

Charleston Mercury
August 7, 1861
Hampton's Legion

Hennessey

Extracts from a Private Letter

[FROM A MEMBER OF HAMPTON'S LEGION.]

CAMP JOHNSON,
Six Miles from Manassas, July 30.]

I will endeavor to give you some particulars of the fight, although you will by this time have heard thousands of reports, as every man sees different on such occasions. We received orders on Friday, the 19th inst., to appear at the Central Depot in Richmond, at 5 o'clock, p. m. We found it impossible to be there so early, and, consequently, did not get there until 8 o'clock. We then stacked arms, and lay down on the ground and slept until two that night. We left Richmond at the last named hour, and arrived at Manassas on Sunday morning about four o'clock. Shortly after, we heard the roar of artillery. Col. Hampton then drew us up in line and addressed us, the substance of which was, that we were about to go into battle, and hoped we would prove ourselves South Carolinians worthy of our State and fires. We then took up the line of march for the field, at which place we arrived about nine o'clock. Col. H. ordered us to take the extreme left, and stand until we were cut to pieces, or drive the enemy back.

We advanced steadily forward, shells bursting all around us. We were then dressed into line, and I never expect again to see cannon balls and shells fly as they did that morning. It is a mystery to me how one man escaped in the Legion. We stood our ground for one hour, alone, under one of the hottest fires Gen. B. says he ever saw. I gave myself up for gone, but still kept loading and firing. Poor PHILPS was shot dead at my side; also a man by the name of BLANKENSEN. BOMAR was wounded just to my left. Finding it impossible to hold our position, we retreated to a small clump of woods, and then the cry was, "We are surrounded; we are out-flanked." At this critical moment, the Georgia and Mississippi Regiments came to our assistance. We then not only maintained our position, but kept the enemy in check until about 2 o'clock. At this time, Gen. B. came up with Kershaw's and Cash's Regiments, and Kemper's Battery and John-tou's column. His appearance was worth to us 10,000 men. It rallied the wounded as well as the others. Those that were unable to rise from the ground waved their hands and cheered him as he passed along the line. We were then at close quarters with the scattered remnants of the Legion, and I assure you it was hot work. The order was given to charge the enemy's battery, which, upon the second charge, fell into the hands of our troops. It proved to be the famous Sherman Battery. After this charge, the enemy, completely routed, took to flight. Our men pursued them as far as Centreville. They left everything, in the shape of canteens and drinkables, that you can think of—champagne, lemons, sugar, etc. We took, among other things, some trunks. We captured 70 ambulances, fitted up in the most fancy style; also, a carriage and six horses, with a sword and trappings, supposed to have belonged to some general officer. The woods around were strewn with the dead and dying. A man who has never been upon a battle field can form no idea of the horrors of one. The roar of cannon and musketry, combined with the shrieks of the wounded and dying, and the sight of man-

gled bodies, is truly horrible. I saw a ball from one of the enemy's rifle cannon cut a man in two. I witnessed Bartow's horse shot from under him. He (Bartow) was a noble fellow. When he fell, two of our men helped his men to carry him off the field. A Regiment of our Zouaves were pitted against the Fire Zouaves of Ellsworth; they killed all but about 200 of them; the bloody bowie knife did ample work. The Washington Artillery, of New Orleans, is one of the noblest band of men I ever saw. I give them the credit of gaining the victory; they fought like lions, actually mowing down the ranks of the enemy. In our advance, one of our men saw a wounded Yankee lying down; he went up to him and gave him some water; when he turned to join the company the fellow coolly drew his pistol and fired at him, but missed; our men immediately turned round and bayoneted him. I escaped with a Minie ball through my hat. It just grazed my head. I send you, by Mr. R., a piece of bomb shell picked up on the battle field. The Yankees are a mean, contemptible people. They sent, under the white flag, to know if Gen. B. would allow them to bury their dead after the fight on Thursday at Bull Run. Gen. B. assented, and the scoundrels, instead of burying their dead, commenced to throw up entrenchments. We found it out and very soon ran them off. I took a walk over the battle field a few days ago, and the dead Yankees are not all buried yet. The bodies are in a dreadful condition, and the whole atmosphere is filled with the most disgusting smell. The idea, to me the most lamentable, is that the best blood of the South is being spilled whilst fighting against the lowest, most despicable and degraded men, not only of the North, but I believe of the world. The prisoners are, nearly all of them, the most miserable looking creatures I ever saw. Ely, the member of Congress taken prisoner, is an exceedingly low looking man. The enemy resorted to all kinds of deception and chicnery to take advantage of us; they used both the Palmetto flag and Confederate flag while advancing upon us, and for some time completely deceived our men. They also got and used our signs of recognition. It is very hard to distinguish our men from the enemy when at close quarters, their uniforms are so much like ours. I am now compelled to close my letter, as the mail is about to start for Manassas, but before doing so let me say that no woman of any country could be more kind to the sick and wounded men than the women of Virginia. Our wounded are receiving every attention; they are sought after and carried to private residences, and all that can be done to make them comfortable is being done. The farmers around the country where we are now stationed carry, daily, as many as forty and fifty of our men at a time to dine with them. Give my love to all the boys, and tell them I never expect again to see them.

