

Historical Notes to accompany letter dated:

08/10/62: 036

Historical Notes

As Cyrus Hardaway wrote his letter home dated August 10, 1862 he anticipated that Berdan's Sharpshooters would soon be relocated to a new military position. His best guess was amazingly accurate; Berdan's Sharpshooter Regiments, as well as the entire Union Army of the Potomac would be moved as Hardaway predicted, "I think when we do go we shall go down the river on the boats and the up the Potomac."

Encamped at Harrison's Landing since early July, Hardaway's suspicions of an imminent move by the Federal army were indicative of major changes in Union military planning. McClellan's Army had been forced to retreat from their June 1862-Richmond position as a result of the *Seven Days Battle*. As the summer wore on, and the Army of the Potomac withered away in the heat and humidity of the semi-tropical environment, the newly appointed Union Commander in Chief, General Henry Halleck determined it best to abandon McClellan's *Peninsular Campaign* and bring the army back to Washington.

Many other aspects of the Northern war effort changed as a result of the late June battles; it was now patently evident that the war would not be over soon. The Union needed more soldiers and its April 1862 decision closing recruiting stations was reversed. Avoiding the appearance of a panic, the governors of several northern states "requested" President Lincoln to call for new volunteers in response to the recent Union "victories." On July 2, 1862 (the day after the *Battle of Malvern Hill*), Lincoln called for 300,000 new 'three year' recruits in order to "speedily crush the rebellion." In addition, the War department began enforcement of the July 16, 1862 Congressional militia law requiring the northern states to organize an additional 300,000 local militia for service up to nine months. The most intriguing aspect of the entire process was that any deficiency in any state's recruitment of "three year" recruits, was to be made up by levying on the equivalent number of "nine month" recruits. By this formula and process, an enormous Union army was in the making.

As noted in prior notes, if we read Hardaway's letter very closely, we can understand not only his comments but also what might have been his mother's thoughts. Hardaway's comment, "I am glad that Uncle Samuel has waked up and is going to have some soldiers. I think if we get them in the field pretty soon that the war will not last long. . ." Cyrus Hardaway was many things; a pessimist is not on the list.