

*Historical Notes* to accompany letter dated:

10/05/62: 043

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Cyrus Hardaway's October 5, 1862 letter home to his mother in Pittsfield/New Berlin was his last while convalescing from his most recent bout with "rheumatism" and back pain. Probably aggravated during the mid August 1862's "eighty miles in four days" march from Harrison's Landing to Fortress Munroe, Hardaway was in such severe pain by September that he was unable to join his regiment as Berdan's and the Army of the Potomac pursued Lee in his first invasion of the North prior to the *Battle of Antietam*. Hardaway's back pain was intense and his descriptions resemble those of a modern day sufferer, ". . . I can't stand up nor lay down."

Also in convalescence in Washington, D.C. was Colonel Berdan who had allegedly been injured at the *Battle of Groveton* in late August 1862. This injury created considerable controversy and resulted in Berdan's classification as "Absent Without Leave" at one point during his recuperation. He eventually obtained medical leave but the incident did nothing to enhance his capacity to command. As late as November 1862, Berdan was still recovering from his mysterious wound, at Willard's, the most exclusive hotel in Washington City.

Despite their participation in the Union's tactical victory at Antietam, the fall months of 1862 were difficult for most of Berdan's Sharpshooters. As Hardaway listed in his October 5th letter, many problems afflicted the regiments. As they prepared for the winter, Berdan's Sharpshooter's historian, Charles A. Stevens wrote, "Much dissatisfaction was perceptible in the army: rations, often short, were of bad quality; clothing and shoes were worn out; and it was weeks before these inconveniences were remedied. The men had not been paid for six months, which put them in bad humor. To make things worse, our knapsacks, which had been left on the Peninsula in August, were returned in a bad condition and emptied of their former contents. So that many lost valuable, in the shape of presents, journals, etc. Therefore, the temper of our regiment was not very enviable."