

In mid-19th century Vermont, the vast majority of males worked on farms – either their own or as a hired hand on someone else’s. Some were into dairy farming, some raised horses (thorough breeds like the Morgan), some branched off into raising Merino sheep and a few even were truck farmers, raising produce for their own consumption and to sell. Vermont never had the vast, flat, unbroken grassy acreage enjoyed by the western states, so the beef industry never took hold in the Green Mountains. To find someone in 1850 living in Addison County who did not make their living by doing some sort of agricultural connection would have been uncommon. And uncommon was a good descriptor for Mr. Henry B. Allen. You might have called him a “jack of all trades and master of none.” In his early years, he was a laborer, meaning he might have done nearly any kind of manual labor from general handyman to being a seasonal farm hand. Later on, he tried soldiering when that was popular. He also became a renowned fishing and hunting guide in Addison and Rutland Counties. At one point in his working life, he managed a visitor’s center at Fort Cassin House in Vergennes. At another time he supervised the Little City’s poor farm. Real late in his lifetime, he moved to “Fowler”, Vermont (now called “Florence”)^[1] where he took up the job of transporting school children in the district, who were beyond walking distance, back and forth from home to school.

Henry B. Allen was the only son of Ruby Kellogg Blake (1805-1897) and Obadiah Allen (1820-1900).^[2] In an unusual arrangement, Obadiah was younger than his first wife by fifteen years. Existing records suggest that Henry was born in Ferrisburgh, Vermont, on March 27. However, these same public records cannot agree as to what year he was born in. Three of them, Vermont in the Civil War, Find A Grave and at least one Ancestry.com family tree stated it was 1839. Various Census records gave it as 1834 and 1835, His marriage certificate to Maria indicated the year of his birth to be around 1834. His second marriage records implied that 1836 was the year he was born. His service records all indicated he was twenty-seven when he enlisted in 1862, making his birthday fall within the year of 1835. Henry’s own death certificate did nothing to shed reliable light on his real year of birth. Whoever typed it said he was eighty-five when he died in 1919. Calculating backwards, showed 1834 to be his date of birth. However, the same typist gave his date of birth as March 29, 1839 which meant that his age at his death was really ninety not eighty-five. No one date was over-whelmingly repeated, so the only alternative was to settle on a range of years from 1834 to 1839.

What was obvious and consistent was that the Allen family’s roots ran deep in Ferrisburgh. Henry’s grandfather, also an Obadiah, was a farmer in town at least as far back as 1820.^[3] Both Henry’s father and his mother

were natives of the town. Other than when and where Ruby was born and when and where she died, little else was known about her. Her exact relationship to Obadiah as his wife and to Henry as his mother was also somewhat convoluted. She was born in 1805 in Ferrisburgh. Her father may have been William Kellogg. On Henry's marriage certificate to Maria, her maiden name was given as Black/Blake.^[4] She lived a long life, dying in Bristol in 1897 and was buried in Greenwood Cemetery in that town but exactly where was unknown. No headstone was ever found for her.^[5] She seemed to have spent the majority of her life living in Ferrisburgh, but not all of it with Obadiah. No certificate of marriage was found for Obadiah and Maria so it was not known exactly when they married. Calculating from Henry's birthdate of March 27 (29), 1839 base on the pattern of marriage to birth of first born child, the nuptials would have occurred around 1837-1838. However, for almost twenty years, from Henry's birth in 1839 to Obadiah's second marriage in 1858 the three Allens – Obadiah, Ruby and Henry – just vanished from sight.

On September 30, 1858, Obadiah married for the second time. Evidence that he and Ruby divorced was never found, but then again, neither was any record found of their marriage either. His new bride was twenty-five year old Helen E. Ferris from Panton, Vermont. This was the second wedding for both of them. Helen's father was Benajah W. Ferris, a modestly successful farmer from Panton.^[5] The new wife had been living in Ferrisburgh on her father's \$1,500 spread in 1850. She lived in the home of her father, Benajah and her mother, Ann, plus her two brothers, Carlton and Jonathan. Helen was sweet eighteen in 1850.^[6] By the time Obadiah remarried, Henry, Ruby's son. Was twenty years old. In fact, he had just married for the first time too, only a few months before his father's wedding in September. Helen went on to bear Obadiah four more children from 1861 to 1873, all of them females except for their first born, Carl E. Allen. He was born three years after Obadiah and Helen tied the knot. Unfortunately, the infant only lived two months, dying in Plattsburgh, New York July 16, 1861 of diphtheria.^[7] The three girls, Carrie (1862-1914), Sarah (1869-1928) and Mary I. (1873-1952), all lived fairly healthy, long lives.

