

HISTORICAL NOTES

<https://guernseymemoriamlibrary.org/services/chenango-county-digitized-collection/the-civil-war-letters-of-cyrus-j-hardaway/historical-notes/>

Historical Notes

Cyrus Hardaway's letters home to his mother, Mary Ann Hardaway Beardslee, conclude with his letter dated May 21, 1865. With the "mustering out" of the Regiment on June 8, 1865, the "Chenango County" Regiment, 114th NYS Volunteers struck their tents a final time, marched out of Washington, D.C., and boarded a train for Baltimore. After an unpleasant delay in Elmira, the Regiment eventually reached Binghamton and began their "triumphal" journey up the Chenango River Valley. As they entered each village, Chenango Forks, Greene, and Oxford, the Regiment encountered large local celebrations only concluding with the grandest festivities at Norwich on June 19, 1865. Speeches, parades, and dinners clearly expressed Chenango County's appreciation for the heroic achievements of the 114th NYS Volunteer Infantry Regiment. On subsequent days further festivities occurred in each of the Regiment's Company's home towns.

Cyrus Hardaway's subsequent years are shrouded in some mystery. Two letters from him to Augustus Beardslee's wife, Caroline Abigail Moore Beardslee, provide evidence that in 1891 he was married (Delia White), lived in Washington, D.C., and worked for the United States Department of Census.

Hardaway maintained an interest in his family, friends, and the affairs of Pittsfield and New Berlin throughout his life until his death in 1910. His mother, Mary Ann Chatfield Hardaway Beardslee, died on June 17, 1885; her husband, Cyrus Hardaway's step-father, Jesse Beardslee died in 1878. Augustus Beardslee, Hardaway's step-brother and always referred to in Hardaway's letters as "Gust," died in 1881. Augustus's wife, Caroline Abigail Moore Beardslee, whom Hardaway teasingly referred to in his Civil War letters, as "Betsy Jane," lived until 1900. The two letters from Hardaway to her in 1891 express a close "brother-sister" type of relationship. Adrian Foote, Hardaway's step-brother in law and married to Mary Cornelia Beardslee, also died in 1910.

All of these persons, united by family or marriage, are buried in St. Andrew's Cemetery in New Berlin, New York. As close as they were in life, they are as close in death. Their communal burial site can be located by walking straight west from the South Main street entrance of St Andrew's cemetery. Proceed up the hill behind the cemetery vault and [locate](#) a large cedar tree. Hardaway and his family and friends are buried within feet of each other. Hardaway's personal tombstone provides ample proof of the significance of the Civil War upon his life. On one side is his date of birth and death; on the other is his life's epitaph:

"He fought at Yorktown

Malvern Hill

Mechanicsville

2nd Bull Run

Fredericksburg

Chancellorsville

Gettysburg

"Company F, the "Unadilla Valley Company," of the 114th NYS Volunteer Infantry Regiment was raised in the summer of 1862 in response to the call by President Abraham Lincoln. At its "mustering in" during September of 1862, the Regiment numbered nearly 1000 soldiers and officers. At its mustering out in June of 1865 it was a fraction of that number. At various times during the publication of Hardaway's letters and the historical notes, the names of many of New Berlin's and Pittsfield's Civil War soldiers have been published. The following list regarding Cyrus Hardaway's "Unadilla Valley Company," was obtained from Harris H. Beecher's Record of the 114th Regiment published in 1866 as a "register containing the name, rank, and military record of every man who was ever connected with the 114th Regiment NYS Volunteer Regiment."

COMPANY F: 114th NYS Volunteer Regiment, "Unadilla Valley Company"

Captain Charles H. Colwell-The original Captain. Was presented with a sword and sash by the citizens of Sherburne. Resigned on Surgeon's [certificate](#), Jan. 8, '63, at New Orleans. Captain James F. Fitts-Originally was Adjutant. Promoted Captain, vice Colwell, Jan. 8, '63, in which capacity he was mustered out with the Regt. First Lieutenant Adrian Foote-Entered the service in the above capacity. Promoted Quarter Master, March 28, '63. First Lieutenant William D. Thurber-Originally was 1st Sergeant. Promoted 2d Lieutenant, vice Buel, Jan. 9, '63, but was never mustered to that grade. Promoted 1st Lieutenant vice Foote, July 4, '63. Wounded in thigh, at Cedar Creek, from which he died, Oct. 25, '64, at Newtown, Va. [First Lieutenant](#) Jerrie P. Allis-Was at first a Sergeant of Co. G. Promoted 2d. Lieutenant of same Company, June 14, '63. Promoted 1st Lieutenant, and assigned to Co. F, Dec. 15, '64, in which grade he was mustered out of service. Wounded in right fore-arm, at Cedar Creek.