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Private Letters.

Extract of a letter from a member of the Washington Light Infantry Volunteers:

MANASSAS JUNCTION, July 23, 1861.

We were thirty six hours coming from Richmond, without any food or sleep. Arrived at Manassas Sunday morning, swallowed a few morsels and immediately proceeded to the field of battle. Arriving there we were placed in the advance position. We saw the enemy approaching as in solid columns. As soon as they came within musket distance we gave them a volley which caused them to retreat. They again rallied, and supported by Ellsworth's Zouaves, advanced and poured a volley of fire amongst us which was most disastrous. Johnson was then killed, and we were compelled to retreat. Beauregard then appeared amongst us, inspired us, and volunteered to lead us if we would follow. We gave him cheer after cheer. The order was then given to charge, which the men obeyed, and carried Doubleday's batteries of six guns at the point of the bayonet.

The flower of the U. S. Army were against us. The Legion has the honor of carrying the day, and keeping 15,000 men at bay for two hours, subjected to the most galling fire of musketry, shells and cannonry. We went upon the field with six hundred and returned with three hundred.

We pursued the enemy as far as Centreville. The road along which they retreated was strewn with their dead and dying—horses, guns, ammunition, clothing, baggage, provisions, &c., literally covered the ground—fifty-three pieces of artillery captured.

I had the honor of bearing our banner, when we captured the celebrated Doubleday battery. My gun is torn up, and I escaped almost miraculously. None of the boys are hurt. Our Company lost thirty-nine killed, wounded and missing. Captain Conner behaved gallantly. I am sorry we lose him, as he now commands the Legion.

HAMPTON'S LEGION.

We have been furnished with the following extract from a letter from our fellow-citizen, WILLIAM C. HERIOT, Esq., of the Washington Light Infantry, HAMPTON'S legion, to his father in this city. It is dated:

MANASSAS JUNCTION, July 23, 1861.

My Dear Father:—I wrote to sister from Richmond, two days previous to our departure for this place, stating that Hampton's Legion would move forwards for the seat of a war in a few days. The Legion experienced very rough times on the passage to this place. We were two days and nights on our journey. The fare was very bad, but we had an abundance of water, which, you know, (being an old soldier) is a great desideratum. The inhabitants of the country were very loud in their demonstrations of joy on hearing that the Legion was on board the cars.

The face of the country is certainly grand and picturesque. You have a very fine view of the Blue Ridge Mountains, when within 40 or 50 miles of Manassas Junction. The eye, as it ranges over the beautiful fields, is greeted everywhere with the sight of green foliage. This is a very abundant country. The stocks of cattle and sheep are equal to any in Kentucky or Tennessee. Large fields of clover are to be seen on all sides. The original soil is extremely fertile, and immense quantities of guano are used annually.

