

Heman Hooker must have taken an extraordinary amount of ribbing during his lifetime considering the handle his parents blessed him with.

He came from a very large family even by 18th century standards. His father, Daniel Hooker, Jr., and his wife, Sally Joy, had sixteen children during their marriage. Heman had eleven sisters and four brothers. The oldest sibling was Daniel III born in 1817. The youngest was Huldah born in 1845. Heman was the fourth boy out of five sons. He was born January 7, 1840. <sup>[1]</sup>The whole family lived in Goshen, Vermont. Being the tenth child of sixteen almost made Heman the middle child. By 1850, all of Heman's brothers were off on their own along with eight of his sisters. Only three sisters and himself were left living with Daniel and Sally, the parents. Ten year old Heman was living essentially in a house full of women. He and his father were the only two males left on the family farm. <sup>[2]</sup>

By the next Federal Census in 1860, Heman was not listed as living in his parent's household. Only seventeen year old sister Susan was still at home. <sup>[3]</sup>In 1861, Heman was probably farming with another family somewhere in Goshen. On September 3, 1861 in Brandon, Vermont the twenty-one year old with a light complexion, black eyes and brown hair signed his declaration and enlisted in the army for three years. <sup>[4]</sup>He did not know on that day that he would see only one more birthday.

The Fifth was organized in St. Albans, Vermont. Its companies were raised in various towns throughout the State. Company B, for example, was comprised of only men from Middlebury; Company E was from Manchester; Company H, from Brandon; Company F, from Cornwall; and so on. The Regiment was mustered-in on September 16, 1861 at St. Albans. It was immediately sent to Washington, D.C. and joined the other Vermont troops already at Camp Advance (Griffin) near the Chain Bridge in Virginia where it was assigned to the Vermont Brigade with which it served during the rest of the war. Throughout the fall of 1861, and the first few months of 1862, it was on duty in the defenses surrounding Washington.

March 10, 1862 the Fifth moved to Alexandria, Virginia. Two weeks later, the Regiment boarded transport ships for the Virginia Peninsula landing at Fort Monroe and moving to New Port News on the twenty-third and twenty-fourth of March, 1862. By April 16, 1862, the Regiment was at Lee's Mills with the Vermont Brigade. On June 29, the Fifth brought four hundred men to the action at Savage's Station. In one half hour of fighting, it lost one hundred eighty-eight of them on the field. Company E of Manchester suffered the heaviest losses of any company from Vermont. Company E went into the engagement with fifty-nine muskets. In that one half hour of fierce conflict, it lost forty-four of the fifty-nine; twenty-five were killed and nineteen were wounded. Five Cummings brothers and one cousin from the company were among those killed or wounded. Only one of the six recovered from his wounds. The Regiment as a whole suffered the heaviest loss in killed and wounded at the Battle of Savage's Station, Virginia on June 29, 1862 of any Union regiment in a single action of the entire war. In the following few days, the Fifth along with the rest of the Vermont Brigade, went on to be involved in more fighting at White Oak Swamp and Malvern Hill as the Federals retreated from General Lee towards Harrison's Landing.

On August 16 - 24, 1862, the Regiment returned to Fort Monroe and reached the Bull Run battlefield by August 30, just missing the fighting there. During the Maryland Campaign of 1862, the Fifth took part in Crampton's Gap (South Mountain) and Antietam. It ended 1862 engaged in the Battle of Fredericksburg. In January (23-24) of 1863, it joined Burnside's "Mud March" on its way to Marye's Heights and Salem Church. It celebrated the Fourth of July at Gettysburg. The Fifth took a break August 14 through September 16, 1863 and relaxed in New York during the draft riots there. The Regiment rejoined the Army of the Potomac at Culpeper Court House in Virginia on September 23. It went into winter quarters at Brandy Station where the veterans of the Regiment re-enlisted on December 15, 1863 and was the first Regiment granted a veteran's furlough for a month's duration.

On its return from furlough in Vermont, the Fifth continued as a veteran organization and participated in the bloody month with the Army of the Potomac from the Wilderness to

Cold Harbor, and took an active part in the siege of Petersburg. The Regiment began the campaign with five hundred men. In one month, it lost three hundred forty-nine killed, wounded and missing, including thirteen officers. September 15, 1864, the term of service for original members who had not re-enlisted expired. They were mustered-out leaving present for duty one assistant surgeon, a quartermaster, three first lieutenants and three hundred enlisted personnel. After the October 19 Battle of Cedar Creek, the Fifth moved to the Siege of Petersburg again and went into winter camp at Squirrel Level Road in December, 1864.

When Petersburg finally fell in April of 1865, the Fifth Vermont was the first Regiment to plant its colors on the Confederate defensive works. The unit was present at Appomattox Court House for the surrender of Robert E. Lee and his army. June 8, 1865 the Fifth marched in the Corps Review held at Washington, D.C. On June 29, the veterans were mustered-out. At its discharge, there were only twenty-four officers and two hundred eighty-eight men on its rolls - three hundred twelve total out of an original strength of 1,618 . For the last ten months of its service, the highest ranking officer in the Fifth present for duty was a captain; for more than three months of those last ten, the highest ranking officer present for duty was a lieutenant. Every officer present for the Grand Review went out as a private. <sup>[5]</sup>

Heman was only with the Fifth for a short time of its existence. From the date of his enlistment until the Battle of Savage's Station, his life in the army was about as bland as it could get. The months went by without much to break the monotonous routine. That abruptly changed on June 29, 1862 for both Heman and the Fifth. As detailed above, the Fifth's losses at Savage's Station that day were significant. Heman was one of the statistics quoted. He was one of those who were killed in action. His body was one of the many the Vermonters were forced to leave on the field for the Confederates to care for. That is why there are no remains under the stone erected in the Goshen Cemetery in his honor. His body lies under Virginia soil, most likely very near where he fell that June day. As one Lieutenant Charles J. Ormsbee of the Fifth explained in his letter (undated and unaddressed): "...Inventory of the effects of Heman Hooker Private in company H 5th

Regt. Vermont Volunteers who was killed in action at Savage's Station Va June 29, 1862 as follows viz: His effects were all left on the field with him...." Ormsbee went on to say, in the most perfect of bureaucratic accounting language, that Private Hooker had been paid up to just recently but was owed "...to the date of his death." The very last of the undated letter stated that Private Hooker "...has received clothing to the amount of \$42.89." [6] Not one word of regret, grief or feeling of loss was expressed by Lieutenant Ormsbee. I hope no one expected the Confederates to return the missing items.

Twenty-seven men of Company H were wounded that June day according to the Burlington Free Press' report on the action. Three were killed outright, Heman being one of them. [7] I hope that the parents of the other two killed did not receive a letter from Lieutenant Ormsbee specifying how much their sons owed the Government for "allowances".

#### NOTES

1. Archives.com, Family Tree for Heman Hooker and Ancestry.com, Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908 for Heman Hooker.
2. Ancestry.com, 1850 U.S. Federal Census under Heman Hooker.
3. Ibid., 1860 U.S. Federal Census under Daniel Hooker.
4. Fold3.com, Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Vermont, p. 2, image 311410659. Hereinafter referred to as Compiled Service Records....
5. Ancestry.com, U.S. American Civil War Regiments, 1861-1866; Vermont in the Civil War/Units/1st Brigade/Fifth Vermont Infantry; <http://civilwarintheeast.com/us-regiments-batteries-vermont/5th-vermont>.
6. Fold3.com, Compiled Service Records..., p. 12, image 311410669.
7. Archives.com/search/newspaper/Burlington Free Press/July 18, 1862.