

Company A, 120th OVI



Photo Credit: Andy Gappa at Find a Grave

BOYDSTON, Solon 16 Aug 1862

Private Boydston was 19 when he entered service. He was captured 3 May, 1864 near Snaggy Point on the Red River, Louisiana; mustered out 8 July 1865 at Camp Chase, Ohio. [Pension record also shows Co D 114th OVI.]

Father: Thomas BOYDSTON

Mother: Elisabeth STEELE

Birth: 1844, Ohio

Marriage: Catharine SHULTZ, 28 Dec 1865

Death: 10 Oct 1890, Orrville, Wayne Co OH

Cemetery: Crown Hill, Orrville, Wayne County, OH [The office at the cemetery could not find a record for his burial. However, a headstone was provided for him, supplied by the Cross Brothers.] They said at Orrville that he was moved to Chicago. He was reinterred at Oak Woods Cemetery, Chicago, Cook County, IL.

Headstones Provided for Deceased Union Civil War Veterans, 1879-1903: Solon Boydston, Pvt, Co A, 120th Ohio Inf, Crown Hill Cemetery, Orrville, Wayne Co OH; died 10 Oct 1890.]

Pension record: Solon was also in Co D 114th OH. Applied for invalid pension 10 Jan 1880, Application 339820; Certificate 345081 There was also a widow's pension filed 4 Dec 1890; Application 516568; Certificate 318103 filed from OH.

Solon Boydston is the son of Thomas Boydston and Thomas' third wife Elisabeth (Betsy) STEELE [daughter of [Jacob Steele Jr. and Mary Elizabeth Long](#) of East Union township, Wayne county OH].

History of Wayne County, Ohio, From the Days of the Pioneers and First Settlers to the Present Time, 1878, Robert Douglass:

Thomas Boydston settled in Greene township as early as the spring of 1811. He was born in Green county, Pa, in December, 1786, and married Emily Burress, of Monongalia county, Virginia, the following children resulting from the first marriage: Boaz, Mary, Charles, Belinda, Presley and Enoch. His wife Emily dying May 24, 1824, in East Union township, he was married a second time to Mary Brakefield, of Greene township, who died without issue. A third time he was married to Elizabeth Steel, of East Union township, of which union the following children are living: Solon, Sarah, Emily, Minerva, Eunice. He [Thomas] died in Orrville, August 22, 1863, his wife still surviving him.

1850 Census, East Union Twp, Wayne County, OH, page 204: Thomas BOYDSTONE, age 63 PA, farmer; Elizabeth age 40 PA; Enoch, age 27 OH; Franklin, age 18 OH; Emily, age 16 OH; Sarah, age 13 OH; Minerva, age 12 OH; Solon, age 8 OH; Eunice, age 4 OH.

1860 Census, 1st Div of Wooster, Wayne County OH, page 280: Solon BOYDSTONE, age 17 was an apprentice cabinet maker living with William SPRARF? who was the master cabinet maker.

Solon Boydston and Kate A SHULTZ were joined in marriage by the Rev Samuel Laird on 28 Dec 1865 [Sworn to by Rebecca Welcham, age 42, in City of Lancaster PA on 9 Dec 1890 for pension records. Also affirmed by E.I. Shultz, of 137 E. James St, Lancaster PA, age 51; 9 Dec 1890: Was present at the marriage of Solon Boydston and Kate A. Shultz on 28 Dec 1865.] Neither were previously married. Kate, the widow, was born

12 Oct 1845 at New Holland, PA. Another paper signed by the widow says that they were married 27 Dec 1865 rather than 28 Dec. Kate's address was 4227 Cottage Grove, Chicago, IL.

1870 Census, Baughman Twp, Wayne County OH, page 9: Solon BOYDSTON, age 26 OH, farming; Catharine, age 25 PA; Charles, age 3 OH; Frank, age 1 OH. Also living there were Adam KULP, farm laborer, and Catharine SHERRER or SPERRER, age 16 a house keeper.

