

Jno. B. Bachelder
Hyde Park, Mass.
My dear Colonel,

Replying to yr p/c 9/3 am sorry to say the prospects for dedicating our monument this year are not favorable. The earliest date that can now be named is November 15th and even this date is not absolutely certain. One of our principle contractors is the cause of this delay and uncertainty, not being able to get his work out as agreed.

Considering the uncertainty of the weather as late as the middle of November, I think it would be a mistake to attempt the formal dedication of these monuments this year. I am now getting the opinions of those most interested and shall be able to finally determine the matter in a few days. Thus far every person heard from favors postponement until next Spring.

Sincerely yours
Geo. G. Briggs, Chairman

Letter of Col. William C. Oates⁸¹
Committee on Judiciary
House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. Sep. 16, 1888

Col. Jno. B. Bachelder:

Yours of the 11th rec'd. it would be quite a pleasure to me to meet you at Gettysburg and to go over the field with you and point out our positions on the Confederate right; but fearing that I may not be able to do so I will describe the best I can on paper the positions occupied by my Regt. & Law's brigade on the third day of battle.

On that morning Laws brigade lay on the second or upper foot of Round Top along the stone wall, which the soldiers erected there.⁸² My Regt. was still on the extreme right & extended beyond to the east of the rock wall, with my right Co. deployed as skirmishers at right angles on my right extending

81. Col. William Oates commanded 15th Alabama. He had a distinguished career after the war, serving as governor of Alabama and as a member of Congress.

82. See Map [3] N-27.

back to the rear and connecting at the time of the charge of Federal cavalry with the Texas brigade which was also deployed and extended at the time southward a considerable distance.⁸² This was the position when the Fed cavalry charged and broke through the Texas line. When they assailed Reilly's battery I was ordered to move rapidly with my Regt to his support.⁸³ I obeyed with alacrity moving in quick time rear in front and as I moved towards caused Lieut. Adrian with about a dozen skirmishers to spring forward & just as I was under rising the hill approaching the little copse of woods a squad of the cavalry between me & the battery when a charge of canister fire at them passed through my ranks without harm.⁸⁴ The officer in command of the squad of cavalry encountered my skirmishers & ordered them to surrender. They responded with a volley. When his horse fell dead & he fell mortally wounded having received several severe wounds. Lieut. Adrian approached.⁸⁵ The remainder of this cavalry instantly disappeared to the woods when Lieut. Adrian approaching the wounded officer demanded his surrender.

He replied by indignantly refusing to do so & placing his pistol to his own head with a shot ended his sufferings. This officer was Brig. Genl. E. J. Farnsworth. I think that particular little copse of trees where he fell had been cleared & cultivated when I visited Gettysburg a few years ago. After this event I returned to my former position where I remained until late that afternoon long after Pickett's charge had been repulsed, when I was ordered with my regiment to move nearly directly south and extend my line of pickets about 300 yds. & hold my Regt. in position at the right of the line thus extended. The Texas troops had been withdrawn and I moved out there and there I remained in the woods unsupported until after dark. I was ordered to remain there until relieved & I was there until after all of Longstreet's corps had been withdrawn. I received no orders and the rain poured in torrents.⁸⁶ Intuitively I knew that

82. 1st Texas, Robertson's brigade, Hood's division. See Map [3] K-27 and Map [3] L/N-28.

83. Capt. James Reilly commanded the Rowan Artillery, Major M. W. Henry's Battalion, attached to Hood's division. See Map [3] K-27.

84. See Map [3] M-27.

85. Lt. John G. Adrian, Company E, 47th Alabama.

86. July 4th.

I was isolated, that there had been a retrograde movement. I rode back to see if our line was still in position. I had not gone far when a Fed. skirmisher fired on me. This was in the woods as well as I could judge, about 150 to 200 yards east south east of the point where Genl. Farnsworth fell. I rode back resolved to disobey orders. I drew in my pickets at once & marched by the right flank southward & then westward and after performing a considerable circuit in the dark with the rain still pouring I found my place in line with Longstreets corps where the men were engaged in throwing up temporary works. It was said at Headquarters that a courier was started to me with an order to withdraw at the time the movement began but the order never reached me. I think if I were present I could point out very nearly the ground occupied and if I fail to make the visit I hope, Col., from this hasty description you will be able to locate these places. I believe Genl. Laws' address is Chester, S.C. but I doubt whether he is financially able to visit Gettysburg. He has been of very intemperate habits since the war and I think has become quite poor. He moved from Alabama to S. Carolina several years ago.

