about average for a man of his time, standing at five feet six and one half inches tall. His complexion was fair for a man who worked outdoors most of the time. He had the customary blue eyes and brown hair. Private Hinman was a recruit for the Ninth Vermont Infantry, Company C. ^[7] That meant he was joining as a replacement for an original member of the Regiment, taking the place of a man whom the Regiment had lost through expiration of his term of service, been wounded or died. He wasn't actually mustered-in the army until January 7, 1864 when he and the other volunteers arrived at Brattleboro, Vermont. At that time, his active enlistment period began. He was given \$25 of his \$300 bounty along with a month's pay in advance of \$13. He also received a \$2 premium payment and another \$35 bounty paid from the commutation fund. ^[8]

The Ninth Regiment was organized at Brattleboro and mustered into the service there on July 9, 1862 for three years. It was ordered at once to Washington. By July 19, the command was attached to General Sturgis' division at Cloud's Mills. Five days later, the Regiment was moved to Winchester where it was employed in the construction of fortifications and other fatigue duties for several months. Early in September it was sent to Harper's Ferry on the approach of Stonewall Jackson's forces. Due to the Federal command's indecisiveness and questionable loyalties, the Ninth, along with nearly twelve thousand other Union troops, were forced to surrender to General Jackson.

Harper's Ferry was humiliating to the Union but not to the Ninth Vermont. Colonel Stannard, commanding at the time, initially refused to surrender his men to the Confederates. For two hours after all other Federal troops had stacked arms, the Ninth and its Colonel attempted to fight its way out of the trap it was in and break through to reach the Army of the Potomac located nearby. Only when a Confederate division cut off its route of escape did Colonel Stannard, outnumbered ten to one, order his command to Bolivar Heights to stack arms with the other Federal prisoners. Before reluctantly surrendering, the officers of the Regiment cut the national colors into strips and parceled them out among themselves thus keeping it out of the hands of the enemy. They had intended to do the same to the State flag, but, in the excitement and haste, was not completely successful and a large part of it ended up in the hands of the Confederates. It was sent to Richmond as a trophy. Later, in 1865, when the Ninth marched into Richmond at the head of the Union Army of the Potomac, the flag was recaptured from the Rebel archives by the same command that had lost it. At the request of the Governor of the State of Vermont, the flag was returned to the State Capital where it resides to this day. The Ninth had the dubious distinction of being the only Regiment from Vermont that lost its colors at the hands of the enemy.

From Harper's Ferry, the Ninth was sent to Chicago on parole. They spent the next four months there. On January 10, 1863, the Ninth was exchanged. The Regiment received new Springfield rifles in anticipation of returning to the field of combat after a long and embarrassing detention as prisoners of war. Unfortunately they were assigned to guard the newly arrived Confederate prisoners captured at Murfreesboro and Arkansas until April 1 when they returned to City Point, Virginia. The Regiment was at Suffolk during the siege in April and May of 1863. From there, it was sent to Yorktown and occupied West Point during the Gettysburg campaign. A futile attempt was made to capture Richmond while its defenders were drawn off to take part in Lee's push into the North. July, August and September found the Regiment once again at Yorktown where the health of the Regiment suffered greatly from the climate and malaria. For this reason, and because of the persistent urging of the Governor of Vermont on behalf of the troops, the command was transferred in October to the Newport barracks located between Morehead

City and New Berne, North Carolina. Early in February, 1864, at the time of the attack upon New Berne, a detachment of Confederates were sent by General Pickett to capture Newport barracks. The ensuing fight resulted in three men of the Ninth being awarded medals of honor for gallantry. As a result of the Confederate assault, the Ninth was obliged to withdraw to Morehead City. Three days later, the Ninth reoccupied the Newport barracks. During the summer of 1864, various detachments of the Ninth were employed in dealing with Confederate activity around the New Berne area. September 15, 1864 was the second anniversary of the surrender at Harper's Ferry and was also the date on which the Ninth arrived in front of Petersburg.