Their mother, on the other hand, was sickly much of her life and died at fifty-five from heart disease. In 1884, she suffered from two debilitating bouts with serious health issues. The first occurred in January, 1884 when she was diagnosed with "erysipelas", also known as "St Anthony's Fire". It was a common bacterial infection of the outer layers of the skin resulting in a tender, bright red rash typically of the face or legs. It enters the body through cuts, scratches and insect bites and can be potentially dangerous if not properly treated with antibiotics.^[8] Then in May of the

same year, Helen had a “shock of paralysis” (stroke).^[9] The next three years were tenuous ones for Helen. On November 14, 1887, she succumbed to her heart disease at the relatively young age of fifty-five.^[10] In 1891, Obadiah sold his farm to the Rev. P.C. Dayfoot for \$1,600. The farm was located at the south end of Button Bay and contained nearly sixty acres.^[11] Obadiah held on for another six years after Helen’s passing. He was seventy-nine when he crossed over and living with his daughter, Sara A. Spaulding and her family in Ferrisburgh. His funeral, like many in the 19th century, was held at home. Obadiah left two daughters as heirs to his estate – Sarah and Mary I. He did not have much to leave them for an inheritance. He was only a typical, run of the mill farmer, typical of his times. He owned a 100 acre parcel of land worth about \$2,600, a house and a few farm implements. He had twenty hens for livestock. He owned \$40 worth of stock in a creamery and had \$300 in outstanding notes due him. The only other item of any value was a \$20 pew he had in the local Panton M.E. Church to pass on to his heirs. The total value of his estate was appraised at \$3,029.50 which the two daughters split equally.^[12]

While Obadiah was tilling the soil for a living, his young son, Henry, was out and about in Addison County making his own mark on the world. The cloistered years of his early life with his mother, Ruby, suddenly disappeared when Henry married a young woman named Maria C. Perry (1843-1880). Maria was the daughter of Isaac and Lucy Perry of Ferrisburgh. Her father was a laborer. Maria was eight years old when the 1850 Federal Census was done. Henry was about eleven. By 1858, the two of them were husband and wife. Henry would have been about nineteen. Maria would have been no older than sixteen. However, her marriage certificate noted she was eighteen. Assuming the ages in 1850 were accurate, then someone lied on the marriage papers so that she would appear to be of legal age to marry. The wedding had all the ear marks of a “shotgun” wedding. The birth of the couple’s first child, Ella Jane (1859-1927), just nine months after the wedding further supported the fact that Maria was presented to the authorities as of legal age to marry so that her “delicate condition” could be legitimized.^[13] Barely out of adolescence themselves, the young couple now found themselves strapped with the responsibilities of full grown adults. There was a home to provide for and maintain and a family to support. Henry worked as a laborer in order to support himself, his wife and his child. For the newlyweds, this was the best of times and the worst of times. They had each other and the promise of a future. But in 1860, there were the precursors of war heard all around like the low rumbling of thunder before a summer’s storm. The horizon of their world was darkening with monstrous thick, grey clouds that boiled among the towering, white thunderheads. Finally, in April of 1861, the

highly charged mixed particles in the air sent lightning bolts hurtling towards earth and the ball was opened.

Amid the ensuing storm that crashed all around Henry and his nascent family, the Allens attempted to carry on the semblance of a normal existence. Henry worked; Maria tended hearth and child. In the middle of all the uncertainty they were immersed in, the young couple found out that a new addition was on the way. Augusta Allen, Henry's first born son, entered the world sometime in 1862. By then, the Civil War was a year old and it had not been going well for the Yankees. Time and again in major engagements, it seemed the Confederates came out on top: Fort Sumter; First Bull Run; Wilson's Creek; Balls Bluff. Union General George B. McClellan laid out an ambitious offensive plan to capture the Confederate capital of Richmond called the Peninsula Campaign for 1862. Vermont raised five new regiments (Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth) just in time to join in his campaign. The Old First Vermont Brigade as it came to be known, was the only Union brigade to consist entirely of troops from a single state. It had its baptism by fire during McClellan's attempt to take the Confederate capital at a place on the Warwick River known as Lee's Mill. Two months later, the Seven Days Battle would further bloody the Vermont Brigade as it fought at Gaine's Mill, Garnet-Golding Farm and Savage Station where the Fifth Vermont had more casualties than any other Vermont regiment in a single action of the entire war.^[14]

In July, 1862 President Lincoln called for 300,000 additional men to serve for three years. Governor Holbrook of Vermont, along with other northern state governors, pressed Lincoln to call for half a million more troops to put down the insurrection. Of that number, they proposed, 300,000 would be enlisted for just ninety days. On August 4, 1862, the President sent out a call for 300,000 volunteers to serve for ninety days.^[15] Vermont's quota amounted to 4, 898 men, enough to fill five additional regiments. This call for more man power put an extra strain on a small state with an 1860's population of about 315, 000 souls. The Green Mountain State had already sent nearly 10,000 volunteers to the Union Army. In addition to fielding nine infantry regiments so far, the citizens of the State had pledged a million dollars to support the war effort. Now they were being asked to send another 5,000 of their sons and husbands south at the bequest of the Federal Government.^[16]