Second Lieutenant John F. Buel-Resigned his commission, June 9, '63. Second Lieutenant Cyrus J. Hardaway-First enlisted as a private in Berdan's Sharp-Shooters, where he served for nearly two years, participating in eleven battles. In Sept. of '63 he was discharged from his former Regt., at Warrenton, Va., to [receive](#) promotion in the, 114th N. Y., and was mustered 2d Lieutenant of Co. P, in which grade he served till the close of the war. He never, however did duty with his Company, but was the Acting Regimental Quarter Master, in the absence of Lieut. Foote, during the whole of the time he was connected with the Regiment. First Sergeant Charles L. Brown-Was originally a Sergeant. Promoted 1st Sergeant. in March of '63, vice Thurber, but owing to a failure of muster in the last named officer, he only served as Acting Orderly. Promoted 2d Lieutenant of Co. E, Oct. 7, '63, but was unable to be mustered to that grade. Promoted 1st Lieutenant, and assigned to Co. G, Aug. 9, '64. Detailed for eight months as clerk in the Quarter Master's Departments of Division and Corps. Wounded at Port Hudson, in right thigh. First Sergeant Stephen Weaver-Was at first a Corporal. Promoted 1st Sergeant vice Brown, Sept. 1, '63. Was sent north on recruiting service in the fall of '63. Wounded at Opequan, in head, from which he died the same night. He was faithfully attended to the last by his brother Corporal Weaver. First Sergeant William F. Allen-Originally was Sergeant. Promoted 1st Sergeant, vice Weaver, Sept. 20, '64. Wounded in left. fore-arm and shoulder, at Cedar Creek. Sergeant Charles D. Hooker-Was at first a private. Promoted Corporal, March 10, '63. Promoted Sergeant, Dec. '64. Detailed north on recruiting service. Sergeant James F. Simmons-Discharged for disability, at Baltimore, Feb. 12, '63. Sergeant John C. Talman- Instantly killed at the assault on Port Hudson, June 14, '63, by a shot in the head. Sergeant Charles N. Thomas-Promoted from a private to Sergeant, May 1, '65.. Sergeant Eugene M. Utley-Promoted from Corporal to Sergeant, Oct. 11, '64. Wounded slightly in head, at Sabine Cross Roads, and also at Port Hudson. Mortally wounded in bowels, at Cedar Creek, and died at Newtown, Va., Oct. 27, '63. Sergeant William W. Wakeley-Promoted from Corporal to Sergeant, Feb., '64, Killed at Cedar Creek. This faithful soldier was barred alongside of the others that fell that day, on the banks of Cedar Creek-. Sergeant Charles L. Williams- originally a Corporal. Promoted Sergeant. June 14, '63. Wounded in head, at Opequan. Mustered out in hospital. Sergeant James S. Williams-Originally a private. Promoted Corporal, Aug. 1, '63. Promoted Sergeant, Dec. 1, '64. Taken prisoner at Sabine Cross Roads, and exchanged Oct. 23, '64. Corporal John L. W. Bell- Promoted Corporal, May 1, '65. Wounded severely at Opequan. Corporal Malcolm G. Deltz- Transferred to V. R. C., May 31, '66, at New Orleans. Corporal Charles V. Hall-Promoted Corporal Oct. 19, '64, for gallant conduct. Corporal George J. Matteson-Promoted Corporal, Jan. 1, '65. Wounded in neck, at Opequan. Corporal George R. Miller-Detailed for some time as a manager of a government farm at Fortress Monroe. Killed at Opequan. His right-hand arm was tom off by a fragment of shell, and his breast badly mangled. This Christian soldier was the first that fell upon that bloody field.

Corporal Clinton H. Medbury-Wounded in both lungs, on the night of the 11th of June, '63, while engaged in

digging(y a sap toward the enemy's works at Port Hudson. He died June 25, '63, at St. James Hospital, New Orleans. He was an exemplary soldier. Corporal Christopher W. Potter-Promoted Corporal, Oct. 19,'64, by General Orders, for gallant conduct. Corporal Charles F. Pratt-Transferred to V. R. C., Sept. 30, 63, at Fortress Monroe, Va. Corporal Daniel W. Putnam-Wounded in head and abdomen, at the assault on Port Hudson, June 14,'63. He died in field hospital at Port Hudson, June,'63. Corporal John Spurr-Promoted Corporal, April 27, '64. Wounded in hand at Port Hudson. Wounded in breast at Opequan. Mustered out in hospital at Philadelphia. Corporal Lewis E. Tew-Promoted Corporal, Jan. '64. Killed at Cedar Creek. His remains were brought north, and interred at New Berlin. Corporal Isaac Weaver-Enlisted Jan. 13,'64. Transferred to 90th N. Y., June 2, '65, at Washington, D. C. Musician Dudley W. Young-Transferred to V. R. C., Sept. 80, '63, at New Orleans. Alfred N. Aldrich-Enlisted Aug. 31,'64. Wounded in head, at Cedar Creek. Elijah J. Andrews-Died of typho-malarious fever, at Brashear City, La. June 6,'63. James T. Avery-Discharged for disability, at New Orleans, July 17, '63. Re-enlisted in the same Company, Aug. 31,'64. Wounded in thigh at Cedar Creek. William H. Avery-Enlisted Sept. 1, 64. Wounded in leg at Cedar Creek. Erasmus D. Babcock-Transferred to V. R. C., at New Orleans, May 1, '64, Russell F. Baker-Wounded at Port Hudson, in hand. Died of congestive fever Franklin, La., Jan. 18, '64. George A. Beach-Wounded in hand severely, at Port Hudson. Afterwards d(!tailed as teamster. Henry Bidwell-Deserted Sept. 6, '62, at Norwich, X. Y. Received a three days, furlough, and never returned. Charles H. Bowen-Transferred to V. R. C., May 1, 64. Charles H. Bryant-Severely wounded in both thighs, at Port Hudson. Discharged at York, Pa., Dec. 29, '64. Chester L. Buchanan-Enlisted Aug., 26,'64. Died suddenly of congestion of the brain, in his tent at Camp Sheridan, Stevenson,3 Depot Va., Feb. 8, 65. Only a short time before he came off the picket line apparently well. Levi M. Carpenter-Enlisted June 4, '64. Transferred to 90th N.Y., June 2, at Washington, D.C. Mathew L. Carpenter-.Never wounded. George W. Champlin-Died of ship fever, Dec. 19, '62, at Ship Island, Miss.

