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Chatham, Va., Nevv. 26th. 1908

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Rev. J.E. Poindexter,

Richmond Va.

My Dear Friend Poindexter:-

Yours of the 24th inst. received, and

I am so glad to hear that the portrait is finished. I am sorry I could not get a larger contribution, but may be able to get more as I have not heard from all the old "confeds" that I wrote to.

The following are the names of those who contributed:

James Carter	\$1.00	Ghas Bilharz	\$1.00
E.C. Linthicum	\$1.00	B.W. Jones	25
Wm Davis	25	- - Levelace	25
J.D.G. Corbin	50	James Easley	25
J.W. Whitehead	1.50		

Genl Armstead's brigade was stationed behind a hill, and for about one and one-half hours the Yankees shelled us with all the power they had, the shells passing over us doing us but little damage (this was when Col. Aylett, claiming that he was wounded called upon Col. Martin to command the Regiment) Armstead called his brigade to attention and gave the command "Forward" March. The brigade moved promptly forward and arrived on top of the hill, which until now had protected us. As soon as we got on top of the hill, and began to advance towards the valley, Oh my! it seemed to me that the whole of Cemetery Ridge was a blaze of fire, and the blaze continued until the confederate forces had marched through the valley, began to give away, and as they fell back from the fence our men



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Rev J.E.P # 2

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which was four or five hundred yards wide, and gotten with in charging distance of Stone wall. Genl Kemper's brigade was in our front and when we were about half way through the valley Kemper rode up to Armstead, who was on foot, and said "Armstead I am going to charge and carry them these heights, and I want you to support me" Armstead replied "I'll do it", look at my line it never looked better when on dress parade" under This happened the heaviest artillery fire that in my opinion the world ever saw. I don't believe anything in history, ancient or modern ever surpassed it, and still under these conditions Armstead's brigade was marching at quick step as if on dress parade. Just at this point Armstead took off his hat, put it on his sword's point and kept it there through the entire charge. The sword would stick through the hat, which would slip down to the hilt, but Armstead would immediately hoist same to the point again, and I have no doubt but that he still had his hat on his sword when he went over the stone wall. He kept 15 or 20 steps in front of his brigade all the way, was cheering all the time and calling to his men to follow him. After getting with in about fifty yards of the stone fence (not a gun had been fired by the confeds up to this time) came the order all along the line to charge, and we DID charge. From behind the stone wall the Yankee Infantry rose and poured into our ranks such a murderous fire that no human tongue will ever be able to describe. Kemper's brigade had disappeared almost entirely, and it remained for Armstead's men to do the work. After a desperate fight the Yankees began to give away, and as they fell back from the <sup>Stone</sup> fence our men



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Rev. J.E.D # 3

began to climb over. I was shot down just before I reached the fence and the smoke was so dense that I could not see or recognize a man ten steps off and of course can not answer all your questions to my personal knowledge. I can say upon the testimony of others, who were eye witnesses and I am as certain of it as if I had seen it that Armstead was killed with his hand on a captured cannon, and with his old hat still on his sword. In regard to Hutchings Carter I will say that a man named Blackburn was Color Bearer. Blackburn was killed about 100 yds. from the wall; James Carter then grasped the colors, and carried them a short distance, when a man named Scott took them. Scott was seen killed; then a man named Jones took them and carried same to the stone wall. At the wall Jones was wounded (badly), and Hutchings Carter grasped the colors and carried them over the wall and up to the captured artillery, where were Armstead, Col Martin, Geo. White, Tom Tredway, Chip Coleman and others. We had driven the Yankees from behind the stone wall, captured all their artillery in Armsteads front, and the victory up to the present was complete, but one of our North Carolina regiment gave away on the extreme left and through the gap thus made the Yankees passed through, got in our rear, and this was the end of our dearly bought victory. I laid out on the battle field two nights and one day and no one can imagine what I suffered both physically and mentally. I think I could have walked fifty yards in any direction from where I lay on the field stepping from one dead man to



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another without ever slipping to the ground. I have read many accounts of this battle, but none I have ever seen begins to give one an idea of the dreadful horrors of this fight.

Cel R. Martin commanded the 53rd. in the great charge, and no braver man than he ever fell on a battle field, and yet no braver than Carter H.L.; Carter Jas.; Bilharz; Cousins; Walker, Coleman; Tom White

Tredway and many others, who stood with us on this memorable occasion. ^ I am glad the honor of presentation has been assigned to

you, and I know your speech will be worthy of the occasion. I would love to be with you so I might hear it. I wonder if the Times-Dispatch will publish it? If so I will read it with pleasure.

As I write the awful groans of the wounded and dying, and their pleading for water and help all comes crowding into my mind, and

I do pray the good Lord that I may never witness such a scene again.

With best wishes for you and your family,

Your Friend,

*J. W. Whitehead*

Pittsylvania Co. furnished more Souldiers to the Confederate army than any other County in the state.