



Rebel Underground

Sons of Confederate Veterans
Major John C. Hutto Camp # 443
Jasper, Alabama

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Dr. Ray Herren, University of Georgia,
guest speaker for the January meeting.
Standing with Dr. Herren is Hutto Camp
Commander James Blackston

Major John C. Hutto Camp

January Meeting Notice

Sunday, 15 February 2015 - 2:30 PM

First Methodist Church

1800 Third Avenue

Jasper, Alabama

Speaker

**Dr. Robert S. Davis, Director
Professor of Genealogy & History
Wallace State College
Hanceville, Alabama**

The Final Battle Between Colonel William Calvin Oates and Joshua Chamberlain

"Conceived in Liberty - Joshua Chamberlain, William Oates, And the American Civil War" by Mark Perry - Viking - Copyright 1997



Gen. William C. Oates
Spanish American War

About 1904-05 William Oates fought one last battle with Joshua Chamberlain. Oates had been contemplating the placing of a monument to the 15th Alabama at Gettysburg, at exactly the

spot where he believed his regiment had stood-on the far right of the rebel line and within twenty yards of the federal line. Oates traveled to Gettysburg in the summer of 1904 to inspect Little Round Top and to point out to park commissioners the line his regiment took on the afternoon of July 2, 1863. Oates walked up Little Round Top to the exact spot where, he said, his regiment held its most forward position. But the commissioners who accompanied him said they had evidence that his regiment did not, in fact, advance so far as he believed. In support of their position, they produced a

letter from Joshua Chamberlain that contradicted Oates's memory.

Oates did not believe he would have any trouble gaining approval for his monument, but after the 1904 inspections, he knew he would have to argue his point with his old antagonist. Chamberlain simply would not agree that the 15th Alabama had gotten anywhere near as close to his own line as Oates believed-and he was adamant on the point. The issue was taken up with Colonel John Nicholson of the War Department, who attempted to adjudicate the two claims. In fact, the difference in distances involved was minor-about fifty to seventy-five yards. But that did not mean the issue was unimportant, for Chamberlain claimed that the placement of a monument to the 15th Alabama where Oates wished it to be would have placed the rebel regiment inside his lines and exaggerated the success of their attack.

Frustrated by his inability to convince the War Department to approve the monument, Oates finally wrote Chamberlain directly. Oates attempted to be conciliatory, but it took his every effort, and the words are strained and cold:

"Co. Nicholson has sent to me your letter to him of the 16th ...which I have carefully perused, and take pleasure in writing directly to you on the points involved. General, neither of us are as young as we were when we confronted each other on Little Round Top nearly 42 years ago. Now, in the natural course the memory of neither of us is

as good as then. You speak in that letter of having corresponded with me and that you had received two letters from me. I will not dispute your word for you are an honorable gentleman, but I have no recollection of ever writing a letter to you, except at the present moment, nor do I remember ever to have received one from you. I have heard and read much about you-among other things, the very complimentary notice of your soldierly and gentlemanly conduct at Lee's surrender, in (General John B.) Gordon's book of Reminiscences, but never had the honor of meeting you after the war."

Oates went on to review his claim that a monument of the 15th Alabama Regiment should be placed at Gettysburg at a point of its farthest advance. Oates said that he did not want to quibble as to exactly where that point might be: "If you, General, will write to the Commissioners, or to its chairman, and say that you have no objection to erecting it there, I assure you that there will be no inscription upon the shaft derogatory to your command and if mentioned it will be complimentary, for well do I know that no regiment in the Union Army fought any better or more bravely than your regiment at that spot."

Chamberlain, however, would not agree. He reviewed Oates's application for the placement of the monument and found fault with Oates's memory-claiming that he had previously written Oates, and that he had no objection to a monument to the 15th Alabama. Nevertheless, he said, he could not

agree to the placing of a monument on ground designated by Oates, since the 15th Alabama did not reach that close to the Union lines or, as Oates claimed, "doubled back" his left so that it almost touched his right. The attack of the 15th Alabama, Chamberlain implied, was simply not that successful. The letter was testy:

