

**“Boonville Herald and Adirondack Tourist”  
Boonville, New York  
2005**

**The Civil War Letters  
Of  
Charles Harvey Hayden  
Patriot & Hero  
97<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteer Infantry  
By Al Grenning**

In July of 1861 the United States seemed destined to self destruct in a gathering Civil War. One of the largest military engagements in our country's history had just taken place. Union troops were overwhelmed by Southern forces and chased all the way back to Washington, D.C. The nation's fate hung the balance. It was called Bull Run by the North and Manassas by the South. Here in the Western Adirondacks, citizens reacted with patriotic outrage and revengeful fervor. Congress immediately authorized states to organize volunteer regiments for defense of the Union. Within days of Congress' action Governor Morgan of New York State granted Oneida County the authority to raise its third all volunteer infantry regiment. By the end of the month it had been officially decided that this newest New York regiment, the 97<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteer Infantry was to be raised, drilled and commissioned here in Boonville. Boys, young men and middle aged married fathers all eagerly responded to this call to arms. Charles Wheelock, a local militia officer and merchant would be its Colonel and commander.

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1861, Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden of Big Brook, NY (Westernville) enlisted for three years of service as a private and was assigned to Company "I", one of ten companies in the regiment. He was in his mid 20s, unmarried and among the first volunteers to enlist. As a young boy he and his sister Laura lost their mother to disease. Although it isn't clear, it appears they were given up by their father and raised by relatives or close family members. Charles and all other enlistees drilled through late fall of 1861 and early winter of 1862 on the flat in front of Park Hill. Eventually more than 900 men volunteered, completed their training and left by train for war from Boonville in March of 1862. Although the regiment experienced conflict including the Battle of Second Manassas in its first months of service, it wasn't until mid-September that it received its real baptism of fire. The 97<sup>th</sup> was among 115,000 American soldiers involved in the Battle of Antietam, called Sharpsburg by the South. Early on the morning of September 17, 1862, Boonville's regiment along with others in

Brigadier General Abram Duryea's Brigade led an initial attack from the north through farmer D.E. Miller's cornfield. This was the offensive thrust of James Rickett's Division, First Corps of the Army of the Potomac. Conservative estimates place the human cost of the battle at more than 23,000 casualties, the most suffered on a single day of conflict in this country's history – before or since. On the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> only forty men were left unscathed and present for duty in the 97<sup>th</sup>.

Strategically, Antietam marked the first occasion that Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was blunted in battle by Union forces. President, Lincoln wisely used the stand off as a political basis to issue his Emancipation Proclamation. However, none of this was of immediate concern to Private, Charles Harvey Hayden of the 97<sup>th</sup> NY because he found himself lying in the corn, shot through the body. Every Civil War soldier knew that men who were body shot had virtually no chance of survival. A minee ball had entered the pit of Charles' stomach and exited under his arm. As serious and critical as this wound was it did not prove mortal! Instead, Union field surgeons with advances in hospital care nursed him back to health over a period of many months. In fact, his health was sufficient to allow him to re-enlistment in January of 1864.

The letters and diary that have been handed down are from Charles H. Hayden's extended period of convalescence. Almost all are written to his sister Laura. In them he expresses his personal reflections on the war, religion, politics, death and her welfare. Since he was unmarried and they had lost their mother in earlier years, Laura became the central person representing home and family for Charles. Overwhelming events of the time obviously led the two siblings to a mutual commitment of faith and welfare. From the letters it can be seen how their close bond gave each other strength. All letters closed asking for a timely response. The first two letters in the series are dated July 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 1862 and were written before the major battles of Second Manassas and Antietam. In this first surviving letter Charles describes the regiment as having experienced artillery action and some fighting. He was understandably impressed. The second, longer letter reflects more on the hot months of summer and offers a unique window into general camp life.

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**The Boonville History Club's campaign to endow, repair and rededicate the 97<sup>th</sup> NYVI monument at Gettysburg, seems to have struck a local chord. Strong community interest has brought to light certain artifacts, historical letters and diaries. One very interesting contribution has been brought forward by Les Trainor, of Boonville, himself a Civil War enthusiast for most of his life. Through time Trainor's family has become custodians of the extensive letters and diary of Big Brook (Westernville) native and 97<sup>th</sup> volunteer, Charles Harvey Hayden. The Hayden story, written in**

**his own hand, is a moving, patriotic, spiritual and heroic first hand account of a local Civil War soldier who gave his all in the cause to save the Union. The collection represents an unparalleled window into a soldier's fate as he struggles with his health, spirit, faith, fate, family and patriotism. This letter collection vividly and clearly portrays the sacrifice of a Boonville area soldier's place in our national history. It is probably the most important surviving first hand account of a soldier's life in the 97<sup>th</sup> NYVI.**

**The importance of the Hayden letters and diary is obvious. But, because of fading, misspellings, strained grammar and random order, continuity was not initially completely obvious. During a July visit, Al Grenning's grandson Alex began transcribing and organizing the collection into a coherent sequence. As it developed into a more involved summer history project, he transcribed all of the original Hayden letters sequentially and stored them as a MS Word® file. Great effort was taken to keep the context as original as possible. Spelling and grammar were edited only when absolutely necessary. A duplicate of the complete transcriptions has been given to the Erwin Library Institute and is available on reserve. Alex is starting his freshman year at Wilson Central School this fall.**

**A separate study and restoration of Hayden's personal diary also has been completed. It remains in possession of the Trainor family. Although the word "treasure" is over used, there is no doubt that the surfacing of Hayden's letters and diary give a new unseen window into Boonville's contribution to the Civil War. In future issues the Herald will publish the complete set of Hayden's letters chronologically, one each week.**

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\*Al Grenning is a member of the Friends of The National Park at Gettysburg and is an Associate Licensed Battle Field Guide at Gettysburg. He has been working with the Boonville Historical Club in their campaign to rededicate, repair and endow the 97<sup>th</sup> NYVI monument on that field.

