

Historical Notes to accompany letter dated:

09/11/62: 039

Historical Notes

Twenty days (August 22-September 11) have passed since Cyrus Hardaway's last letter home to his mother in Pittsfield/New Berlin. From this letter and future ones, it appears that Hardaway was in Washington, D.C. recuperating from illness. Perhaps that delay explains the lack of comment by him upon the major events occurring during the interim. Alternatively, it is possible that other letters were written but did not survive. It is inconsistent with Hardaway's weekly letter style not to have commented upon the *Second Battle of Bull Run* or as the South called it, *Second Manassas*. It is also possible that Hardaway's health prevented him from writing. His complaints regarding his "rheumatism" and the extreme discomfort occasioned by it would certainly justify a suspension of his letters home. Finally, it is possible that Hardaway simply did not write about the *Second Battle of Bull Run*. From earlier letters it is possible that Hardaway could simply no longer write about the horrors of the battlefield. His letters of early July, written after the *Seven Days Battles* exhibit increasing levels of dread and doom regarding battle.

From other historical sources, it is known that during the *Second Battle of Bull Run*, Berdan's Sharpshooters were again positioned in front of Porter's divisions as skirmishers and saw action on August 29, 1862. Fighting resumed the following day on August 30 at Groveton, Virginia when Porter's divisions suffered heavy casualties after its forward units were outflanked by Confederate General Longstreet's artillery. General Porter's forces lost more than one-third of their number in killed and wounded.

Berdan's 1st Regiment could muster only 290 men for this battle and was in the forefront of the fighting. The Regiment suffered a 22% casualty rate incurring sixty five dead, wounded, or missing in action. The Regiment received special compliments from General Porter on its extraordinary battlefield actions.

On September 5, 1862 General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac and began the first Confederate invasion of the North during the Civil War. Four days later, on September 9, General "Stonewall" Jackson's forces captured Harper's Ferry in preparation for the Confederate movement into Pennsylvania.

On September 12, the day after Hardaway's letter to his mother, the remainder of Berdan's 1st Regiment, consisting of 14 officers and only 411 men, left their camp near Washington, D.C. and rejoined the Army of the Potomac as it pursued the Confederate army north. Cyrus Hardaway remained behind, apparently in some form of convalescence, and would not rejoin his regiment until mid-October 1862.