

"Henry C. Roscoe, our popular merchant and a future senator, was made an R.A. Mason last evening."^[1] This single quote just about summarizes Henry's life in one sentence. Like his father, Alfred, Henry became a storekeeper as an adult. And also like his father, Henry was very active in the civic and secular affairs of his community. Indeed, he was popular in New Haven and well known by its citizens, many of them having been extended store credit for their purchases in his store. Despite his key position in the life of the village, his second wife, Jennie, seemed to hold a special place in the hearts of the children and young people of the town. When she passed away, her death was noticed by three local newspapers - Bristol Herald, The Enterprise and Vermonter (Vergennes) and the Middlebury Register. When Henry died some years after Jennie, he received no obituary write up at all in any Vermont newspaper!

Henry Clay Roscoe was born on May 2, 1845. Some sources said his birthday was on December 31, 1844. Regardless, his arrival occurred in New Haven, Vermont.^[2] His father was Alfred P. Roscoe (aka AP) (1807-1873) from Monkton, Vermont. His biological mother was Elvira S. Ladd (1810-1848). He had a step-mother named Elmina Barnes (1812-1877).^[3] As best as could be determined, Henry had a brother and a sister for siblings. The sister, Mary E., was older having been born about 1835. The brother was Alfred M. who was also older, having been born about 1837.^[4]

When Henry was eight in 1850, he and his two siblings lived in New Haven with their parents, Alfred P. and "Almira" Roscoe. Henry's biological mother, Elvira S. Ladd, was born in Monkton on November 29, 1810, the daughter of Ira and Polly Ladd. Elvira only lived until June 27, 1848 when she passed away of unknown causes. By then, she had given birth to three children - Mary, Alfred M. and Henry. She was only thirty-seven when she died; very young even for nineteenth century standards.^[5] Being left with three very young children to care for, a household to maintain for himself and his children, and a mercantile business to run by himself, was more than Henry could handle on his own. He desperately needed a partner. So he remarried within nine months of his first wife's death. The new Mrs. Roscoe was actually Elmina Barnes (1812-1877). She and Henry were united in holy matrimony on March 15, 1849.^[6] In 1850, Alfred had an estate value

of \$2,500 which indicated that, financially, he was comfortably surviving but not getting rich. After all, he was a small town general storekeeper in a rural village. All three of the young Rocoos attended school when in session.^[7]

Ten years later, Alfred had improved his socio-economic status to a new, higher level. He was still a "retail dealer" or general merchant in New Haven. His store business was worth about the same as in 1850 (\$2,700), but his personal value had risen to a remarkable \$6,000. He was now well on his way to becoming a respected middle class businessman in the tiny hamlet of New Haven. Fifteen year old Henry was the only "child" left in the household. Both of his older siblings, Mary and Alfred, had left home to establish their own destinies in the large, outside world. Henry still attended school along with a Sara Horton who also lived in the Roscoe household in 1860. Little was found out about her except that she was born in Connecticut around 1846.^[8] Her relationship, if any, to the Roscoes was unclear. Most likely, she was not a servant in the home because she went to school. She could have been an orphaned child of a friend or community member. She even could have been a sister of Alfred's or his wife, Elmina (who did have a sister named Sarah). Or she might have been Mary's daughter, making her a grand-child of Alfred and Elmina. Or maybe she was just a child from a large, poor family who was boarded out to reduce the number of mouths to feed in a dysfunctional family. Such a practice was not unusual in the 19th century.

April 14, 1861 brought news - disheartening to some, exciting to others - to the townspeople of New Haven. That is the day that the distant rumblings of canon fire reached the little Vermont village. Two days earlier, in a far away place called Charleston, South Carolina, the Federal garrison of Fort Sumter had been forced to surrender to forces of the newly created Confederate States of America. The great war of rebellion had begun. Like ants from a disturbed nest, young men everywhere scampered to the nearest army recruiter so that they could put their names down as a volunteer in Mr. Lincoln's army. But poor Henry Roscoe had to wait to join in the excitement. He was only sixteen - two years shy of the minimum age for a recruit. No matter which birthday you used, Henry could not meet the eighteen year old age requirement to enlist. He would