The initiative to record the history of the 97<sup>th</sup> NYVI is ongoing. Any artifact, photograph of a soldier, letter or other historical item shedding light on individual soldiers or local regimental history is of great interest to the Boonville Historical Club. Also, solicitation by the Club continues for the Gettysburg monument project. Through community effort, repair, rededication and an endowment is being established through the cooperation of the National Military Park at Gettysburg. In support of this community initiative donations are gratefully accepted and should be sent to Elaine Tompkins, in care of the Boonville Town Clerk's Office, Route 12, Boonville, New York, 13309.

Note: The monument project was completed in 2005 and through its efforts the Gettysburg field monument on North Seminary Ridge was restored and upgraded!

*Camp Near Washington  
July 6<sup>th</sup> 1862*

*Dear Sister*

*I take this opportunity to let you know that I am alive and my health is rather better than when I wrote you last. I have been under two cannonadings and in one battle and still my life is preserved.*

*Write soon from your brother  
Charles H. Hayden*

*Camp Near Warrenton  
July 8<sup>th</sup> 1862*

*Dear Sister,*

*I received your letter this morning and was glad to hear from you but was sorry to hear that you had been sick – I had almost given up hearing from you as I had written twice and received no answer – I am glad to hear that Pa is getting along so well. I hope that he may always prosper – I hope the acquaintance you are forming may prove for your happiness. Be sure your heart goes with your hand – I am glad Pa approves of him. I hope he may prove all you could wish – I am sorry that you have had (a) disappointment but we are liable to be disappointed even in those we hold most dear - should you be disappointed a gain. I hope you may continue to live on and hope on striving to be a good girl – For I know the effect which disappointment is liable to have upon the mind.*

*We have been incamped at (indistinguishable) Station for the last three or four weeks living very uncomfortable for Soldiers. We moved from there last Saturday to this place about twelve miles (away). The weather is so warm that it is hard marching now.*

*Yesterday and the day before were the hottest days I think I ever saw. We have but little drilling now. Our drilling hours are from eight to ten and from five to seven O'clock – We live in little tents made of two pieces of cloth about*

*one half as large as a sheet. Two of us button our pieces together and stretch it across whole boards in two crotches and this forms our tent - when we start on a march tent, blanket, oven coat, knapsack, gun and equipments forms a pretty good load but generally we get part of it carried - Since I began this letter I have been off and got all the cherries and black berries that I could eat. The black berry vines run along on the ground in the meadows and are very large and nice. We have the black and red cherries all we want - The water here is first rate and the country quite hilly- The place we left the country was level and the water poor -*

*I do not know how many men we have here but several thousand making it look quite like a city when lit up at night. I and William Wright from Wright Settlement went out five miles beyond our lines the other day but saw no rebels. Took dinner without much reluctance got by some slaves consisting of hoe cake butter and milk. - You said you wish that I could be there to spend the fourth with you. I wish I could have been. I think we might have had a good time - You spoke of my getting a furlough and coming home this summer. It is hard getting a furlough in our camp. I do not know of anyone getting a furlough without they are sick or to go home with the sickness - The railroad which had been damaged by the rebels has been repaired to this place which gives us quick communication with Washington.*

*Direct Washington DC 97 REG NYSV COK  
From your Brother Henry Hayden*

In this letter of October 10, 1862 Charles Hayden writes to his sister Laura, in Westernville, (Big Brook) N.Y., from the Union hospital in Smoketown, Maryland. In it he informs her of his wounds suffered in the Battle of Antietam. The Smoketown Hospital was one of many hastily created for wounded soldiers. It consisted of an oak grove sheltering about 80 army tents. Two dilapidated cabins served as the only standing structures. Dr. W. R. Mosley, Assistant Medical Inspector for Union forces, noted that two months after the battle in November 1862, there were 479 patients under treatment. 232 were wounded soldiers while 237 others were sick with typhoid fever, dysentery and diarrhea. Many were afflicted with both wounds and disease. When the following letter was written Charles was in the latter category. However, he realized his good fortune to be alive upon his reflection of the battle and its horror.

*Smoketown, MD  
Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> 62*

*Dear Sister*

*I take this opportunity to write a few lines to you. I was wounded in the battle of the 17<sup>th</sup> of last month. I was wounded in the right breast. My wounds appear to be doing well. I also received a shot in my thumb and finger of my left hand but my fingers are about well. I have had a bad diarrhea which has kept me very weak. We went into the battle early in the morning. I was in a cornfield when I fell. I was left and the rebels passed over me then our men drove them back again. The rebels were charging again when I placed my handkerchief over my wound and standed (stood). (sic) I came to an ambulance and they took me in and brought me to the Hospital we are in. Nice new tents 5 - of us in our tent - I have been up and out of doors yesterday. I do not know whether they will let me come home or not - the battle was a terrible affair. Men (were) dropping all around - with heads and legs off. The continual roar of cannon the shot and shell flying around and the hissing of the balls all make it terrible.*

*Dear sister write soon direct as before.  
From your affectionate Brother  
Charles H Hayden*

Boonville Herald – Third Week  
Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden

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In this letter of January 25, 1863 Charles is still receiving care from the same hospital in Maryland that he wrote from in November. His progress is amazing considering the seriousness of his wounds. He notes that Smoketown is becoming the recipient of soldiers from other hospitals. Just four weeks before this was written Union forces lost 13,000 soldiers (18,000 - both sides combined) to casualties during the Battle of Fredricksburg. No doubt the influx of patients he notes was the result of that battle.

The letter also demonstrates the influence of the United States Christian Commission. During the war this YMCA founded, non denominational, charity funded, volunteer organization cared to the spiritual needs of soldiers, particularly those who were wounded. It supplied clothing, diaries, writing material, bibles and ministry for both northern soldiers and captured southerners. Religious services were held and libraries were established in most hospital camps. Over 5000 volunteers supported the organization. Their work was to have a profound effect on Private, Charles Hayden of the 97<sup>th</sup> NYVI.

