Mary Cassandra Jane Rockett Hayes

(22 Jan 1852–13 Dec 1896)

of

Spearsville, Union Parish, Louisiana,

Daughter of James William Rockett & Eudocia Holcombe

Wife of Jesse Benton Hayes

by Timothy Dean Hudson

Mary Cassandra Jane Rockett [Mollie] (22 Jan 1852–13 Dec 1896) was born in Lafayette County, Mississippi, the youngest child of James William Rockett (4 Jun 1792–22 Oct 1857) and Eudocia Holcombe (30 Oct 1809–23 Feb 1879). Mollie's father died in 1857 when she was only five years old. Afterwards, Eudocia took her youngest four children and followed the families of her sisters, Teresa Holcombe Hunt and Francis Holcombe Hayes, all of whom had left Mississippi several years earlier and settled at Spearsville, Union Parish, Louisiana. They made the journey by ox cart. Upon their arrival, they apparently lived with Teresa and her husband, Baptist minister William Hunt, on their farm a few miles north of Spearsville. Eudocia later bought land from her brother-in-law, and Mollie and her brothers all grew up there.

Mollie Rockett married about 1879, presumably in Union Parish, Louisiana, to Jesse Benton Hayes (15 Jan 1842–15 Apr 1896), son of Edmond Hayes (9 Jul 1805–30 Jul 1882) and Alpha Omega Woolley (22 Jun 1815–1871). The Hayes family had migrated to Union Parish in the latter 1840s from Alabama and settled at Cherry Ridge, located a few miles east of Spearsville. However, they left Cherry Ridge in the 1850s, likely before the Rocketts arrived in Spearsville. Edmund and Alpha Hayes moved their family northwestward across the state line to Magnolia, Columbia County, Arkansas. In the 1860s, they moved west to Henderson County, Texas.

On 11 November 1869, Jesse Benton Hayes married in Henderson County, Texas to Ellen Ollie Harrell (17 Sep 1847–6 Nov 1875), daughter of Adam Harrell (1800–23 Jun 1881) and Sarah ? (c1806 – ?). Jesse B. Hayes and Ellen O. Harrell had two known children before her death in 1875:

1. Emily Antoinette Hayes [Nettie] (3 Sep 1870–11 Jun 1932) married on 25 December 1888 in Union County, Arkansas to Thomas Wright (29 Mar 1869–19 Nov 1957), son of Robert Jefferson Wright (12 Jan 1846–11 Nov 1893) and Martha Ann Jean (26 Apr 1848–23 Jun

1924). Nettie and Thomas Wright are buried in the Hillcrest Cemetery, Lufkin, Angelina County, Texas.

2. Edmond Russell Hayes (30 Jul 1872–20 Dec 1890) died at Spearsville, Union Parish, Louisiana.

Edmund Hayes left Texas soon after his wife's death in 1871 and joined his children living near Spearsville, Union Parish, Louisiana by 1875. Jesse Benton Hayes remained in Texas through January 1879. That month, he finished settling his wife's estate with the Henderson County Court, and then he and his two children and joined his father and siblings at Spearsville.

Jesse Benton Hayes married Mollie Rockett in 1879, a period in which Union Parish marriage records do not exist. In early June 1880, Mollie and Jesse lived in the village of Spearsville, where he worked as a carpenter. By November 1882, they had moved north across the state line to Caledonia, Union County, Arkansas, where their son was born. By November 1886, they had returned to Spearsville, where their second daughter was born in November 1886. By July 1889, they had returned to Caledonia, where their youngest daughter was born. There movements between Spearsville and Caledonia appear tied to Jesse's work and proximity to relatives.

Little else is known about Mollie and Jesse. She began suffering from an unknown mental illness, and sometime in the 1890s, she became an inmate at what was then called the Arkansas Lunatic Asylum in Little Rock. This facility later became the Arkansas State Hospital.

Jesse Benton Hayes died in April 1896 and is buried in the Morgan-Wade Cemetery located at Caledonia, Union County, Arkansas. Mollie Rockett Hayes died later that year in December 1896, reportedly while still a patient at the Arkansas Lunatic Asylum. If so, she was probably buried in Little Rock.

Mary Cassandra Jane Rockett and Jesse Benton Hayes had four known children:

1. **Mary Ora Hayes** (12 Jul 1880–28 Jan 1972) was born in Spearsville, Union Parish, Louisiana.
2. **George Benton Hayes** (21 Nov 1882–1 Sep 1927) was born in Caledonia, Union County, Arkansas.
3. **Rosa M. Hayes** (8 Nov 1886–8 Mar 1962) was born in Spearsville, Union Parish, Louisiana.
4. **Beulah Gertrude Hayes** (17 Jul 1889–13 Feb 1971) was born in Caledonia, Union County, Arkansas.