Efforts in Vermont to raise the requisite number of volunteers in the summer of 1862 were nevertheless vigorous, rowdy and mostly enthusiastic, even if not always positive. Like with all great social issues, the entire populace did not speak with a unified voice. There were protestors and anti-war elements in the crowds who attended the War

Meetings. However, they were a small minority compared to the supporters, and by mid-September forty-three companies of about 4,000 men had enlisted. Around the 20th of the month, seven more had joined the ranks, among them Vergennes. Before the end of September, fifty companies, amounting to almost 5,000 recruits, were ready to be mustered-in.^[17] Included in the bunch was Henry B. Allen who volunteered to become a member of Company I, Fourteenth Regiment Vermont Infantry.^[18] The twenty-seven year old, five feet eight inch tall farmer with grey eyes and brown hair from Ferrisburgh was in Camp Lincoln at Brattleboro, Vermont by October 22. There the new regiments were inspected and accepted into the service of the United States Army.^[19] Although Henry's term of service was extremely short (just ninety days), he and the other Ninety Day wonders included being part of one of the most brutal and grueling forced marches experienced by any Vermont troops during the entire war, and made them pivotal participants in the most important battle of the Civil War. Howard Coffin, historian and prolific writer on Vermonters in the Civil War, gave a very clear description of what Vermont's five ninety day volunteers experienced during their brief term of service as Union soldiers in 1863 in his book, Nine Months To Gettysburg:

From October 21 to the Special Muster taken April 11, 1863, Private Allen was present and accounted for. He and the Fourteenth in general had spent most of that time helping to build various fortifications around Washington, manning those defensive works and guarding the important Occoquan River crossings in the vicinity of Wolf Run Shoals. Most importantly, Private Allen had managed to avoid spending any time sick or injured in the Regimental Hospital. Considering the living and working conditions, diet, personal hygiene practices and camp sanitation, that was no small feat by itself. Late in June, 1863, the Second Vermont Brigade, which consisted of the Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Sixteenth Regiments, were given orders to pack up and follow as rear-guard of the Army of the Potomac as it marched towards Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and a meeting with General Robert E. Lee's invading forces. Starting after the main body of the Union Army had already passed through at Wolf Run Shoals ford, The Vermonters had to march at quick time just to catch up. From the beginning of the march, it was rough on the men in the ranks. Every day, day after day, they had to cover twenty or more miles at a time. Even hardy Vermont farm boys familiar with heavy toil and physical exertion, broke down from the strain of the forced march. Those who could not keep up were left in the road or alongside of it. Under orders from Stannard, no one was to stop to assist them. Hundreds were left behind. Stannard drove the Vermonters relentlessly. His brigade covered the 120 miles from Wolf Run Shoals, Virginia to Emmitsburg,

Maryland in six days. He would not even let the men stop to relieve their thirst from their hot and dusty marching. Captain Stephen Brown of the Thirteenth Vermont wrote after the march was over: “Day after day, having already marched as far as seemed possible for us, we marched miles and miles further. Without food for days in that climate, in the hot summertime, clad in thick wool clothing, weighted with guns and 60 rounds of ammunition, upon blistered and bleeding feet, we shortened the distance between our brigade and the veteran First Corps....”^[20] As the columns pressed onward towards Gettysburg, men fainted and fell into the dusty road with ghastly faces turned upwards as though dead. Others twitched convulsively in the dust and dirt of the roads. No one stopped to help the poor unfortunates as orders had been issued that no one was to break ranks for any reason. Finally, Captain Brown had seen enough of his men suffering, and gave orders to some of his men to fill empty canteens in a nearby stream and bring back water to alleviate the parched throats of the men. When Stannard heard of this breach of his orders, he placed the good Captain under arrest, symbolically taking his sword, belt and side arm from him as a display of his punishment for disobeying a direct order. Since they were on the march, there was no place to confine Captain Brown, so he was allowed, for the moment, to remain with his men. Later, the Captain would earn the Medal of Honor for his bravery at Gettysburg using the only weapon he could find - a camp hatchet!^[21]

Around Emmitsburg, the Second Vermont Brigade was ordered to leave two regiments behind to guard the supply wagons, take the remaining three regiments and hurry to Gettysburg where the fight had already begun. The Twelfth and Fifteenth were chosen to stay and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Sixteenth tramped towards the small Pennsylvania cross-roads town leaving Emmitsburg at about six in the morning of July 1, 1863. By noon on that hot, sultry day a courier reached the command and informed General John Sedgwick that General Reynolds had been killed in the fighting at Gettysburg and that his troops were desperately needed on the field of battle. It was at this time that General Sedgwick issued his now famous order: “Put the Vermonters in the lead and keep the column well closed.” It was imperative that the last miles to Gettysburg be covered as quickly as possible, and Sedgwick knew from his experience with the Vermonters that they were the best marchers in the army and would set the fastest pace for his 15,000-man Corps. Ten miles from Gettysburg, at a place called Littleton, the columns of the First Corps began meeting wagons and carriages conveying wounded to the rear. Smoke, grey and thick, could now be seen on the horizon like giant thunderheads. No stops were made even though civilians offered buckets and pitchers of cool, wet water. By six in the evening, the Vermonters

crossed Rock Creek just outside of Gettysburg having covered twenty-eight miles in twenty-four hours!^[22]