not be of legal age until either December 31, 1862 or May 4, 1863. Henry had to take the chance that the war would be finished before he could get to it. What no one knew at the time was that this rebellion was not going to be a flash in the pan event but rather a long, drawn out, bloody affair that would last four, arduous years. The clock ticked on and Henry waited impatiently for his eighteenth birthday to arrive. When Bull Run came and went and the "secesh" still survived, President Lincoln called for 300,000 more troops to put on the uniform. As more regiments of infantry were being formed in Vermont, young Henry became ever more impatient to enlist. Finally, on September 1, 1862, still a few months short of eighteen, Henry found a recruiter in Bristol, Vermont who would accept him without close scrutiny or questioning. There were quotas to be filled with volunteers; each state had their magic number and the military districts within each state made up of individual townships had theirs. No one wanted to resort to the unpopular alternative of filling quotas by conscription (draft). So, time and again, recruiters either ignored or loosely interpreted the age requirements in order to meet the quotas. N.F. Dunshee enrolled the five feet six and three-quarter inch clerk with a light complexion, blue eyes and light hair into Company G of the Fourteenth Vermont Regiment on the first of September, 1862 for nine months.^[9] Mr. Roscoe officially became Private Roscoe on October 21, 1862 at Brattleboro, Vermont when the Fourteenth was accepted into the service of the United States Army.^[10]

The Fourteenth Vermont only existed for a short time (they were "Nine Months" men), but they saw hard service during their term of enlistment. At first, the Regiment was attached to those units making up the defenses around Washington, D.C. After December 11, 1862, the Fourteenth was placed on guard duty in and around Fairfax Court House where it was engaged in the repulse of Jeb Stuart's cavalry raid. From March to June, 1863, the Vermonters were stationed at Wolf Run Shoals along with other Vermont troops to guard the vital river ford on the Occoquan River. On the 25th of June, the Fourteenth was attached to the Third Division of the First Corps and began its march northward towards Gettysburg. It was a grueling march sometimes covering twenty miles a day for consecutive days at a time. Over two hundred of the Regiment were forced to drop out before every reaching Gettysburg because they could not keep up the pace. The

Fourteenth arrived at Gettysburg too late to take part in the first day's action. It bivouacked in a wheat field to the left of Cemetery Ridge. Late on the second day, the Regiment was called into action to help the Thirteenth Vermont repel an attack by General A.P. Hill on the left center of the Union line. After the tremendous opening cannonade of July 3, during which several men of the Fourteenth were killed by an explosion of a battery caisson, the left flank of Pickett's long grey line could be seen advancing towards the concealed Vermonters. At less than one hundred yards distance from the enemy, the men of the Fourteenth rose at command and delivered a devastating volley into the Confederate columns. The Thirteenth and Sixteenth changed fronts and added their fire to that of the Fourteenth. The result was that Pickett's right wing was caught and crushed. After the main charge was halted and Pickett's divisions were streaming back towards Seminary Ridge, four companies of the Fourteenth, A, F, D, and I, captured most of Confederate General Wilcox's Brigade as prisoners. This independent action taken by the Vermont troops, including Chauncey L. Clark, was credited by the Union high command as being crucial to the turning of Pickett's Charge. The Fourteenth was also part of the Union's pursuit of Lee's forces following the three day battle. It was during this pursuit that, on July 18, 1863, the Fourteenth was released and sent home. The Fourteenth was mustered-out on July 30, 1863. Total enrollment for the Fourteenth was 964 officers and men. Of that number, 27 were killed in action, 65 died of wounds; 39 died of diseases; 1 died in prison and 1 was murdered. Total deaths amounted to 68.^[11]

Being one of the healthiest regiments in the Second Vermont Brigade, Private Roscoe was fortunate to remain on active duty throughout his enlistment period of nine months. Mustered-out on July 30, 1863 with his comrades of the Fourteenth, he returned to his hometown in Vermont to resume his civilian life at the country store of his father, Alfred. During the war, Alfred had supported the war effort not only by sending a son to fight in it, but also by paying his taxes to support it. The 1864 U.S. IRS tax assessment on his business was \$11.00; \$10 for the retail store and \$1 for a horse wagon.^[12] Once back home and living with his parents again, Henry went back to clerking in the family mercantile business. Then, in 1868, another transformation occurred in Henry's life. He became a husband and entered into a life-long contract with a woman named Sarah

