The Isaac Hayes 1860-1861 Polar Expedition

In 1860 Isaac Israel Hayes, M.D. (Figure 1) lead an expedition to the arctic in search of an Open Polar Sea. The purpose of the expedition was to confirm the existence of such an open sea by reaching the North Pole and to explore the northern coasts of Greenland. Fortunately, Hayes used part of the expedition’s funds to purchase a stereo camera with accompanying photographic equipment. However, he was unable to include a professional photographer and ended up training himself to use the camera and preparing-developing the glass plate negatives. George Knorr, Hayes’ Personal Secretary, and Henry Radcliffe, Assistant Expedition Astronomer, assisted in performing photographic duties. Samuel McCormick, Expedition Sail Master, also took a few stereo photographs during the expedition based on his journal entries.

In all approximately 200 photographic negatives of various subjects were reportedly produced on the expedition by Hayes and his designated assistants, with those of glaciers being of most interest at the time. To help alleviate financial difficulties remaining from the expedition, Hayes entered into an agreement with New York photographer Thomas C. Roche to print and market stereo photographs from negatives that were provided, with the proceeds shared equally between Hayes, Knorr and Roche. This arrangement appears to indicate that Hayes and Knorr made the majority of the photographs that were published by Roche. They are the first stereo photographic images known to have been made from an expedition to the Arctic.

The stereo photographs of the 1860-1861 Hayes Expedition are scarce and it does not appear that they were widely sold or distributed. When Hayes returned to Boston from the Arctic, the Civil War was underway, the expedition did not achieve its primary goal of discovering an Open Polar Sea, and people’s attention was focused elsewhere. The stereoviews (Figures 2 & 3) published by Roche have a white label on the verso with a printed title, view number, background information on the image and a credit line for Roche as the publisher. In the lower front-corner many have a T. C. Roche blind stamp showing his T C R overlaid initials (Figure 4). The views also have a printed notice of 1862 copyright registration by I. I. Hayes along front the right-side (Figure 5). Unfortunately, searches for registration records at the U.S. National Archives have been unsuccessful. Subsequently, for the past fifteen years a slow process has been underway to prepare a catalog and inventory of where physical examples of these stereo photographs are held. The highest numbered stereo view found is eighty-two. Sixty-nine separate views have been catalogued.

Also, glass stereo photographs of the Expedition are mentioned by Richard Russack in his 1975 article “Dr. Isaac Hayes: Explorer Photographer Bigot.” However, the whereabouts of these photographs remain unknown.

After returning to Boston, Hayes deposited scientific notes and charts from the expedition at the Smithsonian. It wasn’t until the War was over that he wrote The Open Polar Sea: A Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery Towards the North Pole, In the Schooner “United States” (Figure 6) which was published in 1867.

Isaac Hayes’ interest in exploration continued with the goal of mounting another Arctic expedition. He gave numerous lectures that were accompanied with photographic glass lantern slides projected “through Black’s Stereopticon.” The American Geographical Society was included in these venues and a number of Hayes’ glass slides now reside in the Society’s Library Archival Collection, including many from stereo photographs taken during Hayes’ 1860-1861 Expedition.

Further information on this subject is provided in an article, “A Time of Discovery: The Isaac Hayes 1860-1861 Polar Expedition,” that is published in The Daguerreian Society 2021 Annual (pages 19-39).

Leonard A. Walle
March 6, 2022
Endnotes

1. During this era the “Open Polar Sea” was a widely accepted theory that a sea surrounded the North Pole with temperatures permanently above freezing which provided a Northwest Passage across the top of the continent from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.


9. The American Geographical Society was founded in 1851 in New York City and is the oldest nationwide geographical organization in the United States. Over the years a primary interest of the Society has been on the Arctic, Antarctic, and Latin America. Its Library Archives Collection was transferred to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1978. Reading about Hayes’ photographic slide lantern presentations in Douglas Wamsley’s book, *Polar Hayes: The life and Contributions of Isaac Israel Hayes, M.D.*, led me to contact the Library and it was through this inquiry that information about these slides was obtained. Later, from correspondence with arctic historian Thomas Walker, I learned that he also had followed the same path.