1880 census Orrville, Wayne county, OH: Solon BOYDSTON, age 35 OH, a furniture dealer, father born unknown, mother born PA; Kate, wife, age 34 PA, parents born PA; Charles, son, age 13 OH; Franklin, son, age 11 OH; Lizzie, daughter, age 2 OH; also living there was Joseph SHULTZ, age 26 PA, a railroad clerk, parents born PA.

1890 [June] Special Veterans Schedule: Orrville, Wayne Co OH, Solen BOYDSTON, Co A 120th OH Inf. Line 8, House 291, Family 313. Post Office: Orrville, OH. Prisoner 13 months.

Family Search, Death record: Solon BOYDSTON died 10 Oct 1890 in Orrville, Wayne Co OH. Born 1844 in Lancaster, PA. Age 46. Undertaker. Married.

Wayne County Democrat, Wednesday 15 Oct 1890, page 3. Died 10 Oct 1890.

APPALLING DEATH---Coroner Solon Boydston Killed at Orrville

The Fair was over, and hundreds of visitors to Orrville were at the railroad station last Friday evening waiting for trains to take them home. It was gloomy weather, a cloudy sky and dim lights flickered here and there in the railroad yard. Along the platform in front of the track thronged the crowd, when about 7:30 o'clock, on the platform of the C., A. & C. line, a scuffle took place between some men, which by those who saw it was supposed to be a fight.

Just then a shifting engine came slowly along, and two of the men were knocked, thrown or fell in front of the engine, which in an instant was fatally upon them. No one appeared to know who they were or saw exactly how it was done, and many near by saw nothing of it at all. The engineer felt by the motion of the machine that something was wrong and promptly stopped. The crowd rushed forward and found a man lying beside the track badly injured, the wheels having run over both legs. He was carried to the platform where he told them another man was under the engine. This was investigated, and on the track, wedged in between the fire box and driving wheels of the engine, was a dead body, crushed, mangled and disfigured beyond recognition.

The injured man was removed to the Hurd House, where Dr. Grill amputated one of his legs. He gave his name as John Sweeny, of 79 Seneca street, Cleveland, which is said not to be true.

In the meantime the dead body, which was supposed to be that of a tramp, was placed in the baggage room at the railroad depot. For nearly an hour it lay there while persons were looking for the County Coroner, Solon Boydston, to hold an inquest. He could not be found, and Mr. J. W. Stansbury, Mr. Boydston's partner in the cabinet and undertaking business, had the body removed to their establishment up street. It was placed in the undertaking room and the door locked.

Search for Mr. Boydston was resumed. His unaccountable absence was strange and mysterious, and now some apprehensions and misgivings were felt. A citizen finally suggested that perhaps it was no tramp that was killed. Full of forebodings they had Mr. Stansbury unlock the door of the undertaking room, and began an examination of the remains deposited there. Uncovering the feet, Mr. Stansbury was horrified to recognize his partner's shoes, and in a moment more his watch, masonic pin, officer's badge and other articles, which fully established the fact that the body of Solon Boydston was before them. The sad news was soon heralded over Orrville, creating a great shock and the saddest sorrow in the community. D. Y. Landis, undertaker at Wooster, was that night summoned to prepare the body for the grave.

How he came to his death is not accurately known, whether by murder or accident. The most reliable account appears to be that during the Fair Mr. Boydston was on the police force. In line of duty he had that evening gone with other officers to Overton's Tile Factory near the depot to disperse and arrest a lot of tramps who had taken possession in defiance of the owner's protests. Boydston had captured the man Sweeny and was taking him to the lock up, going by way of the depot, and when in the crowd it is said that Sweeny, recognizing a confederate there, gave him a signal for assistance, and at same time struggled with Boydston to escape; but the officer held to his man and threw him on the platform, when it is said the confederate was seen to strike or push Boydston to escape; but the officer held to his man and threw him on the platform, when it is said the confederate was seen to strike or push Boydston just as the shifting engine was passing, and holding on to Sweeny he fell or was thrown in front of the engine, which in an instant crushed him to death and hurled Sweeney several feet away, injuring him as above stated. It is reported that the alleged confederate was seen after the tragedy, but soon afterwards disappeared. Sweeny claims that he did not know him. Some heavy bruises were found on the back of Mr. Boydston's head, as if from blows, and not wounds inflicted by the engine.

