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H. Q. Bridges to Mrs. V. G. Armistead (26 July 1913)

H. Q. Bridges

Virgie Gage Armistead

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Sixth District Court

717 EAST 15TH STREET

CASIMIR J. WELCH,
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE
CLEMENCE H. EHINGER,
CLERK

HOME PHONE MAIN 11

MAX ASOTSKY,
CONSTABLE
GEORGE MORRISON,
DEPUTY



KANSAS CITY, July 26", 1913.

Mrs. V. G. Armistead,
2616 Royal Street, N.O.

My Dear Madame:-

On my return from attendance at the recent Gettysburg Celebration held July 1, 2 & 3, inst., I found a letter awaiting me from my brother at Holmesville, Miss., with inclosure of a contribution to the N.O. Times-Democrat of Sunday, June 23, signed Flo Field, under the caption: -"Jere Gage, Hero of Gettysburg", with reproduced photograph.

My brother suggested that no doubt you and your sisters, Mrs. C. G. Parsons, of N.O., and Mrs. Ada G. Dabbs, of Quitman, Miss., whose names appeared in the article, doubtless would appreciate a letter from me, telling the facts and circumstances of how Jere died, as I was there at the time. He was one of the noblest boys I ever knew, and was my college mate at the state university, my mess mate during the war as members of the University Grays, later known in military annals as Company A, 11th Miss. Vols. Inf., Davis' Brigade, Heth's Division, A.P. Hill's Corps, in the Army of Northern Virginia. I was at the university from '58 to '61, he having graduated in '60 and entered the law school at Oxford in the fall of '60. So, it will be seen, I was an intimate personal friend and a long time associate of his. We were together during the war from the time of enlistment in May '61 up to Gettysburg, where on July 3, '63 he yielded up his splendid young life on that famous battlefield. I'm sending you herein a copy of the inscription on the "Marker" erected by

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KANSAS CITY, _____ 191

government at the exact spot where our regiment was engaged at the time he received his mortal wounds, which I myself witnessed, as I was within a few feet of him when he was struck. We were in the battle of the first day until dark; the second day we were not in action; but in the forenoon of the third day we were in a strip of woods hard by the Emmitsburg road on Seminary Ridge about one mile south of the town. We were at the time under the most galling fire that ever came out of cannon's mouth, the very ground underneath us seeming to shake from the plunge of solid shot and the detonations of bursting, shrieking shells, which appeared to rake and search out every square yard of the ground we occupied. My remembrance at this long distance of time is that Jere was in a sitting posture while the most of us, except, of course, the officers, were lying down. Presently a 24 pounder shell exploded immediately in front of us, and Jere called out that he was struck, one fragment of the shell almost tearing away his left arm from the socket, and another fragment hitting him in the abdomen, either one of which terrible wounds would have been fatal. Jim Dailey, also one of our mess, being litter bearer that day, at once gathered him up, placed him on the litter and bore him away to the field hospital about 200 yards to the south of us, where it was that Dr. Holt saw him and attended him. Of course none of ^{us} could leave the ranks but what I know as to how he died I was told by Jim Dailey that evening about night, when I was taken to the field hospital to have my wounds attended to, for having been in the charge on the enemy's stone wall breast works in the afternoon, I was myself severely wounded upon the head by a Minnie bullet.

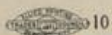
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Jim told me that Jere died soon after being carried to the field hospital and said that Jere asked him to "Bury me in my old shawl", Jim", and which he did. It was the fashion of the boys at the university to wear shawls in lieu of top coats, and it was this shawl that Jere had carried all through the war in place of a blanket that he requested Jim to make his winding sheet. It was about noon of the fatal day when he was wounded, hence it was that Dr. Holt said he was the first to be brought to the hospital. It was about 2:30 P.M. when we were ordered to advance against the stone wall across the valley ; it was there I was disabled, and was not taken to the hospital until about dark. I have not seen Jim since, and have heard that he was dead. In my recent re-visit to Gettysburg I met only three of the old regiment, but none of my old company "A", as with a possible few exceptions they are all out of action now, having gone to "Land of the leal"; but together with those three we went on the 3rd day to the point indicated by the "Marker" as being the place where we stood in the forenoon of that day 50 years before, and all agreed it was the exact spot, and it was a hallowed spot to us, for we were fairly overwhelmed with a flood of memories of the long ago.

On a separate sheet I'm inclosing you the inscription on the Marker, which you will find interesting because it tells with perfect accuracy of what part we took as a regiment in that great battle. Similar ones at various other places also record the action taken by other troops on both sides. Alas, Alack, dear Jeremiah Saunders Gage, Peace to thy Soul.
"Green grow the grass above thee,
"Friend of my early days,
"None knew thee but to love thee,
"None named thee but to praise.

Very respectfully,

A. Q. Bridges

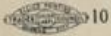
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Copy of Inscription on Marker on Gettysburg Battlefield.

C. S. A.

Army of Northern Virginia.

Davis' Brigade, Heth's Division, A.P. Hill's Corps.

55 N.C.; 2d Miss.; 11th Miss.; 42 nd Miss. Regts Inf.

July 1. Formed linewest Herr's Tavern and crossing the Run at 10 A.M. Joined later by 11th Miss previously on duty guarding train. The brigade fought until the day's contest ended.

July 2. Lay all day west of the Run and at evening took position near here(the marker).

July 3. In Longstreet's assault this brigade formed the Left Centre of Pettigrew's Division, and advanced to the stone wall south of the Bryan Barn, where, with regiments shrunken to companies and field officers all disabled, further effort was useless.

July 4. After night withdrew and began the march to Hagerstown.

Present First Day about 2.000

Killed 180; Wounded 717; Missing 500. Total 1397.

Addenda —

Company A.	There were present first day	<u>31</u>
	Killed during the 3 days	<u>14</u>
	Wounded " " " "	<u>17</u>
		<u>31</u>

This addenda is made by me

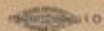
H. Q. Bridges

CASIMIROUX WELCH

XXXXXXXXXXXX

717 E. 15TH ST.

KANSAS CITY, MO.



Mrs. V. G. Armistead,

2616 Royal Street,

New Orleans, La.

H. Q. Bridges,
Att'y At Law,
717 E. 15th St.,
Kansas City, Mo.