*Smoketown Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> 1863*

*Dear Sister*

*I take this opportunity to write a few lines to you. I am still at this Hospital. We are in large tents and have a good stove. There are five of us in a tent. I am gaining strength and my wounds are healed up but I feel the affects of them inwardly considerably yet a few weeks ago. I expected to be with you before this time but I do not know whether I shall be discharged or not. Now they talk as though they wanted me to go to nursing, but I do not want to do it, I rather go to my Reg, if I was able but I do not think that I am able yet.*

*They are making this a General Hospital for this region and are bringing their sick from other hospitals. Here we have some Three hundred -- now of sick and wounded. I had a letter from Cousin Helen a few days ago. She was well and I am always glad to hear from her. She takes as much interest in my welfare as though she was my sister. I wish you could see the letters. You said that Edward was not what you expected. I am glad that you found him out before it was too late but am sorry that you were disappointed. You spoke about going to Steuben to work perhaps you may be there before this reaches you. I do not know what is for the best but I hope that you may be diverted for the best and trust to that friend that never can forsake you. Read the bible and be directed by its teachings, it will lead you a right.*

*Dear Sister I am tired of war and blood-shed and tired of seeing sickness and suffering caused by this unhappy war.*

*I believe that our only hope is to trust. Trust to him that tempers the wind to the Shorn lamb. I hope that we may do away with the evil that is among us and the Lord will (----) to bless us as a nation for without his blessing we can do nothing-till Pa and Ma. That I am as well as can be expected under the circumstances receiving a ball about three inches to the right of the pit of the stomach and coming out just back of my arm. I have received (an) overcoat and pants and under cloths from the government. I lost my clothes in the battle. We have not received any pay for most seven months but I sent back to Western for some so that I have had what I needed to use. I have had to buy considerable food as our fair is rather poor. I hope the time may soon come when we shall meet a gain but in the mean time try to be a good girl. I was sorry to hear that you had been sick but was glad to hear that you were getting quite well a gain. I hope your health may continue good. We have plenty of hickory nuts here. I have been out several times and got some but could not get as many as I would because I could not climb the trees – you hardly know how much I wish to see you. But that cannot be for the present but we will hope that the time will come when we shall meet again.*

*Dear Sister, write soon and direct  
Smoketown, Hospital Washington  
CO MD*

*From your loving brother  
Charles H Hayden*

Boonville Herald – Fourth Week  
Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden

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In this letter of March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1863 Charles writes to his sister Laura from the same Smoketown hospital that he was sent to in October of 1862. Discouraged with continuing poor health, chronic diarrhea and pain from his very severe wound, he is concerned about not being fit for regimental duty. He expresses a clear fatalistic tone and acceptance that the future is beyond his capacity to control.

*Smoketown Hospital  
March 5<sup>th</sup> 1863*

*Dear Sister,*

*I have been waiting some time and have not written because I expected to leave here soon, either discharged or sent to the regiment. But I do not see anymore prospect of going than I did two months ago. There are some discharged and others sent to their regiments every few days. My health is not very good and I have had the diarrhea for six months most of the time and my side and breast (are) weak and I have some pain when I lay down. I find that I do not get over a wound as soon as it is healed. But, it is liable to bother - long after. I do not think that I am able to go to the regiment and do duty as soldier but perhaps I shall be sent.*

*I mean to try to keep my trust in Him that has preserved my life through the bloody conflicts that I have passed through where many have been called from health to the grave in a few moments – and if it is His will that I shall be discharged it will be so if not He can give me strength when I return to duty to do what is required of me.*

*I am glad that you have found a friend and I hope that he may prove kind and true. Still I would all ways have you put your trust in that friend that can never deceive but will always do that which is best for us if we put our trust in Him although we may not always think so at the time.*

*The weather here has been wet and we have had rather bad weather but today is warm and pleasant. The grass is just beginning to start. We have a nice little chapel where we have meetings three times a week and we have a very fine man for chaplain.*

*I was sorry to hear that Pa had lost his dam but was glad that he had it repaired. I hope he may have success and be prosperous.*

*Dear Sister I hope the time may soon come when war shall end and we shall meet at home again.*

*Direct Smoketown Hospital  
Washington D.C.  
Via Sharpsburg M.D*

*From your loving  
Brother Charles H. Hayden*

Boonville Herald – Fifth Week  
Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden

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On April 25th 1863, Charles writes to his sister Laura from the location of the Smoketown hospital for the last time. Because she represents the only connection to home, family and friends in Westernville, the letters he receives from her are a central part of his existence. In a gesture of appreciation he composes a poem representing his feelings toward her kindnesses. Although a few sentences at the end of the original document have been lost – the letter does reflect the feelings of severely wounded, lonesome and hospital confined Civil War soldier.

*Smoketown Hospital  
April 25<sup>th</sup> 63*

*Dear Sister,*

*I wrote to you sometime ago but have received no answers - are (you) sick or why do you not write? This hospital is about to be broken up and perhaps I may be sent home but you must not put too much hopes in my coming home. But, if I should come home I should be there next month. I hope you are well but your health was so poor when you wrote that I am afraid you're sick.*

*Those that are going from this Hospital are going to Fredrick about twenty miles from here. Some twenty five or thirty went yesterday and more are going Monday.*

*The weather here is fine to day and the fields are green –  
On the next pages I am going to write some of my composition.*

*How sweet the memory of  
A sister kind and dear bound by a  
Thousand acts of kindness (little acts its true)  
But I never can forget them where ever I  
May go.*

*'Tis the little acts of kindness that are  
Strewn from side to side that will  
Make our life time happy and our  
Moments sweetly glide  
How I wish I'd see (sight) that sister with a heart  
So warm and true ever ready to receive  
Me even anxious so to do  
Dearest sister keep on hoping that we*

*May soon meet a gain - if on earth you  
Never meet me – meet me in the heavenly plain*

*Dearest Sister please (do) not (loose) your hopes on  
things of time for soon we will leave them far behind. In the moments that now  
fly let us prepare to live and dye for who among us now may say how quickly  
we may pass away ----*

Boonville Herald – Sixth Week  
Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden

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Charles writes to his sister Laura, from Frederick City, Maryland, on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1863. The Smoketown hospital he had been confined to during the past seven and one half months will never meet his eyes again. This letter comes shortly after the Battle of Chancellorsville in early May. Combined, the North and South suffered over thirty thousand casualties and was the most humiliating Union defeat of the Civil War. The stress placed on the medical corps of both sides for care of the wounded was beyond capabilities. Good fortune and luck was with Charles because he found himself in a situation offering clean, un-crowded quality care. Once examined by the doctor in his new setting there was evidently consideration for sending him to the Invalid Corps. However, serving the remainder of his military term with the maimed and handicapped was not to be his fate. Most interesting are his eye opening comments concerning the care of rebel prisoners!