Two days after its arrival, the Ninth received a detachment of recruits, increasing its numbers to 1, 129. Among those new arrivals to fill the Regiment's ranks was Private Lilly. On September 17, 1864, one hundred picked men of the Ninth were sent as a support to an isolated, exposed earth-work known as Redoubt Dutton. The detail from the Ninth lived in gopher holes (rifle pits) under the muzzles of the Union guns of the redoubt. A one hundred gun salute on September 24 and again on the 30th brought on a determined attack from the Confederates and the brunt of it fell on Redoubt Dutton. The steady, well-directed fire of the Vermont line disarranged and broke two well organized lines of battle at less than one hundred and fifty yards.

On September 29, the Ninth participated in the Battle of Chapin's (Chaffin's) Farm. On the 27th of October, the Regiment took part in the Battle of Fair Oaks. The Ninth was recalled to form part of the troops sent to New York under General Butler to protect the city from anticipated riots during the presidential election. From New York City, it was sent back to Richmond. April 3, 1865 the Ninth, along with the Twelfth New Hampshire, were the first two Federal Regiments to enter the abandoned Confederate capital. Running through the burning streets of Richmond, they did not halt until they reached the front door of the Confederate White House. For the next two weeks, the Ninth was part of the provost guard in Richmond. Soon, Lee, Johnson and other segments of the Rebel Army surrendered and the shooting war was over. On the 13th of June, the original members of the Ninth were mustered-out. About four hundred recruits remained in the

service until December when they were disbanded and sent home. The Ninth then became a thing of the past.^[9]

Private Hinman's first eight months in the service were routine and smooth as possible for an infantryman. Then in September/October of 1864, he was on detached duty at Redoubt Dutton mentioned in the Regimental history.^[10] In late November, 1864 while on duty in the trenches before Richmond, Private Hinman became sick and was sent to the Base Hospital.^[11] He was a patient there through the end of 1864.^[12] In March of 1865, Private Hinman was promoted to Corporal.^[13] On July 11, 1865, he was given a twenty day furlough. In August, he ended up in one of the three general hospitals in Vermont sick.^[14] On September 5, 1865, there was an internal reorganization of the Ninth because the term of enlistment for the original members of the Regiment were expiring and because of the substantial losses of one kind or another the Ninth had suffered. Corporal Hinman became Sergeant Hinman of Company C. The bad news was that he owed the Government \$3.00 for transportation he took during his furlough back in July.^[15] Because he was a recruit and enlisted after the original members of the Ninth, Sergeant Hinman was kept in the Company A, Ninth Batt'n Vermont Infantry until December 1, 1865. He was then discharged from the army. The Government owed him \$29.17 from his clothing account and another \$160.00 of bounty money.^[16]

Not long after his discharge, William headed for home and the life he had left behind there. He may have returned to New Haven to resume his civilian life. It wasn't too many years after the war that William made another monumental decision in his life. He decided to surrender his bachelorhood for the life of a married man. His bride was a local girl from Monkton, Vermont named Janette M. Hollis (1849-1891) She was twenty and this was her first marriage. Her father was George P. Hollis (1815-1887). Her mother was Perlina Eldredge (1812-1892). They were married on December 30, 1868 in Bristol, Vermont.^[17] It seemed that December was William's favorite month of the year. He had enlisted in the army in December, had been discharge from the service in December and, now, was married in December. Janette's father was a shoemaker in Monkton.^[18] The newlyweds did not wait long to start a family. Their first child, a daughter, was born on

September 19, 1869 in New Haven. Her name was Mary. Unfortunately, Mary did not survive long. She passed away in August of 1870. ^[19]