Abram Chappell-Wounded in hand at Port Hudson. Transferred to V. R. C., May 31, '64. Charles Clark-Enlisted Aug., 26, 64. Wounded at Cedar Creek, in leg. Transferred to 90th N. Y., June 2,'65. at Washington, D. C. John A. Cleaveland-Died from the effects of vegetable poison, June 1, '63, at Berwick City, La. Albert B. Colburne-Wounded slightly in leg at Opequan. Elijah N. Colburne-Enlisted Jan. 4,'64. Wounded at Cedar Creek, for which he was discharged May 13, '65, at Chester, Pa. George W. Crumb-Wounded in thigh, at Cedar Creek, severely, for which he was discharged May 22, 65, at Philadelphia, Pa. Alfred Davis-Killed at Opequan, being shot through the head. His officers always spoke of him as ever cool and ready. Daniel Davis-Discharged for disability, Sept. 8, '63. Adin Deming-Wounded in right knee, at Opequan . 3lustered out in hospital, at York, Pa. William R. Dunham-Enlisted Sept. 6, '64. Wounded at Cedar Creek, iii leg, severely, from which he died, Oct. 29,'64, at Winchester, Va. Horace Eddy-Taken prisoner at Sabine Cross Road 3, and confined at Tyler. Tex. Exchanged Oct. 23,'64, Lewis J. Eddy-Brother of Horace. Andrew J. Eldred-Mustered out with Company. Adicas Ellis-Wounded in leg at Cedar Creek.- limb amputated; discharged from hospital in Philadelphia, Pa. Amenzo Ellis-Brother of Adicus. Wounded at Opequan, in arm. Discharged May 22,'65, at McClellan Hospital, Philadelphia, Pa. Charles Fairchilds-Captured and paroled at Brashear City, La., June 23, '63. Detailed a long time at Brigade H'd Q'rtr, as carpenter. Edwin Fairchilds-Enlisted Jan. 12, 64. Transferred to 90th N. Y., June 2, '64 at Washington, D. C. Norman Fenton-Died of chronic diarrhea, June 10, '63, at Brashear City, La. Frank P. Field-Discharged for disability, May 6, '64, it Alexandria, La. George Fontaine-Wounded with buckshot in left fore-arm, at Port Hudson. Wounded at Opequan, in left leg with minnie ball. Discharged June 23,'65, at Satterly Hospital, Philadelphia, Pa. Freland P. Freely-Transferred to V. R. C., May 31, '64. Albert D. Fuller-Served some time as Co. cook. Jeremiah B. Fuller-Discharged for disability, at Baltimore, Md., Feb., 4, '63. Joseph Gilbert-Died of typhoid fever, at Chesapeake Hospital, Fortress Monroe, in Dec., '62. Hiram Gilbert-Brother of Joseph. Died of the same disease, at the same place, not far from the same time. Ambrose Green-Discharged for disability, Nov. 9, '62, at Stewart's Mansion Hospital, Baltimore, Md. Robert E. Gritman-Wounded in thigh, at Cedar Creek, from which he died Oct30,'64, at Winchester, Va. James Haight-Enlisted Aug. 22, '64. Discharged May 22, '65, for disability, at Philadelphia Henry M. Hall-Enlisted Aug. 31, '64. Jacob H. Havelly-Mortally Wounded in the head during the assault on Port Hudson, June 14, '63, and died the following day. The ashes of this gallant young soldier were gathered up in the succeeding month of Feb., by his cousins, Colonel Willie P. Rexford, and Lieut. North, to be buried with his kindred in Sherburne, N. Y. Smith Hill-Wounded- at Port Hudson, in side, leg, and arm with buckshot. Fred R. Honecka-Wounded in shoulder, at Opequan, and in thigh, at Cedar Creek. Discharged May 22, '65, at Philadelphia, Pa. Jarvis Howard-Died of disease, Aug., 1, '64, at New Berlin, N. Y., while home on sick furlough. Miles Ireland -Discharged for disability, April 27, '63, at Washington, D. C. Charles Isbell-Transferred to V. R. C., Sept. 30, 1863. Trumann G. Ketchum-Discharged for disability, at Marine Hospital, New Orleans, Aug., 21, '63. Cornelius O. King-Served as

