

HAMPTON, CARLOS D. (DR.)

SECTION G, BLOCK 20, LOT 13

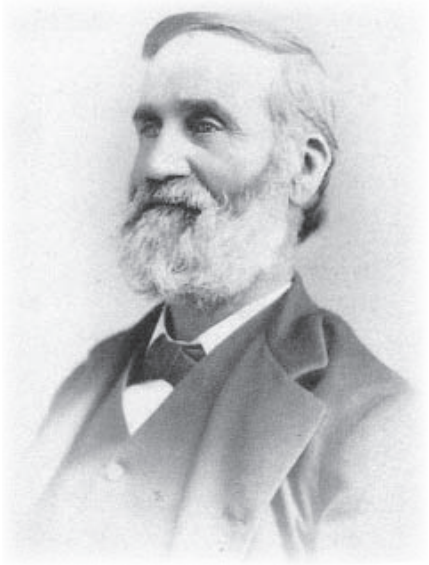
In the spring of 1862 Dr. Carlos D. Hampton had two options presented to him: remain in Texas and wait for the inevitable visit from rebel supporters that would result in his hanging, or join the Confederate army. Years later his obituary would describe him as “a man of strong convictions and of fearless independence in all his ideas,” and his convictions and independent thinking did not agree with the options with which he was presented. Instead he created and chose a third option: a risky trek over hundreds of miles of rebel territory to find and join Union forces. A month later he broke through the rebel lines and enlisted with the 9th Illinois Cavalry as a hospital orderly.

Carlos Hampton was born in Ontario County, New York on April 1, 1821 to James and Prudence Hampton. When he turned 11 his family braved the wilderness to move near the newly settled village of Tecumseh, Michigan. He attended the local schools and Tecumseh University, and then taught school while attending Cincinnati Medical College, graduating in 1845. He practiced briefly in West Unity, Ohio, before moving to Medina, Michigan, and becoming a partner with a Dr. David Brown.

Dr. Hampton's future wife, Cornelia Drown, was born in Canandagua, New York, on October 14, 1825. Two years later her father Appollas moved to Tecumseh, calling the family to join him in 1829 after he had built a home and cleared enough land to farm. While in Michigan he became the first militia captain in the state of Michigan.

On December 24, 1846 Carlos and Cornelia married, settling in Medina where Dr. Hampton practiced medicine. In 1858 the Hampton family—which now included 3 young boys—had to relocate to Texas due to Dr. Hampton's poor health brought on by exhaustion. They bought 160 acres near Black Jack Grove (now Cumby) where the family operated a stock farm. Dr. Hampton opened a medical practice and taught school.

Unfortunately for the Hamptons, the time of unrest preceding the Civil War caused people to distrust most Northerners. John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry had angered all Southerners and Dr. Hampton became one of their targets. Rumors were circulated that one of Dr. Hampton's



Carlos Hampton

On October 16, 1859 John Brown captured attention of the nation when he seized the armory and several hostages in Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia). His intent was to form an army of slaves who would come rushing to support him when they realized he was fighting for their freedom. The slaves didn't show up, but Robert E. Lee and Jeb Stuart and their marines did. John Brown was captured and sentenced to hang, charged with murder of innocent civilians and insurrection, among other things. John Wilkes Booth was one who attended the hanging. Harpers Ferry caused an even bigger divide between the North and the South, as John Brown became a martyr to some and a murderer to others.

trips north to procure medicines was really an opportunity for him to encourage and arm the Negroes. The family waited fearfully for his return, knowing the rebel supporters were lying in wait for him.

Dr. Hampton made it home safely and, despite the distrust surrounding him, he vocally opposed the secession of Texas. He tried to convince neighbors and friends that nothing but trouble would follow should the state leave the Union. Mrs. Hampton recorded in her recollections¹ some of the words he spoke at a public meeting: "Secession means war! And such a war as you in your wildest moments never dreamed of!" At another meeting Dr. Hampton noticed that "the people who were seated near him were one by one moving away, and it was evidently merely to "get out of range," for the Texans had a habit of shooting first and explaining afterwards, and the Doctor's brother-in-law said that evening that he had no doubt, but if Hampton had tried to say a word at the meeting some hot head would have pulled his revolver and shot him down."



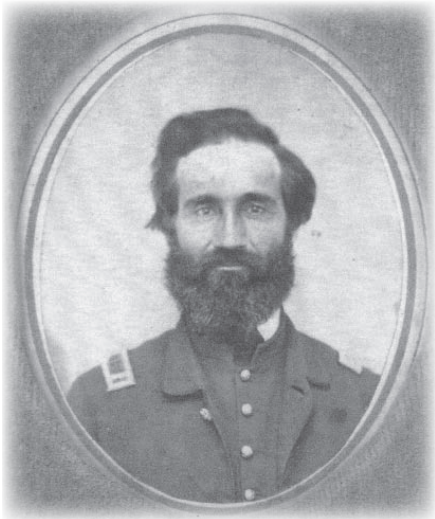
Cornelia Hampton

Despite his impassioned pleas, Texas seceded from the Union on February 23, 1861, becoming the seventh Confederate state. Many of those who had opposed the secession previously now sided with their state. Dr. Hampton decided to remain quiet, hoping to be left in peace, but after several threats on his life if he didn't join the Confederate army, the family realized they were no longer safe.