The first day's fight on the fields of Gettysburg was over. Lee's forces had pushed the Federals from west of the village center, through the town to Cemetery Ridge just south of Gettysburg proper where the Union forces stopped to defend the high ground offered by the Cemetery Hill. All was chaos and confusion as the Confederates kept up a snipping fire while the Union brass tried to figure out the best deployment of their available troops. Stannard was busy trying to find a Union corps commander who could give him instructions on where and how to align his exhausted Vermont Brigade in the long line of defensive positions being developed along the ridge. After being shuffled first here then there in the mayhem, his spent regiments were ordered to take up a position just north of a copse of trees where a low stone wall formed a ninety degree turn to the east between the Taneytown Road and the Baltimore Pike. At this spot the three regiments of the Second Vermont Brigade (the 12th, 13th and 14th) lay upon their arms uncovered on the ground for the first sleep they had had in over twenty-four hours.^[23]

Meanwhile, off to the west on another hill called Seminary Ridge which ran parallel to the Union's Cemetery Ridge, screened from the eyes of Union commanders, Lee had his Confederates moving into position for an assault on and around what was locally called Little and Big Round Tops. These two large, rocky mounds of ledge and boulders provided the highest elevation in the valley around Gettysburg and would be a great advantage to whomever occupied them as observation stations and artillery positions. These two prominences became landmarks for Lee's next push against the Federals, not knowing that the Yankees had also recognized the potential value of that real estate and had set in motion actions to occupy it for their own self-preservation. Little Round Top would achieve everlasting fame as part of the Battle of Gettysburg when Joshua Chamberlain's Maine regiment made its heroic stand on its slope to beat back Longstreet's assault on the second day of fighting. It was also in this area at the base of the Round Tops in the Devil's Den, the Peach Orchard and the Wheatfield that further vicious and bloody fighting occurred that made Gettysburg one of the most famous battles of the Civil War.

Dawn of July 2 illuminated the anxious faces of 84,00 Yankees and approximately 75,000 Rebels cautiously eyeing each other across three quarters of a mile of open space separating the two ridges.^[24] Everyone knew all hell was about to break loose; no one knew exactly when it was going to happen. The waiting was worse than the inevitable action. Men

tensely waited and sweated in the hot July sun as it rose higher and higher in the blue sky. The lull was caused by poor communication and even poorer planning on the part of Lee and his subordinate officers. Unfamiliarity with the terrain resulted in delays getting troops into position for an assault on those two Round Tops south of the village of Gettysburg. At about three o'clock in the afternoon of July 2, the Confederate artillery opened the ball with a well-directed cannonade of the Union extreme left. The first shell sent towards the Federals exploded over the Thirteenth Vermont causing two or three men to be wounded. Early in the bombardment, General Stannard sent five companies – D, E, F, H and K of the Thirteenth to support a battery near the crest of Cemetery Ridge, just to the right of where the Taneytown Road crossed the top of the hill. The rest of the Second Vermont Brigade was ordered further south towards the famous salient in the Union line created by General Sickles when he moved his command west towards the Confederates in order to take advantage of higher ground near the Wheatfield/Peach Orchard portion of the “fish hook” alignment of Union defensive works. Beginning at Little Round Top, where Joshua Chamberlain’s Maine Regiment earned everlasting fame for its desperate charge with their bayonets and empty muskets to prevent Longstreet’s Confederates from rolling up the left flank of the Union line, the fighting rolled north through Devil’s Den, up the Plum Run valley at the base the Round Tops, and on through the Wheatfield and the Peach Orchard where Sickles and his command took and gave a terrible pounding. Union Major General Hancock ordered the First Minnesota to the relief of Sickles hard pressed men. So vicious was the action in this sector of the engagement that in ten minutes, that regiment of 262 men sustained 215 casualties!^[25] The Rebs continued rolling up the Federals left, finally breaking the Union lines just south of the soon-to-be famous copse of trees. It was then that General Meade called on the nearby Vermont Brigade to plug the gap created by the Confederate’s breakthrough. The five companies from the Thirteenth could only watch from the crest of Cemetery Ridge where they supported a battery of artillery as their comrades of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Sixteenth Vermont went into action. The Vermonters, mostly men of the Fourteenth and Sixteenth Regiments, stopped the Confederate’s advance and pushed them back through the Plum Run valley, the Wheatfield and the Peach Orchard and through the Devil’s Den area all the way to the Emmitsburg Road. That night, the exhausted Vermonters stayed where they had filled the gap on the slope of Cemetery Ridge. They were not alone on the field the night of July 2, 1863. As spent as they were, it was difficult for the men to sleep among the wounded and dying all about them. The constant commotion caused by candle-carrying ministers of mercy and caring as they sought to aid those who were not already beyond help on both sides, plus the constant moaning of human voices in intense