*Frederick City  
May 25, 63*

*Dear Sister,*

*I have left Smoketown at last. I have been here three weeks. I did not get my discharge at Smoketown as I expected. I don't know how long I will be here probably all summer. The weather has been very warm for a few days – I do not think I feel as well when the weather is very warm. I spoke about my discharge to the doctor Saturday morning for the first time. Twice I have been in the hospital. I thought if I could go north where the weather is cooler it would be better for me. The doctor gave me but little encouragement about going home and seemed to think that I might be able to go into the invalid corps but said he would see if I was entitled to discharge.*

*The hospital is pleasantly situated just at the outskirts of the town. There are 18 or 20 buildings 100 or 200 feet long and about 30 feet wide. They are enclosed by a high fence and when we wish to go out we have to get a pass. I have had 4 or 5 and have not had to ask for one –*

*I like it here very well everything is kept very nice and clean.*

*This Hospital is not very full of patients. The rebel patients were sent off a few days ago. They were used as well as we an sleep in the same rooms and eat at the same table. I believe in using prisoners well and I wish that our prisoners could be used as well as they have been. I think they (Rebels) were used better than they (Union) were.*

*Laura, perhaps you may not get this letter very soon but answer as soon as you get it and tell me where to direct if you are at home or anywhere else from our home.*

*Direct Fredrick City  
General Hospital M.D.  
Barrack O*

*My ink is so poor that I do not know whether you can read this letter or not.  
From Hervey to his sister Laura.*

*P.S. Laura if you are at home answer (confirm) with a few lines in your next letter.*

Boonville Herald – Seventh Week  
Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden

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In this letter Charles shows continued concern for his sister Laura's health. His acceptance of a Devine plan for all that has happened is reflective of the United States Christian Commission's work and the general revivalist movement in the 1860s. It is written about two weeks before the Battle of Gettysburg. At that point Northern States are highly embroiled among themselves in an anti-war movement lead by Democratic politicians called "Cooper Heads." The former mayor of Utica, New York, Horatio Seymour, is a strong proponent of a negotiated settlement with the South, and now is Governor of New York State. No doubt, Charles is aware of the political climate, because he writes about Democrats, Republicans, Christians and the damage being inflicted to the war effort by "Northern Rebels."

*Fredrick City June 12<sup>th</sup> 63*

*Dear Sister,*

*I hasten to answer your letter which I received in due time – I am sorry to hear that your health is so poor and I hope that you may not lose your voice, but whatever God may appoint in his providence let us try to receive as from an all wise and merciful Father and let us pray that our afflictions may (come) from our greatest blessings. We always have much to be thankful for in our greatest affliction.*

*- You tell me to be patient I have no cause to be impatient when I think of the promises of God, he has said that all things shall work for the good of those that love him so that our affections and disappointments if received in the right spirit may prove blessings to us – all that we may suffer here will soon be past. We cannot always see the hand that leads us but let us cast our selves into his care and he will care for us. But if we are ashamed of him before man he will be ashamed of us before his father and the holy Angels*

*Elise wishes me to be a Democrat. I wish she may be a Christian if she is not. Then she may be a Democrat or Republican. She may err in judgment but she will not err in principal. She will aim to be right and do right - We should not think more of party than our country - I would rather the names Democrat and Republican would link to us no more than that we should lose our free institutions. I would that we had a party without the imperfections of either but as they are made of imperfect men they will be imperfect. And, we should*

*choose the best and will - should they think of it - You there at home never can know what men are suffering for this country. To know it must be seen and felt and the man (men) that would for money or for offer weaken the efficiency of our army by word or deed are aiding to the extent to which they go. To carry on the rebellion I am sorry that we have so many rebels north. They may prolong the war. I believe that is all that they can do. I believe that the union of these states will be established.*

*I have not received any pay here. I did not get here in time to muster and have a year's pay due me the first of next month. Perhaps I may be paid in July. I sent to Lysander last fall (when I expected to come home) and got fifteen dollars and I have about ten shillings left. I think that you need part of it more than I do so I enclose a dollar to you.*

*Write soon direct-Fredrick City*

*General Hospital Barrack "C"  
From your Brother C H Hayden*

*Write particularly how you get a long. My health is rather improving. I have but little pain and rest well nights. And plenty of plain foods mostly bread. Meat once a day, not often butter, sometimes applesauce for supper, tea and coffee for break fast and supper.*

*C H Hayden*

**Boonville Herald – Eighth Week  
Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden**

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No sooner was Charles settled in his new hospital at Frederick, Maryland than events began to over take his destiny once more. The Gettysburg campaign was now under way and Robert E. Lee's 85,000 soldiers were on the march north. It was feared by the Union that Frederick would be overrun and captured. One response was to move as many convalescing patients as possible out of harm's way. Many were sent to Baltimore's Jarvis Hospital, in which city fortifications were being expanded to resist the coming invasion. Union concern was certainly justified and although Baltimore itself was never attacked, the two sides did clash at a place called Gettysburg. He notes that those patients well enough might be given light defensive duties should it become necessary, but questions whether he was fit enough to do so. He also suggests that others might be sent even further north. One thing was certain, because of the pending invasion, government and the general population was close to panic.

