

No one has ever been able to confirm the existence of ghosts. No one has ever been able to disprove their existence either; not without doubt - beyond the shadow you might say. Alfred Beham, or Behem or Bean or Beam or Beaham or Benny took on the appearance of a spectral spirit. In fact, his middle initial may have been "S". Then again, maybe it wasn't. In this biographical sketch, only the facts as they were to be found and verified are presented. This will leave large gaps in the timeline of Alfred's life story. It was unavoidable due to the ephemeral nature of the public record keeping system in place at the time of Alfred's passing through.

Alfred Beham was born on May 7, 1829 in St. John, Canada. ^[1] He was the son of Glebe and Mary Behem. ^[2] No evidence of siblings could be found. Alfred and, it was assumed, his entire family, came to the United States from Canada in or about 1843. ^[3] The first confirmed location of Alfred in the United States after 1843 was when he enlisted in the Union Army to fight in the American Civil War. He joined the service at Stockholm, New York on February 27, 1864. He enlisted in the Seventh New York Heavy Artillery regiment. The five feet five and one half inch Canadian farmer with grey eyes, black hair and a dark complexion signed up for three years. The thirty-five year old was mustered-in on February 29 and assigned to Company A of the Seventh Heavy Artillery. He was also known by the Army as Alfred Beam. ^[4] Mysteriously, Private Beham was credited to Vermont rather than to New York which was another bizarre incident in this phantom's story. Stockholm, New York is located in the St. Lawrence River Valley in upper northern New York, a considerable distance from the Vermont-New York border. It received its name from surveyors from Stockholm, Sweden when they carved it out of the township of Massena, New York in 1806. During the War of 1812, its residents abandoned the town. After the second war with Great Britain was over, only a few of the inhabitants returned. ^[5]

The Seventh was originally formed as the 113th New York Infantry when it was mustered-in the U.S. service on August 18, 1862. It was then nicknamed the Seymour Guard and was commanded by Colonel Lewis O. Morris. On December 19, 1862, it was changed to the Seventh New York Heavy Artillery. Until 1864, the regiment was used

primarily to garrison the numerous forts ringing Washington, D.C. including Battery Vermont. During this time, August, 1862 to May, 1864, two new companies were raised in New York and added to the Seventh's total strength. One was raised on August 6, 1863. The other, to which Alfred belonged, was raised on January 19, 1864. May 15, 1864 the Seventh was ordered to the front to serve as infantry, joining Grant's army at Spottsylvania on May 17 with 1, 763 muskets. There it was assigned to Barlow's division and, at one time - in September, 1864, it was attached to the famous Irish Brigade. During its first one hundred days of service in the field, from Spottsylvania to Reams' Station, the Seventh lost 1, 254 in killed, wounded and missing. The casualties at Cold Harbor amounted to forty-five killed, two hundred fifty-nine wounded and one hundred fourteen missing - a total of four hundred eighteen casualties. Among other extraordinary losses incurred by the regiment were one hundred thirty-five killed, wounded and missing at Totopotomy, five hundred one in the assaults on Petersburg in June, and ninety-four at Reams' Station. It ranked third among the nine heavy artillery regiments which sustained the greatest loss in killed and mortally wounded in the war, having lost fourteen officers and two hundred seventy-seven men (total of two hundred ninety-one). Four officers and three hundred seventy-eight men died of diseases and other causes for a total of six hundred seventy-seven aggregate casualties. Two hundred sixteen of those died in Confederate prisons. ^[6] Original members of the Seventh who had signed up for three years were mustered-out of the service on June 26, 1865. Those recruits who had joined later, like Private Alfred Beham, had to wait until August 1, 1865 to be discharged at Federal Hill, Baltimore, Maryland. ^[7]

The next sighting of Alfred occurred after his term of service in the Seventh ended. Most soldiers, when discharged, went back to their home turf before the war and resumed their private lives as civilians. There was no reason to believe that Alfred was any different. Besides, he had more reason than most to quickly return to his home town and resume his former life. Alfred had a wife and at least three small children waiting for him to return home. The exact date of his marriage was never located. Since his first born child arrived in 1857, it must have been somewhere around 1855-1856. If Alfred's headstone in Mountain View Cemetery can be believed, his first wife's name was Angeline Carbano

(1835-1897) ^[8] Angeline (aka Ann) Carbano (Carbino, Carbineau) was the daughter of Frank and Janette Carbineau. She had been born December 22, 1835 in Massena, New York. ^[9] Since Massena and Stockholm are adjacent communities, it would be safe to say that was where Alfred first met her. Prior to his entering the service, Alfred had fathered three children: Frank Beam, 1857; Jennie Beam, 1860; and Malinda Beam, 1863. After his return from the war, he picked up right where he left off, having his fourth child, Joseph Beam in 1866. And, right on schedule, a fifth child, Emma Beam, was born in 1869. ^[10]

