



Henry Johnson

Camp Johnson near Hagerstown

September 20, 1862

My dear Rebecca, Mary, & Ida, wife & sisters,

I wrote you yesterday and by mistake dated I believe the 18th, After I wrote to you about half past four P.M., such word was received of the result of the days fighting as made it necessary for us to move from our position 3 miles out of Hagerstown in the turnpike which leads to the battleground near Shepherdstown [Battle of Boteler's Ford] and come back to Hagerstown & move about two miles toward Williamsport.

As I told you, I have been assigned to guard duty. The guard consisted of 63 men & some others were left — in all perhaps 80 men.

Jackson has escaped from McClellan & crossed the Potomac, and McClellan feared that he might go up the Potomac & cross at Williamsport, come up to Harpers Ferry and either get in his rear or go up into our state. For this reason he desired the Pennsylvania forces to be sent on to Hagerstown in order to deter him from the attempt or prevent him if he undertook it. He showed his foresight in this instance for sure enough, he did send up some forces to Williamsport yesterday afternoon.

In our old camp, I was on guard in the woods for from 6 to about 10 P.M. & there was so much fear of a raid of some kind, that I walked my beat the entire time. All at once a horseman came up at a gallop across the fields from here & ordered us all to pull up tents, pack baggage, & be off in half an hour for this camp. I was so tired that I knew I could not march some six miles & I succeeded through James Bowman [quartermaster] in getting a ride with the baggage. The road from Hagerstown here was lined with cavalry and other forces, cannon, &c., and here on each side of the road the campfires were blazing in every direction.

We were paraded about 11 P.M. in battle array, muskets all loaded, & with stacked arms were permitted to lay down, with our blankets for a covering & with the information that we might be attacked at any moment & at all counts would be early in the morning.

At two or three o'clock, we were roused up & again placed in line of battle — an alarm being occasioned by some of our cavalry pickets coming suddenly upon our infantry pickets, and causing an alarm in the camp. A dispatch was forwarded at 1 A.M. this morning & received here while we were in battle array that he had succeeded in extending his lines some 15 miles this way & that there was no longer any necessity for the Pennsylvania forces to remain here. It was also ascertained that the force sent by Jackson to Williamsport had left there, either because we were too strong for them, or because they had found out McClellan's extension of the lines. We accordingly again went to bed, but the night was cold & I did not sleep so comfortably on the ploughed ground as the night before.

We were all a good deal uneasy at the thought of such raw forces being opposed to Jackson's veterans but I was not much discomposed, I believe, but prepared myself to stand fire without a flinch, if I could.

Today we are all calm as danger has passed away & tomorrow we march back to Pennsylvania where you may write to me & will go to New Castle, Pennsylvania — how long to stay, I do not now. Tomorrow some of us intend going to the battleground. It is dark now & I have no more room. Love to all. I wish I could hear from home.

Yours ever, — H. Johnson

Some of our boys call this Camp Johnson in my honor. The battle today was near Sharpsburg, Va. [Maryland] & we obtained a complete victory, as reported.

# Henry Johnson

Born in 1819 the son of Samuel and Rebecca J. (Heiner) Johnson of Sussex County, New Jersey. Henry attended subscription schools, graduated from Princeton in 1837, read law with the Hon. Whitfield S. Johnson, and joined the New Jersey bar in 1841, married Margaret Green, sister of future state Supreme Court Justice, Henry Green.

During the Civil War, Johnson served as a private in Co. K, 14<sup>th</sup> Pa. Militia 1862, Antietam Campaign, although his unit was involved in minimal action with the enemy. Johnson, a skilled, Princeton-educated attorney, returned home to Williamsport at the end of the 1864 Session, practiced law, and worked for the betterment of his hometown until the day he died, August 11, 1895.