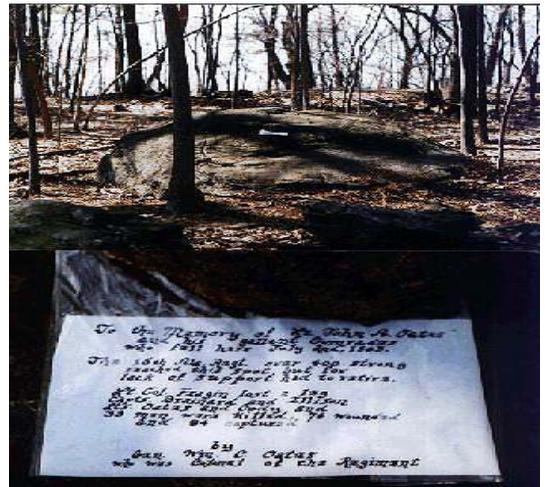
"In [your] letter I find your impressions place me at a disadvantage in your estimation on two very different grounds; first, in that your former correspondence by way of letter made so little impression on you that you are led to deny having such correspondence; and secondly that you ascribe to my influence with the Government authorities their refusal to permit the erection of a monument to the 15th Alabama on the ground where they fought. These suggestions compel me to look over my vouchers to see if I have possibly been mistaken on topics of much importance as to involve my honor."

These were fighting words since, in that time especially, a man's "word of honor" could not be questioned lightly. Chamberlain then went on to protest that he had "no objection whatever to the erection of a monument by you on the ground attained by the 15th Alabama or any portion of it, expressing only the wish that this ground be accurately ascertained." Chamberlain argued that Oates was simply wrong in his assumption about how close his regiment had come to the 20th Maine, or at what point it had penetrated his lines, if it did at all-and therefore Chamberlain simply could not agree to the

placing of the monument on the ground that Oates designated.

There is where the issue ended, with no more correspondence between the two. There was much more to the controversy, however, than Oates could have known. It now seems unlikely, in light of the historical evidence, that the Gettysburg Park Commission was inclined to place any monument honoring the 15th Alabama at Gettysburg, even had Chamberlain agreed with Oates on the details of the battle. After Chamberlain wrote to Oates, he sent a copy of his letter to John Nicholson of the War Department's Gettysburg National Park Commission. Nicholson wrote back: "I wish to congratulate you upon the dignified, manly, soldierly and gentlemanly way in which you have replied to him," Nicholson wrote. "It is very clear that General Oates has not the slightest idea of admitting the views of any one in the controversy except himself." Nicholson added that the monument debate was being turned over to the chairman of the commission. Several months later, the commission turned down Oates's request for a monument to the 15th Alabama on Little Round Top.

Oates was deeply disappointed. He wanted the regimental monument to serve as a memorial not only to those who fought there, but to his brother and his close personal friends, and had spent hours designing the monument and writing its inscription:



To the memory of Lt. John A. Oates and his gallant Comrades who fell here July 2nd, 1863. The 15th Ala. Regt., over 400 strong reached this spot, but for lack of support had to retire.

Lt. Col. Feagin lost a leg.
Capts. Brainard and Ellison,
Lts. Oates and Cody and
33 men were killed, 76 wounded
and 84 captured.

Erect 39th Anniversary of battle,
by Gen. Wm. C. Oates who was
Colonel of the Regiment.

The Chamberlain-Oates controversy over the 15th Alabama monument not only shows how the war lived on long after its guns were silenced, but exemplifies the very real wounds that remained between its antagonists. The generation that had fought

the war was dying, and yet they had not forgotten the past. Even forty-two years after the events, the battle was fresh in the minds of Chamberlain and Oates, despite the care they took in complimenting each other on their successful careers. "I should be glad to meet you again, after your honorable and conspicuous career of which the trials and test of Gettysburg were so brilliant a part," Chamberlain told the former Alabama commander in his last letter.

Yet, despite this formal cordiality, Chamberlain and Oates never gave any indication that they would have really liked to meet each other; they never talked, never addressed the same crowd or served in the same legislature. The only time they faced each other directly was at opposite sides of the most important conflict of their day. But despite this, their lives, careers, families, experiences of war and peace, and successes and failures are remarkable similar. Both grew up in modest surroundings, in rural communities, where education and God were ever-present realities. Both were self-made men who became amateur soldiers. Both excelled in battle, both served as governors of their state, both yearned for a seat in the Senate-both were denied. Had they met, they would have had much to talk about. A list of the topics on which they might have found common ground would be lengthy and an almost perfect reflection of their society's most important principles: both mistrusted big government, believed in an elected elite of "the best men," thought political stability the engine of economic growth-and had large

ideas about the course of the American Republic.

Col. William C. Oates identified the rock in the background of the top picture as the one on which his brother, Lt. John A. Oates, was killed. He wished to erect a monument on that site, but was denied permission to do so. The message on the rock-close up on the bottom picture-is the one he wished to place on the monument, as written in the above writing about Oates, in the "The Final Battle between Oates and Chamberlain.

<http://15thalabamaavi.tripod.com/id10.html>

How The War Was About Slavery By Paul C. Graham

Much has been made of what Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation actually did (or didn't do), but little has been said of what it intended to do.