His age was 49 years, and at time of death he was the Coroner of Wayne county and was the candidate for

second term on the Democratic ticket at the coming election. He was well known throughout the county as a prominent citizen and business man of Orrville, a member of several Benevolent Orders, and a comrade of the Grand Army of the Republic, he having been a Sergeant in Co. A, 120th Regiment O.V.I. As a man he was much esteemed, and few had more personal friends. **He leaves a wife and two sons and two daughters,** to whom much sympathy is given.

The funeral, which took place Monday afternoon, was the largest ever in Orrville. All business was suspended and the whole community attended in respect for the dead, while many came in from the surrounding country and from other towns. The offering of flowers was very large. The officiating ministers were Rev. Delano Jeffries, Rev. D. M. Irvin, Rev. Beck and Rev. Booth. The burial services were conducted by Wooster Commandery Knights Templar, of which the deceased was a charter member and present also were several Knights from Massillon. The other organizations attending in a body were the Orrville Cedar Lodge of the Masonic Order, Knights of Pythias, Grand Army Post, Fire Department, Mayor and town officers. The pall bearers were Sir Knights Geo. W. Barrett, Fred Dysie, Dr. S.P. Grill, of Orrville, E. D. McIntire, T.H. Eiser, of Wooster and J. A. Hackett, of Massillon.

Cincinnati Post, 11 Oct 1890, page 4:

"Solon Boydston, coroner of Wayne county, O., and John Moran, of Cleveland, were struck by a train and killed at Wooster, Ohio."

Plain Dealer [Cleveland OH], 12 Oct 1890, page 3:

"Of late a Mr. Critchfield, who lives near the C., A. & C. switch yards, has been complaining to Marshal Porter of the rowdyism and vandalism of a gang of tramps who have, for about a week past, been occupying an old shanty near his house. Marshal Porter, busy with his duties connected with the local fair, turned the complaints over to his deputy, Mr. Boydston. The latter kept his eye on the men, especially the fellow who has since given his name as James Sweeney. Friday night at the Union depot, Boydston concluded to place Sweeney under arrest, but upon what charge is not known. He arrested Sweeney, and started with him across the double tracks of the C., A. & C. to reach the station platform. It is said that Sweeney resisted and in the struggle which ensued both men were knocked down by switch engine No. 102, which was shifting passenger coaches. Sweeney was more fortunate than Boydston. The tender wheels passed over and crushed his right leg below the knee, while Boydston was literally crushed beyond recognition.

Another account gives it that while Boydston was arresting Sweeney another man advanced upon him, struck him a murderous blow with a billy and pushed him under the wheels of the backing engine. Although stunned, Boydston held on to his prisoner and drew him partly under the wheels. After Sweeney had been removed to the Mansion house, a man pushed his way into the injured man's room, saying, 'I am his friend, let me see him.'

'Hello, Mike,' was the greeting Sweeney gave the newcomer. A short time after, at the point of a revolver, Marshal Porter placed the fellow under arrest. He gave his name as Michael Moran and said he lived in Cleveland. He is now in jail suspected of being the man who struck Boydston with a billy. Neither Sweeney or Moran will talk. Sweeney, after being run over, under the impression that he would die, gave his name and said that he had a sister living at No. 79 Seneca street. He was attended by Drs. Lane and Gull and his leg was amputated and attention given him. At present he is getting along well and will recover. Feeling ran high against the two men Friday night when it was learned that Coroner Boydston was dead and open threats of lynching were made.

Coroner Boydston was almost instantly killed. He was so mangled that it was some time before he was identified. Mr. Boydston was about 50 years of age, a leading county Democrat and a candidate for reelection as coroner. He was a member of the independent order of Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias and his funeral—presumably next Monday—will be under the auspices of these orders. He leaves a widow and four children, who have the deep sympathy of the entire community in their affliction. Mr. Boydston was a popular man, had many warm friends throughout the county and his sudden taking off has cast a gloom over the entire community. Since the death of Mr. Boydston, acting coroner, Justice of the Peace Gaily has been holding an inquest in the mayor's office, but as yet no verdict has been reached."

