

John Hayes was an Irish immigrant, one of thousands, who came to the United States to escape the harsh economic times that had befallen the United Kingdom in the mid-eighteenth century. He came to North America with the high expectations of most foreigners who saw this relatively new country of the United States of America as the "Land of Opportunity". A place where a man could, with hard work and clean living, make something of himself even if he started with nothing. These shores were the gateway to prosperity where sweat was more important than birth to success and security; where advantage was earned, not inherited; a place where every man was called "Mr." and no one automatically had a title putting him above all others. What he actually found was a country embroiled in its own different kind of war for survival. Not a civil strife caused by famine or massive migration from the country to urban centers, but a strife based on politics and philosophical differences founded on divergent cultures and life styles. John thought he was leaving conflict behind him only to find that he stepped into another one three thousand miles away from home.

John Hayes (aka Hays) was born in the emerald country of Ireland sometime in 1845 or 1847. <sup>[1]</sup> For the sake of argument, I used 1846 as the year of his birth. According to the public records, he had two fathers; one was named Richard and the other was Michael. <sup>[2]</sup> Since Michael Hayes III signed the consent form on John's enlistment papers in 1863, I decided to go with "Michael" rather than "Richard". Besides, the Irish seemed more fond of the name "Michael". It was much easier to determine who John's mother was. All the sources consulted agreed that it was Mary Goff. And all sources agreed both parents came from Ireland as well. <sup>[3]</sup>

The American Civil War was brewing when John and his family arrived as immigrants. While they were busy getting settled into their new country, the causes of the Great Rebellion were perking away. The boiling point wasn't reached until the canon fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. Then the war of words, with an occasional use of canes to emphasize the point of contention, was over and the shooting war had begun. It must have been a particularly exciting time for a young immigrant male in the prime of his life. He may not have understood all the complexities of the causes behind the gun

powder smoke, but he was nonetheless enthralled with the opportunities it presented for a jolly good time. Or the circumstances surrounding John's enlistment into the Union Army as a Private may have been a bit more somber and a little less patriotic. It seemed, from his enlistment papers, that the Selectman of Castleton, Vermont, where he was a resident, had a great deal to do with his decision to become a soldier. His joining up may have had more to do with the draft than with volunteerism. Although the motivation may be questioned, the fact was that John Hayes became a member of Company C, First Vermont Heavy Artillery Regiment at eighteen years of age on December 10, 1863 in Castleton, Vermont. He and his father stood before the Justice Of The Peace of the town, E.S. Chapman, took the oath of allegiance, and signed their names to their respective portions of the form. <sup>[4]</sup> The five feet five and one half inch farmer from Ireland with the hazel eyes and dark brown hair that went perfectly with his light complexion reported to Brattleboro, Vermont on December 14 and was mustered-in the Union Army on December 15, 1863. He was paid \$25.00 of a \$267.00 bounty plus another \$35.00 from the commutation fund and was given a new set of clothes to wear. <sup>[5]</sup> In addition to the \$60.00 he already had been paid, by the end of December, 1863 he was due the second installment of his bounty (\$40.00). <sup>[6]</sup>

The regiment was originally mustered-in as the Eleventh Vermont Volunteer Infantry in September, 1862. In mid-December of that year, it was re-designated as the First Heavy Artillery. Unfortunately, official and personal records used both designations which has caused great confusion.

The Eleventh Regiment was the largest Vermont regiment sent to the war, both in original membership and in total enrollment. It was recruited as an infantry regiment at the same time as the Tenth, under the call of July 2, 1862 from President Lincoln for 300,000 volunteers. By the middle of August, ten companies had been organized. The Regiment rendezvoused at Camp Bradley in Brattleboro, Vermont where they were mustered into the U.S. service September 1, 1862 for three years. It left the State on September 7 for Washington, D.C. where it arrived on the ninth and was immediately assigned to duty in the chain of forts constituting the northern defenses of the capital. By

order of the Secretary of War, dated December 10, 1862, it was made a heavy artillery unit becoming re-designated as the First Heavy Artillery.

The Eleventh remained in the defenses of Washington, D.C. for a period of eighteen months, during which time it was chiefly employed strengthening the works, constructing and garrisoning Forts Stevens, Slocum and Totten. During the latter part of its artillery service at Washington, the Regiment garrisoned four other forts and occupied a line of about seven miles. It experienced little of the real hardships of war during 1863 and the first months of 1864. It had comfortable quarters, the men enjoyed excellent health and rations - even luxuries were abundant for a price. It maintained an excellent state of discipline typical of Vermont troops, and was rated the best disciplined regiment in the defense of the capital. After the terrible Federal losses at the Battle of the Wilderness, the Eleventh was ordered to join the Army of the Potomac. It reported for duty as infantry near Spotsylvania Court House with nearly 1,500 men.

