

R.B. Hayes – Paraguay National Hayes

Paraguay: A country of 7 million citizens has numerous Hayes memorials – from statues to schools to stamps, museums and streets named in his honor. The national soccer team name is Club Presidente Hayes. There is a city called Villa Hayes, which lies in the middle of a province called Presidente Hayes, which is roughly the size of South Carolina.

What did Hayes do to deserve all this?

From 1864-1870, Paraguay was engaged in one of the bloodiest war in the history of the Americas – the War of the Triple Alliance. Facing the combined forces of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, the people of Paraguay were mercilessly defeated. Two-thirds of the country's population died. But even after the war ended, Argentina and Paraguay continued to scuffle over the Chaco, a huge tract of land in the southwest region of Paraguay. Chaco made up 60% of Paraguay territory. Unable to come to a resolution, diplomats from both countries traveled to Washington D.C., so that President Hayes could arbitrate the debate (pre-UN days). On November 12, 1878, Hayes decided in favor of Paraguay and he's been a national hero ever since. This date is a national holiday in Paraguay.

Once every 50 years, Villa Hayes hosts a huge festival in his honor. The next one is 2028.