*Jarvis Hospital June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1863  
Baltimore*

*Dear Sister*

*I take this opportunity to write a few lines to you. We left Frederick a week ago yesterday. The rebels were supposed to be advancing on that place so all the patients that were able to be removed were sent here. I believe about three hundred and fifty - a few being left. The rebels have been there and paroled over those that were left but did not destroy any property - this city is being fortified so as to be prepared in case of an attack - but I hope that the uprising of the north will surprise the rebels as much as they surprised us and I began to think it has and if they put off their advance much longer they will not go far.*

*Many of the committed have gone to guard the city. I do not think that I am hardly fit for that duty yet. I am quite comfortable but am not capable of much exertion. This hospital is situated on an eminence overlooking the city - everything is kept very nice and clean here. But things are arranged more for comfort and less for show than at Frederick. Our food is as good as at Frederick which consists mainly of bread and coffee for breakfast and supper and meat and soup for dinners. Our coffee is very good for those that do not like*

*trimmings but I like them. But we must not mind the trimmings when we are solders-*

*We have a good library of religious books which I take much pleasure in reading – we have preaching (on) Sabbath afternoons and prayer meetings Wednesday evenings. And the religious soldiers meet twice a week and have a little prayer meeting among themselves.*

*Baltimore is quite a large city. I got lost in Fredrick and I should not be surprised if I should get lost here when I go out. We have to take out turns about leaving the guard. My turn has not come yet but (I) shall probably go out this week-*

*If the rebels should attempt to take this place we should probably either be set at some light duty or sent farther north according to our ability – there are about one thousand Negroes at work on the fortifications which with the three forts already here will make a formable resistance to the enemy should they attempt to capture this place- - -*

*I want you to write more particularly about yourself. Are you able to be up or are you obliged to keep (to) your bed part of the time. Tell me just how you are getting a long. If you are in need of a little money write me soon. I will send you some if I have it. I expect to be paid next month. I can direct some to be sent to you whether I have any or not. If you need write soon direct*

*Jarvis General Hospital Baltimore - US  
MD*

*P.S I sent you a letter from Fredrick since I received yours - before I left there.*

Boonville Herald – Ninth Week  
Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden

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Again Charles has been uprooted by events and now finds himself in the most curious of locations. He writes from a small island just off the New Jersey shore of New York Harbor. His unsettled state is quite evident and longs for news from his sister Laura. Of course, he will never know that on the very ground from which his letter was written there would be erected one of civilization's greatest monuments – the Statue of Liberty.

*Bedlows Island July 14<sup>th</sup> 1863*

*Dear Sister,*

*I have written to you three times and have received no answers. Are you so sick that you cannot write or have you written (or) have they been never answered? Have you got my letters – I expect to come home when I came here but I think it very doubtful whether I shall come home or not. This is not a regular hospital and I cannot get a furlough without I am sent a way from here. If I am rightly informed the weather is so much cooler that I feel better than I did at Baltimore. I am better of my diarrhea which I have had for the last nine months –*

*Dear Sister if you are able to write I want to hear from you if not get some one to write for you.*

*Direct Bedlows Island  
New York Harbor*

*If you do not answer this letter I shall think you are not able or do not want to hear from me any more. Either of which is worse than I hope.*

Boonville Herald – Tenth Week  
Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden

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This letter was written about four weeks after the Gettysburg campaign. Combined both sides conservatively suffered 52,000 casualties. The medical stress for proper care of the maimed and ill on the Union side was enormous. Even before Gettysburg major northern cities had established rehabilitation hospitals and other facilities. But, now the challenge to provide proper medical services was more acute than ever. At this point Charles had been in army medical care for almost one full year. No doubt because of the extremely high casualty numbers he finds himself in yet another new location, having been moved a short distance from Bedlows Island in New York Harbor to a mainland hospital in Newark, New Jersey. A letter from his sister Laura has finally caught up to him. His continuing care for her welfare, in spite of his own condition, is most evident. He has also been affected by news of the severe mauling that his own regiment, the 97 NYVI, received during its engagement at Gettysburg. -- Another interesting comment concerns a “likeness” he had taken. This would be a 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph called a tintype. The letter confirms that it was sent back to Laura here in Oneida County. If that image were to surface how nice it would be to put a real face on a piece of our history.

*US General Hospital  
Newark, Aug 10<sup>th</sup> 63*

*Dear Sister*

*I received your letter this morning and it took a load off my mind to hear that you were getting a long so well. I had begun to think that you were very sick and perhaps dead for I thought that if you were a live you wood write.*

*I wood like to come home as well as you could wish and have been trying to get a furlough. I went to New York City to see the medical director, but he was not in his office and I could not see him. I intend to come home if it is possible now that I have got so near my own State*

*I had a pretty sick night but feel pretty well to day. I have a little police duty to do sweeping and have the afternoon and evening to go around. My health has been pretty good generally excepting the weakness in my right side which still bothers me. I hardly think that I shall be discharged very soon, but wish that I might be near you, especially if I could do you any good.*

*Dear Sister, I do not wish to control you in choosing a partner for life but I am glad that you have so much confidence in writing to me. I think that we should counsel together as brother and sister that loved each other and each others welfare*

*I had my likeness taken to send to Cousin Helen but I concluded to send this to you and have another taken for coz Helen. I did not know as my letters reached you so I sent it to Lydies or the center. I have written to Helen but I can get no answers and also to Lysander. My mail does not follow me very well.*

*Lieutenant Cady was wounded at Gettysburg and has since died. Our captain has been wounded, first lieutenant discharged, General Wheelock was taken prisoner but escaped, lieutenant Colonel Spofford was taken prisoner and several of my comrades were killed and wounded. There are several of my regiment and one of my company here.*

*Write soon direct  
US General Hospital Market Street  
Newark NJ 10 Ward  
From your brother Hervey Hayden*

Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden  
Boonville Herald – Eleventh Week

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At this moment in September of 1863 the wounded from the Gettysburg campaign have been moved to hospitals through out the Northern States. Charles is fortunate because for the last month he has been assigned to the General Hospital in Newark, New Jersey. This is his second letter from that location. He writes with great concern for his sister's well being after a courtship with a young man turns sour. His advice to her comes directly from his Christian bearing which no doubt has been enhanced through the work of the United States Christian Commission. Incredibly, with all that he has suffered his outlook is positive, even to the point of considering himself fortunate. This letter offers a window into the general mind set, and spirituality of many typical Civil War soldiers both North and South.