10. Also, eight Hayes Expedition stereoviews from the Smithsonian Museum of American History are illustrated in T. K. Treadwell’s article “Dr. I. I. Hayes, The First Polar Photographer” (*Stereo World*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 20-25). However, it should be pointed out that Hayes was by no means the first person to successfully make photographs in the Arctic. As mentioned by Wamsley and Barr in their article “Early photographers of the Arctic,” (Ref. Endnote 5), calotypes were made by William Domville and Captain Francis Leopold McClintick on the 1852-1854 Belcher Expedition and twenty glass plate wet collodion negatives survive from Captain Edward Inglefield’s 1854 voyage to Beechey Island in the Canadian Arctic. Photographs from the Hayes 1860-1861 Expedition deserve credit for being the earliest photographic stereo images known to have been made in the Arctic.
An Inventory of Known Photographic Views Taken in the Arctic Regions During the Expedition of Dr. Isaac Israel Hayes

**Stereo photographs from the Hayes Expedition (Published by T. C. Roche, New York)**

No. 1  Port Foulke, in June, 1861, from the north west.  [1, 2, 7, 8]
No. 2  First view of the Schooner “United States” in Winter quarters at Port Foulke; taken in June, 1861, from the West.  [1, 2, 7, 8]
No. 3. Second view of the Schooner “United States” in Winter quarters at Port Foulke; taken in July, 1861, from the observatory, looking seaward.  [1, 2, 7, 8]
No. 4 Third view of the Schooner “United States” in Winter quarters at Port Foulke; taken near the observatory, July 13th, 1861, after the ice had broken up.  [1, 4]
No. 5 The Schooner “United States” in the ice; July 14, 1861.  [2, 6]
No. 6 In Winter quarters. The quarter deck of the Schooner “United States” in June.  [3]
No. 7 Fourth view of the Schooner “United States” in Winter quarters at Port Faulke; taken near the observatory, after the ice had broken up.  [4, 7]
No. 8 The “Ice-Foot” at Port Foulke in June, 1861.  [1, 2, 4]
No. 9 Returning from the Hunt. Port Foulke, June 1861.  [6, 8]
No. 10 Looking Seaward from Port Foulke, July 1st, 1861.  [1, 6, 7]
No. 11
No. 12 The Port Foulke Observatory in June, 1861.  [1, 2, 6]
No. 13 The Meteorological Observatory at Port Foulke in June 1861.  [2]
No. 14 The Port Foulke Observatory from the deck of the schooner “United States” lying in winter quarters, July, 1861.  [1, 2, 3, 5, 7]
No. 15 Sontag’s Grave, July 10th, 1861.  [1, 2]
No. 16 The Port Foulke Observatory and Sonntag’s Grave.  [1, 2, 3]
No. 17 Esquimaux. (Note: title in question)  [4]
No. 18 Kalutinah Feasting.  [1, 2, 8]
No. 19 Merkut – the wife of Hans.  [1, 4, 8]
No. 20
No. 21 Two Esquimaux hunters, Kalutinah and Alitak, on the quarter deck of the Schooner “United States” at Port Foulke, June, 1861.  [1, 7]
No. 22 A deserted Esquimaux hut, Barden Bay, Whale Sound, North Greenland. Taken in August, 1861.  [1, 3]
No. 23 Hans with his wife, Merkut and Angeit, her brother.  [1, 8]
No. 24 Kalutinah and his son at Port Foulke, June, 1861.  [1, 7]
No. 25 Au Esquimaux hut at Netlik, Barden Bay, Whale Sound, August, 1861.  [1, 3]
No. 26
No. 27 Hans and his wife, Merkut, at their summer house, near Port Foulke, June, 1861.  [1]
No. 28 The Esquimaux hunters Marcius and Jacob, at Port Foulke, June, 1861.  [1, 2, 3, 4, 8]
No. 29 View South of Port Foulke.  [2, 4]
No. 30 A grounded Iceberg, in Aukpadlartok Fiord, August, 1861.  [1, 2, 3]
No. 31 A group of icebergs in Aukpadlartok Fiord.  [2]
No. 32 A glacier near Port Foulke, and Alida Lake; “Glacier Camp” in the foreground. Taken in June, 1861.  [1, 2, 7, 8]
No. 33 Getting a view northward; July 15th, 1861.  [1, 4, 8]
No. 34 Little Julia’s Glen and Fall; July 15th, 1861.  [1, 2, 8]