During the severe Overland Campaign that followed, the Regiment participated in every major engagement of the Sixth Corps from May 1864 to April 1865: Spotsylvania; Cold Harbor; Petersburg; Weldon railroad; Fort Stevens; Charlestown; Gilbert's ford; Opequan; Fisher's Hill; Cedar Creek; Petersburg siege. In the debacle at Weldon railroad, June 23, 1864, the Regiment suffered the greatest loss sustained by any Vermont Regiment in a single action. It lost nine killed, thirty-one wounded and two hundred sixty-one captured. All the captives were sent to Andersonville prison where two hundred thirty-two of them died.

Original members, recruits for one year and recruits whose term of service expired before October 1, 1865, were mustered-out on June 24, 1865. The remainder of the Regiment was consolidated into one battalion of heavy artillery and stationed in the defenses of Washington until mustered-out on August 25, 1865. The original members of the Eleventh numbered 1,315. Recruits and transfers amounted to an additional 1,005. The total rank and file was 2,320. Of that number, 152 were killed in action; 210 died of disease; 457 were wounded; 339 were captured; 2 died by accident. <sup>[7]</sup>

Private Hayes was engaged in the Battles of Spottsylvania Court House; Cold Harbor; Petersburg June 23, 1864, March 25 and April 2, 1865; Charleston; Winchester; and Cedar Creek. <sup>[8]</sup> Private Hayes was, in fact, present and accounted for in the ranks of Company C for most of his three year term of service. When he wasn't busy doing duty as an infantryman or gunner, he was hanging around sutler Evans' tent. He owed Evans \$4.00 by the end of February, 1864 (two months after taking the field). <sup>[9]</sup> Apparently the second installment of bounty money (\$40.00) had not yet arrived. He was still loitering around the sutler's tent at the end of August, 1864. He then owed Evans \$8.00 and he was in more debt to the Government for losing a \$.56 haversack. <sup>[10]</sup> When Civil War soldiers had idle time on their hands in camp, they filled it by doing a variety of things besides shopping for luxuries they couldn't really afford at the sutler's tent. They loved gambling whether it was with cards or dice. They played group games like baseball. They wrote letters home if they were literate. They'd wash their own clothes if they didn't have money to pay the Regimental laundress to do it. But credit at Evans was way too easy to get and many soldiers were regulars. By the end of October, 1864, Private Hayes owed him another \$2.00. <sup>[11]</sup>

Private Hayes was transferred on June 24, 1865 to 1st Battalion, Vermont Heavy Artillery, Company B when the original members of the Regiment were discharged. <sup>[12]</sup> Due to him being a recruit, Private Hayes had to wait until August 5, 1865 before he was sent home. At the time of his discharge, he didn't owe sutler Evans anything, but he was in debt to the Government for \$37.65 for clothing and equipment. Fortunately, he still had bounty money due him, about \$120.00, so he went home with some money in his pockets. <sup>[13]</sup>

What John did immediately after his discharge from the service was the same as almost every other ex-soldier - he headed back home to resume his civilian life. He was a farmer when he entered into his military career, so it was assumed that is what he returned to. And like many young men coming home from the war, it did not take long for John to find a wife. On October 31, 1871, twenty-five year old John Hayes got himself hitched to a young twenty-two year old Catholic girl from Ireland named Mary Quinn. The priest

married them in Orwell, Vermont. <sup>[14]</sup> Her father was Jeremiah Quinn and her mother was Katherine Gorman, both from Ireland. The family had immigrated to the United States in 1862 when Mary was nineteen. <sup>[15]</sup> Children began arriving shortly after. The first born was John C. Hayes in Orwell about 1873. The second child was also a boy. His name was Jeremiah Hayes and he was born December 9, 1874 in Shoreham, Vermont. In 1879, two more children were born. Fraternal twins came into this world on March 5, 1879 in Shoreham. The father of the twins, John, was a farmer in town. <sup>[16]</sup>

By 1880, when the West was at its wildest, John Hays, now in his early thirties, was still laboring away on a farm - probably not his own - to support Mary Q. and their four children. All of them were residents of Shoreham where the majority of their male neighbors farmed, the females kept house and the children attended school. <sup>[17]</sup> Jack had applied for, and apparently was granted, a small pension back on July 26, 1886 which augmented the meager earnings he reaped from his farm. <sup>[18]</sup>

