

1st Sgt. Jeremiah S. Gage
Co. A, 11th Mississippi Infantry
“The University Greys”



Jeremiah Gage was an 1860 University of Mississippi graduate. He then went to UM Law School in the 1860-1861 school year. Sometime, there at the University, he met, courted, and fell in love with Miss Mary Wendel. Gage's Father had died in 1860, right before his graduation. Mary's Mother had died in 1860 also. I am sure that drew them closer together.

In the Spring of 1861, when the Civil War came, Jeremiah Gage joined the University Greys. He fought at First Manassas, at Seven Pines, and then he was wounded in the hip at Gaines Mill, in the Summer of 1862. He came home to Pickens, in Holmes County, Mississippi, on wounded furlough. During that furlough he came to Oxford to see Mary. He asked her to marry him, but she told him they should wait until the War was over.

Gage rejoined the Greys in the late Fall of 1862. In the Summer of 1863 he marched North with them towards what we now know would be the battle of Gettysburg. The family story is that he limped to whole way North, due to his old hip wound. He often had to fall out during the day and catch up at night. He would not let his friends go get into a major fight without him.

The 11th Mississippi and the Greys were put into line to make Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, on the third day of that battle. Before the Charge, Confederate General R. E. Lee ordered a cannonade of the Union line. The union gunners replied with every gun they had. Gage was hit by the Union cannon fire and he was taken back to a field aid station. His left arm was hanging on by some muscle, and his left side was torn open.

There was nothing the Doctor at the aid station could do for Gage. Before the Doctor put Gage out of his misery with some black drop, morphine mixed with alcohol. He asked Gage if he had any message to leave. Gage asked for pen and paper, and with his good arm he wrote:

My Dear Mother,

This is the last you may ever hear from me. I have time to tell you that I died like a man. Bear my loss as best you can. Remember that I am true to my country and my greatest regret at dying is that she is not free and that you and my sisters are robbed of my worth, whatever that may be. I hope that this will reach you, and you must not regret that my body cannot be obtained, it is a mere matter of form anyhow. This is for my sisters too, as I cannot write more. Send my dying release to Miss Mary...you know who.

J. S. Gage Co. A, 11th Miss.

P.S. This letter is stained with my blood.

Gage finished the letter, pressed it to the wound in his side, and gave it to a Doctor he knew, to get it to his mother for him.

The Greys went on into the Charge and they were all killed or wounded.

Mary heard about the letter, and sitting at home in Oxford in September of 1863, she wrote to Jeremiah Gage's oldest sister. Mary wrote in part:

"you can grieve for him as a brother, but although my whole life was mapped on his love - the cold etiquette of society will not allow me to mourn for him as my betrothed. Yet you may just assume that his image will never be supplanted in my heart."..."And will you not send me a copy of the letter Jere wrote to your mother just before he died. I hear that my name is mentioned. Although we have never met, our love for Jere, and our grief at his death has made me love you as a sister, will you not love me? You can have no idea of the dissolutions I feel, no mother upon whose sympathizing breast I can lean and pour out my sorrow. And all dark is the future."

Excerpt from posting by Starke Miller