Catherine "Kate" Landon. She was born May 14, 1849 in New Haven, Vermont. She was the eighteen year old daughter of Elisha Horton Landon (1800-1890) and Charlotte Hoyt (1805-1864).^[13] Her father and grandfather operated a \$5,000 farm in New Haven. Sarah was the youngest child in her family. She had four siblings: two sisters (Charlotte J. and Mary Ann) and two brothers (William and Mills).^[14] Henry and Sarah were married on April 2, 1868 in New Haven by C.A. Hurlburt - minister.^[15] The newlyweds had their first child, Katherine M. "Kate", on August 8, 1870.^[16] Two weeks later, Sarah died (August 21, 1870) of fever.^[17] The Middlebury Register took note of her passing, praising her Christian values and faith calling her early loss "irreparable" and saying "...she was an ornament..." of the community.^[18] By 1870, A.P. Roscoe had sold the store to his sons, Alfred and Henry.^[19] They had renamed the business "Roscoe Brothers". The 1870 Federal Census was taken July 20 for New Haven. Sarah was eight months pregnant with Kate and had only one month more to live. After she passed, Henry struggled to be a single parent and general store merchant at the same time, just like his father had experienced in his life time. But he did have a nest egg of \$5,000 at the time of Sarah's death, so he and his little daughter were not destitute. Still, there must have been some trying times dealing with the high degree of stress caused by Sarah's early and unexpected passing. There must have been great anxiety for both Henry and his infant daughter, Kate. Henry allowed for a respectable mourning period to pass of four years before he remarried a second time.

His new wife was Jennie Kate Hall, a native of New Haven, Vermont. She was born to Erasmus Darwin Hall (1817-1895) and Eveline Sprague (1822-1861) on April 7, 1856.^[20] E.D. Hall was a physician in the community of New Haven. Eveline most likely assisted her husband with his practice as well as managing the home for herself, her husband, and their three children. All of them were girls. Jennie was the middle child, having an older sister named Frances (10), and a younger sister named Mary. Dr. Hall also employed a servant girl, sixteen year old Louisa Lewsby whose primary responsibility was looking after the three girls.^[21] By the time Jennie married Henry in 1874, her father had built up a good practice in town, amassing an estate value of \$3,500. He was doing well enough to afford a domestic servant. He also gave room and board to a farm laborer.^[22] Henry

and Jennie were married in New Haven on April 7, 1874 by the local minister - S. Knowlton. She was twenty-one and this was her first marriage.^[23] The 1870 Federal Census indicated that Henry was a retired storekeeper. But his marriage records to Jennie Hall in 1874 stated he was a merchant.^[24] In the Addison County Journal newspaper of March 1877, mention was made that "...Mr. M.A. Roscoe (actually Alfred Mortimer, Henry's brother) has sold out his interest in the firm of Roscoe Bros. to his brother, Mr. Henry C. Roscoe, who will continue in the business...."^[25] That made Henry, like his father before him, the sole owner-operator of a dry goods store in the village of New Haven.

Somewhere along the line, Henry had also begun dabbling in agriculture. The 1880 Federal Census listed him as a "farmer" not a merchant in their June head count. Jennie was keeping house and Kate was old enough to attend school. Fred Duprey, an illiterate, nineteen year old "servant" worked for Henry as a "Month Farm Hand".^[26] It appeared that Henry was a man of many interests. His father had also taken a keen interest in the civic matters of the town and at the state level, too. A.P. Roscoe had held a dozen town and church offices in his life time, many more than once and some for as many as thirty-four years in a row. A.P. was also a Representative to the General Assembly, twice.^[27] Henry seemed to have inherited his father's desire to serve and to be an entrepreneurial spirit in the community. He, too, held multiple town offices. He served as trustee of Beeman Academy for fifty years. In 1882, he also represented the town of New Haven in the General Assembly for the State of Vermont. And, like his father, he was Postmaster in town for seven years.^[28] Along about August of 1883, Henry sold his farm for \$8,000.^[29] Thanksgiving time in 1884. Henry bought two tons (4,000 lbs!) of turkey for 18 cents per pound.^[30] For the thirty-sixth Anniversary/Reunion of the Battle of Gettysburg, both Henry and Sherrod Brown attended. Each one had fought in the famous battle in 1863; Henry in the ranks of the Fourteenth Vermont and Sherrod as a sharpshooter in the First USSS (Berdan's). Henry was found of relating how he had had a tin cup of water shot out of his hand at that engagement.^[31]