agony, made it nearly impossible to slumber. Along Cemetery Ridge, James Hartwell of the Thirteenth said, “The firing had ceased for the day and nothing was heard save the groans and prayers of the wounded and dying. I espied a short distance from where I was standing four women on their bended knees with bandages and cooling drinks, doing all in their power to lessen pain and prolong the lives of those who had fallen. God bless for they passed none by, not knowing or caring where they were born, at what alter they knelt, or whether they were clad in blue or gray. Upon inquiring I learned that they were called Sisters of Mercy”.^[26] That night, the Thirteenth was made whole again by the return of the five companies that had been detached as support for a union battery.

The morning of July 3, before dawn, began ominously with canon fire. The heavy guns were very active for an hour or so, then suddenly stopped. The booming was replaced with clouds of gun smoke and the rattle of volleys from thousands of muskets about a mile north around Culp’s Hill on the Vermonter’s extreme right. The morning was already extremely hot and men were fainting from the heat. After six hours of the sounds of battle to the north of them, absolute silence descended all along the Union lines.

At ten minutes past one o’clock in the afternoon of July 3, 1863, the terrible silence that had hovered over the battlefield for the last hour, was broken by two signal guns fired in rapid succession. So began the greatest cannonading to ever occur on the North American continent. An estimated 150 Confederate canon simultaneously pummeled the center of the Union lines on Cemetery Ridge. A moment later, more than 100 Union guns joined in the cacophony of explosions. The earth literally shook with every detonation. The air vibrated with the concussions of muzzle blasts from the heavy guns. If each Confederate gun fired at the rate of twice per minute, they would have fired some four thousand five hundred individual projectiles at the Yankees in the two and one half hour long barrage that proceeded the 17,000 man Pickett’s Charge. The air was filled with every possible type of shot and shell imaginable. As Vermont Lieutenant George Benedict said: “It was converging fire which came upon the Union lines at every angle, from direct point-blank at which [canister] was served with effect, to enfilading fire from a battery of Whitworth guns far to the right, which sent their six-sided bolts screaming by, parallel to the lines, from a distance of over two miles. Shells whizzed and popped and fluttered on every side; spherical case shot exploded overhead, and rained showers of iron bullets; solid shot tore the ground into furrows...”^[27] Fortunately for the boys in blue, the majority of those screaming shells went over the heads of the infantry hugging the ground for cover. Unknown to the Confederate artillerists, they were shooting over their intended target.

Even so, enough of the errant projectiles fell among the Federals to cause considerable damage. Then the shelling stopped just as suddenly as it had begun. Knuckles turned white as fists clenched muskets with a death-like grip. Everyone knew what was going to happen next. That space between Seminary Ridge and Cemetery Ridge was about to be flooded with yelling, screaming Rebs determined to crush the center of the Union fish hook. And the Vermonters of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Sixteenth Regiments, who huddled on the front line facing their enemy, knew they were right in the way.

Three divisions, fourteen brigades, at least forty-two regiments, around 17,000 armed men stretched out in a line nearly a mile long stepped out of the woods, around the guns that had attempted to lay down a softening fire for the attack and dressed their lines as if on a parade ground. One Vermonter, Private Sturtevant of the 13th VT, was impressed by the sight they presented: “We saw them first as they reached the crest of Seminary Ridge a full half mile away, at first horse and rider, then glistening bayonets and then flags and banners waving and fluttering in the sultry air...”^[28] The 1,000 yard long double line of infantry was most eloquently described by Lieutenant Frank Haskell, Sixth Wisconsin Infantry – “The enemy is advancing. Every eye could see his legions, an overwhelming resistless tide of an ocean of armed men sweeping upon us! Regiment after regiment, and brigade after brigade...the red flags wave, their horsemen gallop up and down; the arms of 18,000 men, barrel and bayonet, gleam in the sun, a slopping forest of flashing steel. Right on they move, as with one soul, in perfect order, without impediment of ditch, or wall or stream, over ridge and slope, through orchard, and meadow, and cornfield, magnificent, grim, irresistible.”^[29] The entire right side (Kemper’s division) of the Confederate battle line was coming right at the Vermonters positioned just south of the now famous Copse of Trees or the “Highwater Mark of the Confederacy”. Like at Bunker Hill, the Vermonters were under orders not to fire until the command to do so was given. Anxiously they waited as the Rebs came closer and closer. What happened next was almost providential for the Vermont troops. As the enemy closed on the Second Brigade’s position, at a distance of under 100 yards, the Fourteenth rose from their cover. At almost the same precise moment, the Confederate attacking columns did a left oblique movement which sent them directly across the front of the Fourteenth instead of right at them. Now the whole attacking unprotected flank of the men in gray was exposed to the Fourteenth’s fire. The order was given and the Fourteenth let loose with a tremendous volley at unsuspecting targets. Quickly, the Thirteenth, on the Fourteenth’s right, also rose and added their fire power to that of their comrades. As soon as the Sixteenth Vermont, which was to the left of the Fourteenth and slightly behind it,