Regimental wagon-master throughout his entire service. William D. Knapp-Wounded in right leg at Port Hudson. Discharged charged for disability in Marine Hospital, New Orleans, Jan 31,'64. James E. Marvin-Discharged for disability May 13,'63, at New Orleans. John L. Marvin-Wounded at Port Hudson, in left side and right hand, for which he was discharged, April -20, '64, at New Orleans. Sidney T. Merrill-Mustered out with Regt. Never wounded. Joseph W. Miller-Discharged for disability, at Baltimore, Md., Jan. 14, '63. Charles M. Moremus-Generally present with Co. La Fayette Moremus-Enlisted, Sept. 4,'64. William Munn-Never wounded. William EL Mumbalo-Wounded at Port Hudson, in right leg. Discharged at New Orleans, Sept. 8, '63. Oscar N. Nichols-Died of typho-malarial fever, at Brashear City, La., Mar. 10, '63. Caleb S. Page-Detailed during most of his. service in the Commissary Department and as clerk. Charles A. Peck-Enlisted Aug. 1, '64. Solomon Pettit-Discharged for disability, Dec. 27,'62, at Baltimore. Afterwards re-enlisted in another Regt., and died at Vicksburg, Miss., March 26, '64. Charles J. Pratt-Wounded in left arm and breast, at Opequan. Discharged from a Philadelphia hospital. George W. Roberts-Killed in action at Port Hudson, June14,'63. A young man of excellent habits, and much respected. Varner S. Root-Served as drummer, from organization of Regt. Smith B. Rowland-Discharged for disability, at Baltimore, Md., May 27, '63. Lindsey L. Shipman-Transferred to Veteran Reserve Corps, Sept. 30, 63, at Fortress Monroe. Lorenzo S. Shaw-Arm badly injured by a shell, on the 14th of June, at Port Hudson. Discharged in consequence, at Charlestown, Va., Aug. 19,'64. Seth C. Sisson-Shot through the right lung, in the assault of the 14th of June, and died the next day. He was a soldier prompt in the discharge of his duty. Charles W. Smith-Transferred to V. R. C., Sept. 80, '63. Elbert F. Smith-Wounded severely in thigh, at Port Hudson, June 14, discharged in consequence, at Baton Rouge, La., Feb. 19, '64. Albert D. Smith-Died of diphtheria Hampton, Va., Jan. 14, '63. His remains were buried in New Berlin, N. Y: Charles L. Smith-Died at Marine Hospital, New Orleans, of diphtheria, Nov. 15, '63. He had been examined for Lieutenant's commission in the Corps d'Afrique. Angel P. Stead-Died of disease, Aug. 31,'63, at Baton Rouge, La. Nathan Teft-Detailed in Pioneer Corps in the valley. Charles B. Teft-Wounded at Port Hudson, in head, right hand and shoulder at Cedar Creek, in thigh, breast and elbow. Mustered out in a Philadelphia hospital, since the Regt. Nelson A. Thayer-Discharged for disability, at Carrollton, La., Feb. 14,'63. Roswell F. Thayer-Brother of the above; died of fever, at Marine -Hospital, New Orleans, Sept. 6, 63. George B. Throop-Transferred to V. R. C., April 22,'64, at New Orleans. David H. Vanduzen-Enlisted June 4,'64. Transferred to 40th N.Y., June 2, '66, at Washington, D. C. Ezra Waters-Transferred to V. R., Sept. 30, '63. Isaac Weaver-Enlisted Jan. 13, 64. Transferred to 90th N. Y., June 2, 65, at Washington, D. C. Anson E. Webb-In battles, not wounded. Austin White-Discharged for disability, at Vermillionville, La., Nov. 9, '63. Charles T. White-Wounded June 14, at Port Hudson, in left arm, shoulder and thigh. Wounded at Cedar Creek, in jaw and right side of head, destroying the eye, and in thigh. Transferred to V. R. C., at Chestnut Hill Hospital Philadelphia, and discharged since the Regt. Franklin Wilcox -Discharged at Baltimore, May 19,'65, for disability. Joseph Wisbeck-Enlisted June 4,'64. Transferred to 90th N. Y., June 2, '66, at Washington, D. C.

Cyrus Hardaway's Civil War letters to his mother Mary Ann Chatfield Hardaway Beardslee in New Berlin/Pittsfield have provided regular readers with an original opportunity to better understand the Civil War and its significance upon one person, his family, community, and all of American history. From his initial enlistment in the legendary Berdan's Sharpshooter Regiment to his transfer to his hometown Company F, "Unadilla Valley Company," as part of the 114th NYS Volunteer Infantry Regiment, "Chenango County Regiment," Cyrus Hardaway fully participated in the American Civil War.

Other New Berlin/Pittsfield residents served in the Civil War in units other than 114th NYS Vol. Infantry Regiment. In addition to the 114th, Chenango County provided the 17th, 19th, 26th, 76th, 89th, 90th, 137th, 157th, 161st, 168th, 176th, and 193rd Regiments. Otsego County provided the 3rd, 43rd, 76th, 90th, 121st, 146th, 152nd, 154th, 176th, and 179th Infantry Regiments. Additionally both counties provided numerous regiments of cavalry, artillery, and engineers. Cyrus Hardaway's letters are simply one New Berlin/Pittsfield man's attempts to historically record and give meaning to the most important event in 19th century American history.

No better evidence of this historical significance are the numerous Civil War monuments erected by nearly every community in the decades after the war. New Berlin's Civil War monument is located within St Andrew's cemetery on South Main street. It is an extraordinary monument and has the names of 64 Civil War

veterans inscribed upon its sides. Erected in 1877 at the staggering cost of \$10,000, it is a vivid reminder of the significance of the Civil War on local and national American history.