As the world entered into the Twentieth Century, new technology was being quickly introduced into the homes of Americans. These new fabulous devices did not escape the notice of Henry. When Henry had a telephone installed in his store in New Have early in 1901, it was a big enough event to be reported in the local newspaper.^[32] The Federal Census of 1900 listed only Henry and Jennie left in the household. By 1901, Jennie, now only in her mid-forties, began to display health issues. She was reported "...sick with fever and other complications for nearly four months...."^[33] Near the end of 1907, Henry decided to retire from the dry goods business. In December, he sold the store to Ira and Charles Everest.^[34] As 1907 turned into 1908, Henry's good fortunes grew increasingly slimmer. Jennie had a stroke in May of 1908 which left her partially paralyzed.^[35] Then, in May of 1909, his nephew, also named Alfred P. Roscoe, was taken very ill and died.^[36] His death would have been tragic enough, but he left the town of New Haven in a financial mess.

Henry's nephew had been acting town treasurer for some time before his sudden death. When the town treasurer's books were examined following his passing, it was found that Mr. Roscoe in his fifteen year tenure as treasurer, had illegally obtained a number of loans on the town's behalf without knowledge or consent of the selectmen. This scandal became public when one of those people who had loaned money to the town asked for repayment. Mr. William M. McIntyre presented a debt of \$1,650 to the selectboard. Having no knowledge that any such loan had been authorized by them, they refused payment. When the town treasurer's books were audited, a shortage of \$3,600 was discovered. That sum consisted of \$2,500 in loans from various individuals and a deficit of \$1,100 in cash on hand. The whole sad mess had to go to the courts to be settled.^[37]

In retirement, Henry and his wife had sufficient leisure time and the resources to remain very active and to travel. Henry attended G.A.R. annual meetings held in various cities around the country. He also went to reunions of Civil War veterans regularly, especially at Gettysburg. He and Jennie frequently visited family in Steele, Alabama and Alameda, California. About 1914, Henry began making regular trips to Mt. Clemens, Michigan for treatment of rheumatism.^[38] In the spring of 1917, Minnie (Hall) Sprague from Sourlake,

Texas, a sister of Jennie's, came to Vermont to spend the summer with the Roscoes. Unfortunately, it was not a pleasure trip for Minnie. She had come to care for Jennie who was very sick. They all spent the summer living in Burlington where Jennie was undergoing treatment for cancer at Fanny Allen Hospital in Winooski. Her fight against the disease lasted for two agonizing years until she died of it on Thursday, May 1, 1919 at Fanny Allen where she had been a patient for the past six months. The funeral was held in Burlington, the body conveyed to New Haven where an impressive ceremony was conducted. The casket was covered with beautiful flowers, attesting the love of old friends and neighbors.^[39] The young people of New Haven especially mourned the loss of their genial "Aunt Jennie".^[40]

Rheumatism continued to make Henry's life miserable. He spent ever increasing amounts of time at the baths of Mt. Clemens. He had applied for a Government pension based on disability back in July of 1890. At the time, he was awarded a pension of \$15 per month.^[41] In August of 1919, Henry returned to Mt. Clemens in Michigan for more treatments in the famous baths.^[42] While there, he became very ill with influenza during the winter of 1919-20. He was so ill that he alarmed his friends back in New Haven and he struggled for a long time to recover from it.^[43] His return to New Haven in May of 1920 was a great relief to his many acquaintances in town. For the winter of 1920-21, Henry opted to spend it with his daughter and husband, Mr. and Mrs. W.O. Smith, in California.^[44] He planned on returning to New Haven in the spring. When back in Vermont, he boarded with friends in town. Henry continued this pattern throughout the winters and summers of 1921-1928; he spent winters on the West Coast and summers on the East Coast. Despite all the shuttling back and forth between coasts, he managed to die in his hometown of New Haven on August 28, 1928. Cause of death was arterio "Schlerosis" and apoplexia. Henry was eighty-three years of age.^[45] He was laid to rest with his wives in Evergreen Cemetery.