But I must endeavor to give you an account of the greatest battle ever fought in America, which occurred on Sunday, 21st July, 7 miles from this place. The battle commenced at daylight on Sunday morning at Bull Run. Hampton's Legion arrived here at daylight on that morning, while the battle was going on. We partook of a cup of coffee and some dry bread, and marched immediately for the scene of action. We arrived on the battle field at 8 o'clock, and immediately commenced operations. Oh, what an awful day! The heart sickens at the sight of so much misery. We literally had to walk over the bodies of the dead and dying. The force of the enemy is variously estimated. Some say 45,000 and I have heard it put down at 60,000. The Confederate forces consisted of about 20,000 men, commanded in person by Gen. Beauregard. What a noble fellow he is. We came very near losing him. His horse was shot under him. The immediate scene of operations extended about eight or nine miles. The battle continued until night put an end to the dreadful scene. Oh, what a glorious, though dearly bought, victory for us. I, thank God, escaped with a little scratch over my nose, and a bullet struck me on the finger—pretty close shooting, don't you think?

I have some Yankee trappings to show you, if I live to see you again, in the shape of a splendid overcoat and pistol case. The enemy fled in great confusion. We followed them as far as Centreville. We lost our noble Colonel, B. Johnson, and Col. Hampton was badly wounded in the face. I was standing within six feet of him when he was shot.

We expect to leave for Alexandria to-morrow, when I will write you. God bless you, my dear father, sisters and brothers—guide and protect you. And should it be His will that I may meet on earth again, what pleasure, indeed, it will afford me again to shake the hand of those I love so affectionately. But these are dangerous times, and life is very, very uncertain. Again, God bless you all.

Affectionately, your son, WILLIAM.

Charleston Courier

August 7, 1861

Hampton's Legion (2 Ltrs)

From J. Hermy

Charleston Mercury

August 9, 1861

Hampton's Legion

From files of
John Hennessy

CAMP JOHNSON, VA., August 5.

Hardships of our Volunteers—Cooking—Need of Rice and Grist—Sunday after the Battle—Incidents of the Camp—Shooting with one Eye—Gen. Beauregard's Address—Strict Discipline, etc., etc.

In commencing this letter, I would, through you, urge upon all those who are sending contributions to the sick soldiers, to remember, as well, those who are not; for, believe me, the fighting part is but a portion of all our brothers, are enduring for the sake of home and honor. The Department furnishes flour; none of the men know how to make eatable bread out of flour, salt and water; and the fried, heavy fritters, and the raw, doughy biscuits, are doing as much damage as Minnie balls and patent shells. Send our men rice and grist in flour barrels. In that size it is more easily moved. Send it, and pay the expenses to Manassas, cost what it will. Also send peas and beans. Send them each week; it will save the lives of many who, else, will perish under the present fare and wretched water they are compelled to use. Our wounded are all doing well. SWEAT, poor fellow, has lost his arm. BOMAR is recovering. GREEN is getting on well; he is still at Manassas. We have not been able to move him yet. CHAPIN is well cared for in Richmond. I saw him yesterday; he says he wants for nothing. Sergeant GARDNER, whose gallantry I have heard much of, is also there, getting on well. GEORGE WEAR is improving, and will return to camp this week. BAKER's eye has recovered; he has gone back to camp; also, HURSON and ATKINSON. They report on the well list again. THOMPSON is at Gordonsville, with a relative, doing well.

Sunday before last we gathered together under some fine shade trees which skirt our camp in the rear, and there offered our prayers and praises to Almighty God. The contrast between the two Lord's days, and the difference of occupation, seemed to strike impressively the whole congregation, and I have seldom preached or prayed with a more solemnized people. I hear there has been a marked difference in the Legion since the fight. I am sure all at home will join me in the prayer that the impression may be lasting, and God's work may be blessed by Him among them.