*US General Hospital  
Newark, N.J.  
September 26<sup>th</sup> 63*

*Dear Sister*

*I received your interesting and affectionate letter to day. O that I had wisdom to council you right but I know so little about the young man you speak of - his running away in the night from his parents farm is not in accordance with the Lords command to honor father and Mother. He should obey his parents in the Lord and be subject to them until of age. He should obey them without they tell him to disobey god. Sister how bad it would be to have his father and Mother and Sisters feel so sorely. You, Dear Sister ask God to direct you. -- Dear Sister I am sorry that you have promised your heart and hand and are obliged to break it. Look well before you make any more promises or unite yourself for life. Yes, Dear Sister I wish I could be with you and protect you from all dangers but I could not if I were there. There are dangers that no human I can see. My prayer to God is that he may keep and protect you from every evil. -- Dear Sister, you frankly told me that you met this man in the woods. I believe you to be a good girl but if our Dear Mother was alive would she approve of your meeting any man but your Father or brother alone in the woods? I think not. I believe if she were alive she would watch every action. That she would*

*might sensor and teach you as only a mother can the way of duty and the way of God.*

*Among the first things that I can remember is of our mother being a poor widow earning her living by her needle and at night she would kneel down with her little boy and ask God's blessing upon herself and son. Though poor I believe that she had a care for those more needy than herself. Her last words to me were, "Hervey be a good boy for I am going a way." And I know that she would have me use every influence that I could to have you a good and Christian girl. I believe that she died happy and if I live (to be) a good Christian boy I expect to meet her in heaven. Dear Sister, let us try to meet each other there –*

*God has been good to us through all the years that are past - through all the years that I loved not God he was good to me -- and since I entered the army comrades have fallen on the right hand and on the left. Cannon balls have torn the air and earth around me and rifle balls have flew thick and fast. Still I am alive though wounded but not killed - though confined for a long time in the hospital yet I have not suffered a great degree of pain. Though sick I have had many blessings. God has taken care of us all our lives. O that we might love him with all our hearts – I am glad you are reading the bible with me to day - I read the 11 chapters of Mathew.*

*Did you write when you receive this direct as before?*

*From Your Loving Brother Hervey*

*US General Hospital  
Newark, November 16<sup>th</sup> 63*

*Dear Sister Laura,*

*I did not come here as soon as I expected to. General Dix gave us until the 15<sup>th</sup> to report in and I came back to Utica and then went up to Western until Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup>. I had a pleasant time in Western and went around a considerable. I stayed at Mr. Simses (Sims) Monday night up on Stueben Hill and I am ashamed to say that Mr. Sims and his father took turns at walking so that I could ride home with them from Holland Patent. I bought a ticket at Utica for Forestport and fell in with Mr. Sims and he said that I could go home. With them I did not know that one of them would have to walk. And when I found it out I tried to go back to the cars (the train) but they would not let me do so. I had a pleasant visit at Mr. Simes. (Sims) Tuesday, I came down to Mr. Joneses store and the first man I saw was George Mary drawing oil at the door. Visited there a while then went down to Mr. Miller's with Julia, took tea there - went back to the store a while in the evening saw a couple of my acquaintances. Went back to Miller's and stayed all night. Mr. Sikeses girl the one we spoke of works to Miller's. Her father is dead - died this summer. Wednesday night I stayed at Lysanders. Laura (Not to be confused with Charles' sister) and I went down to Mr. Ellises. Ann is getting to be a large girl - I had a good visit - There is a party at Silas Balls' tonight. I did not get back in time for an invitation. I heard that (Paresued?) said that if she had known that I was at Lysanders she would have come on purpose to have invited me. But I think that is a poor plave for a person to go - that wishes to enjoy religion. Wednesday, I went on South Hill. Stopped at Henry Hills and Mr. Stones. Laura was at home but looked a little sleepy. Had a good visit (I then) went to William Hill. William took me in and said the women must visit with me while he plowed a little while. Took tea here at William's went over with them to prayer meeting...and such a prayer meeting I think I never saw before. I enjoyed it well. Went back with Mr. Hills folks. Stayed all night for the rest of the night. Took breakfast with them Friday*

*morning - and William told me to come up an I could ride to Rome with him Saturday if it did not rain. Stopped at both Mr. Mireses a while. They have a nice new church on South Hill. Went down to Lyesanders, and up to see Frank Cummings and Silas Ball]. Took tea with Silas. Paresued lives there. Stayed until after dark. Went down to Tsahs a while in the evening. Had a pleasant time. Stayed at Lysanders Friday night. Saturday morning (I) did not go up to William Hills - it looked so much like rain before daylight. Mark went up and told him I was afraid he would not want to go and (that) I was going on the stage. Lysanders took me to Westernville. I got on the stage and went to Rome. Took the cars (the train) at eleven o'clock and five minutes P M and arrived at Newark about half past ten at night. I have written a letter for a friend before I commenced this and am tired.*

*Write soon direct 11<sup>th</sup> Ward instead of 10 as before. From your brother Hervey  
Hayden*

*PS write soon as you receive this.*

**Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden  
Boonville Herald – Thirteenth Week**

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In late November Charles writes from Newark, New Jersey to his sister Laura concerning a recent furlough. In an earlier November letter there is no mention of their meeting during his visit home. Rather, that letter mentions neighbors, friends, stage coaches and rail schedules but nothing concerning immediate family. For some reason it is not until this second letter that he expresses any reaction concerning time spent with his own family. There are two possible explanations. Either, there were separate furloughs and it was not until the second that they were to meet or something happened during his only furlough home that caused him initially not to mention their meeting.

In this letter Charles does write about his impressions of “Jerry” who is obviously connected with Laura. It is not too difficult to imagine that this new personality in the family mix might have caused at least an unspoken difficulty. Could Jerry’s presence possibly explain why there was no discussion of their meeting in his earlier November letter? It is unfair to make assumptions concerning people and relationships that lived so long ago. However, this letter gives a real glimpse into the strong spiritual connection that Charles and Laura had developed. No doubt he depended on it as an important element of his positive attitude during convalescence.