Based on similarities of first names, Alford and Angeline, and the names and ages of the children in the household, it was believed that the 1870 Federal Census for Alfred Benny was indeed Alfred Beham (or any one of the aliases others gave him). His age, forty-five, would be about right. His wife's name, Angeline, and her age matched Alfred's wife. By 1870, Alfred had five children, each one about three years apart in age. "Louisa" didn't resemble "Frank" much, but "Mary J." could have been "Jennie"; "Marinda" was very close to "Malinda"; Joseph was an exact match; and "Eluene" could have been a semi-literate scribe's version of "Emma". Finally, the order of birth for all the children was exactly the same and their ages also matched in every instance. It was a strong case for the two men, "Alford" and "Alfred" to be one and the same person. Strong, but not water tight. There was the issue of "Louisa". Even a sloppy and/or creative census taker would be challenged to get that name out of "Frank". But, considering some of the other unique spellings for peoples' names that I have seen, it was not outside the realm of possibility. So, if Benny was Beham, he was busy doing more than trying to survive by subsistence farming in Orwell, Vermont in 1870. Despite his operation being only valued at \$200, he kept adding to the size of his family at a predictable rate. ^[11]

By 1880, Alfred was still working on someone else's farm as a day laborer. He was fifty-one and had added three more mouths to feed to the family: George Bean, nine; Fred Bean, six; and Albert Bean, two. His oldest was twenty-three and the youngest was just two. Albert may not have made much money in twenty-one years, but he sure had been productive in other ways. According to the Federal Census information, Alfred could not

read or write. His place of residence was listed as Brandon rather than Orwell and his last name had been changed to "Bean" from "Benny". ^[12] But he was still Alfred and his wife was still Ann (Angeline). With all those mouths to feed and only making hired man's wages working as a laborer on a farm, Alfred wisely applied for a government pension in 1883. ^[13] He must have been relieved to get a little extra income to help support his rather large family. Frank, who was twenty-three now, was working as a day laborer like his father and lived at home. Jennie, twenty, and Malinda, seventeen, also worked outside the home as servants. Even young Joseph, fourteen, had gone to work while living at home in order to help support the family. ^[14] They may not have been living high, but they all worked hard for each other.

As usual, there was no 1890 Federal Census information available on Alfred because of the 1890 vault fire that destroyed most of the documents. However, because he was a veteran, he did appear on the 1890 Veterans Schedules. It placed him in Orwell, Vermont. The return correctly verified that Alfred had enlisted in the "7th NY Hev. Art", Company A on February 27, 1864 and that he had been discharged August 1, 1865 after serving one year, five months and four days. He could not provide proof of his discharge because his papers had also burnt in a fire. ^[15]

At the commencement of a new century, seventy-one year old Alfred Beham (aka Alfred Becham) was calling Orwell, Vermont his home. A lot had happened before 1900 began. All of his children had grown and left the home. In 1900, it was just Alfred and his wife. But his first wife, Angeline (Ann) had died of chronic rheumatism at sixty-two on September 18, 1897 in Orwell. ^[16] Being pregnant almost constantly for twenty plus years may also have contributed to her demise. Alfred waited a respectable two years after her death to remarry. On September 9, 1899, the seventy year old widower married fifty-five year old Amy Miller from Leicester, Vermont. This was her second marriage too. Amy had been born in Bristol, Vermont about 1844. Her father was Wyman Norton and her mother was Polly West. Amy had had one child in her previous marriage. The couple were united in Orwell by the Reverend D. Daignault, a Catholic priest. ^[17] Alfred was still listed in the census as a laborer, but it was doubtful that at his advanced age, he was still

doing any physical labor for anyone. His marriage revealed for the first time that Alfred was born in St. John, Canada to Glebe and Mary Behem. ^[18] Alfred was able to enjoy the company of his new wife for only a short time. He passed away on October 1, 1906 in Orwell. ^[19] He was seventy-seven years old. Amy was fifteen years his junior, so she had a lot of years ahead of her yet. The last clue about what happened to her after Alfred's death was the record of her having applied for widow's benefits from the Government on November 24, 1906. ^[20] After that date, Amy vanished without a trace.

NOTES

1. Ancestry.com, Vermont, Vital Records, Marriage for Alfred Behem; Ibid., Moreland Campbell Dowell Anjal Family Tree for Alfred Bean; www.findagrave.com, Memorial # 84803732 for Alfred Beham.
2. Ibid., VT, VR, 1720-1908 Marriage-Groom for Alfred Behem.
3. Ibid., 1900 U.S. Federal Census for Alfred Beham.
4. www.fold3.com, New York State Muster Roll for Alfred Beham, image 316481661.
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm,_New_York.
6. www.civilwarindex.com/armyny/7th_ny_artillery_heavy.html.
7. www.dnna.ny.gov/7th NY Artillery Regiment/Roster.
8. www.findagrave.com, Memorial #84863732 for Alfred Beham.
9. Ibid.; Ancestry.com, Dumas Family Tree for Ann Carbineau; Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908, Death for Angeline (Carbino) Beham.
10. Ancestry.com, Dumas Family Tree for Ann Carbineau.
11. Ibid., 1870 U.S. Federal Census for Alford Benny.
12. Ibid., 1880 U.S. Federal Census for Alfred Bean.
13. www.fold3.com, General Index: Pension Files for Beham, Alfred.
14. Ancestry.com, 1880 U.S. Federal Census for Alfred Bean.
15. Ibid., 1890 Veterans Schedules for Alfred Beham.
16. Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908, Death for Angeline (Carbino) Beham.
17. www.familysearch.org, Vermont, Vital Records, 1760-1954 for Amy Miller.
18. Ancestry.com, Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908, Marriage for Beham, Alfred.
19. www.findagrave.com, Memorial #84803732 for Alfred Beham.
20. www.familysearch.org, United States General Index: Pension Files, 1861-1934 for Beham, Alfred.