

= Joseph H. Allen =

Joseph H. Allen (September 5 , 1821 ? April 24 , 1884) was an industrial businessman , an officer in the Civil War , and a town supervisor of Brunswick , New York . Allen was born in Alburg , Vermont , to parents of British descent and left home at an early age . After several business ventures , he became successful in the auger and hoe business , selling mainly to the American South . He successfully ran for supervisor of the Town of Brunswick in 1856 and justice of the peace in 1861 . At the beginning of the Civil War , his sales plummeted so he closed his business and enlisted in the Union Army . Allen was wounded multiple times during his service and ended his career at the rank of lieutenant colonel . He returned home to reopen his factory , which was instrumental to the industrial success of the hamlet of Eagle Mills in the mid to late 19th century . He died in 1884 at the age of 62 .

= = Early life = =

Allen was the son of John and Sarah Allen . His father was a native of Connecticut and of English origin , and his mother was originally from Vermont and of Scottish descent . He left home when he was eight years old " to carve out a fortune for himself " , as Sylvester put it in his History of Rensselaer County , New York . He began work in an auger factory in Hamden , Connecticut , at an early age and continued until he was seventeen years old . At that time , he purchased a clock store , which he traded for horses in Vermont and Canada . He shipped his horses to the West Indies , but the ship was wrecked and his horses were lost , thus placing him badly in debt . However , he soon obtained credit , and again shipped a number of horses to the West Indies , this time successfully , enabling him to pay all his debts and even earning him a profit .

= = Before the war = =

Allen soon resumed his place in the auger factory in Connecticut , where he remained until September 1 , 1843 , when he moved to Troy , New York . There he entered into partnership with O. W. Edson in manufacturing augers . The partnership continued until the following January when Allen purchased his partner ' s share and continued in this business until the factory burned down in 1850 .

In January 1851 , Allen purchased the Eagle flour mills , an historically important industrial building in the area , which eventually gave the hamlet of Eagle Mills its name . The factory had a long history of failed business attempts . It was built in 1821 by Daniel Sheldon to mill flour using wheat supplied from Troy . After brief success , the business closed and the building sat idle . It was sold to James Bumstead who reopened the building as a feed mill . He too had troubles and sold the building to James McChesney , who kept the building idle for some time before transferring the property to Catlin and Saxton , who began the manufacture of augers and bits . Also unsuccessful , Catlin and Saxton abandoned the business and James McChesney (whose name was still on the deed) sold the property to Groome and Shattuck , who began manufacturing monkey wrenches . This too failed and the property was sold to Paul Smith , a miller from nearby Cropseyville , who sold the property to Allen in 1851 because Smith later decided that he preferred to keep his mills consolidated in Cropseyville .

The factory was located on the rocky banks of the Poesten Kill , a creek that was commonly used for water power in the area . Allen had two new buildings erected and funneled creek water to them through tunnels in the bedrock underneath the buildings . He named his enterprise the Millville Manufacturing Company and converted the mill into an auger and bit factory . At one point , he experimented with producing cable chains and files , as well . But the company soon ran into legal difficulties and was dissolved .

Allen reopened the company in 1859 , having added machinery for the manufacture of hoes , and opened a retail store on site . He found a successful market in the South , where demand was high . His company , newly named the Planters ' Hoe Company , was a considerable success . However ,

as the nation came closer to civil war , demand dropped and sales in the South became impossible . The factory was closed in 1861 , not only due to poor sales , but because Allen enlisted in the Union Army .

= = Public and armed service = =

Allen 's presence was noticeable within Brunswick . In March 1853 , he presided over a meeting to incorporate the " Church of the Disciples of Christ at the village of Millville " , now known simply as Church of the Disciples of Christ . That summer , a church building was erected at a cost of about \$ 1 @, @ 200 . In 1856 Allen became the supervisor of Brunswick , a position he was reelected to once and held until 1857 ; he ran as a Whig . He was also elected justice of the peace in 1861 , but he did not finish his term because he decided to serve in the Civil War ; this time he ran as a Democrat , and remained one for the rest of his life .

In early 1862 , the 125th Volunteer Infantry Regiment had been put together in Brunswick and a call by President Lincoln for more troops was answered by Allen that September . He enlisted in Company C of the 169th New York Volunteer Infantry and was chosen captain , having organized the company within six days . Most of the infantrymen came from Brunswick , though some came from surrounding towns . Residents of the town raised the money necessary to cover various " bounties and expenses " incurred by Allen 's soldiers while en route to war .

Allen participated in all the battles in which his regiment took part except a few minor ones , due to wounds he received in battle . During the Battle of Cold Harbor , the bones in his wrist were shattered , and he later incurred a flesh wound in the same wrist at the First Battle of Fort Fisher . He was also wounded in the leg near his ankle at Fort Fisher ; the musket ball remained there until his death . While recovering from injuries , he was reassigned to New York to recruit new soldiers . He was promoted to the rank of major in June 1864 , and , for " meritorious conduct " at Fort Fisher , he was recommended for promotion by President Lincoln and brevetted lieutenant colonel on March 13 , 1865 .

= = Post war and personal life = =

Allen returned to Brunswick after the war and reopened the Planters ' Hoe Company in association with George T. Lane . He ended the production of augers , which still made up a small percentage of production even after closing Millville Manufacturing . Allen put himself in charge of manufacturing and sales and he again secured a solid market share in the South . A prosperous trade resumed and was still strong at least until the 1880s . The company eventually expanded and began manufacturing lighter common hoes for the general public , adding to its heavy southern @-@ style line of hoes . The Planters ' Hoe Company was still a success as late as the 1890s , but it was extinct by the 1920s .

In addition to holding the offices of justice of the peace and town supervisor , it is also said that Allen was one of the foremost supporters of education in the town . On July 6 , 1847 , he married Sarah H. Payne , daughter of David H. and Catharine C. Payne , of Hamden , Connecticut . The couple had two children : Sarah and Cornelia May .

Allen died on April 24 , 1884 , and is buried in Eagle Mills Cemetery on Brunswick Road in Eagle Mills ; his wife died in 1907 and is buried next to him . Based on insignia carved on his gravestone (specifically the Square and Compasses) , Allen was a Mason .