The family lived in constant fear that Dr. Hampton would be abducted and black-jacked—hung from a blackjack tree—as so many others who vocally opposed the secession of Texas had been. The possibility of attack was so real that Mrs. Hampton and her sons had a plan in place in case of emergency.

On the first of April I experienced what might be called an "April fool", but was a very exciting day for me at home. While the Dr. was at work on the dam, Jimmie, my ten year old son, came rushing in and said "I believe they are coming to mob pa, men all armed are coming." I looked out and saw half a dozen men riding up from the direction where the recruits were rendezvoused at Lone Oak. I thought they were surely coming to take my husband and hang him or take him into the rebel army, and I sent Jimmie to tell his father and brother that a party of armed men were coming. The doctor told Jimmie to tell me that if they enquired about him I was to say he was hunting stock on Turkey Creek, the opposite direction from where he really was, and if they stayed about the house to hang a red cloth from the chamber window, and if they left, or made no enquiries, to hang out a white cloth. I took the ammunition, the old musket and the broken revolver up stairs, and sharpened the butcher knife as quickly as possible. There were some loose boards up stairs and these I pulled over the stairway and hauled

1 Mrs. Hampton's memoirs, *A Story of Secession Days in Texas and Bitter Experiences of Union Sympathizers in Civil War Days as Told by a Michigan Woman* were written by her son Will Hampton. The memoirs focus on the difficulties families faced when they were on the wrong side of the Mason-Dixon line. The story ran in *The Charlevoix Courier* sometime between 1893 and 1903.



Carlos Hampton

some grain bags over them, forming a sort of barricade so that it would be difficult for anyone to get up the stairs even if they were not met with opposition. I thought perhaps my husband might get into the rear of the house without being seen, and up stairs behind the barricade he could make as good a fight for life as was possible. I had done all this before Jimmie got back with word about the cloth. Just as I had finished I looked out the window and saw a large company of soldiers. It proved to be a regiment that had been located on the gulf and had been ordered to the front and was enroute north. They had a company of scouts ahead and it was this advance party I had at first seen and thought was the rangers after the Dr. and I then hung out the white cloth to let my husband know they were not after him. It was a big scare with a happy ending.

While this turned out to be a false alarm, many of the other threats were more substantial, and the possibility of death very real. Dr. Hampton and his wife knew that they had to do something drastic in order to save his life. On April 9th, 1862, Dr. Hampton began his escape. Only one other person was aware of his plan, Dr. Scott, who received passes to leave Texas in order to get medicines. The two doctors decided to meet up and travel together once they were away from Black Jack Grove. Mrs. Hampton was to tell everyone that her husband had finally left to join an acquaintance in the Confederate army. If the truth got out the entire remaining Hampton family would be in danger.

Despite the story that Dr. Hampton told about joining the Rebel army, he was suspected of defecting. Men questioned him, followed him, and purposely gave him wrong directions, trying to lead him into an ambush. On May 12, Dr. Hampton finally reached the Illinois Cavalry and signed on to help the Union.

Dr. Scott returned to Texas, telling everyone that Dr. Hampton had enlisted in the Confederate Army. Mrs. Hampton then let it be known that she would be joining her husband in Little Rock, and began preparations for her trip. In reality she was preparing for her own trip through rebel territory to break through to safety on the Union side. She made clothing for herself and her family, and sold what she could without raising suspicion. In her memoirs she recalls that a friend warned her of the dangers of the trip, "as he had seen a number of wagons on the Mississippi bottom where women had tried to take cotton to Memphis to sell because of the blockade, where guerillas had taken the teams off the wagons, burned the cotton and left the women to get home on foot as best they could. He asked what I would do if treated the same way—I said it required more courage to stay home and watch my son Frank driven into the rebel army at fourteen, better to die on the road."

On the evening of October 29, 1862, Mrs. Hampton and her sons, Frank—14, Jimmie—11, and Charles—6, began a journey that would take them over 700 miles from Texas to Memphis, through enemy armies, starving deserters, and suspicious Rebel supporters. They dealt with the hardships of weather and travel, and often

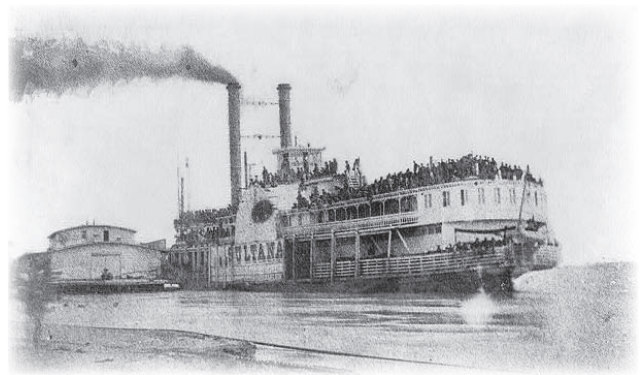
times they slept in the wagon. Everywhere they went they were questioned and, according to Mrs. Hampton, they “told enough lies to sink a nation” in order to get themselves to safety. On December 4, they reached safety traveling by boat from Memphis to Cincinnati. From there they traveled to Medina to stay with Mrs. Hampton’s sister.