As a final testament to our community's heritage and contribution to the American Civil War, the names of those individuals on New Berlin's Civil War monument are listed below.

Smith Haight Aden Deming Henry Pickens William Angell
Jarvis Howard Charles V. Hall James Reed George Agard John Harkins Mathew Carpenter George Roberts
Isaac B. Burch C. Houghtaling John E. Miller Jacob Robinson Walter Briggs George Jacobs Adicus Ellis Lewis
Reddington Chester Buchanan Everett Jackson Henry Harrington Lafayette Sherburne Henry Bennett Wallace
Jackson Edwin Gibson Stephen Scott Andrew Burrell Morrell Kinney Edwin Sawtelle William Thurber Deleva
Burlingame Morris Lull Austin White Lewis Tew Frank Babcock Galen Lull Samuel Sexton John Talman John
Hunt Clinton Medbury Horace Chase Edwin Thatcher Chester Cook Henry Marks William Potter
C. VanWalkenburg William Hamplin Charles Marks Charles White James Wales Leonard Edwards Daniel
Putnam John Reed Thomas Snell Charles Field David Porter Charles Bowen James Woodmansie George
Ferguson Francis Peck Elijah Andrews Samuel Winsor Luther Cage

Since the initiation of this column over 140 "letters home" ago, Cyrus Hardaway's Civil War experiences have intrigued and educated its many regular readers. With the conclusion of his letters, many individuals have asked or commented, "What happened to Cyrus Hardaway after the war?" A prior column attempted to answer the question but was able to provide only minimal information based upon the scant materials available at that time.

Recently, in the course of exploring the genealogical and historical resources on the internet, it was learned that some Civil War military war records and pension records are available at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Without great expectations, a search was made by the author's son, William Q. Beardslee, and to our immense pleasure, Hardaway's pension and military records were found, copied, and are now summarized.

Hardaway was officially discharged from the NYS 114th Volunteer Regiment in July of 1865. It appears that after a visit to his home in Pittsfield/New Berlin, he decided to change occupations. Readers may recall from his letters that he was ambivalent about purchasing farmland on (Pissmire Hill) Shacktown Mountain. Instead of returning to his farmer occupation, he traveled west.

For the next several years he worked as a ticket agent in Illinois for the Wabash and Illinois Railroad. Over the next 15 years, he also worked for other railroads including the Erie and Lackawanna. From his surviving pension records it appears he also worked with and around his younger brother, Nathan Summers Beardslee. "Summers" was successfully established as an engineer/surveyor and worked for several railroads in western New York, Ohio, and Illinois. It seems that Hardaway worked as an assistant railroad surveyor. On at least one occasion he returned to Pittsfield and farmed with his brother "Gust" (Augustus Beardslee) and his step-father Jesse Beardslee.

In 1882, at the age of 44, Hardaway married for his first and only time. His marriage to the widow, Delia White Hardaway would last for the remainder of her natural life. She died around 1905.

In 1885, Hardaway suffered the onset of an illness (partial paralysis) which plagued him for the remainder of his life and was the triggering event in his long efforts to obtain and increase his military pension. Hardaway initially suffered a complete paralysis which after nearly a year at home as an invalid, recovered somewhat but only so much as to allow him, with great fragility, to walk with the assistance of a cane or personal assistance.

After several years of semi-invalid status, he filed an application (1890) for a Civil War military pension. As part of that application, Hardaway submitted letters from his wife, brother-Nathan Summers Beardslee, individuals who knew him during the war, including his sharpshooter tent mate and New Berlin attorney

Henry Harrington, as well as from his treating physicians. He also submitted lengthy descriptions of his subsequent work experience, private life, and health history. It appears that but for this strange and acute paralysis, Hardaway had enjoyed otherwise good health.

An interesting part of the pension application was Hardaway's claim that his physical disability was caused, at least in part, by the exotic calfskin backpack equipment provided to Berdan's Sharpshooters. Hardaway's application suggested that the sharpshooter backpack was poorly designed and caused severe back strain on all sharpshooters. He was particularly critical of the sharp edges and the positioning of the backpack which constantly caused him to fight against the weight of the pack.

Hardaway underwent several medical exams and as might be expected, was examined for other illnesses which might account for his disability. He was determined to have never had any other medical conditions or diseases that could account for his disability; eventually, after a long period of bureaucratic review he was granted a pension. On subsequent dates the pension was increased. During much of this time he worked at the U.S. Census department as a clerk.

Throughout the lengthy military pension file, Hardaway repeatedly expressed his frustration at his inability to "legally" prove the events which he believed caused his disability. On more than one occasion, Hardaway submitted sworn statements indicating that it was difficult to prove, and that he had "no other witnesses or evidence" of events which had happened thirty years prior. His brother "Gust" had died in 1881 and his mother in 1885. His step-father passed away in 1879 and many of his fellow Berdan sharpshooters had been killed in the war or were dead from the passage of time. In short, he thought he had no other proof than what he had submitted.