As "fit and necessary war measure" to suppress the "rebellion," its purpose was NOT TO END SLAVERY, but to END THE WAR.

When the proclamation was issued on September 22, 1863, it provided a 100 day window in which those states or parts of states which were designated as being "in rebellion against the United States" could, **THROUGH THEIR OWN ACTIONS**, preserve slavery in their own territory by returning to the Union.

If any or all of the States comprising the Confederate States of America would have complied with the conditions enumerated in the proclamation, they would have extricated themselves completely from the threat of abolition, yet no state did.

While Union apologists would have us believe that Lincoln's position on slavery evolved during the war, the facts do not support this conclusion.

The Emancipation Proclamation was nothing more than an echo of the Corwin Amendment which put forth the preservation of slavery as an enticement to woo the "wayward" states back into the fold of the Union.

The difference, however, was that this offer was free from the constraints of the legislative process and/or the adoption of it in sufficient numbers by the other states.

Although the Emancipation Proclamation has been hailed as a great moral achievement, one wonders how this interpretation came about. It did not free one single slave where it was intended to have an effect, namely, the Confederate States that were not under Union control, and it held in bondage all those slaves residing in those states or parts of states that were under Union control.

In fact, an honest reading of the actual document reveals that it was nothing more than an offer to perpetuate slavery.

If the intention of the document was to free

any slave whatsoever, then those slaves in the occupied areas of the Confederacy could have been set free at once.

Of course, Lincoln could have freed the slaves in the Union States as well, but the document is clear that only those states or regions "in rebellion" were to be effected by the proclamation.

If the intention of the document was to free the slaves in the Southern Confederacy, then why was not the proclamation to go into effect immediately? Why the 100 day window? After all, there was nothing preventing the South from accepting the terms of the offer, thereby ending the long and bloody conflict with slavery left intact.

The moral content attributed to the Emancipation Proclamation results from the Confederacy's failure to comply with its demands, thus triggering an emancipation that, according to the American mythology, freed the slaves, but according to the plain facts of history, did no such thing.

Ask yourself: How would the Emancipation Proclamation be viewed today if the Southern States had chosen differently? Would it be hailed as the sacred document that "freed the slaves"? Would still be called the "Great Emancipator"?

Jamaica - The Journey to Freedom - From Slavery to Emancipation

When the English captured Jamaica from the Spaniards in 1655, they saw the potential wealth that sugar cane known then as "yellow gold" could bring them. The English were however not physically capable of growing sugar canes themselves as this was a crop that required intensive manual labor.

By then, the Arawak Indians, the original natives of the island, had become extinct. Natural disasters such as hurricanes as well as the diseases they contracted from the Spanish who held them captive for many years, virtually wiped out this indigenous population.

The English then looked towards the continent of Africa, where it was said that the Africans could withstand the heat and their bodies were more resistant to diseases. The majority of the slaves, who were taken from West Africa, endured a dreadful journey to the West Indies referred to as "The Middle Passage". By the late 18th Century, it was noted that Jamaica had the largest number of slaves in the British West Indies and a most successful sugar industry.

As the manufacturing and export of sugar and its by products such as molasses and rum thrived, the slave trade flourished. There were however, a few members of the British Parliament who having seen the conditions in which the slaves were forced to live, were strongly opposed to slavery thus sparking an

anti-slavery debate.

First came the abolition of the slave trade in 1808. In 1823, the Anti-Slavery Society was founded with the Quakers taking a prominent role along with a number of influential men like William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson.

Investigations and arguments by members of this society revealing the horrors of slavery, lead to the passing of the Emancipation Act on July 31, 1834 in the British West Indies at midnight. However, full freedom to all slaves was not granted until four years later by Queen Victoria of England on August 1, 1838.

Emancipation meant that Jamaica's over 300,000 slaves were now free to choose what they wanted to do with their lives. Some persons remained on the sugar estates and worked for wages, which they later used to buy land for themselves while others headed for the hillside eventually forming free villages the first of which is Sligoville, located in St. Catherine.



Mrs. Anita Faulkner -UDC & 2st. Lt. Cmdr. Brandon Prescott at the Gen. Robert E. Lee Day in Montgomery



Shannon Fontaine, Confederate Navy & 2nd. Lt. Cmdr. Brandon Prescott at the Gen Robert E. Lee Day in Montgomery

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The *Rebel Underground* is dedicated to bringing our readers the very best in coverage of important news concerning Confederate History and Southern Heritage. We are not ashamed of our Confederate History and Southern Heritage. We dare to defend our rights.