Mary was only nine months old when William and Mary lost her to a fever. She was listed as a member of the household when the 1870 Federal Census was taken. She died of the fever one month after it was recorded. ^[20] William was doing carpentry work that year. He was thirty-two and his young wife, Mary, was only twenty-one. Although William worked hard, he was not amassing a fortune doing carpentry work for others. His total estate was worth only \$1,000 in 1870. ^[21] The loss of their infant daughter was somewhat mitigated by the arrival of their second daughter, Edith M., on May 4, 1871. They still lived in New Haven. Three years later, William and Mary had their third child, a boy this time. His name was Herbert Alvah and he was born on July 1, 1874. ^[22] Like himself, Herbert would be William's only son. In an attempt to earn more money for the family than he could just by doing carpentry work, William got involved in gambling and gambling led to trouble for him and his family. William was caught by authorities trying to sell lottery tickets. Apparently this was against the law at the time. The State of Vermont took him to court where he pleaded guilty to the charges against him and was fined \$15 and costs. This all occurred on September 16, 1873. ^[23]

By 1880, William's quality of life must have improved. He must have used his skills as a carpenter to build a large house. It had to be substantial since it housed himself, his wife, his two children, his father-in-law and his mother-in-law. Janette ran the house. Edith and Herbert attended school at nine and five respectively. George had added farming to his shoemaking business. And Perlina, listed only as a "boarder" in the Census must have assisted Janette with maintaining the home and caring for the young children. ^[24] On April 21, 1886, another daughter was born to the Hinman's. Her name was Daisy Alice and she would be the last Hinman born to the family. ^[25] Just as the 1880's were coming to a close, William found himself in the newspapers again. This time it was not for breaking the law, but as a survivor of a terrible train accident.

"A little crowd were standing on the platform of the depot at New

Haven at eight o'clock Friday evening waiting the arrival of the special excursion train from Rutland and the home-coming of their friends from the horse-breeders exhibition. That train was timed to reach New Haven at 8:08 p.m.; it never arrived at New Haven...." ²⁶

More than likely, Janette, maybe even Edith and Herbert, were in that "little crowd" waiting for the train with William on it. The crowd at the depot knew tragedy was in the making when, to their horror, at 8:00 p.m., a thirty or forty car freight train from the north went barreling through the Junction past the depot at thirty m.p.h. There were now two trains on the same track heading for each other and no one on either train was aware of it. And there was no way of telegraphing either engineer on the trains heading for a certain, and fatal, head crash.

When the special excursion train left the Rutland depot at 6:00 p.m., its nine coaches were filled with horsemen and horse-lovers. When it pulled out at 6:30 p.m., there was standing room only. At Center Rutland, many left the train to board the Delaware and Hudson for Whitehall, New York. At Leicester Junction, another large party left the cars. At Middlebury, many more passengers got off. The New Haven contingent, including William, were seated in different cars. The special sped on at 30 m.p.h. after leaving Middlebury and passed Brooksville at this speed. A short distance north of Middlebury was a pretty sharp curve on the road, the only one between that town and New Haven. It was on the top of that curve the excursion and the hog trains met. It was fortunate for the passengers that the trains collided on a curve as the oblique angle helped to reduce the force of the impact.

"William H. Hinman of New Haven was sitting in a car about the middle of the train ('I always select the centre of the train' says Mr. Hinman') with his feet braced on the seat in front of him. He felt the application of the air brakes and braced himself for a second shock, but it did not come. No one in his car was much jostled, and he with

others walked out the rear as calmly as possible under the somewhat excitable circumstances" [26]

Others on the train, who were still alive, got out of the wreckage to check themselves over. It was dark and difficult to see. The sounds of hundreds of trapped, squealing hogs made for a hideous sound in the night. As soon as practical, large bon fires were lit along the tracks to provide light for rescuers to work by. Those who survived the horrible collision were now concerned for those trapped in and beneath the hogs, iron, wood and debris piled some thirty feet high. People at the scene of the wreck were reluctant to crawl into the mangled stack of cars and hogs and debris for fear it would collapse at the slightest jarring and bury the would be liberator. One person stepped forward willing to take the risk. He was P.O. Stone, a young lad of nineteen, who volunteered to comb the heap of remains to search for survivors. He worked carefully and slowly until he found two injured and trapped people. These were the two Hunt boys. The cautiously removed them from the wreckage. Others began to volunteer and soon found the Fireman Perrin. These casualties were extricated from the pile of debris and placed upon seat cushions while messengers were sent off to Middlebury and New Haven for doctors.