It is at this point that the reader of his pension file realizes that the "best" evidence of Hardaway's war time injuries were the Civil War letters which he had written home to his mother and family. It was a strange and painful experience for this author to read Hardaway's pension file and his obvious frustration at not being able to "prove" his injuries when his "letters home" established beyond any question the exact time and place (the Peninsula Campaign of 1862) he had suffered his injuries. Hardaway obviously did not understand that his family had saved his letters; perhaps, his remaining family, only his step brother's widow remained on the homestead, did not realize the letters were stored away and available as evidence.

Some readers might suggest that his Civil War "letters home" would constitute "hearsay evidence" and inadmissible as evidence in the pension proceedings. Hearsay evidence is generally defined as evidence as to what someone said, other than while testifying in court and is offered as proof of the truth of the matter asserted.

By the 1890's, over thirty years after their writing, Hardaway's letters would probably have been considered a rarely encountered "exception" to the hearsay rule: Ancient Writings. Statements in writings (Hardaway's letters) of sufficient age that have been acted on as true are admissible as proof of the fact. In addition the letters might be also considered a "state of mind" exception to the rule.

Despite his lack of more evidence, Hardaway was granted a pension and on later dates increases in rates. Upon his death in 1910, Hardaway's brother, Nathan Summers Beardslee, brought his brother's remains back home to New Berlin for internment. The funeral was held in the Beardslee Homestead in Pittsfield, and burial was in the family plot at St. Andrew's in New Berlin, New York. This column is the last in the series that have reproduced the Civil War "letters home" by New Berlin/Pittsfield's Cyrus Hardaway to his mother, Mary Ann Chatfield Hardaway Beardslee. It has been an interesting and powerful experience for the author in its discovery and publication of these letters.

Hardaway died in 1910 without children from his marriage to Delia White Hardaway. Upon his death his remains were brought home by his half-brother, Nathan "Sommers" Summers Beardslee and buried in the family plot in New Berlin's St. Andrew's cemetery. Without any children, Hardaway's memory and Civil War

experiences would have been forgotten but for his "letters home." For that reason alone, they should be celebrated and appreciated.

Hardaway's only family alive at the time of his death was his half-brother Nathan Summers Beardslee. Readers may recall references in Hardaway's Civil War letters to "Sommers" and the obvious affection felt by him for his little brother. Later in his life, Hardaway worked with his younger and far more successful brother on railroad surveying in western New York.

Nathan Summers Beardslee always considered himself a native of New Berlin and upon his death in 1916 provided a significant amount (\$16,000) to the Village of New Berlin for the local library. A plaque commemorating his gift is located in the vestibule of the village's library. The following speech might also be considered another gift to New Berlin.

In connection with the recent review and organization of various family deeds, letters, and other documents, a strange, and never before seen document was discovered. It is a speech given by Nathan Summers Beardslee to the Civil War veterans organization, the Grand Army of the Republic, in 1898 upon the 35th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg.

The address is based upon Nathan Summers Beardslee recollection of his brother's (Cyrus J. Hardaway) participation in Berdan's Sharpshooters and the Battle of Gettysburg. Readers of Hardaway's letters will find poignant descriptions of Hardaway's departure for war, his letters, and the family's reading of them.

The publication of this 1898 public address based upon Hardaway's Civil War experiences is a powerful and appropriate manner to conclude this "Letters Home" column and is dedicated to the memory of Pittsfield/New Berlin's Cyrus J. Hardaway, his fellow Otsego and Chenango county Civil War veterans, and their Civil War experiences.

1898 Address by Nathan Summers Beardslee to the Grand Army of the Republic on the 35th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg

"Within the past few years I have had the opportunity of visiting some of the great battlefields of the Civil War, and I can truthfully say, that until then I have never appreciated in any degree the hardships which you endured, nor the work which you accomplished; and it is with a feeling of presumption, that I attempt to say one word to you men who fought those battles, whom we meet almost daily, and yet who seldom mention in any way the great deeds performed in defense of our country.

Two years ago I visited the battlefield of Gettysburg, and perhaps may venture to speak to you of what I saw there and also of what occurred at the homes of the young men when they went out to fight for their country in 1861.

At the breaking out of the war I was a lad about 12 years of age, and I well remember the stirring scenes of those days. I lived in a town about 35 miles south of Utica, and depended for news from the seat of war upon the Utica Daily Herald. I remember very distinctly of bringing home the paper on that April night on which Fort Sumter was bombarded, and that my father sat by the table reading to the assembled and eager family a thrilling account of the event.

The excitement continued, and finally the call for troops was made; and from our house, my brother and a young man by the name of Nelson, who had lived with us a long time, volunteered to go into the service. My brother was about 21 years old, tall, and straight as an arrow, and Nelson, though somewhat younger, was equally as strong. Both were of fine physique and were types of the brave young manhood which went to make up the vast arm of the North. They enlisted in Co. D of Berdan's sharpshooters and were furnished with breech-loading rifles.

