Henry Oliver Nightingale was born in Hawkhurst, County Kent, England on June 6, 1844. He emigrated to the United States in 1849, arriving in New York from London aboard the Margaret Evans on June 30th at the age of 5. His parents, Henry and Hannah, himself, and younger brother Charles settled in Rochester, New York.

Henry was an abolitionist, and joined the northern army when the Civil War broke out at the age of 18. He mustered in July 8, 1862 as a private in the 108th Volunteer New York Infantry. He fought in a dozen battles, including Gettysburg, and was promoted to corporal on March 1, 1864. On May 6, 1864, during the Battle of the Wilderness in Virginia, Henry was hit by a Confederate gunshot in the left shoulder.

He was sent to Stanton General Hospital in Washington, DC for treatment of his wound. The injury was serious, and the attending surgeon wanted to amputate his arm. Henry refused to allow that, and remained a patient at Stanton for 13 months s. Throughout his life, Henry suffered with weakness and numbness in his left arm.
Henry was released from the hospital and honorably discharged from service on June 2, 1865. He returned to Rochester, and married Judith Underdown, also an immigrant from England, a month later on July 6th, 1865. Henry worked as a bookkeeper and printer, and he and Judith had several children. Three of the children died in infancy, one died as a young man, and three lived full lives: twins John and Florence, and Edith.

They moved around the country, living in New York, Buffalo, Detroit, and Spokane. Judith died while they lived in Spokane, on December 30, 1907. A few years later, Henry moved to Oregon to be near his daughter Edith, and then returned to Detroit, where he died on May 12, 1919 at the age of 76. His body was returned to Spokane and buried on May 20.


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**Related Archival Materials**

Two letters from Nightingale to Gertrude Taylor, a pen pal during the time of Nightingale’s stay at Stanton Hospital, are available from the Falvey Memorial Library’s Nagy collection at Villanova University, http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Americana/Nagy/.