could move around the Fourteenth and get a clear field of fire, they, too, unleashed yet another devastating volley into the rear of the attacking grey columns. By now there were in the vicinity of 1, 400 muskets being discharged into the backs of the Rebels as fast as every man could load and fire. Every volley had terrible effect. So close were the Vermonters to the attacking Rebels that careful aiming was not required in order to send a Minnie ball into the easy marks. Since the Confederates were moving away from the Vermonters and towards the Copse of Trees to the north of their position, the Second Vermont Brigade had to wheel to the right and move up on the enemy in order to close the ever- increasing distance between themselves and their assailants. Within minutes Rebels were throwing away their arms and surrendering to the Vermonters who had so effectively decimated their ranks. Meanwhile, the Confederate attack which had concentrated on the Copse of Trees along the Union line was being stymied by Federal troops there. Only a few hundred of the 17,000 attackers who had started Pickett's Charge ever made it to, and through, the Union lines at "The Angle". Only about one half of the 17,000 Confederates were able to make it back to the safety of Seminary Ridge after Pickett's Charge had completely failed to achieve its objective of severing the Union lines at the Copse of Trees on Cemetery Ridge. Many of those who were not killed outright in the attack were escorted to the rear as POWs. The after-action reports written by Union commanders on the field July 3, all gave high praises to the Vermonters for the part the Vermont Brigade played in thwarting the action history labeled as Pickett's Charge.^[30]

The Second Vermont Brigade won their laurels and glory at the Battle of Gettysburg. Henry B. Allen was right in the thick of it with the rest of the Fourteenth Vermonters. July 4, 1863 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania it rained. Union soldiers took a well-deserved rest as they were exhausted from three days of trying to cripple Lee's Confederate army of northern Virginia. July 5 saw the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Sixteenth regiments ordered to pursue Lee's retreating forces who were trying to get back to Virginia soil. Even though the Brigade's term of service was only days away from expiring, they were sent in pursuit of the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. But not all members of the Second Vermont Brigade could chase after the Rebels. Some had become casualties of the events in the last three days. One of them was Private Allen. He had been wounded at Gettysburg.

According to Henry's Casualty Sheet in his service records signed by his Brigade commander General George J. Stannard, he was "slightly" wounded on either July 2 or 3 "in front of Gettysburg Pa"^[31] "Slightly" could be a very loose term. From further information in his records, Henry

was “wounded (by a shell fragment) in the left knee, made deaf in his left ear and blind in his right eye.”^[32] Being very near to an exploding artillery shell would account for both the knee injury and the permanent loss of hearing in the ear. On both days, there were plenty of shells in the air from each side to choose from. However, the blindness in the right eye was not mentioned in the records until the 1890 Special Schedule was done for veterans and widows.^[33] How badly the shell fragment damaged Henry’s left knee was also unknown. You might say that Private Allen was a fortunate man to have sustained non-fatal injuries in a three day battle that left over fifty thousand casualties.

Gettysburg was the beginning of the end for General Lee and the Confederacy. Lee began withdrawing what was left of his Army of Northern Virginia the night of July 3. The next day, July 4, it rained all day giving the Army of The Potomac a chance to rest. When Union General Meade took up pursuit of Lee’s fleeing army on July 6, the Vermont Brigade was chosen to participate even though the expiration of their term of service was only days away. On the march in pursuit of the Rebels, regiments of the Second Vermont Brigade whose enlistments had expired were syphoned off and sent east to Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York City by train to Brattleboro, Vermont and home. By July 23, the Second Vermont had passed into the history books.^[34]

Private Allen went home by a slightly different track. Being “slightly” wounded, he would have gone to a field hospital somewhere on the field of the Gettysburg battle. Once treated there, he would have been sent east for his discharge since his term of service was nearly over. Before reaching home however, he passed through a New England Soldier’s Relief Association hospital in one of the major cities on the East coast. He was admitted July 12, 1863 with chronic diarrhea.^[35] That did not prevent him from reaching Brattleboro in time to be mustered-out with the rest of the Fourteenth on July 30, 1863.^[36]

