

later, he added, his kinsman with the same last name and initials was killed. Barlow, who had recovered, heard of it and assumed it was Gordon. So both men assumed that the other did not survive the war. Fifteen years passed. Both men were invited to a dinner party in Washington by Clarkson Potter, a Congressman from New York. At table, Gordon peered at Barlow and asked: "General, are you related to the Barlow who was killed at Gettysburg?" Barlow answered: "Why, I am the man, sir. Are you related to the Gordon who killed me?" Gordon responded: "I am the man sir." At which time, of course, they hugged and cemented a friendship that lasted until the end of their days.

In a speech Gordon gave dozens of times, perhaps hundreds times, between 1893 and 1904, the year of his death, titled "The Last Days of the Confederacy," he told essentially the same story, with minor variations.

In an incomplete letter to his mother, Almira Penniman Barlow, dated July 7, 1863, Barlow told a story similar to Gordon's, but with substantial differences. Foremost is a complete omission of any mention of Gordon. In addition, he said that two of his men tried to carry him from the field, but failed, and that he lay in the field for about five minutes before the enemy came up. He says that "Major Pitzer" had him carried into the woods. He then describes his diagnosis by surgeons (terminal) and his subsequent care in Gettysburg by his captors and by civilians.

In a subsequent letter to Almira, undated, but written before August 5, 1863, Barlow said that while he was lying on the knoll, he remembered that he had incriminating letters on his person (incriminating because they related to his nomination as the "Negro Superintendent") so he destroyed them before the enemy reached him.

Apart from Barlow's saying that he destroyed letters, the accounts seem to tell a reasonably clear and coherent story. Unfortunately, they are not clear and coherent enough for some students of the war, who contend that the whole story is "a fable," "apocryphal," "highly unlikely," "a contrivance," "a myth," "fiction," "bogus." This view received its most definitive expression by William Hanna in his article that appeared in the May, 1985, issue of *Civil War Times Illustrated*, referred to above. Numerous reasons are given, by Hanna and others, for the contention that the meeting never took place, including:

1. There are inconsistencies between Gordon's two accounts.
2. There are inconsistencies between Gordon's accounts and Barlow's accounts, especially Barlow's failure to mention Gordon or Arabella in his letter of July 7 and the business about the letters.
3. Arabella was working at a Christian commission in Maryland during the Gettysburg fighting and it is therefore unlikely that she could have made it to the battlefield in time to care for her husband, which is borne out by the fact that he does not mention her in the July 7 letter.