As I remember now, it was a warm June morning when the time came for the boys to leave home and join their regiment. We were all gathered about the door to bid them good-bye, the men of the family with a lump in their throats, as usual, bade a hurried good-bye, and disappeared as quickly as possible. My mother of course was the last to say farewell. To each of the boys she spoke a few words of kindness and good advice, such as only a mother can give, and which they could take away in their hearts. She looked sad but kept up bravely, and I recall that she stood on the lower step holding my hand, as we watched them go down the street and disappear from sight, and then turned and went into the house, and directly to her own room. In passing her door soon after I saw what cannot be forgotten in youth, in manhood or in old age, and which makes the name of mother sacred to all mankind. She was kneeling by her bedside and with clasped hands and bowed head was doing what I presume thousands of other mothers throughout our broad land were doing, she was praying that the Heavenly Father would bring back her boy, and that prayer was granted; but his comrade lies buried among the unknown dead on Cemetery Hill, having been killed at the opening of the fight near the Wheatfield, on the morning of the second day. I recall also, how quiet the house seemed after the boys had gone, and it was a long time before we became accustomed to their absence.

Then came the letters describing their reception in Albany and of the putrid meats and horrible living furnished by army contractors; the trip to New York and the ride from New York to Washington in cattle cars; then into camp for a short time at Washington, where but little better food was received, and then the story of the siege of Yorktown.

Then the letters told of the march up the Peninsula; life in the Chicahominy Swamp, and the hot fights at Gains' Mill and Malvern Hill; the retreat, and afterwards the second battle of Bull Run, where they were for a time cornered near a railroad embankment, suffered considerable loss and were finally badly whipped. I remember well the letters describing the winter before Fredericksburg and the slaughter across the river, and the battle of Chancellorsville, but I will not attempt to follow them through all of these struggles, which are so much more familiar to you than they are to me.

On the 18th of October 1898, at seven o'clock in the morning our party reached Gettysburg, and was taken charge of by Captain Long with whom many of you are acquainted, and were driven out of Emmettsburg Pike to visit the scene of the first days fight. We saw the ground on which the gallant 9th N.Y. opened the battle on that day, and we stopped to view the monument erected in their honor. We saw the point on the Chambersburg Pike, where one of our batteries was in danger of being captured, and 1200 Pennsylvania troops were ordered to charge out and save the guns, which they did, but lost 852 men in a short space of time. We drove by the little clump of timber, and over the ground where General Reynolds was killed; thence over the bridge crossing the railroad out where so many lives were lost, and so on over the field, and returning to the town late for dinner.

As we drove out of town in the afternoon we were shown the narrow lane through which 1700 Louisiana Tigers had marched to attack our breast works on Cemetery Hill. They were men who had no fear of death, and were met and driven back by men equally as brave. Twice they were inside our breast works and twice they were driven out. Men were frenzied and fought like demons, with muskets, gun-swabs, clubs, and stones, and as a result of this desperate encounter, out of this regiment of 1700 men composing the Louisiana Tigers, less than 300 returned, after a battle lasting only one-half hour. Desperate as this encounter was, it was but typical of the many that occurred in almost every part of the field during the great three days battle.

During the second day the battle on the Wheatfield, and in the Peach Orchard, were equally as fierce; for Gen. Lee recognized the importance of getting possession of Little Round Top. For seven long hours this ground was again and again fought over, until the Wheatfield and the little valley at the foot of Round Top were almost impassable with the bodies of the dead and wounded, and as you ride over this ground and view the scene where "the bullets sang the song of death," one is, as I said before, so impressed that it is almost impossible to comprehend it.

We were driven over the magnificent grounds of the Cemetery Hill and shown the beautiful monuments that are now erected to commemorate the memory of the men who fell there. We were shown the New York State Monument and National Monuments and were driven to Spangler's Spring, and drank of the water that both friend and foe so bitterly fought for thirty years ago.

During all the years that have elapsed since the war, I have heard my brother say but little about these great battles, but later that week we saw him in Washington, and had an opportunity to question him in regard to the part that a private soldier took in that great struggle at Gettysburg. He told me that during the first day's fight, Berdan's sharpshooters were at Frederick, Md., and that during the day they marched 33 miles, carrying with them five days rations and eighty rounds of ammunition. They reached the battlefield some two miles from Gettysburg about one o'clock the next morning, and laid down on the ground and went to sleep as well as they could. Not more than fifty percent of the men had reached camp at that time, and they were coming in all night, and the rumbling of artillery and marching of troops could be distinctly heard.

Many poor fellows, footsore and weary, marched the long night through, and came in late, only to meet death on that, or the following day. In the morning they gathered a few sticks and made a cup of coffee, and about ten o'clock General Sickles and his staff rode by; The Gen. stopped and said to them "boys, go over in those woods and see what is over there, but be mighty careful and not get into a scrape." They were ordered to advance, and were the first to march through a wavy field of wheat and into a piece of timber beyond. Not a living thing was to be seen. Everything was as still and silent as the grave. About three or four hundred feet in advance there was a stone wall that looked very suspicious, and though nothing was to be seen, they were advancing with much caution, supported by the 3rd Maine regiment, when, suddenly, two lines of battle rose from behind the wall and fired into their ranks. The enemy fired low and the regiment of sharpshooters fared badly, but in the 3rd Maine regiment the slaughter was horrible, and they could hear the bullets strike the men.