Because those standing by on the New Haven platform at the junction had prior knowledge of the impending disaster, they had wired the railroad station in St. Albans for help. Soon after the collision occurred, wrecking trains arrived on scene with men, tools and equipment. Most importantly, they also brought a car load of doctors and, of course, the prerequisite entourage of railroad executives. The fireman and two Hunt boys were put on board cars and taken north. Fireman Perrin had a compound fracture of one leg and was taken to Burlington for treatment. The two Hunt boys, accompanied by doctors, were taken to their home in New Haven. The bodies of Conductor Blodgett and William Allen had been removed and sent to the undertakers in Middlebury. Only Engineer Embery remained missing. All day the wrecking crew worked at clearing the tracks. By two in the afternoon, the road was nearly clear. But there still was no sign of Engineer Embery. Some thought he may have wandered off in a daze into the nearby woods after the collision. Shortly after three in the afternoon his body was found. He lay about four

feet off the west side of the tracks nearly opposite his engine. His neck was broken. Speculation was that he had attempted to jump from his engine at impact. His remains were taken to Middlebury to the already busy undertakers. After 3 p.m., the hogs were loaded. It was quite the operation to gather them all up as they had scattered everywhere around the wreck site. It was nearly dark by the time the round-up was complete. The hog round-up had given some of the locals a chance to earn some pocket money. The railroad offered fifty cents a hog for every one caught and brought to the waiting rail cars. Six cars were loaded with dead hogs and four more with live ones. All were shipped to Boston. It was not possible to determine the exact extent of damages and loss incurred in this accident. Some guessed between \$15,000 to \$50,000. This was the most serious rail accident that had happened on the Rutland division of the Central Vermont Railroad in many years. ^[27]

After William's lucky escape in the train accident, he resumed his life as a normal citizen of New Haven. In 1890, he was active in the political matters of the Democratic Party in Addison County. At the annual convention of the party in 1890, William was nominated to run for assistant judge. ^[28] In a local New Haven town election in 1891, he was elected Clerk of School District No. 1. ^[29] William filed for a government pension for the first time in April of 1889. It was granted. ^[30] No Federal Census records for William exist for 1890 due to a vault fire that year which destroyed most of them. And he doesn't show up on the 1890 Veterans Schedules either. But he was still living in New Haven and he was still active in civic and political matters. On March 3, 1891, his wife, Janette, died at forty-one years old in New Haven. Her attending physician said she died of "nervous prostration". ^[31] That was a medical term of the nineteenth century which meant "extreme exhaustion from inability to control physical and mental activities". ^[32] In today's terms, she suffered from extreme depression, fatigue and a nervous breakdown. It was not known what circumstances brought her condition to a fatal level. According to her very brief obituary in the newspapers, she had failing health for years. However, she was described as "...a devoted wife and mother..." ^[33]

The 1900 Federal Census still listed William as a resident of New Haven and working as a carpenter at sixty-two. So, it was assumed that, in addition to his interest in horses and politics, he also continued to reside in New Haven throughout the 1890's. His twenty-five year old son, Herbert, and his two daughters, Edith, twenty-nine, and Daisy, fourteen, all still lived at home with their father. Janette, of course, had passed away in 1891. William owned his house in New Haven free and clear of any liens or mortgages. ^[34] He received an increase in his pension that year. According to the Bethel Courier, he was to receive \$17 per month. ^[35]

