

*Historical Notes* to accompany letter dated:

11/22/63: 098

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Cyrus Hardaway's letter home dated November 22, 1863 confirmed the military inactivity experienced by Company D, NYS 114th Regiment during the remainder of November 1863. After the highly embarrassing Confederate "surprise" attack on November 4th, a long period of calmness enveloped the Army of the Gulf at its Louisiana encampments.

On November 5th the entire army marched from the site of the humiliating attack and camped once again at Vermillionville. Within days Hardaway and his fellow soldiers had built a small village with "confiscated" secessionist lumber. For ten days the army stayed at this site and enjoyed the late fall weather with horse racing and other amusements. Confederate forces harassed foraging parties, but no other significant engagements occurred. On November 16th the camp was abandoned and the army marched towards New Iberia. Once there Hardaway's brigade located their camp at the rear of the army in a location chronicled as "inviting and convenient." In a short time, a village with chimneyed cabins had been constructed. On November 20th a major inspection was scheduled; the 114th was credited for being the best appearing regiment in the brigade.

Since his transfer to the 114th and Louisiana, Hardaway's former Berdan's Sharpshooter regiments had been engaged in the post-Gettysburg campaign. General Meade had "pursued" Lee's movement south into the Shenandoah Valley without success. Over the next several months both armies engaged in a series of flanking actions, *The Bristoe Campaign*, with little significant results. By early December both armies were located in familiar winter camps.

Three days prior the date of this letter, Abraham Lincoln had journeyed out of the White House and dedicated a new cemetery. Speaking to a crowd of over 15,000 for little more than two minutes, he considered his speech a "flat-failure." Over the next few days a few persons perceived the speech as a masterpiece. Over time, Lincoln's "little speech" comprised of but ten sentences, has been recognized as one of the most moving and exquisite passages in the English language. Within days of his *Gettysburg Address*, Lincoln returned to the White House with a mild form of small pox.