Once a civilian again, Henry returned to his hometown and his family in Ferrisburgh. In 1865, he and Maria added another son to the expanding family. January, 1865 saw Ezra Hiram Allen become the newest member of the Allen clan.^[37] In March of 1866, Henry and Maria lost Augusta, their first-born son. The next year, 1867, another son was born. His name was William (Willie) H. Allen and he arrived in March of 1867 exactly one year after Augusta passed away.^[38] By now, Henry had found a new career for himself as a fishing guide. Apparently, he had been working very hard on building a reputation as the fisherman’s fisherman in the years following his army service. In 1868, he bought a fishing business

located at Kellogg's Bay on Lake Champlain where he would "be happy to wait upon and accommodate all who may call upon him."^[39]

According to the 1870 Federal Census, Henry had returned to doing farm work as a laborer. He may have been doing the manual labor job to help support the fishing business.^[40] After all, he had to provide for a wife and three children. On March 28, 1870, the Pension Bureau began paying Henry a small stipend monthly for his disabilities which stemmed from his wounds received at Gettysburg.^[41] Henry's application for an invalid pension may have been prodded more from the fact that Maria was pregnant with their fourth child than by any disabilities he suffered from the war. Ernest Elijah Allen arrived on November 9, 1870.^[42]

The decade of the 1880s was a very busy time for Henry. To start with, in June, when the Federal Census was taken, Henry had more than a houseful of relatives sharing his home with him. He still had most of his own family under his roof: his wife, Maria and his three boys Ezra, Willie and Ernest made up the bulk of the household. In addition, Henry's only daughter, Ella, her husband and her one year old daughter also occupied the same space. On top of that, Ruby Blake, Henry's seventy-four year old mother had resurfaced and claimed her portion of the home as well. Henry was again farming and, perhaps, guiding on the lake too. His son-in-law, John C. Jackman, also farmed. Ella was a housekeeper. All the children in the combined families went to school if they were old enough. Ruby was too old to be of much help to anyone. The presence of all these extra people in Henry's household may have been explained by the fact that Maria was extremely sick with cancer of the womb.^[43] More than likely, Ella was there to care for Maria until she passed away on October 1, 1880.^[44] Henry became restless after Maria passed. They had been married for twenty-two years. He became restless and wandered from one thing to another, never staying with anything for too long and never staying in one place for long either. There was a big, empty hole in his life that he was desperate to fill. He still had three children, ages nine to fifteen, to raise alone. And he had an aged mother to look after as well.

It wasn't long before the Ferrisburgh farmer found a replacement for Maria. On May 30, 1881 he married Olivia E. Dana, forty-one from Weybridge. They were married in Ferrisburgh by Rev. E.E. Curtis.^[45] The three children still living at home with Henry now had a step-mother to help provide a stable and nurturing environment in the household. Olivia was a local girl having been born in Bristol in 1840. She was the daughter of James Austin and Lucia Bentley. Like Henry, it was her second marriage as well.^[46] Taking a new wife wasn't the only new thing Henry did in the early 1880s. He also switched jobs. When he was married in

1881, he was listed as a farmer and had established a reputation for being a better than average fisherman in the Champlain Valley. Around 1883, Henry assumed a totally different role – he became the overseer of the poor farm in Vergennes. He held that position until 1886, when he was replaced with a new manager.^[47]

The Vergennes poor farm, located near where the Northland Job Corps campus is today along Otter Creek, was part of 19th century society's solution for what to do with the less fortunate element of the general population who was unemployed, infirm, disabled, transient or afflicted mentally and unable to maintain themselves in their own home or the home of a relative or friend. These poor farms started up almost as soon as Vermont became a state. They were fixtures in almost every town from 1797 to 1968.^[48] Middlebury had one by 1822.^[49] Poor farms housed two main categories of clients: the transients and the temporarily, unemployed but able-bodied men and women; the larger, more permanent type of resident who was made up of the elderly, physically and mentally handicapped citizens of the town. Before the existence of nursing homes, medical and psychological institutions for those in crisis, poor farms were the only places for the unfortunates to go. In 1850, Vermont had 1,878 individuals living in poor farms and poor houses. Of them, nearly two-thirds were disabled in some way – 140 blind, 148 deaf or dumb, 299 deemed “idiots” and 560 physically disabled. The remainder were presumed either elderly or able-bodied unemployed.^[50]

Poor farms were usually on land owned by the town and located somewhere within its borders, mostly in out-of-sight, out-of-mind places. The actual running of the farm was in the hands of a designated overseer, usually someone who submitted the lowest bid to the town for doing the job. They were encouraged to set the moral tone at the farm and were expected to maintain discipline by whatever means reasonable. Overseers had unquestioned authority over their charges. If it sounded like a prison, it was not accidental. Those who partook of the hospitality of the poor farm were often referred to as “inmates”. One of the prime qualifications for the job of overseer was the ability to be “hard boiled” with the patrons. Inmates could be caged or even whipped to compel compliance. Food and drink could be withheld (usually not for more than three days) if desired by the overseer. Another punishment used was solitary confinement in a shack on the premises that originally served as a “pest house” for those who contracted small pox.^[51]

Besides the town having to provide the location for the poor farm, it also had to pay the expenses of maintaining the property which included the wages of the overseer. Town taxes were mostly used to defray the cost.