You may judge of the coolness of some of our men on the day of battle by the following incident: Corporal Baker was shot in the eye, and, unable to see, he remarked to the Colonel, "My eye is shot out; what am I to do?" "Shoot with the other eye," said the Colonel. "But I always shut one eye when I shoot." "Well," said the Colonel, "you are saved that trouble; one is shut for you; open the other and shoot." Baker tried, but finding it impossible to see, he left the field; worn out, he took his seat at the foot of a tree, where, a few moments after, he found a companion. "Neighbor, where are you from?" said the Corporal. "Massachusetts," said the fellow. "O, you are a Yankee, are you?" "Yes," was the reply. Baker looked at the man, and, as well as he could see, he had no wound, and was armed. The Corporal had not even a pen-knife with him; he looked all round for a weapon, and his vision being very short, he could find nothing. After being in this disagreeable proximity for some minutes, he, in his usual quiet way, informed the Yankee he was going, and the fellow making no objections, the Corporal retired. There was a narrow escape. Gen. Beauregard's remarks to the Legion, as near as I can gather them, were: "Soldiers: You are Carolinians, and it is not the custom of Carolinians to be conquered—forward!" One of the Zouaves said he had been wounded and taken prisoner, and carried to the rear of a South Carolina regiment, and while lying on the ground he saw one of the South Carolinians, who was severely wounded himself, crawl up to a stump, and load and fire his gun eleven times as he sat there waiting to be taken from the field. Who can conquer such a spirit as this? There is a very amusing anecdote told of Adjutant B. When in full pursuit, near Centreville, an officer appeared among them, moving around quite briskly. The Adjutant was quite suspicious of the stranger. "Who are you, sir, and what are you doing here?" "Me, sir, I am General S—, of Virginia." "You may be General S—, but I don't know you, sir." "Don't know me, sir?" looking around with great indignation, "why, everybody knows me about here. I am General S—." "That may be, sir," said the Adjutant, "but for the present you must keep in the rear." At length a happy thought suggested itself. "Show me your shirt, sir." "My shirt, sir, my shirt!" and with boiling indignation the General showed his shirt where the name was written in full, and the General received the apologies and the pass from the Adjutant. A hint to the home folks to mark all the clothes in convenient places. We don't know when some more of us may find the same useful.

I am sending you these little incidents as I hear them well authenticated. They form, to the friends of the parties, part of the history of the glorious 21st. More anon.

Yours, the

CHAPLAIN W. L. I.

From the files of
John Hennessy

FURTHER PARTICULARS OF THE MANASSAS BATTLE—THE CAPTURE OF SHERMAN'S BATTERY.

We have some very interesting and authentic accounts of the battle at Manassas, from an officer who was in the thickest of the action; and who testifies to the extremely courageous and devoted action of the Hampton Legion, that held one of the most important positions in the fight, in front of the deadly fire of Sherman's Battery.

The infantry companies of the Legion joined the line of battle about 9 o'clock in the morning, having marched seven miles, after a hastily-snatched breakfast, to take their part in the general action. In a few moments after the line was formed, Col. JOHNSON fell by a shot from the battery. He was instantly killed, the ball striking and tearing away the upper portion of his head. Colonel HAMPTON himself, assisted by Surgeon DAREY and Adjutant BARKER, bore the body from the fire.

At this instant, the men missing for a moment the presence of their commander, cried out "We have no commander!" Capt. GAREY, who was commanding the left wing, suddenly called out, "Follow me, Hampton Guards, follow to victory!" The effect of the tones of the command was instant. The noble and gallant Edgefield company made a rushing charge towards the enemy, in advance of the rest of the Legion nearly three hundred yards, and so far on the left flank that for a moment they were under the fire of the Washington Artillery. The Guards advanced to within 100 or 120 paces of the enemy. Unable to maintain their position, they retired, falling back upon the column of the Legion. It was then that Col. HAMPTON, after a few thrilling words at the head of the Legion, ordered its fire to be opened upon the deadly battery that was mowing down his ranks.

Nobly and gallantly did his men respond. Firing by file and maintaining their position, they stood steadily until three o'clock in the evening, under the deadly fire of one of the most destructive batteries of the Federal army.

At this time of the day, the Legion fell back about 200 yards, when Gen. EVANS, of South Carolina, rode up to the line, and making himself known to the men, added his noble and patriotic encouragements to those of their gallant commander. A shout rises as BRADGORD himself rides to the line, and in stirring words appeals to the Legion to hold its devoted position—but a few moments longer, and the victory would be won.

The men were suffering horribly from the most agonizing thirst, when a number of officers and privates volunteered on the desperate mission of bringing water from a ravine near by through the fire of the enemy. But three returned from the gallant errand. Lieuts. BAYES and TOMPKINS, of the Watson Guards, and private N. N. CARTER, and they just in time to join Col. HAMPTON's last and desperate charge upon the battery.