When 1910 rolled around, seventy-two year old William was rocking away of his sister's front porch watching New Haven's best go by. He was fully retired and enjoying it. The 1910 Federal Census taker reported that a "Juliette" A. Brunelle, seventy and a widow, owned the house she and her brother lived in. Now this was a bit strange because William had only two sisters and neither of them were named "Juliette" He had been married to Janette Hollis, so maybe that is where "Juliette" came from. Any way, they both were living off their "own income" at the time of the census. ^[36] Four years later, seventy-six year old William's body just plain wore out. On May 8, 1914 he succumbed to "acute congestion of the lungs. Valvular disorder of the heart". ^[37] The funeral services were held in his home in New Haven. Services were officiated by Reverend A.A. Lancaster, pastor of the Congregational Church. He was survived by his two sisters: Mrs. Hubbard of New Haven (Sarah?) and Mrs. Johnson (Daisy) of Weybridge and by a son, Burt (Herbert) Hinman. ^[38]

NOTES

1. www.findagrave.com, Memorial #40394308; Ancestry.com, Thorn Family Tree for William H. Hinman.
2. Ancestry.com, A bunch of distant relatives Family Tree for Alva Hinman; *Ibid.*, 1840 U.S. Federal Census for Alva Hinman.
3. www.findagrave.com, Memorial #62632928 for Alva Hinman.
4. *Ibid.*, Memorial #62633503 for Mary Moore Hinman.
5. Ancestry.com, 1850 U.S. Federal Census for Wm Hinman.
6. *Ibid.*, 1860 U.S. Federal Census for William Hinman.
7. www.fold3.com, Compiled Service Records of Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations From the State of Vermont, p. 2, image 311599066. Herein-

- after referred to as Compiled Service Records.
8. Ibid., Compiled Service Records, p. 3, image 311599068.
 9. Vermont in the Civil War.org/Units/Ninth Vermont Infantry/Regiments/History; Ibid., Units/Ninth Vermont Infantry/Introduction.
 10. www.fold3.com, Compiled Service Records, p. 15, image 311599093.
 11. Ibid., Compiled Service Records, p. 9, image 311599080.
 12. Ibid., Compiled Service Records, p. 15, image 311599093.
 13. Ibid., Compiled Service Records, p. 11, image 311599085.
 14. Ibid., Compiled Service Records, p. 15, image 311599093.
 15. Ibid., Compiled Service Records, p. 14, image 311599091.
 16. Ibid., Compiled Service Records, p. 16, image 311599095.
 17. Ancestry.com, Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908 for Janette M. Hollis; www.findagrave.com, Memorial #40679009 for Jeanette Hollis Hinman.
 18. Ibid., 1860 U.S. Federal Census for Janette Hollis.
 19. www.findagrave.com, Memorial #40679009; Ancestry.com, McKenzie Family Tree for William Henry Hinman.
 20. Ancestry.com, Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908 for Mary M. Hinman.
 21. Ibid., 1870 U.S. Federal Census for William Heiman.
 22. Ibid., Mackenzie Family Tree for William Henry Hinman.
 23. www.newspapers.com, Express and Standard, Tue., Sep. 16, 1873.
 24. Ancestry.com, 1880 U.S. Federal Census for William Hinman.
 25. Ibid., MacKenzie Family Tree for William Henry Hinman.
 26. www.newspapers.com, Burlington Free Press, Mon., Sep. 2, 1889.
 27. Ibid.
 28. Ibid.
 29. Ibid., Burlington Clipper, Thu., Aug. 7, 1890.
 30. Ibid., Argus and Patriot, Wed., Apr. 8, 1891.
 31. www.fold3.com, Pension Files for Hinman, William H.
 32. Ancestry.com, Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908 for Jenette Hinman.
 33. www.usgennet.org/usa/ar/county/greene/olddiseases/htm.
 34. www.newspapers.com, Burlington Clipper, Thu., Mar. 12, 1891.
 35. Ancestry.com, 1900 U.S. Federal Census for William H. Hinman.
 36. www.newspapers.com, Bethel Courier, Thu., Oct. 18, 1900.
 37. Ancestry.com, 1910 U.S. Federal Census for William H. Hinman.
 38. Ibid., Vermont, Death Records, 1909-2008 for William H. Hinman.
 39. www.newspapers.com, Burlington Daily News, Tue., May 12, 1914.