Another version:

Boston [MA] Herald, 12 Oct 1890, page 4:

Most Deliberate Murder. A Policeman Pushed Under a Train and Killed. [Special Dispatch to the Sunday Herald.]

Pittsburg, PA., Oct. 11 1890. The killing of one man and the probably fatal injury of another at Orrville last night turns out to be a deliberate murder. Coroner Solon Boydston of Orrville, who was acting as policeman during the fair, had John Sweeney in custody on the depot platform. Sweeney saw a 'pal' in the crowd and made a signal to him. The latter stepped up, and just as a switch engine was going by shoved Boydston in front of it. The coroner was terribly mangled, and must have died instantly. He retained his grip on Sweeney as he went down and the prisoner was also run over and badly cut up. He will probably die. The man who did

the pushing was caught by the crowd, and is now in jail.”

About Sweeny: Cleveland Leader, 12 Oct 1890, page 2:

“The limb was horribly mangled and amputated last night at the Mansion House, where he now lies. He claims Cleveland as his home, and James McDonald, of No. 79 Seneca street, as his brother-in-law.”
“Several parties are under arrest as implicated in the matter and will be held until a verdict is returned.”

More facts about the incident:

Elkhart [IN]Daily Review, 13 Oct 1890, page 4:

“A devilish Assault on an Office Results in a Manner Not Intended> Akron, O., Oct. 13. – The killing of one man and probably fatal mangling of another at Orville Friday night, turns out to be murder. Coroner Solon Boydston, of Orville, who was acting as policeman during the fair, had John Sweeney, said to be from Cleveland, in custody on the railway station platform. Sweeney saw a pal in the crowd and made a sign to him. The latter stepped up, and just as a switch engine was going by, shoved Boydston in front of it.

Took the Prisoner with Him. The coroner was terribly mangled and must have died instantly. He retained his grip on Sweeney as he went and the prisoner was also run over, being very badly cut up. He will probably die. The man who did the pushing was caught by the crowd and is now in custody. He refuses to give his name.”

Canton Repository, 14 Oct 1890, page 4:

“The trusees removed Sweeney to the county infirmary to-day after receiving a telegram that he was unknown at 97 Seneca street, Cleveland, which he claimed as his home.” “...Boydston was pushed under the wheels by one of the prisoner's friends, at present unknown to the authorities.”

Repository [Canton OH] 17 Nov 1890, page 4

“Was an Accident. Acting coroner of Wayne county gives his verdict in the case of Coroner Boydston.

William M. Gailey, acting coroner of Wayne county, has rendered the following verdict on the death of Solon Boydston: 'Solon Boydston came to his death while in the act of taking a prisoner to the village lockup, by being accidentally run over by shifting engine No. 10, on the C. A. & C. railroad, in the village of Orrville, and without any fault of said company's employes.'

Mr. Boydston was coroner of Wayne county and deputy marshall, and was killed about four weeks ago while acting in his official position. It was thought by many that he was pushed in front of the engine by a pal of the prisoner. The prisoner was also run over by the engine and escaped with no other injury than the loss of one leg. He now lies at the county infirmary, where he is being cared for.”

Cleveland Leader, 5 Feb 1891, page 4:

“Asks Damages. Special Dispatch to the Leader. Orrville, O., February 4. – Frank T. Boydson, son of the late Solon Boydston, has filed papers in the Common Pleas Court of Wayne county, asking for \$10,000 damages against the Cleveland, Akron & Columbus Railroad Company. He alleges that on the evening of October 10, 1890, his father was killed at the Union Depot at Orrville, and the accident was due to carelessness of the company in running an engine through the yard, without the proper lights and required number of men on same to protect life.”