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Detailed Information on Mollie Rockett & Jesse Benton Hayes' Children

1. **Mary Ora Hayes** (12 Jul 1880–28 Jan 1972) was born in Spearsville, Union Parish, Louisiana. She married on 30 November 1899 in Union County, Arkansas to Carl Lee Stocks (15 Apr 1872–11 May 1947), son of Thomas Moses Stocks (17 Dec 1843–22 Mar 1927) and Nancy Elizabeth Dumas (29 Aug 1852–2 Jan 1933). In 1900, Carl and Ora lived in Smackover Township, Union County, Arkansas, with his parents and her two younger sisters, Rosa and Bula. Carl and his father worked as book agents for the railroad.

   Shortly after 1900, Ora and Carl obtained a farm that he operated into the 1920s, but he later became a Baptist minister. In 1930, they lived in Norphlet, Smackover Township, with their house adjoining that of her sister, Beulah, and her brother's widow, Belle Hayes. They spent their lives in Norphlet, but Ora and Carl Stocks are buried in the Arlington Memorial Park, El Dorado, Union County, Arkansas.

2. **George Benton Hayes** (21 Nov 1882–1 Sep 1927) was born at Caledonia, Union County, Arkansas. It is not clear where he lived after his parents' deaths in 1896, as he has not been located in either 1900 or 1910. George married about 1915 or 1916 to Lizzie Belle Harper (13 Jan 1894 –11 Jan 1981), daughter of Marion A. Harper (17 Jun 1865–30 Mar 1926) and Eleanor Dawson Jones (2 Jan 1864–21 Apr 1917).

   George and Belle Hayes lived at Haynesville, Claiborne Parish, Louisiana on 12 September 1918 when he registered for the World War I draft. Their sons born in 1920 and 1923 also reported Louisiana births, but the family has not been located on the 1920 federal census. George Benton Hayes died in Norphlet, Union County, Arkansas at the age of forty-five of pellagra, a preventable vitamin deficiency. His death certificate identified him as the son of Jesse B. Hayes and Mollie Rockett.

   In 1930, Belle Harper Hayes lived on Broadway Street in Norphlet with her three young sons and next to George's two sisters, Ora and Beulah. Belle worked as a cosmetics agent. She remained through 1935, but by 1940, she had moved with her two youngest sons to Brownwood, Brown County, Texas. She did not work outside the home in 1940, but her middle son, Jesse Benton Hayes, worked as a butcher in a grocery store. Belle spent the remainder of her life in Brownwood and died there in January 1981.

   George Benton Hayes and Lizzie Belle Harper are buried in the Rehobeth Cemetery, Norphlet, Union County, Arkansas.

3. **Rosa M. Hayes** (8 Nov 1886–8 Mar 1962) lived with her older sister and brother-in-law in 1900. In 1910, she boarded in the Spearsville, Louisiana home of Mary E. Hunt Brown, her first cousin. Rosa Hayes married on 2 April 1911 in Union County, Arkansas to Conrad Fowler McCleskey (8 Mar 1882–1 Dec 1959), son of James Franklin McCleskey (4 Feb 1833–8 Sep 1913) and Sarah Ann Fowler (8 May 1840–1 May 1925). Rosa and Conrad McCleskey are buried in the Pleasant Grove Cemetery, Union County, Arkansas.
4. **Beulah Gertrude Hayes** (17 Jul 1889–13 Feb 1971) was born at Caledonia, Union County, Arkansas. Beulah lived with her oldest sister, Ora, and brother-in-law in 1900. Beulah married on 22 August 1909 in Union County, Arkansas to Ollie Homer Harper (12 May 1885–9 Sep 1967), son of Marion A. Harper (17 Jun 1865–30 Mar 1926) and Eleanor Dawson Jones (2 Jan 1864–21 Apr 1917). In 1910, Beulah and Ollie lived near El Dorado near his parents, and both Ollie and his father worked for the railroad.

   Ollie Harper began farming a few years later, and Beulah and Ollie still lived near El Dorado in September 1918 when he registered for the World War I draft. They moved to Louisiana by early 1920, where their son Curtis was born, but by mid-year, they had moved to Childress, Childress County, Texas. They had returned to Union County, Arkansas by 1925, and in 1930, they lived in Norphlet next to her oldest sister, Ora, and her brother's widow, Belle Hayes. Ollie worked as a line foreman with an oil company in 1930. In 1940, they still lived in Norphlet, but he farmed.

   Beulah and Ollie divorced in the 1940s, and he moved to Los Angeles, California, where he remarried on 22 May 1948. In 1950, Beulah lived in Norphlet with her widowed older sister, Ora, and worked in a washeteria. Beulah later moved to Gladewater, Gregg County, Texas, where she died of congestive heart failure. Beulah is buried in the Gladewater Memorial Park, Big Sandy, Upshur County, Texas.

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