

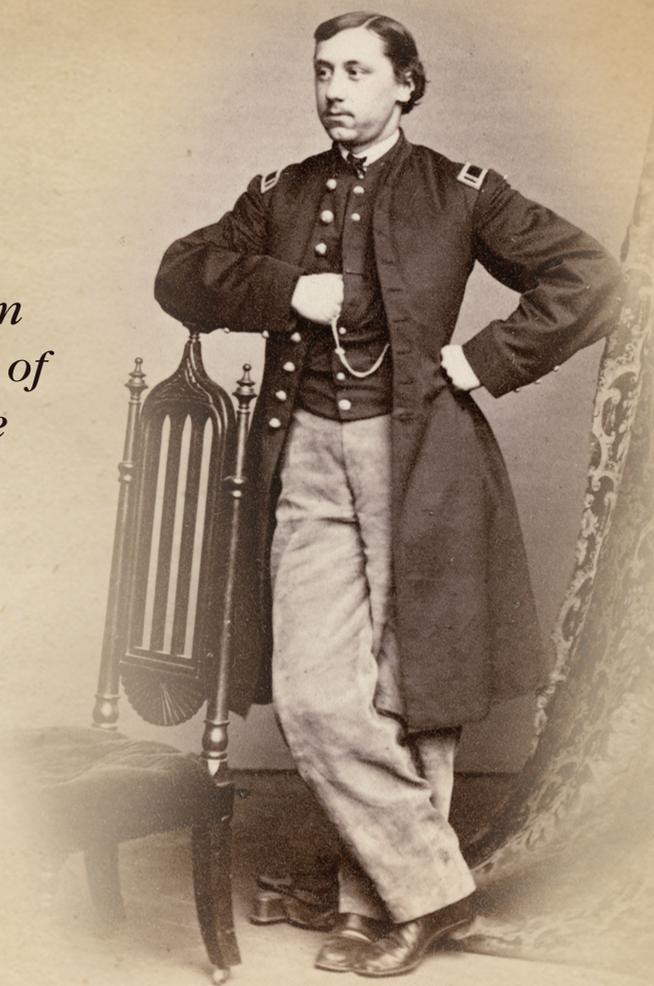
# Rudolph B. Hitz

*Rudolph B. Hitz attended the Maryland Agricultural College from 1861 to 1863, but left without receiving his degree. After a year of medical training, he signed the first of several contracts with the Union Army, serving as an acting assistant surgeon late in the Civil War and afterwards, until his untimely death in 1869.*

Hitz was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on November 18, 1841, to John Hitz, a Swiss émigré and mining engineer who was named the first consul general of Switzerland in 1853.

Rudolph was 19 years old when he enrolled in Maryland Agricultural College on October 9, 1861, where he remained for two years. He then matriculated at Georgetown College in the medical department, a major training center for Union Army surgeons. Some of the buildings at Georgetown had been converted to Union Army hospitals, and there he could have gained clinical experience.

While Washington, D.C., was nearly as torn in its loyalties as the state of Maryland itself, there was no question where the Hitz family stood in the conflict. Consul Hitz and Rudolph's mother, Ann, were well known in the city as caring visitors to camps and hospitals. In particular, "Mother Hitz," as she came to be known, was summoned whenever a German-speaking Union soldier needed solace.



When John died in January 1864, Secretary of State William Seward wrote to President Abraham Lincoln urging him to attend the elder Hitz's funeral to honor "the most steadfast and loyal friend throughout all our recent national troubles." Two months later, in March 1864, Rudolph became an acting assistant surgeon, a contractual employee of the army, and was assigned to Fort Laramie, Wyoming.

Over the next five years, he entered into a number of such contracts, several based in Washington, D.C., at Harewood Hospital, and he often accompanied soldier-patients returning home after the war. He later served at frontier outposts in North Dakota and Montana. He wrote to his wife of the landscape "Everything looks bleak and dreary although there is considerable grandeur in the Scenery."

While out West, Hitz found "truly splendid fossils" that he shipped to the Smithsonian Institute, and he contributed numerous Native American artifacts to the Army Medical Museum as well.

Rudolph Hitz died on December 31, 1869, at Fort Shaw, Montana, survived by his wife, Mary, and two young sons, Charles and Henry.

