

Some people are born into this world having only bad luck, if they have any kind of luck at all. Samuel C. Alexander seemed to be one of those. Young when he went off to war, he was young yet when he got out of it and young again when he died because of it.

Samuel was a Canadian by birth. He was born in Lower Canada; in Shefford, Quebec some said, in 1844. ^[1] His father was Cyrus Alexander, Jr. and his mother was Susan (Washburn) Alexander. Six year old Samuel and his parents had Cyrus Alexander, Sr. living with them in 1850. The seventy-seven year old grandfather had been born before the American Revolution began. I imagine there were some very interesting conversations around the hearth of that household with the looming Civil War on the horizon. Cyrus, Jr., like Cyrus, Sr., operated a farm in Goshen, Vermont at the time. ^[2]

By 1860, Grandpa Alexander was no longer with the family. There was only Cyrus, Jr., Susan and Samuel who was fifteen now, and, most likely, working along side his father on the Goshen farm. ^[3]

Poor Sam didn't know at the time of his enlistment that he was in for a miserable next year of his life. He became a recruit in the United States Army when he and his father signed the official Declaration Of Recruit. Even though Sam was twenty years of age, well past the minimum age for enlistment, his father completed the Consent In Case Of Minor form. Sam had his father sign on the fifteenth of August, 1864. The young volunteer filled out his the twenty-second of August. ^[4] Private Alexander stood five feet, seven and one half inches tall. He had a dark complexion, black eyes and brown hair. He joined for one year and was assigned to Company B, 9th Regiment, Vermont Volunteers on August twenty-second, 1864 at Rutland, Vermont. ^[5] Being from Goshen, the new recruit was credited to that town and paid a bounty of \$100; one third on the spot and the rest to be paid at a later time. ^[6] A week after being mustered-in, Samuel was shipped off to New Haven, Connecticut for further processing and assignment. ^[7] It only took two months of being thrown together with hundreds of strangers and living twenty-four hours a day outdoors for Sam to become sick. By Nov./Dec.'s Muster Roll, he was listed "...absent...Recruit attached Sick in Hospital". ^[8]

The new year of 1865 did not start out well for Sam. His prospects for a quick and complete recovery from whatever had laid him low was bleak. On January 20, 1865, someone attempted to transfer him to another unit "...by Gen. Order No. 450, War Dep't". ^[9] However, Samuel was still a member of Company B of the 9th Regiment when he found himself a patient in the USA General Hospital in Brattleboro, Vermont on February 13, 1865. ^[10] Six days previously, February 7, at Patrick Station another attempt was made to transfer the sick Samuel from the 9th Regiment to the 4th Regiment "Vt. Volunteers". ^[11] Apparently this transfer was never completely processed by the War Department before Private Alexander was mustered-out of the service. A special note was added to Sam's official file on February 17, 1919 that said, "...the records showing such transfer is erroneous." ^[12]

For the next four months, poor Sam languished in one hospital after another - first in Brattleboro at the Governor Smith USA General Hospital and then at Auger USA General Hospital near Alexandria, Virginia. ^[13] Finally, Sam was released from both the hospital and the service on July 11, 1865 at Washington, D.C. He was paid one additional

installment of \$33 1/3 bounty with the last \$33 1/3 still owed him. However, he owed the Government \$51.21 for clothing allowance he was advanced. ^[14]

Sam missed out on the more exciting moments experienced by the 9th Vermont, like the humiliating surrender at Harper's Ferry. He may have been with the 9th at the Battle of Fair Oaks on October 27, 1864 if he wasn't already sick in some hospital. And that was exactly where he was on April 3, 1865 when the 9th Regiment was among the first Union troops who entered the captured capital of the Confederacy- Richmond, Virginia. The last of the 9th Regiment mustered-out in December of 1865 were recruits. Samuel had been home since July. ^[15]

Sam's exposure to soldiering left him a sick man. The disease he contracted in the Army did not kill him right away. It took six years before he finally succumbed to the plague he caught while in uniform. Sam married quickly after he ended his term of service. On September 25, 1868 he married a woman named Elvira A. Ferson. The marriage took place in Goshen or Leicester, depending on which certificate of marriage you are looking at. ^[16] According to the 1870 Federal Census, Sam and his wife were living in Goshen right next to Sam's mother, Susan, and his father, Cyrus, Jr. Cyrus owned the farm and his son, Samuel, helped him run it. ^[17] Sam died of consumption April 7, 1871 at the age of twenty-seven years, eight months. ^[18]

NOTES

1. Ancestry.com, 1860 U.S. Federal Census under Samuel Alexander; Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908, marriage certificate and death certificate for Samuel C. Alexander; Family Trees, Brown/Rose.
2. Ibid., 1850 U.S. Federal Census under Samuel Alexander.
3. Op cit., 1860 U.S. Federal Census under. Sam E C Alexander.
4. Fold3. com, Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Vermont (herein after referred to as Compiled Service Records...), p. 17. image 311531997.
5. Ibid., Compiled Service Records..., p. 16, image 311531991.
6. Op cit., Compiled Service Records..., p. 3, image 311531931.
7. Op cit., Compiled Service Records..., p. 4, image 311531935.
8. Op cit., Compiled Service Records..., p. 5, image 311531940.
9. Op cit., Compiled Service Records..., p. 6, image 311531944.
10. Op cit., Compiled Service Records..., p. 7, image 311531949.
11. Op cit., Compiled Service Records..., p. 8, image 311531953.
12. Op cit., Compiled Service Records..., p. 14, image 311531982.
13. Op cit., Compiled Service Records..., pp. 9-10, images 311531958 and 311531963.
14. Op cit., Compiled Service Records..., p. 11, image 311531968.
15. Ancestry.com, U.S., American Civil War Regiments, 1861-1866.
16. Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908.
17. Op cit., 1870 U.S. Federal Census under Sam E C Alexander.
18. Op cit., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908 for Samuel Alexander.