Plain Dealer [Cleveland OH], 17 Jan 1895, page 3:

“Wooster, Jan. 16.--(Special.)-- A. jury here today gave Mrs. Kate Boydston of Chicago \$1,500 damages against the Cleveland, Akron & Columbus railway in the action fo \$10,000 for causing the death of her husband, Solon Boydston, at Orrville four years ago.”

1930 Census, Los Angeles, Los angeles Co, CA, 351 South Reno st, Dwelling 171, Family 259: Arthur W. NASH, age 58, age at first marriage 37, born MA, father born MA, mother born VT, no occupation; Kathryn B, wife, age 45, age at first marriage 25, born OH, father born OH, mother born PA; Kate S. BOYDSTON, mother in law, age 84, widow, born PA, father born OH, mother born PA.

Widow Kate died 7 Oct 1933 in Los Angeles CA apparently with her daughter Kathryn Boydston Nash of 1301 S. Sierra Bonita Ave, Los Angeles CA.

Hyde Park Herald [Chicago, IL], 20 Oct 1933, page 10:

“Mrs. Kate A. Boydston died Oct. 7 in Los Angeles, Calif., at the age of 88. She had been an invalid for several years. Mrs. Boydston, who had lived in Chicago for many years, was the mother of Mrs. Kathryn B. Nash, Los Angeles, and the late Charles Boydston and the late Frank Boydston; the grandmother of Solon James Boydston, Porterville, Calif., and Mrs. Kathryn L. Vraney, Sioux City, Iowa; and the great grandmother of George Raymond Vraney and Solon James Boydston, Jr. Funeral services were held Oct. 13 at Boydston's chapel, 4227 Cottage Grove, directed by Dr. Johstone Meyers. Burial at Oakwoods. Mrs. Nash is visiting at the home of Mrs. Charles Boydstone, 5727 Washington blvd.”

Debbie Ferdetta sent pension records:

Solon suffered from the effects of heat stroke. George Saltzman verified in an affidavit that "on or about the 16 of May 1864 at or near Tyler in the State of Texas while marching to Confederate Prison he was affected by Sun stroke." Jefferson Etling said that Solon had sunstroke and stayed under his rubber blanket near their quarters in the prison for 3 or 4 weeks. According to another letter, Solon continued to have problems from the sunstroke after the war with attacks of dizziness, nervousness, blindness and severe pain. His attacks of vertigo could last 3 to 10 days at a time. His ears were also affected and he was partially hard of hearing, a problem which started at the time of his sun stroke. [7 May 1889: Dr. Hugh Hart of Wooster examined Solon and said that he was only able to hear the tick of a watch, that should be heard at 24 inches, when it was in contact with his right ear; and only when firmly pressed in the left ear.]

Charles BOYDSTON, born <1867>

Frank BOYDSON, born <1869>

Elizabeth BOYDSTON born 13 Sep 1877 Wayne Co OH to Solon BOYDSTON and Kate SHULTZ. [Doctor Stull's record says 14 Sep 1877, in Orrville OH.]

Kate BOYDSTON born 17 Apr [15 Apr on one pension record; 16 Apr 1884 on her mother's affidavit] 1884 in Orrville, Wayne Co OH, to Solon BOYDSTON and Kate SHULTZ. [Katherine Boydston NASH born 16 Apr 1884 OH, died 30 Nov 1957 Los Angeles, CA, mother's maiden name SCHULTZ, father's name BOYDSTON.]

About Solon's loss of hearing. The doctor who examined him for his pension said that "he was only able to hear the tick of a watch, that should be heard at 24 inches, when in contact with right ear, and only when firmly pressed, in the left ear."

Report of sunstroke for Solon on his way to Camp Ford prison: Affidavit stated that Solon was 'on or about the 16 day of May 1864 at or near Tyler in the State of Texas while marching to Confederate Prison he was affected by Sun stroke.'

Grant's Canal was never finished. Apparently many black former slaves died trying to complete it. Solon didn't seem to approve and expresses his feelings. Some Union soldiers were fighting to free the slaves; others were fighting to preserve the Union. Solon's letter from a newspaper is in the history file.

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