

**DIARY AND LETTERS OF  
RUTHERFORD BIRCHARD  
HAYES**

**NINETEENTH PRESIDENT OF THE  
UNITED STATES**

**EDITED BY  
CHARLES RICHARD WILLIAMS**

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is not seriously weakened by the affair at Fredericksburg and very slight events will change the scale in our favor. Push on the emancipation policy, and all will yet go well.

Our partisanship about generals is now rebuked. General McClellan has serious faults or defects, but his friends can truly claim that if he had retained command, this disaster would not have occurred. The people and press would perhaps do well to cultivate patience. It is a virtue much needed in so equal a struggle as this. If the people can hold out, we shall find the right man after [a] while.

But I bore you with reflections that must occur to every one.

Sincerely,

R. B. HAYES.

S. BIRCHARD.

LOG CABIN CAMP, December 21, 1862. Sunday evening.

DEAREST:— Dr. Jim got his proper resignation papers today and will leave in the morning. Dr. Joe's leave of absence from Washington for thirty days from December 18 came to hand a half an hour after he had left on General Ewing's twenty-day leave. He will not regret the ten day's extension. . . .

I cannot answer all your inquiries about the wounded. Ligget is doing well; is probably at home ere this. I got a letter from Joel tonight. He is the Jew who got eight bullet holes in his person and limbs. He says he thinks he can stand service in a couple of months. He don't want to be discharged. Ritter writes me in good spirits.

Very interesting, all talk about the boys. . . . Webb's surprise that learning is needed in western Virginia hits the position of matters more closely than he knew. Sound teeth and a good digestion are more required than education. I do not know but fear to risk the boys in this eager mountain air; not at present, at any rate. So, of your coming, —

Almost ten years. How happy we have been. But you don't say a word about your *health*. If that requires you to come, you shall come. Otherwise you perhaps "better not." Do you com-

prehend the solicitude I feel? Enough for tonight. — Love [to] all the boys and to Grandma.

Affectionately,

R.

MRS. HAYES.

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*Monday, 22.* — Warm, a shower in the morning. Finished reading "Mysteries of Paris" last night. Not a wicked or obscene novel by a good deal.

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CAMP NEAR GAULEY, December 22, 1862.

DEAR MOTHER: — I received your letter of the 10th. Yes, the Vermont colonel's speech, etc., at Bennington came safely. A cool old colonel he was, as well as pious. I see that the One Hundred and Thirteenth Regiment is consolidated with some other. How does it affect Colonel Mitchell? I hope he does not lose his position. . . .

Dr. Joe Webb has gone home on thirty-days leave of absence. Colonel Comly, on an order from General Scammon, is with him at Fayette. Major McIlrath has gone home for a twenty-day visit. This leaves me the only field officer here, but there is very little to do. The men still busy with their quarters and all quiet in front. My health is perfect; I was never so heavy as now.

You will enjoy the return of the children, or the young ladies rather. What charming girls they are! My love to them and Ruddy and all. I hope you will have happy holidays.

Affectionately, your son,

RUTHERFORD.

MRS. SOPHIA HAYES.

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*December 23. Tuesday.* — Soft weather. Reading Buckle's second volume. What a deep impression his mode of collecting authorities and heaping up facts produces! It shakes one's