

1860

Aug. 14

PERSONAL LETTER from C. W. Gay, in Staunton, to his friend,
Paul Declouet, at home in St. Martinville, La.

Staunton August 14, 1860

Wednesday. - Frere came last night and left this morning. He goes by Cincinatti etc. and will be at home about next Tuesday or Wednesday.

Dear Paul,

This is the first opportunity I have had of answering your pleasant and welcomed letter and I at once embrace it. The congeniality existing between us will, I am sure, by correspondence be kept happily glowing during our far separation - and when you are at the University I hope you will come up to Greenwood often and always make my room your quarters. I have written to old "Hard Nut" asking him to room with me - but have not heard from him yet. I reckon the old fellow has gone home or is out on one of those excursions to Dr. Bronteiro's.

Paul, if you want to see a little town in destruction come up here and look at Staunton. We have had four most dreadful storms here since the fourth of this month and Staunton cannot be recognized now as the pretty "city of the hills". The water tore up the pavements completely and washed the earth out to the depth of eight or ten feet. Every cellar was filled to a level with the street and in some places the water was four feet deep on the stories which are even with the street. Fences, barrels of whiskey, hogs, etc. were carried entirely off - houses were undermined and some of them fell in. Yesterday morning an old frame house near the Lutheran Church was upset by the tremendous flow of water. An old woman was in the 2nd story and was with difficulty rescued and was badly hurt. Several persons came very near being drowned. The whole loss in town will amount to nearly

1860 \$100,000. We out in the country did not suffer quite so much, but still the
Aug. 14 corn was much washed and injured; and fences destroyed. Some persons
(con't.) going to town on horseback could not get along at all and had to come up here
and stay till the waters subsided. You may imagine what times we have had.
Tom Opie and myself went out in the country last Thursday ten miles from
town to spend a few days with two fellows who keep "bachelor's hall" and we
had a most glorious time hunting, fishing and flying around through the
mountains. We went one evening out in the mountains to a ten pin alley, where
we met about a dozen real mountain girls. I tell you, Paul, they were hard
looking critters. On Sunday we went eight miles further to a Methodist Camp
meeting, where we had a rich time. There were about 10,000 people there.
I saw the prettiest girl there I ever saw and also the ugliest. Just in the
middle of the session a snake got amongst the women and you never heard
such squalling in your life. The snake was killed. I went down to Waynesboro
a week or two days ago - surveying with the country surveyor - I saw Massie
and learned that Wash. was spending the summer in Clarke Co., I think, I
came up on the cars and met with an Institute Miss Gwin of Memphis. I got
a seat by her and had a glorious talk. Paul, I have gotten afraid of girls, and
have not been to see any for six weeks, though there are crowds of them here,
I've got a notion to put on my swallow tail and beaver this evening and go up
to see Miss Ellen Suckett. Have you taken the young ladies out in the curl
yet? I would certainly like to see you tumble them out. I got a letter from
Frere the other day. He said he would be in Staunton last night; I went in to
to meet him, but he did not come. I suppose he was kept back by the rain
and will be here tonight. Paul, do you know that the rooms in college at the
University are to be distributed to students by chance? They have a kind of

1860 lottery where the student draws a ticket and whatever room is marked on the
Aug. 14 ticket, he is obliged to take. You had better write and secure you a room in
(con't.) some of the boarding houses out of college. Frere wrote to Winterbaker. I
don't know whether he succeeded in getting a room though. Please let me
hear from you very soon.

I am yours sincerely, I. V. A.

C. W. Gay