

*Historical Notes* to accompany letter dated:

09/16/62: 040

### *Historical Notes*

Cyrus Hardaway's letter home of September 16, 1862 is the one of two surviving letters written to his "broter," Augustus Jesse Beardslee of Pittsfield/New Berlin during the Civil War. Written while Hardaway was convalescing in Washington, D.C. it provides a glimpse of another side of Cyrus Hardaway. Immediately upon reading this letter, a very different style evidencing great friendship and familiarity is evident. "Gust" is Cyrus Hardaway's step-brother and is only a few months different in age than his step-brother. Upon the remarriage of Cy's widowed mother, Mary Ann Chatfield Hardaway, and "Gust's" widower father Jesse Beardslee, the boys were jointly raised on the family homestead in Pittsfield, New York.

The great friendship and relationship between Cy and Gust provided many stories for not only their immediate family but for several generations after. Always a part of each story was the idea that "what one didn't think of, the other did, and none of it was good." One such story about the step-brother's adventures involved their jointly owned fancy carriage and team of horses. Augustus and Cy attended a dance in Morris, N.Y. and were supposed to be home by a reasonable hour in order to assist with early morning chores. For "some" reason, the young men were delayed in returning from Morris. Their father, Jesse Beardslee, was up at five o'clock and started for the barn so that he might be there when the boys arrived in order to give them a proper welcome and a good lecture for being so late. The boys, knowing how late they were, came down the road from Hoboken corners using the whip with the horses at full speed, around and in the driveway, and up to the old barn at full speed. The barn doors which closed from the inside out were open by about two feet. Jesse stood beside the barn doors and the boys proceeded to drive the splendid carriage and team straight through the doors. Before their father could say anything, the boys jumped off the carriage and said, "Why didn't you open the doors, you stood right there?"

At the same time that this letter displays some of that legendary youthful immaturity and playfulness, "Everything was in good order. The bottle of gin in particular," it is also a poignant sharing from one brother to another of the awfulness of war. Hardaway's comments that, "The Lieut's brother was shot within two feet of me. He was right by my side" indicates that he was not yet the completely battle hardened veteran.