One thing is crystal clear. A year after being severely wounding at Antietam, Charles does not know if he will be sent home, placed in the Invalid Corps or returned to his regiment and his fellow soldiers from Boonville.

*US General Hospital, Newark, (New Jersey)  
Novem(ber) 27<sup>th</sup> 63*

*Dear Sister,*

*Being tired and lonesome and nothing to do I thought that I would write a few lines to you. I wrote about all the news when I wrote before. After I left you that morning I rode and walked until near fish creek bridge. I told Pa that I thought that I would try and go farther so I bid him good by and Jerry and I walked as fast as we could handily until we got most to the Belcher Road when I gave out and made up my mind that I had got to go slow whether I was in time for the stage or not. But I was in time after all –*

*Jerry and I got a pretty good start towards getting acquainted for the short time we were together. And I have seen few boys that I liked better than I did him on so short an acquaintance. Not that I deem him perfect for I thought I saw a shadow which I hope may be hid by his many virtues which I believe him to possess – We all have our faults and we may see them in those that we love dearest and first. I have mine and we all if we examine our own hearts will find much that we should fight against. Let us take the bible for the book of our council and follow its precepts. I read the first Chapter of John today. What chapter did you read? I want to (k)now if we are keeping together in our readings.*

*I have been interrupted twice since I commenced writing once for examination and for dinner. We that were on furloughs were examined. Some are going to be discharged some are put in the invalid corps and some are going to their regiments. I suppose that you are anxious to know what they are going to do with me but I cannot tell you for (I) do not know. Yesterday I thought that I might be discharged, today I think that I might be sent to my Regiment. I do not think that I am able to do duty yet and I fear that I never shall be as well as (I am) (sup)posed to be. I realize that I am in higher hands than the Doctors and I hope that I may be able to put my trust in God and do my duty where ever I may be placed. I feel that I need his care and protection whether I remain here or go home or to my regiment. I hope that I may be able to say his will not mine be done –*

*Dear Sister how I have hoped to hear that you had given your heart to God and made up your mind to live for God and for heaven. How I wish that I could be with you all the while but I should want you to do different sometimes from what you would want to do and your love might grow cold towards me perhaps if we were together all the time – It was a painful hour to me when we were at the party but when you came and sat down by me I felt that you loved me to give up the party at my request. Perhaps you thought that I was asking to much but I felt that I could not stay and you do not now how hard it would have been for me to have left you there –*

*Give my respects to any that may inquire about me but I reserve my love for yourself.*

*From your Brother Hervey*

*P.S. Write soon direct as before. I have written one letter before this to you and one to Jerry. Jerry gave me his likeness of you. I think it a good one but in my hurry in coming a way I forgot to pay him for it. But I have written and told him how it was. Perhaps he thought it rather strange at the time. I have not been paid off since I came back. I expected that I should have been. But if I need money I have a friend that offered to lend me half he had without my asking him for any. So I guess I can get along.*

*Love to all the Folks and yourself in particular*

*Charles H. Hayden*

**Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden  
Boonville Herald – Fourteenth Week**

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This is one of the most pungent and interesting letters in the Hayden collection. At this point Charles is interpreting his fate and those he cares for with strict fundamental adherence to his religious convictions. His obvious desire to bring his sister Laura along a similar path is plainly stated. But, the news he receives from her is truly stunning. Charles will now have to share his extremely close tie with Laura - with another person, Jerry! No doubt this revelation helps to explain why there was no mention of their meeting at Big Brook in his first letter after his furlough earlier in the month. Only in his second letter does he mention anything about time spent together. With this letter it becomes crystal clear that Charles is not the total center of Laura's existence. He is incredulous and asks for specific details concerning their "marriage."

During the Civil War counterfeit paper money was a severe problem both north and south. Charles was caught up in this as one of the bills that he gave to his sister was bad. He had been in the practice of sending money to her whenever possible since his muster into the regiment. This last contribution to her existence was made in person during the visit to her house during his furlough.

At the conclusion there is a discussion of a likeness. A likeness refers to a Civil War era photograph. He comments about sending both a diary and one of two likenesses home for safe keeping "if" he should ever return.

*U.S General Hospital Newark, ( New Jersey )  
November 30<sup>th</sup> 1863*

*Dear Sister,*

*I feel to thank my father in heaven that he has let his spirit strive with you until you have been constrained to give your heart to him. Dear Sister, we will have a cross to bear if we will have a crown to wear. Look to Jesus for strength - to follow him. Never give up until you know that God for Christ's sake has forgiven your sins. - That you are born again. Read your bible much be in prayer, often watch your outward conduct that you may be an instrument to the doctrine (what) you profess. Watch your inward thoughts that the enemy of all righteousness leads you not astray. We are not able to resist the evil one*

*in our own strength but Jesus conquered and we may conquer in his name – Be not a shamed of Jesus before men that he may not be a shamed of you before his father and the holy angels –*

*Dear Sister you say pray for you. I have been praying for you. When I began I do not know but for the last two years since God for Christ's sake ( I believe ) forgave me my sins it has been the desire of my heart. That God would save you from the evil of this world and enable to become one of his children –*

*Sister you say that you cannot be happy until you get Religion - no sister what the world calls happiness, if we could find it, would soon leave us or we should leave that. But Religion gives us joy here and prepares ( us ) for a heaven of joy hereafter. We have our trials and sorrows but Religion supports us in them. And in God's word we have great and precious promises*

*Sister you say that you are going to leave the pleasures of the world behind. Yes sister we must leave the sinful pleasures of the world behind and seek our pleasures - in heavenly things. And if we live near to god we shall find them.*

*Dear Sister if I could understand your letter you are married. Why did you not write more particularly where you were married, when and by who ( ? ) And you say in the same letter that Pa says that he don't believe that you and Jerry calculate to get married - as though you were not married – When you write explain it to me.*