They of course got out of there as quickly as possible, and carried young Nelson and others back through the Wheatfield and over into the valley at the base of Little Round Top. With their bayonets they dug shallow holes in the ground, and wrapping the boys in their blankets laid them in this rude grave, then ripping open their canteens, scraped up sufficient earth to cover them over. While they were doing this Gen. Sickles was brought back wounded and passed closely by. You will at once recognize this as the Valley of Death, and the famous Wheatfield ground that was fought over and over that day, and where the slaughter was appalling, caused by the determination of the enemy to capture Little Round Top. They had another fight that day in this Valley of Death, and afterwards fell back towards Gettysburg, stopping behind a stone wall and near a clump of trees. This location was the famous bloody angle. Co. D stayed there that night and until one o'clock the next day, when the greatest enemy opened fire on our lines, and one hundred and fifty of our canon located on a hill back of them replied, firing over their heads. His description of this artillery fight was very graphic. For two hours the earth itself trembled; the screeching of the shot and shell as they passed over them, and the shrieks of the wounded and dying was something indescribable, and made them lie very close.

In the meantime my brother had dug a hole in the ground and piled up a few rocks and some earth in front of himself, and lay there and waited. About three o'clock in the afternoon, from across the open fields about a mile and a quarter distant, the enemy advanced in seven lines of battle. Across this open field, shoulder to shoulder 18000 men, came steadily forward without firing a shot; when about half way across, the artillery fire of grape, and canister, and shrapnel, was concentrated upon them, mowing great gaps in their lines; Company D. with their breach-loading rifles fired 80 rounds of ammunition into these advancing columns, and yet on they came. The artillery had been so placed that it had an enfilading fire, and it seemed as if nothing human could endure it, but the lines closed again and again and continued to advance and actually succeeded in reaching the stone wall, when they seemed to realize that only death awaited them, they were almost annihilated and mortal man could stand nothing more, they wavered for a moment and then turned. They could get no further, neither could they get back. This was Pickett's final charge, made by 18,000 fresh troops, which Lee had brought up and kept in reserve to break the Union center, and there are but few, if any, charges in the world's history that equal it for heroism, and for the number of men killed in a limited time.

My brother said that the next morning when they were ordered to follow General Lee in his retreat they marched over this field, and it was necessary to step over and around the dead to get over the ground. While passing over this field he witnessed a sight, that among all the scenes of carnage of his whole four years of service, nothing is so indelibly impressed on his memory, and the face to this day clings to his vision more than any other connected with his army life. On their way over the ground he passed by a large rock, and sitting with his back against the stone, in a perfectly natural position, was a fine looking young boy not more than 15 or 16 years of age. His cheeks were flushed and there was a smile on his face, and he held in his hand and was apparently reading a small bible. A second look, however, showed that there was no sight of those eyes which were wide open and that the lad was dead.

This was some other's boy who had no doubt learned to read his Bible at her knee, and from her home far away, she was perhaps praying for him, and wondering where he was that very night, little dreaming, that as the sun went down on that bloody field, her boy sat among such scenes, and that as his soul took its flight, his last thought was of her, and his last look was upon the little Bible she had taught him to read, and given to him when he left home.

This is a private soldier's account of the part that he took in one of the greatest battles the world ever saw, and one can only appreciate what was done there by visiting the battlefield and having the battle described by one familiar with it.

The consensus of opinion how is, that if Gen. Lee, instead of turning back to fight at Gettysburg, had maintained his advance and captured Harrisburg, and so on to Philadelphia, the result of our great war might have been changed.

One day not many years ago my brother was accosted in a Washington street car by a stranger who said, "I see that you wear a Grand Army button, what regiment did you belong to?" Upon receiving the reply "to the Berdan's Sharpshooters", he exclaimed, "great Heavens: man: how did you ever get out alive?", then my brother inquired, "what regiment were you with?", and when the stranger answered, "with the 3rd Maine" it was his turn to say, "well: and how did you ever get out alive?"

Before leaving Gettysburg we made a second pilgrimage to the National Cemetery and the monument erected by the Government. As you all know it was at the dedication of the National Cemetery on November 19th, 1863, that President Lincoln made a short speech which will go down in history as one of the greatest addresses of all times, and portions of which are inscribed on the face of the National Monument: It was hastily written at the house, in Gettysburg, where he was being entertained, and the Hon. Edward Everett, the appointed orator of the day said to Mr. Lincoln, "I would gladly give my forty pages for your twenty lines."

As we stood looking at this monument in the bright sunlight, having a fine view of the battlefield, and surrounded by graves of the unknown dead, a feeling of awe and of silence came over us all. With uncovered heads and moist eyes, we read, chiseled in the everlasting granite, the inspired and immortal words of President Lincoln.

Although you have heard them more times and they may be almost as familiar as the Lord's Prayer, yet when standing on this hallowed ground surrounded by the graves of those who died for their country, they strike one with added and irresistible force as he reads.

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of it as a final resting place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note

nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried on. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to the cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion,-” And now, permit me to say to you, men of the Grand Army of the Republic, that each of you, by the act of enlisting, offered your lives to your country; and this grand man, so kindly, so honest, and yet so great, did only what untold thousands of humbled men did; gave his life freely for his country, and no man can do more.”

Total Page Visits: 100 - Today Page Visits: 5

Search our catalog:

All LibrariesVestal Public Library

Enter your search terms, and then choose to search All Libraries.

LOG INTO YOUR 4CLS ACCOUNT

META

- [Log in](#)
- [Entries feed](#)
- [Comments feed](#)
- [WordPress.org](#)

Developed by [Think Up Themes Ltd](#). Powered by [WordPress](#).