

*Historical Notes* to accompany letter dated:

1/3/63: 059

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Firmly re-encamped at their former winter quarters near Falmouth, Virginia, Cyrus Hardaway wrote his January 3, 1863 letter home to his mother in Pittsfield/New Berlin. Regular mail and express package service had been resumed to Berdan's Regiments and the Army of the Potomac. It appears that Mary Ann Hardaway Beardslee's letter of December 25, 1862 had reached her son in a little more than a week including the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

For the first time in several months, Hardaway and the rest of the Army of the Potomac were quietly encamped, and not likely to perform any imminent major campaigns. After their defeat at the *Battle of Fredericksburg*, the Union army needed time to recuperate and resupply itself. The Confederate forces encamped across the Rappahannock River were equally adverse to further winter campaigns.

In the Western theater of the Civil War, there was no hesitation in the campaign commanded by General U.S. Grant to designed capture the remaining bottleneck on the Mississippi River at Vicksburg. After the battles near Corinth, Mississippi in October 1862, Grant launched an invasion southward along the central Mississippi railroad to capture Vicksburg. By mid December, Grant's first campaign towards Vicksburg had failed and he withdrew his troops. These developments, as well as the disastrous results of the *Battle of Fredericksburg*, made the winter of 1862-63 a particularly dark and depressing season.

As has occurred at several other times in the transcription and publication of these letters, Hardaway refers to an individual, Mrs. Maynard, who has apparently been contracted by his mother, Mary Ann Beardslee, to supply a blanket and forward it to her son. Search of the the census records for both 1850 and 1860 does not provide assistance as to the identity of Mrs. Maynard. If you have any information regarding this person, or any other individual mentioned in Hardaway's letters, please feel free to contact the authors.