

Historical Notes to accompany letter dated:

11/27/62: 052

Historical Notes

Cyrus Hardaway's letter of November 27, 1862 to his mother in Pittsfield/New Berlin contained the news that he had been promoted a second time since his muster into Berdan's Sharpshooters in November of 1862. Previously advanced to the rank of corporal, he was promoted to Second Sergeant rank and \$17 a month pay.

Despite his obvious success as a soldier and his promotions to higher ranks, readers of Hardaway's letters have undoubtedly evidenced his growing lack of respect for political leaders and their handling of the Civil War. His November 27th letter stated, "It would be nothing strange if we went into winter quarters here for if we can not get grub enough for us here I do not know what the object will be in moving us farther on to starve." In his letter dated November 21, his frustration at the war's conduct led him to say, "Old Abraham has got his hands full and the quicker he makes a compromise the better it will be for him. You can never the lick the buggers out. That's a sure thing."

Hardaway's opinions resemble those of a highly controversial "Peace Democrat" politician popular in the North's midwest. Clement Vallandigham had emerged by 1862 as a leader within the Ohio Democratic Party based upon a limited government political philosophy. Vallandigham professed himself a "true" Unionist but suggested that the South would never be defeated and in the process of waging civil warfare, the heart and soul of the Republic would be forever shattered. He proposed an immediate cease fire, armistice, negotiations, and withdrawal of Federal troops from the South. Other Democrats called "War Democrats" favored the continuance of the war but espoused a limited warfare strategy similar to that of the deposed General George B. McClellan.

Vallandigham was arrested for "implied treason" and disloyalty in the most celebrated case of civil liberties during the Civil War. At his trial, conducted by a military tribunal in Cincinnati, Vallandigham was convicted of "of having expressed sympathy" for the enemy and speaking "disloyal sentiments and opinions." Denied a writ of habeas corpus by a Federal judge because Lincoln had previously "suspended" them, Vallandigham was ultimately banished to the South as befitting his "sympathizer" and copperhead politics. He eventually ran for but lost the governorship of Ohio after the Confederacy assisted his removal to Canada.

Lincoln's dedication to the suppression of the Confederate rebellion required a very flexible standard regarding rights of free speech and a free press. Hardaway's growing disenchantment with Union politics indicates that Lincoln's problems were not only those states who had seceded, but also with his own loyal soldiers. Without question, the forthcoming *Battle of Fredericksburg* would have immense military and political consequences for both victor and vanquished.