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(1862)  
Jan. 26

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

Staunton, January 26, (1862)

Dear Paul,

I was very happy indeed to receive your letter some time ago and have deferred answering it till I could hear something from Capt. Crane relative to our pay. At first he wrote to me that he was very sorry I thought it was his fault that you and I were reported "absent without leave", for he said he had certainly given us his permission to come by the Central road, believing we were unable to march to Salem, but he said our friend Lawson enquired particularly about us and ordered him to report us as he did. He seemed very sorry about it and asked me to explain it to you. He went to the pay Department and being unable to draw our pay by this roll made off in Salem, he got regular discharges for us by which we could draw our money. He sent these to me to sign and I having your power of attorney, signed them and returned them to his. The infernal jacks would not pay your's without your own signature to the discharges, and would not pay mine because both signatures were in the same hand writing. I would call that the heavy particular. Crane then got new discharges for us, by which, I hope, we can draw without further difficulty. I enclose you yours which you must sign and get someone to sign as witness. Then any one in Richmond can draw for you. If you know no one there, send your discharge to me and a power of attorney (witnessed) authorizing E. B. Bentley to draw your money and I will get Mr. B. to do so.

Capt. Crane told me he intended to go to N. C. (North Carolina) to take charge of a company. Dinwiddie has received some appointment in the Legion. The old Legion has gone to N. C. and I heartily wish it a better time

(1862) than it has enjoyed in Western Va. I saw in the paper the other day that when  
Jan. 26 the Legion was going thru Norfolk, Capt. Wallace shot and killed one of his  
(con't.) men for insubordination and just after another of the same company was killed  
by a sentinel. I have not yet determined what I shall do, but as soon as the  
winter breaks, I expect to join some good artillery Co.

Paul we have spent one happy session together at school and are good friends there and have served together in an arduous campaign where I think we were closer friends than any two other members of our company; and not when I think again of entering service, I feel very sorry that we will most probably not be together again.

Tom Sparrow is in Staunton now. He has some hope of getting a clerkship in the navy Department.

Buck Young is at home. I met him today walking from church with Miss Mary Johnson Stuart. He and Sparrow are coming to stay with me tomorrow night. How I wish you could be with us. Tom could tell you a great many marvellous yarns about his visit in Monroe. He desires me to give his "pious" to you when I should write.

The Staunton girls are as well as ever judging from their looks. I believe I have called on 2 ladies since you left. Miss Peyton and Miss Price.

(February 6th) I have accidently failed to mail your letter sooner and will add a post scripture. I have determined to send your discharge to your father (Alexander Declouet) in Richmond instead of enclosing it to you, as he may be able to draw your money by it now. I shall direct to him, care of Mr. Benjamin so that the letter will be forwarded in case your father has gone home. I hope he will make us a visit for we all will be most happy to see him.

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Paul when this war ends I promise myself the realization of a most pleasant anticipation viz: a visit to you and Frere and a sight of Louisiana, and in the mean time, let me express the hope that our correspondence will continue. Pa, Ma and all join me in kindest regards to all at your home.

Paul, I suppose you have seen nothing of my friend Miss Fannie. She is spending the winter in New Orleans. I received a letter from Lieut. Caperton a day or two ago in which she says "always send my kind regards to your friends Mr. (Paul) Declouet and Mr. Frere, when you write to them". Is Alex (your brother) at home now? That Tennessee soldier (Webster) who shot Snider in Staunton last fall was acquitted last Saturday. Mr. Stuart Sheffey and Michic defended him and made splendid speeches. The killing was conclusively proved to be accidental. Webster seems to be a fine young man and of very high standing in Tennessee. The young ladies attended the trial.

Paul, please write very soon.

Your devoted friend,

C. W. Gay

P. S. Paul, I entirely forgot to pay you the dollar and a half I owed you. I will give it to your father as I cannot make the change now. I will also try to collect what Buck Young owes you and send it in my