I am Col., Very truly yours,
Wm. C. Oates.

Letter of Col. William C. Oates
Committee on Judiciary
House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. Sep. 22, 1888

Col. J. B. Bachelder,
My Dear Col:

There is one point in yours of 21st inst. which I wish to reply to. You say that I am mistaken about Genl. F. shooting himself in the head. That may be an error & certainly is one if there was no wound in his head as you stated. I perhaps should have been a little more particular in my statement and will now give you my statement as though I were making an oath.

Lieut. Adrian and the dozen skirmishers were I suppose some 50 yards in front of my regiment and advancing rapidly when they encountered the cavalry. They were in the woods and my regt had passed to the open ground and near to it when

I saw the cavalry & heard the volley from Adrian's men and could see imperfectly through the woods the cavalry dashing away to the east. A few shots were fired after the cavalry by Adrian who had a small repeating cavalry gun which he had picked up on the field. When I saw the cavalry disappear there was no further necessity for pressing forward and I halted and let my men lie down in the shade. It was a very hot day and they and myself were very much fatigued in the rapid march which we had made part in double-quick from my position on the right. I sat down myself & after several minutes had elapsed one of the skirmishers came back where I was and holding up a pair of shoulder-straps saying, "Col., don't you want the shoulder-straps of that Yankee Major we killed up there a few moments ago? I pulled them off his coat thinking you'd like to have them." I took them and replied, "A Major, the devil! He is a General."⁸⁸ I then walked back with the man to where the body lay, when Lieut. Adrian who with his other men were standing near the body and that of the dead horse which lay near told me the circumstance, that the officer with pistol in hand in front of a small squadron of cavalry reined up his horse and demanded of Adrian a surrender to which Adrian and his men replied with a volley, and Farnsworth fell and his squadron dashed away. Adrian said Farnsworth set upright on the ground with pistol still in hand as he Adrian advanced and in turn demanded of Farnsworth to surrender and that the latter refused to do it and shot himself.

I have the impression and always have had, although it may be erroneous that Adrian said Farnsworth shot himself through the head. I did not examine the head, the body and the ground about where it lay being quite bloody. I noticed two or three bullet holes in different parts of the body from which the blood was issuing. He appeared to be only a medium sized man of rather blonde complexion and a yellowish moustache. I told one of the men to feel in the breast pockets of his coat and therefrom he took a letter which appeared to be written to him from his wife, certainly from some female admirer and was addressed to Genl. E. J. Farnsworth. In this way I learned the name. I tore up and destroyed the letter and after inspection of

88. Farnsworth had his commission as a brigadier general in his pocket but it is believed that he was still wearing the insignia of a colonel.

the body above stated for a few minutes I returned to my regiment and soon after was ordered back to my position on the right. Lieut. Adrian was subsequently killed in battle and I do not remember the names of the men who were with him on the occasion, hence there is no way at this time of finding a living witness to the occurrence.

Adrian was a faithful young officer and regarded as perfectly reliable and I believe he told the truth, but I could not testify that he said Farnsworth shot himself in the head. I can however and do testify that he said F. shot himself and I do know that a few minutes after when I saw the body he was quite dead.

I think, Col., that it is quite improbable that I can visit Gettysburg at the time you name. I only wish that I could.

I am, very truly yours,
Wm. C. Oates

Letter of Lt. George G. Briggs
7th Michigan Cavalry

Grand Rapids Oct. 16, 1888

Jno. B. Bachelder
Hyde Park, Mass.
Dear Colonel,

This reply to your esteemed favor of the 6th inst has been delayed by reason of my temporary absence from home. I address you at your home fearing you may have left Gettysburg by this time.

Wilson wrote me under same date of your communication, upon this same matter of site for our Mich. Brigade Monument.⁸⁹

I judge however the spot he names is not the one you have selected. Wilson says, avenue located starts at [where] the Hanover Road East of Cress Run to the 1st New Jersey monument, Thence to the Cavalry Shaft. This avenue runs some distance south of the position marked for the Mich. Cavalry Monument, about 400 yards". Wilson asks if this is satisfactory. I have written in reply that General Alger, Capt.

89. Assistant Surgeon David G. Wilson, 5th Michigan Cavalry.