The image in this stereo photograph published by T. C. Roche is a match to the AGS glass lantern slide except for what appears to be the figure of a person standing in the distance on an ice patch at the base of the waterfall in the stereo photograph.
No. 35
No. 36
No. 37  A near view of the Glacier represented in No. 32. June, 1861. [1, 2, 4]
No. 38
No. 39  A captured Walrus lying on the ice at Port Foulke.; June, 1861. [2, 7]
No. 40  Captured Walrus lying on the “ice-foot” at Littleton Island, July, 1861. [2, 6]
No. 41  The Schooner “United States” at Littleton Island, July, 1861. [2, 4, 6]
No. 42  Butchering Walrus at Littleton Island; July, 1861. [1, 2, 4]
No. 43  First view of an Esquimaux Summer Camp in Whale Sound, North Greenland, August 1861. [7]
No. 44  Planting the “Stars and Stripes” at Cape Isabella. [2, 3, 6]
No. 45  Second view of an Esquimaux Summer Camp in Whale Sound North Greenland; August, 1861. [1]
No. 46  View of the Glacier, in Barden Bay, Whale Sound, North Greenland; August, 1861. [1, 2, 3, 7]
No. 47  Third view of an Esquimaux Summer Camp, in Whale Sound, North Greenland; August, 1861. [1]
No. 48  Fourth view of Esquimaux Summer Camp, in Whale Sound, North Greenland; August, 1861. [1, 3]
No. 49  Fifth view of an Esquimaux Camp, in Whale Sound, North Greenland; August, 1861. [1, 2]
No. 50
No. 51  The Danish-Esquimaux Settlement, Aukpadlartok; August, 1861. [1, 3]
No. 52  CHRISTINA: The Bell of Aukpadlartok. [1, 2]
No. 53
No. 54  Philip and his family in front of their hut; August, 1861. [1]
No. 55  Icebergs at Aukpadlartok. North Greenland; August, 1861. [1, 2]
No. 56
No. 57  An Esquimaux dance. [1, 2]
No. 58,  Esquimaux huts at Upernavik, North Greenland; August, 1861. [1, 2]
No. 59
No. 60
No. 61
No. 62  Blubber house and Esquimaux huts. [1, 2]
No. 63  View in Godhaven; from the west. [1]
No. 64  A group of Esquimaux Children; taken September, 1861, at Godhaven, North Greenland. [1]
No. 65  The Church at Upernavik. [1, 3, 4, 6]
No. 66  The Colony of Upernavik, North Greenland. Taken in August, 1861. [4]
No. 67  Part of Godhaven, west end. Taken September, 1861, from the South. [1, 2, 7]
No. 68  Part of Godhaven; middle view. [1, 2, 3, 7]
No. 69  Part of Godhaven: east end. [2]
No. 70  EMMA: A Half Breed Greenland Girl. [1]
No. 71  The Governor’s house at Godhaven, Disko Island, North Greenland. Taken September, 1861. [1, 6]
No. 72  Icebergs off Disko Island. [1, 2, 3, 6, 8]
No. 73  SOPHY: The Belle of Greenland. [1, 6, 7]
No. 74
No. 75  Sophy and her Sisters (half breed Greenland girls) seated in the Royal Inspector’s garden, at Godhaven. [1]
No. 76  Sophy and Maria (half breed sisters) of Godhaven, North Greenland, in the Royal Inspector’s garden. [1, 2]
No. 77  SOPHY: The Belle Of North Greenland. [1]
No. 78  The Sisters. [1]
No. 79  A view at Godhaven. [1, 2, 8]
No. 80  Maria Broberg, sister to Sophy, (a half breed girl of Godhaven). [1]
No. 81  The Graveyard at Upernavik. Taken August 1861. [1]
No. 82  The beauties of Godhaven. [1, 7]
The titles contained in this list were obtained from stereo photographs noted as follows:
[1] – Collection of Leonard A. Walle
[7] – Private Collections
[8] – American Geographical Society (glass lantern slides that match stereo photographs)

December 31, 2021

Figure 1 – J. M. Mora: Dr. Isaac J. Hayes (New York, ca. 1869), carte de visite albumen photograph.
Collection of Leonard A. Walle
Figure 2 – Dr. Isaac Hayes et al: Port Foulke in June 1861, from the north west, with identification label on verso, stereo albumen photograph No. 1 taken during the Hayes 1960-1861 Arctic Expedition. Collection of Leonard A. Walle
Photographic Views taken in the Arctic Regions during the Expedition of Dr. Hayes.

No. 2.

First view of the Schooner “United States” in Winter quarters at Port Foulke; taken in June, 1861, from the West.

This view exhibits the house on the upper deck, which was built of boards. The snow has melted from the roof and from around the ship’s side. The house was entered during the winter by a stairway of ice, which has also melted.

Published by T.C. ROCHE, New York.

Figure 3 – Dr. Isaac Hayes et al: First view of the Schooner “United States” in Winter quarters at Port Foulke; taken in June, 1861, from the West, with identification label on verso, stereo albumen photograph No. 2 taken during the Hayes 1860-1861 Arctic Expedition. Collection of Leonard A. Walle
Figure 4 – Detail from lower front-corner of Hayes 1860-1861 Arctic Expedition stereo albumen photograph showing T. C. Roche blind stamp: T C R overlaid initials.

Collection of Leonard A. Walle

Figure 5 – Detail from front right-side of Hayes 1860-1861 Arctic Expedition stereo albumen photograph showing copyright registration notice.

Collection of Leonard A. Walle
Figure 6 – After a sketch by Dr. Isaac Hayes: The Schooner in Winter Quarters, engraving used as Vignette No. 13 in *The Open Polar Sea* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1867), p. 211.

*Collection of Leonard A. Walle*