

*Historical Notes* to accompany letter dated:

11/29/63: 099

Cyrus Hardaway's letter home dated November 29, 1863 evidenced the well supplied state of the Union army in its efforts to control the territories in Louisiana near the Mississippi River. Readers of these letters may recall the utterly despondent 1862 Thanksgiving letter written by Hardaway to his mother in Pittsfield/New Berlin. Hardaway's well known appreciation for good food seems to be in excellent spirits with his new quartermaster's position and the cooking of "Aunt Lucy." It should also be noted that the General Franklin ordered every soldier to attend regimental Thanksgiving Day church services; he also ordered a full whiskey ration to be distributed to each man in the army. Army chaplains formally protested this unique variant of Protestant theology; apparently Hardaway and other soldiers could not determine if the whiskey should be consumed before, during, or after their individual church services.

Hardaway's personal politics have gradually been revealed during the course of his letters home. This letter is a clear indication that he did not have great sympathies for the Radical Republican agenda regarding abolition and in a more vigorous "total war" against the South. Hardaway's negative comments regarding a nest of "Black Republicans" (generally considered a part of the radical wing of the Republican party) indicates that he had not adapted to the growing spiritual revival by soldiers on both sides of the Civil War. Many historians have noted that as the Civil War progressed, a religious revival amongst soldiers occurred. Apparently in response to the death and carnage of war, a "higher cause" for the Civil War was found in the destruction of slavery and of a society that tolerated slavery. Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* has long been appreciated for its literary qualities. In addition, it also provides a succinct, brief, and cogent explanation of the reasons that the Civil War was morally justified.

Many Northerners, including Abraham Lincoln, did not adopt the Radical Republican political agenda. Those liberal Republicans and northern Democrats who favored a compromise with the South were often disparagingly called *Copperheads*. Named for their serpent like qualities, and the copperhead lapel pins they wore, real *Copperheads* worked (often from Canada) for an immediate peaceful compromise with the South. After the *Battle of Gettysburg*, riots in New York City killed over a thousand civilians and caused immense property damage. As the war progressed, a great many Northerners grew increasingly disillusioned about the war. Cyrus Hardaway was many things; a *Copperhead* was not among them.