NOTES

1. www.newspapers.com, Bristol Herald, Thu., Apr. 19, 1894.
2. Ancestry.com, Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908, Birth for Henry Clay Roscoe;

- Ibid., DeWitt & Joy Jones Family Tree.
3. www.findagrave.com, Memorial #136338944 for Alfred P. Roscoe.
 4. Ancestry.com, 1850 U.S. Federal Census for Mary E. Roscoe.
 5. Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908 for Elvira S. Ladd & Roscoe, Elvira.
 6. Ibid., for Alfred P. Roscoe; www.findagrave.com, Memorial #136338944 for Alfred P. Roscoe.
 7. Ibid., 1850 U.S. Federal Census for Mary E. Roscoe.
 8. Ibid., 1860 U.S. Federal Census for Henry C. Roscoe.
 9. www.fold3.com, Compiled Service Record of Union Volunteers in Organizations From the State of Vermont, p. 3, image 312164737. Hereinafter referred to as Compiled Service Records.
 10. Ibid., Compiled Service Records, p. 4, image 312164738.
 11. Ancestry.com, U.S. American Civil War Regiments, 1861-1866, 14th Infantry Regiment Vermont; Vermont in the Civil War/Units/14th Vermont Infantry/Introduction.
 12. Ancestry.com, U.S. IRS Tax Assessment Lists, 1862-1918 for Alfred Roscoe.
 13. Ibid., DeWitt & Joy Jones Family Tree for Sarah Catherine "Kate" Landon.
 14. Ibid., 1850 U.S. Federal Census for Sara C. Landon.
 15. Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908 for Katie L. Landon.
 16. Ibid., DeWitt & Joy Jones Family Tree for Sarah Catherine "Kate" Landon.
 17. Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908 for Kate Roscoe.
 18. www.newspapers.com, Middlebury Register, Tues., Sep. 6, 1870.
 19. Ancestry.com, 1870 U.S. Federal Census for Elmira Roscoe.
 20. Ibid., DeWitt & Joy Jones Family Tree for Jennie Kate Hall.
 21. Ibid., 1860 U.S. Federal Census for Jennie Hall.
 22. Ibid., 1870 U.S. Federal Census for Jennie Hall.
 23. Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908 for Jennie K. Hall.
 24. Ibid., for Henry C. Roscoe.
 25. www.newspapers.com, Addison County Journal, Thu., Mar. 29, 1877.
 26. Ancestry.com, 1880 U.S. Federal Census for Henry Roscoe.
 27. A History of New Haven In Vermont, 1761-1983 by Harold Farnsworth and Robert Rogers, Town of New Haven, 1984, p. 321.
 28. Ibid. p. 322.
 29. www.newspapers.com, Middlebury Register, Fri., Aug. 17, 1883.
 30. Ibid., Fri., Nov. 28, 1884.
 31. Ibid., The Burlington Free Press, Wed., Oct. 16, 1889.
 32. Ibid., Middlebury Register, Fri., Apr. 5, 1901.
 33. Ibid., Thu., Aug. 8, 1901.
 34. Ibid., Fri., Dec. 6, 1907.
 35. Ibid., The Enterprise and Vermonter, Thu., May 7, 1908.
 36. Ibid., Thu., May 20, 1909.
 37. Ibid., Middlebury Record, Thu., Aug. 12, 1909.
 38. Ibid., Bristol Herald, Thu., Oct. 29, 1914.
 39. Ibid., Middlebury Register, Fri., Apr. 20, 1917; Ibid., Bristol Herald, Thu., May 8, 1919.
 40. Ibid., The Enterprise and Vermonter, Thu., May 8, 1919.

41. www.fold3.com, General Index To Pension Files, image 25440796.
42. www.newspapers.com, Bristol Herald, Thu., Aug. 14, 1919.
43. Ibid., Feb. 19, 1920.
44. Ibid., Middlebury Register, Fri., Sep. 10, 1920.
45. Ancestry.com, Vermont, Vital Records, 1909-2008 for Henry Clay Roscoe.