The Legion had advanced about thirty paces, when the charge was joined by the 49th Virginia Regiment, under command of Col. SMITH, who led the charge on foot—his horse having been just shot from under him. Col. HAMPTON offered his own horse. At that time, when within about 150 yards of the battery, Colonel HAMPTON received his wound. He was struck by a ball in the temple. As he was raised, the cool and self-possessed gallantry of the brave man was exhibited. In calm and affecting words he exhorted Col. SMITH to stand by the Legion and to help to support its flag. The words added a new spirit to the combined charge. The Legion advanced to it with its right wing under the command of Col. CONNER, and the left under that of Capt. GAREY—the command of the intrepid Watson Guards, who had so distinguished themselves in the opening of the action, being devolved upon Lieut. W. D. JENNINGS, until joined by Lieuts. BAYES and TOMPKINS, who had undertaken the brave mission of bringing water to the suffering men through the thickest of the fire.

The slaughter of the enemy at the battery, as the combined charge of the Virginia Regiment and the Hampton Legion swept over it, is said to have been terrific. The fugitives were pursued by the companies of the Legion to near Centreville. For four or five miles, the pursuit is described to have been over dead bodies, which strewn the retreat of the enemy.

The Legion reports about thirty killed and mortally hurt, with the immense number of nearly three hundred wounded—truly a gallant record. Neither its cavalry companies nor artillery arrived in time for the action; had they done so, quicker work would have been made by the Legion. As it is, with the gallant record it has made, and the compliments of BRADGORD given it the day after the victory, it may boast, indeed, to have had a distinguished part in the glorious day.

The names of Captains CONNER, GAREY, Adjutant BARKER and Surgeons DAREY and TAYLOR are mentioned among those who distinguished themselves heroically in the fight.

The escapes of many of the men through the storm of fire are described as almost miraculous. The South Carolinians were better shots than the enemy. At three fires from one of the Corporals, J. W. TOMPKINS, two Yankees were seen to bite the dust; and at one time of the action, Lieutenant JENNINGS, with a revolver, fired into the enemy a number of shots, nearly each one of which struck its man. Many of the Legion had their clothes torn through with bullets.

Richmond Examiner

July 25, 1861

Hampton's Legion

From the files of
John Hennessy

Charleston Courier
August 8, 1861
Hampton's Legion

The Manassas Battle.

A young member of the HAMPTON Legion sends the following interesting letter in reference to the Manassas battle:

CAMP, NEAR MANASSAS, July 30, 1861.

Dear Mother.—I have not as yet given you a sketch of the battle, and really I feel unequal to the task. At any rate I will give you my personal experience. About 10 o'clock, Friday, a dispatch came that the Legion must leave for Manassas that evening. We struck tents at 3 o'clock and by 10 were on our way for the Junction. After a tedious journey in box cars we arrived at daylight Sunday morning. We found orders awaiting us to eat breakfast and proceed to the battle ground. I, assisted by one who has since died of his wound, (Middleton), ground the coffee. We eat a hasty meal, loaded our pieces, and started for the battle field. After a march of seven miles we reached the place where the bloody scene was to be enacted. It was then about the time of morning service, and it occurred to me that while we were about to engage in the conflict, prayers were ascending in our behalf. Soon we were addressed by our Colonel as follows: "Men of the Legion, I am happy to inform you that the enemy are in sight." He then exhorted us to strike boldly, to remember the cause in which we were fighting, to stand up for South Carolina. We were then marched to the top of a hill and ordered to lie on our faces, so as not to attract the notice of the enemy as they were not far off for our muskets to reach them. By the imprudence of some, who stood up, we attracted their attention and soon a shower of balls fell among us, and the shells burst within a few feet of some of us—the balls from the rifled cannon hissing like serpents. We left this position and now comes the part we took in the fight. The Legion was formed in a narrow lane. In front of us could be seen, in large columns, the enemy advancing. Dropping on our knees in a gully we awaited their attack. Soon we were met by a tremendous volley of musketry and artillery, whose effect was terrible. It was by this volley our brave Lieutenant Colonel was killed—Col. Johnson was brave to a fault. Immediately to my left was poor Phelps; a ball passed clean through him, striking me in the leg, but it had performed its mission and only gave me slight pain. I turned to Phelps, thinking he might have a parting word to deliver, but he was dead; without a groan he had passed away. A bullet passed very near, grazing my temple and causing the blood to flow. In every direction could be heard the groans of the wounded. We in our turn poured a volley into the enemy. At this time I made up my mind for the worst; the sickening feeling which at first came over me when beholding the wounded wore away; I saw we had a terrible struggle before us and could have met death calmly. We struggled with a greatly superior force all day, sometimes sorely pressed. We were opposed to ten thousand men. After a hard fight all day seven thousand troops came to our rescue under Beauregard, and we routed the enemy. It is almost impossible for you to conceive what a terrible sight it was. The battle field next day was covered with the dead of the enemy who lay in hundreds. I do not know how I escaped. I feel very thankful.