*Dear Sister I am sorry that one of those bills is bad. I think it's strange that it should be – But I know where I got all the money that I had when I was at your house. I want you to take the bill and write the bank, it is on the place where the bank is, the state, the number of the bill who is the cashier and president on a piece of paper or as much of it as you can make out and send it to me. Also if there is any mark on the back of the bill and what it is if any. Then send me the description of the bill – Then mark the bill on the back so you will know it – Enclose the bill in an envelope and send it to Henry R Hill, Big Brook, Oneida CO. NY and write in the letter to him that you received the bill from me and I will direct him about it in a letter. Do it as soon as you can conveniently.*

*Sister you must excuse my directing this letter in your old name if you have changed it. For you wrote it so in distinct I cannot be certain. When I last wrote to you I was expecting to leave. I am still expecting to leave here but I want you to try to answer this before I go away from here. I believe that I have not told you that I answered Jerry's letter today. I have written one to Henry Hill since I commenced this. Write and send it the first chance. Direct 11 ward, the rest as before.*

*From your Brother Hervey*

*P.S. I have two likenesses of you one of which I shall send to you to keep for me and my diary book by mail. I want you to keep them for me so that I can have them if I return home again. I shall not send them unless I leave here. I do not think so that if you receive them you need not direct any more letters to me here but wait until I (w)rite. But, I am in hopes that you will have time before I leave here. I shall not forbid you to read (the) diary if you wish to but I did not write it to be read.*

*From you Loving Brother Hervey*

**Civil War Letters of Charles Harvey (Hervey) Hayden**  
**Boonville Herald – Fifteenth Week**

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This is the final surviving letter in the Charles Hayden collection to his sister Laura. How many others may have been written to her, if any, is unknown. Why they ended on this date can only be addressed by conjecture. Was her husband Jerry, uncomfortable with Charles? Were subsequent letters destroyed? Did he or she just not write any longer? Among the last thoughts we read is that although Charles hasn't heard from Laura in a "great while" he doesn't think it's her "fault".

History of the American Civil War is more than - who - killed - who - where! The real toll reached to the emotional, economic, moral, political and spiritual heart of the country. Aside from the final reality of a Northern victory the cultural devastation left in the wake of conflict was an unprecedented horror. Over 625,000 (Six hundred twenty five thousand) Americans were lost. A percentage comparison to today's population would relate to a loss of five million men. A calamity of that magnitude is difficult to imagine.

This last letter begs many other unanswerable questions. It would have arrived in Big Brook, Oneida County, New York shortly before Christmas. Yet, there is no mention of the observance which seems very odd for such a devote Christian. Instead, Charles writes about being taken back out to Bedlows Island for embarkation on the steamship "America" for a trip up the Potomac to yet another camp destination. Events on the trip contrasted his own idealism and morality against those of draftees (recruits) who drank, played cards and gambled. He ends this last letter with the same plea to Laura for a quick return answer.

It would be unfair to leave readers wondering about Charles Hayden's fate. In addition to his letters Charles kept at least two diaries, one of which has survived. Fortunately, the surviving diary begins days after his last surviving letter to his sister. As a result we almost have a day by day account of his duties and actions up to May of 1864. Remarkably, he does not return home to Big Brook at the conclusion of his military term. Rather, he reenlists at the grade of corporal on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1864 for a second term of service and is re-mustered into "K" company, his original unit. He is given light camp duty while regaining full strength. But, by May of 1864, General U.S. Grant has taken over full command of all Union armies. He begins the "Overland Campaign" which will see northern soldiers lay siege to Petersburg, Virginia by the end of the year. Grant's campaign was the bloodiest affair of the American Civil War. The opening of the campaign was called the "Battle of the Wilderness" and Boonville's regiment found itself fully involved. Unfortunately, during that engagement Charles was shot through the body, lingering for a few days in agony until passing on May

15<sup>th</sup>, 1864. It has been recorded that he was cared for by a nurse who spoke and comforted him as best as possible. At the age of 25 years the wagon maker from Big Brook, Oneida County, New York had given his all to a Cause in which he believed.

*Camp Convalesc(e)nt  
Alexandria, (VA.) Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> 63*

*Dear Sister,*

*I take this first opportunity to write a few lines to you. I arrived here yesterday. I wrote you last from Bedlows Island. I left there last Thursday night in the United States Transit America. We were pretty well crowded in the vessel, the sea was calm and we had a pleasant sail to fortress Monroe. We ware out of sight of land all day Friday. We arrived at fortress Monroe Saturday Morning at day light. Here part of our numbers left us for Newburn, N.C.. Left fortress Monroe in the afternoon and steamed up the bay and anchored sometime in the night. In the morning when I got up the wind blew a gale and we were drifting a shore with both anchors down. The captain ordered the anchors to be raised but they had got foul of each other and could not be raised. Then he ordered steam on and the engines ware strong enough to drag the anchors we lost one anchor and raised the other. The wind went down and the rain ceased the sun came out and we had a pleasant sail up the bay and the Potomac River all day Sunday. We passed the tomb of Washington Mount Vernon Washington's old home. We arrived at Alexandria Sunday night got off the boat Monday morning – There was a great deal of gambling and sharing drinking on board. I see one poor boy that had lost ninety seven dollars gambling - so he said. There were several recruits that had received large bounties on board – Two or three hundred runaway soldiers and a hard looking set they were they looked like rebel prisoners - I heard that there was some fifteen hundred of us on board in all but it did not seem to me that there ware (were) so many – we have a large camp here. It makes a village two or three times as large as Taburg. The mail should run here from Alexandria about three or four miles distant. We have soft bread here and I think live better than at Bedlows Island. I cannot tell how long or how short I shall stay here*

*but I want you to write as soon as you get this for I have not heard from you in a great while but I do not think it your fault.*

*Direct Camp Convalesc(e)nt  
Pier Alexandria VA*

*Dear Sister I want to hear from you get along striving to survive the lord and you striving with all your mind and heart to god take up your cross before the world write all about your self and how you get along –*

*Write if you have sent that bill to Henry Hill – you will have to write three or four sheets to answer all my letters.*

*Don't fail to write soon as you get this.*

*From Hervey,  
Charles H Hayden*