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*Polar Hayes: The Life and Contributions of Isaac Israel Hayes, M.D.* By Douglas W. Wamsley. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2009, ISBN 9780871692627. *Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 262. xiv + 574 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, bib., index. Hardbound. \$75.00.

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It is difficult to compare *Polar Hayes* with any previous biography of mid-19th century polar explorer Dr. Isaac Isarel Hayes (1832-81). That is because there is no other biography of Hayes, though the author argues he is the most influential American polar explorer and authority of his time. Thus it is more vital that author Douglas Wamsley's account be as deeply researched and richly presented as it is. The fact that it is a highly enjoyable, easily flowing read makes it even more of a credit to our shelf of worthy polar personality literature.

This appropriately hefty book (over 500 pages) is more than a tome about an explorer and his encounters with polar ice. Hayes' life was far fuller than that of many others in the pantheon of polar exploration.

Of course, he was known predominantly as a polar explorer. His friends and relatives in later life referred to him as “Polar Hayes” (revived for use as the title of Wamsley's work). As if to cement his reputation in the polar sphere, he is also called “Polar Hayes” in his New York Times obituary (19 December 1881).

In comparison to many of his polar contemporaries, Hayes had greater renown in his own time than might be expected from his limited polar experience. Others had been on far more Arctic expeditions and spent much more time on the ice. Hayes was an active participant on one expedition (Kane's Second Grinnell Expedition, 1853-55), led another with only one wintering (North Pole Expedition, 1860-61), and finally accompanied a summer cruise to Greenland as a an “advisor” and guest (US Art expedition, 1869). So the reputation that author Wamsley reconstitutes is based less on numbers and more on substance.

This fact justifies his giving so much attention to that part of Hayes' life that developed his abilities to become an effective polar leader and authority. We see how his orthodox Quaker upbringing in Chester County, Pennsylvania, helped shape his humanism. His ability to discern essentials of knowledge enabled him to both contribute to and learn from his Kane expedition experience. One of the important lessons he took from the difficult Second Grinnell Expedition under Elisha Kent Kane was how not to lead. This lesson would serve him well five years later on his highly productive and much less personally troubled North Pole expedition.

These acquired favorable traits continued to be evident in his other careers as medical facility director (of the world's largest hospital during the American Civil War), entrepreneur (mining venture), public servant (six-time elected New York State legislator), celebrity (lecturer and author), polar authority, and polar community counselor.

He was a good, strong-minded man with a well-developed sense of how to lead organizations successfully through stressful situations. Hayes cultivated a wealth of valuable polar exploratory knowledge that would mark him as a person well ahead of his time and more comprehending of what

constituted the polar regions and their conquest. His personality, intellect, and scientific education also gave him a dedication to pursuing polar science as more than just a perfunctory adjunct to geographical exploration.

In his relatively brief polar exposure, Hayes pioneered focusing on management for the attainment of the North Pole. Others later would find various degrees of success following the most favorable route (Smith Sound) whose course he established.

He would be the first to seriously regard the Arctic as habitable by “Europeans,” a view that later would become the “Friendly Arctic” philosophy. Before Charles F. Hall and others, Hayes recognized the need to adapt techniques of the Inuit in order to survive and persevere in what otherwise would be a much more brutal environment.

Perhaps his greatest contribution had nothing to do with what he directly did in the Arctic. It had more to do with what his role became in providing for a future polar exploration legacy. He spent the latter part of his life writing a host of literature that kept alive an interest in the polar regions: articles, scientific treatises, fiction, and even children's books. Many either had a direct or indirect polar nature. American President Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) counted one of these, *Cast Away in the Cold* (1868), as a favorite children's book.

Hayes died penniless in 1881, so his literary activities could not be considered personally beneficial. Neither did his business ventures and public service contribute much income, as valuable to others as they may have been. However, the author supports his contention that Hayes' wealth of publications helped fuel a constant interest in polar subjects that can be credited with helping to maintain continual interest and activities in the polar realm.

All these aspects of Hayes' life are packaged in a marvelously researched book that effectively uses valuable primary source material, some of it newly discovered. Wamsley's thorough knowledge of his subject and environment can often be seen when he refers to collateral polar events and personalities that were influenced by Hayes. His descriptions of the Kane expedition from the perspective of Dr. Hayes are especially noteworthy. They alone make this a worthwhile read.

The publisher (American Philosophical Society) should be commended for allowing the worthiness of the text to help dictate the length of the book it was to print. Publishers today might tend to shy away from subsidizing such a large volume on a topic that rarely makes the Amazon bestseller list.

The beautiful, complex cover graphic also deserves citation. Four important, though obscure, historic illustrative elements make up the jacket art (explained on the inside rear cover flap) and set the beautiful, detailed tone for what is to follow therein.

Dr. I.I. Hayes lacked a biography, but deserved one. Now he has one that deserves its place among our best polar biographical literature.