I mentioned in my last that we were going to move camp. We started on Saturday and marched eight miles from the Junction to a pleasant camp. We are about four miles from Manassas. I felt very tired, but was obliged to go on guard.

From the files of
John Hennessy

From Virginia.

We have been favored with another letter from Mr. J. E. Poyas, a member of the Washington Light Infantry Volunteers, HAMPTON'S Legion, to his sister in this city, which we publish (even at the risk of repetition,) believing that every thing concerning the Stone Bridge battle will be interesting to our readers:

MANASSAS JUNCTION, July 24, 1861.

My Dear Sister.—I trust my letter of Monday has flown to mamma on the wings of the lightning. I should have sent a telegram, but there were so many ahead of me, I thought it would be lost, or delayed until of no use.

The Legion has been baptized in blood, and have now a name to sustain, not to make. Would that we had been complete on Sunday, for with our artillery and cavalry we should have been equal to the hordes opposed to us, and instead of holding them in check, which we did for three hours, with scarcely any assistance, we would have driven them back or cut them to shreds before General Beauregard saw us on the field, and he would have been still more proud of his Carolinians.

On Sunday, 21st of July, at 7 A. M., the report of cannon was heard in the distance, and we knew that the battle had commenced. At eight we were formed into line and marched for the field. After marching about four miles a scout came to us, saying the enemy were approaching in numbers on our left. The Georgia Regiment and a small battery (two pieces) of artillery were near us, and first engaged the enemy. We approached under cover of a slight elevation of the ground, but not unobserved, for before we were well in sight their batteries opened upon us, and we lay upon the ground with balls, grapeshot and fragments of shell falling thick and fast around us. Of course, our small force could not stand before their hordes in open field, and the Georgians with the artillery were forced back. We then approached, skirting a small wood on our right, and opened fire upon them. At our first fire their colors were shot down, and it was here that Bahkensee and Phelps met their end.

We were soon obliged to fall back to a fence, and behind that to fight as long as we could stand, then to retire to a road in our rear, take to a ditch, and with a rail fence before us, to hold our position as long as possible.

It was here Col. Johnson was shot by the wretches who approached us with a Palmetto flag, and many of our men were wounded, but we made them pay dearly for their deception, by leaving hundreds of them stretched upon that portion of the field. Whilst we were in that ditch, Colonel Hampton, who had one horse shot, dismounted from his other, and joining us in the ditch, took a musket from one of the wounded men, and from that time until wounded late in the afternoon, fought with his men. I am happy to say that he is doing well, and was walking out yesterday. From that ditch and the fences around we fought from 11 A. M. to 5 P. M. At that time we took a park of nine pieces of artillery. The Richmond papers say the Virginians took it, but Gen. Beauregard says that ours is the credit, and it is certain that the Legion flag was the first over it, taken there by Corporal O'Conner, of our company—Sergeant Darby having become tired had given it to him to carry until he had rested. Our company flags we were obliged to leave in Richmond. The staff of our Legion banner was struck by a ball. Colonel Kershaw's regiment first, came to our assistance from Bull Run. They were followed by Col. Cash's and (I think) Col. Jenkins' regiment in the course of the afternoon. Old Jeff came upon the field at the head of a large body of cavalry, and completed the route of the enemy. Cols. Kershaw and Cash's, one Mississippi regiment, Kemper's battery from Alexandria, and a body of cavalry, with the Legion started in pursuit. Near Centreville they had halted—we formed the line of battle and Kemper opened upon them—and the Palmetto Guard, who were thrown out as skirmishers, gave them a volley, which sent them off howling, leaving their cannon and everything they had. As it was after sunset and cloudy, we could follow them no further, though the cavalry still kept up the chase. We have taken 1300 prisoners, 400 horses, 71 pieces of artillery, and property to an immense amount, in fact, I doubt if there has ever been so hard fought a battle or so complete a rout of an army on this Continent; perhaps never on either where there was such disparity of numbers.