Dr. Hampton continued serving with the 9th Illinois Cavalry as a hospital steward before being promoted to Assistant Surgeon and joining the 4th Regiment of the Michigan Infantry on August 5, 1864. During this time his regiments saw action that included defending against Lee’s attack on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, and Hood’s attack on Decatur. While Dr. Hampton served his company he saw only 7 men die due to war-related injuries while 141 died due to illness.

Mrs. Hampton had her own share of tragedies to deal with on the homefront. A year after the family arrived back in Michigan her middle son Jimmie died due to intemperance. Soon after, oldest son Frank, who had enlisted the day he turned 16, was killed as a rebel prisoner when the SS Sultana exploded. Citing these reasons and his wife’s poor health, Dr. Hampton submitted his resignation on June 1, 1865. The government denied his request. Finally on May 26, 1866, Dr. Hampton was honorably discharged.

Dr. Hampton and his family spent their first nine years of civilian life living in Muir, Michigan. In 1864 son Will was born. The family intended to head west and start life anew. Unfortunately their financial situation did not allow them to follow through with their plans, so they took advantage of land offered by the government and turned north to Little Traverse, now Harbor Springs. In *Looking Backward through Nonagenarian Eyes*, a memoir written by Will Hampton, he tells how his family ended up in Northern Michigan.

I am Will E. Hampton; born in Hudson, Michigan May 15 1864. I arrived in Little Traverse, as the town was then called. My father, Dr. Carlos D. Hampton had been Asst. Surgeon of the 4th Michigan Inf. in the civil war. Having invested unwisely in a saw mill with friends, and a man who claimed to be an expert lumberman it turned out that in a few years the man with the experience had all the money, and all the financiers had was experience—an old story. So it came that my parents instead of going west for a fresh start, came north, dad taking up a homestead in Pleasantview township, three miles directly north of what is now Wequetonsing, and was the first physician to open practice as a resident. So much for how the Hamptons came to be one of the early families in the old Indian preservation settlement of Little Traverse.



The SS Sultana

The explosion of the SS Sultana on April 27, 1865 is still the worst marine disaster in United States history. Approximately 1700 people died, many of them former prisoners of the Confederate army who were finally returning home, when a boiler exploded. Men and women who had been enemies days before joined forces to aid the survivors, many of whom were covered with burns from the explosion and fighting hypothermia from the frigid waters of the Mississippi.

The Hamptons arrived in Little Traverse in June 1875, like many others taking advantage of the government's offer of 160 free acres to "old soldiers". They spent their first year renting from an Indian family as their paperwork for land ownership had been processed incorrectly. Between 20-25 white families had settled before their arrival, with more arriving almost daily.

Dr. Hampton did not take long to begin contributing to the growing community. Within a year of his arrival he sat on a board to form the township of Pleasantview. In the summer of 1876 he served as President of the Little Traverse Centennial Anniversary celebration. In 1881, after helping Little Traverse become Harbor Springs, he served as the first president of the new town.

Dr. Hampton also served as the county superintendent to the poor. This position was especially important during the winter of 1876 as new settlers poured into the area, claiming free land opened by the government. Many of these families had very little money and, after providing some sort of shelter for themselves, had no money left for food. Those who could afford to, donated clothing and food to help the settlers through that first winter. The Hampton house served as a sort of distribution center for the donations. Son Will writes "...Our house in the winter of 1876 resembled a warehouse for second hand goods of all kinds. Nobody really starved, but there was real suffering in many cases."

As the resident physician Dr. Hampton also kept busy. He dealt with gunshot wounds, injuries, and illness. At one point he treated the Catholic Priest Father Zorn for smallpox and the entire community feared an outbreak. While the contagion was contained Will said, "...Father [Dr. Hampton] had the whole side of the street to himself when going and coming from seeing his patient..."

Around 1890 Dr. Hampton became an invalid as he was struck down by paralysis. He and his wife moved in with their oldest son Charles, who ran *The Northern Independent* newspaper in Petoskey, until the doctor's death on August 6, 1893. His wife Cornelia outlived him by nearly ten years, dying on July 8, 1903.



THE LATE DR. C. D. HAMPTON.
First President Harbor Springs Village.



The Carlos Hampton Family
Cornelia, Charles, Carlos, Will



The Hampton Family's Routes to and from Texas