The 1890 Veterans Schedules placed John and his family in Shoreham. He was not in the best of health at the time. He suffered from a bad heart and had chronic rheumatism. Both conditions could be fatal to a person. Although the Schedule confirmed that John had indeed served in Company C of the 11th VT (and the 1st H. Art'y) from December 10, 1863 to August 25, 1865, it noted he received "no pension" despite the fact that his Compiled Service Records indicated he had been granted one in July of 1886. If he received one at all, it may have been for as little as \$2.00 per month. <sup>[19]</sup> Poor John's health problems finally caught up with him on February 3, 1899 in Shoreham where his earthly labors ceased. The Irishman was taken by "mitral stenosis" leaving a widow and four young children for his wife to support. <sup>[20]</sup>

The widow Hayes continued living in Shoreham on into the 1900's with her children. Before 1900, the twins had disappeared from the family list. Only John C (twenty-seven) and Jeremiah, twenty-five, still lived with Mary in the home. It was in the 1900 Federal Census that Mary revealed she had immigrated into the U.S. thirty-eight years earlier in 1862. She was now the head of household at fifty-six years of age (slightly younger than

her actual age of about sixty-one). She rented the home she and her two boys lived in. She did not have an occupation, but her two sons were employed. Both worked for the local railroad; John C. was a brakeman and Jeremiah was a laborer. Each was still single in 1900. <sup>[21]</sup>

Ten years later, in 1910, it was just Mary and "Jerry" (Jeremiah) living in the rented home in Shoreham. Mary reported her age as sixty-six. She was taking in laundry as a washerwoman in her home to pay the bills even though she received a widow's pension from the Government. Jerry still worked for the railroad as a laborer for wages. <sup>[22]</sup> Perhaps it was while working as a washerwoman that Mary had her fatal accident on August 23, 1919. She fell and struck her head. The fall was violent enough to also fracture her femur. The severe blow to her head caused her to suffer a "cerebral emboli" which, along with her already chronic myocarditis, caused her death. She died in Brandon, Vermont. Her death certificate said she was born in Ireland on July 16, 1839 and was seventy-nine years, one month and seven days old when she died. <sup>[23]</sup>

## NOTES

1. Vermont in the Civil War/Cemeteries/Vermont/Orwell/St Pauls/Hayes, John/Vitals; [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com), Memorial # 46684489 for John Hayes; [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), Vermont, Vital Records, 1760-1954 for John Hayes; [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com), 1880 U. S. Federal Census for John Hayes.
2. [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), Vermont, Vital Records, 1760-1954, Marriage for John Hayes; [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com), Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908, Marriage for John Hayes.
3. Ibid.
4. [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com), Compiled Service Records of Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Vermont, p. 22, image 309699496. Hereinafter referred to as Compiled Service Record.
5. Ibid., Compiled Service Record, p. 5, image 309699444.
6. Ibid., Compiled Service Record, p. 6, image 309699446.
7. Vermont in the Civil War/Units/1st Brigade/Eleventh Vermont Infantry/History; [www.en.wikipedia.org/11th Vermont Infantry](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/11th_Vermont_Infantry).
8. [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com), Compiled Service Record, p. 3, image 309699438.
9. Ibid., Compiled Service Record, p. 7, image 309699448.
10. Ibid., Compiled Service Record, p. 10, image 309699459.
11. Ibid., Compiled Service Record, p. 11, image 309699461.

12. Ibid., Compiled Service Record, p. 16, image 309699476.
13. Ibid., Compiled Service Record, p. 19, image 309699487.
14. Ancestry.com, Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908, Marriage for Mary Quinn and John Hayes.
15. Ibid., Miscellaneous Family Tree for Mary Quinn; Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908, Death for Mary Hayes; [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), Marriage, Vermont Vital Records, 1760-1954 for John Hayes.
16. Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908, Births for Kate and James and Jeremiah Hayes; [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), Vermont, Vital Records, 1760-1954, Marriage for John C. Hayes.
17. Ibid., 1880 U.S. Federal Census for John Hayes.
18. [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com), General Index: Pension Files for Hayes, John, image 26558601.
19. Ancestry.com, 1890 Veterans Schedules for John Hayes.
20. Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908, Death for John Hayes.
21. Ibid., 1900 U.S. Federal Census for Mary Hayes.
22. Ibid., 1910 U.S. Federal Census for Jerry Hayes.
23. Ibid., Vermont, Vital Records, 1720-1908, Death for Mary Hayes.