From the files of
John Hennessy

According to the newspapers Gen. Johnston commanded our wing, but we never saw him, nor did we see Beauregard until 2 o'clock. Up to that hour, we could have been crushed at any moment, for the Yankees had ten to our one at the lowest calculation.

A Virginia traitor had furnished them with our countersign, and they had furnished themselves with a bogus Palmetto flag; had also recognized the Legion as soon as it appeared upon the field, and paid it particular attention, but had not the pluck to press on and crush us.

Gen. Bonham, when last heard of, was in possession of Fairfax Court House, and is probably at this time in Alexandria, as a portion of our army has advanced upon it, and report says takes it without firing a gun.

My opinion is that if we take Arlington Heights at once, we may be able to take Washington, and by so doing put an end to the war; but I am quite willing to leave the whole affair under God in the hands of those in whose care he has placed it.

As I have not mentioned Theo. G. Barker, our Adjutant, I must not close this rambling account of our first battle without saying, he was as cool and brave as it was possible for a man to be. After the fight we shook hands and congratulated each other on our safety. Our Captain is a trump—the ace of trumps—and we are all much troubled to think that he will be taken from us to be made a Major. Our Lieutenants all acted nobly; they told me they did not think I could have gone through with so much fatigue. I am very glad to say that Henry Middleton is doing well, and it is hoped he will recover. There is also hope for Green. Our frequent moves when the lines would necessarily be broken, made it particularly trying for men when thrown into confusion are very apt to become panic stricken.

Virginians, Georgians, Alabamians, Mississippians, Louisianians and Carolinians, all did their duty, and entirely routed the Grand Army of the United States.

Charleston Courier
July 29, 1861
Hampton's Legion

We have also been favored with the following extracts of a letter from JOHN E. POYAS, of the Washington Light Infantry Volunteers, Hampton Legion, written the day after the glorious battle of Stone Bridge.

MANASSAS STATION, July 22, 1861.

My Dear Mother:—Our Legion (now the Legion) arrived yesterday morning just before day. At 8 o'clock we took up the line of march, and about the time that you were all going to church, met the enemy, almost seven times our number, and with the assistance of one Georgia Regiment and two pieces of artillery, fought and kept back this immense force for three hours, until General Beauregard, who was fighting another detachment at a distant point, could come to our relief. When I say the Legion, I mean six companies of infantry, for our artillery and cavalry have not come on yet. It was a hard fight but a glorious one, despite the heavy losses on our side. We would see our comrades falling around us, but, until forced to retire to rally, could not stop to take them from the field.

As you may well suppose, from the great disparity of numbers, we were sorely pressed, but as once as we were driven from one position would rally on our Palmetto and meet them at another, and in this way kept them back until about two o'clock. Gen. Beauregard came on the field and told us, "Carolina you have done well—go on, and the day will be ours." Soon after, Col. Kershaw with the 2d Regiment of S. C. Volunteers, came on, and we took the park of artillery which had galled us so severely all the morning. Then Col. Cash with another South Carolina Regiment arrived, and was soon followed by others that had been fighting at Bull Run. The enemy having been driven from that point united with those opposed to us. By sunset we had driven them miles away towards Washington, having taken thirty pieces of artillery, some five hundred prisoners, and ten thousand stand of arms. Colonel Johnson was shot through the head early in the engagement. George Phelps was shot by my right about the same time and instantly killed. Blakemore, another private, was killed much about the same time. Robert Bondy was severely wounded, and has been sent to Culpepper hospital, where the sick and some of the wounded are sent to be nursed. H. Middleton and J. W. Green are dangerously wounded. A great many are severely wounded. Scarcely any one escaped without a scratch or blow. Two of our men are still missing.