The farms themselves, with the help of the inmates able-bodied enough, worked on the farm to grow produce and raise livestock to sell. Another source of income was the early practice of “selling” the poor as indentured servants to townspeople for the highest bid at public auction. In one “hiring out “case in Panton, thirteen year old Aaron Bristol was sold to a local farmer until he reached the age of twenty-one.^[52] Once turned over to the highest bidder, the indentured person was at the mercy of his/her “benefactor”.

Henry was involved in this line of work for about three years until around 1887 when he found a different kind of management job not too far from the poor farm. The local newspaper reported that Henry was “putting up the picnic grounds at Fort Cassin in good condition for the summer visitors”.^[53] It seemed that at one time, out near the old 1812 American Fort Cassin at the mouth of the Otter Creek where it empties into Lake Champlain, there existed a large, two story stone house called the Fort Cassin House that was used as a hostelry. And Henry seemed to be in charge of the visitors’ center and the grounds of it in 1888.^[54] He also received a raise in his pension payments in July that year from \$6 per month to \$10, plus a bonus of back pay in the amount of \$130. Seemed like thirteen years after the Civil War was over, the Federal Government was still trying to pay for it. One local reporter commented: “This pays better than fishing.”^[55] Despite all of Henry’s other diversions, it seemed he found plenty of time for fishing. The Bristol Herald, in 1890, reported: “Henry B. Allen, veteran fisherman, went trout fishing last Friday and as a result from his labors captured 146 of the speckled beauties. Boys, you have got to hustle if you beat Henry.”^[56] At this time, Henry had moved to Bristol where he took up residence.

In March of 1900, while living there, Henry “had a severe attack of heart trouble.”^[57] He and Olivia had been living in the village of Bristol where Henry was a “truck man” (a driver who hauls heavy freight).^[58] His heart problems may have explained why, in early 1908, he and Olivia decided to accept their son’s, Ezra’s, offer to move into a house he had recently bought in Fowler, Vermont. Ezra was Postmaster in Fowler (now called Florence) and had just bought a house on the Brandon road north of Fowler.^[59] By May 14, Henry and family were comfortable in their new home.^[60] It did not take Henry long to find a new job to go with his new home in a new town. It was announced in a Rutland newspaper in early September that “contracts have been made for carrying the children who live outside the walking” distance to school and Henry received the contract to deliver those who lived in the norther part of the district to the Florence schoolhouse.^[61] Only a year after coming to Fowler, Henry suffered a personal loss. His second wife, Olivia, died on March 3, 1909 in

her home. Here body was returned to Bristol where services were held in the Methodist Church. Burial was in Greenwood Cemetery.^[62]

Olivia's passing did not prevent Henry from being active and engaged. He and Ezra went fishing in North Chittenden one evening in June, 1910 and came home with 74 trout between the two of them.^[63] In October of 1910, Henry attended the reunion of the Fourteenth Vermont Regiment in Bennington, Vermont. At seventy-seven, he was described as "more active and supple than many at 25 years his junior."^[64] Not exactly what you would expect to read about a man on disability pension who suffered a wound to his knee at Gettysburg! You also would not expect a man of seventy, half deaf, blind in one eye and having a bad knee to be gallivanting off through the woods of the Green Mountains chasing white tail deer either. But – "A party of deer hunters, seven in number, composed of sportsmen from Fowler, Pittsford, Brandon and Goshen with Henry B. Allen as guide, went to Goshen mountains last Monday and returned with three bucks, weighing respectively 225, 242 and 250 pounds."^[65] However, Henry did not spend all of his time hunting and fishing. He had time to pursue other things as well: "Henry B. Allen has entered suit against the Singer Sewing Machine Co. to recover for the board of a horse claimed by the plaintiff to have been the property of the defendant company. About \$30.00 is involved."^[66] Henry had spunk.

Henry was comfortably settled into living with his son, Ezra, and his family by 1910. He was retired, living off his pension which had been raised over the years to \$22.50 monthly.^[67] The energetic man described in the papers was rapidly disappearing. His heart troubles were catching up with him and he wasn't so spry anymore. In the fall of 1918, his health was very poor. The old veteran lasted one more Christmas with his family and long enough to see the beginning of a new year. On April 25, 1919 at 3 a.m. Henry passed away from "cardio sclerosis".^[68] The wildlife of Addison and Rutland Counties could now rest a little easier. Henry's funeral was held in the Congregational Church in Pittsford. Burial was in Bristol.^[69] Ezra Allen and family of Pittsford and Ernest Allen and wife of Newport, New Hampshire, accompanied the body to Bristol's Greenwood Cemetery.^[70]

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