Col. Hampton was shot in the face, the wound is not considered dangerous, he fought bravely, and since his horse was shot, took a musket in his hand and fought with his men.

Capt. Conner was struck by a spent ball, which did no more than cut his coat, but would have killed had it penetrated, for it was in the left breast.

One of the first shots fired at us, struck a rock, and sent splinters flying, one of which gave me a slight blow upon the forehead above the left eye, and another on the left arm, but caused me no inconvenience; another struck Henry Baker in the left eye injuring it seriously.

The day was hot and dry, and we suffered much from the scarcity of water. Of those in our tent, Whitney was the only one wounded. The Yankees had a large number of regulars, and were confident they would win in the end. We suffered from heat and hunger, but we have a large number of officers among the prisoners taken, and I believe had we known it earlier would have taken them also.

The rebels pretended to be making battle at Bull Run—only a ruse to draw attention from the larger body which was trying to get round this place to take the rail road leading to Richmond. They also raised a Palmetto flag under cover of which one portion of their forces came very near to our Legion and fired upon us, but on our return they were brought to a halt, and we say there as good as they gave us. We were under Beauregard, but Jeff Davis was also on the field, and I think must have satisfied "Old Fuss and Feathers" that he can't compete with him. Night had fallen and we never had, during the day, more than 13,000 engaged.

The rout was a glorious one, and when we came upon the fugitives they attempted to make a stand. As soon as our lines were formed, and the Washington Artillery of New Orleans opened upon them, they took to their heels, leaving 21 pieces of artillery, all that remained of the once famous Sherman's Battery among them.

P. S.—The President and Gen. Beauregard have called on Col. Hampton to thank him for the action of the Legion yesterday.

From the files of
John Hennessy

Hampton's Legion.

The following is an extract from a letter, written by a member of Hampton's Legion, received in this city, dated Manassas, July 23:—

"I have survived a fearful day for the Legion. We arrived in sight of the enemy just as they had forced Gen. Bee back. We were ordered to sustain a battery posted on the extreme left. We formed round a farm house on the top of a hill at the right of the field battery, and found ourselves in advance of the rest of our line, and immediately opposite to a powerful battery of the enemy stationed at the right of a thick wood which protected the infantry on his left. For half an hour we were in total uncertainty where to fire, amidst the whistling of bullets. Conner's company and the next company on the right of the Legion made a stand bravely under a galling fire. We succeeded in rallying the rest of the men when Gen. Bee came on the ground and ordered us to fall back on Gen. Jackson's position. His order to retreat started off a large proportion of the companies. Those that remained fought nobly in the most exposed position. Col. Johnson fell near me, very soon after we got into the fight, from a ball in the head. He died instantly. His loss is irreparable to the Legion. We succeeded in maintaining our position after one or two partial retreats, and rallied until Gen. Beauregard came on the ground and ordered us to retire to a position taken up in our rear by the artillery.

We brought off Col. Johnson's body and the wounded, and after a little while received another order to advance to meet the enemy, who had nearly turned our left. Reinforcements came up in the midst of a struggle against fearful odds, and the battery on the left was saved.

I have nearly used up my gray horse, and find a shot grazed his fetlock.

In reply to Gen. Beauregard's enthusiastic praises of the Legion, the President replied in his own manner, "I knew they would fight."

A portion of Conner's company and the five Rifles made the firmest and coolest stand on a round side, under a hail of bullets poured down from a wood on the crest of the hill, while the Kickapoo battery at the corner of the wood opposite and a battery on our left and rear poured in a cross fire of shot and shell.

Conner and the remnant of the Legion, after the pursuit, remained near the day's fight.

Col. Hampton, late in the day, received a bullet on the side of the temple. The wound is not dangerous, though the ball is under the skin.

We will re-form the scattered Legion to-day and play our part out. It has made its mark beyond our utmost expectation, though it has suffered severely in Col. Johnson's death. I cannot pretend to open the volume of sensations crowded into one day. I feel quite well and fresh to-day and ready for another start.