

Staunton-July 5th 10AM-1861

My dear Mother, When I left you, I went into town, sat down and thought over what it was best for me to do. I decided to follow out my plan of going to the Kanawha Valley. I with some difficulty and delay got my check cashed, at about 9 ¼ [9:15] o'clock, paid 4.50 for hand-trunk, 35 cts [cents] for having my trunk taken out to Mr. Campbell's, paid for breakfast at hotel. My ~~breakfast~~ [sic, crossed out] baggage consisted of the little trunk packed to its utmost capacity and a bundle. I had intended when I went out in the morning to have the under coat I had on, but forgot it. I purchased from the tailor at the institute a cadet coat and had cadet buttons but on my high school coat, which together cost \$1.25. From the Armorer I purchased a splendid pistol, a repeating revolver, with six barrels, for the small sum of \$24. Which would sell in Richmond for \$75. I hadn't time to get the shirt from the woman. You get it and keep it for me. I started from Lexington at about 10 AM in omnibus - for Goshen - there we took the cars of the Va central R.R. [railroad] and came to Staunton, where we arrived at 7 ½ [7:30] PM. I found some of the cadets here at the Hotel. I start this evening at 3 o'ck [o'clock] for Jackson River, where I take stage for Lewisburg and from there go to the Kanawha Valley. From Lexington here. The charge was \$3.00, being about 25 miles by stage and 32 by rail. I have now left in my pocket \$60. My plans are as follows; to go to the K.V. [Kanawha Valley] have an interview with Gen. [General] Wise, tell him, if he will give me a place to sleep in and something to eat I will drill troops for him as often as he desires. I [sic, if] he accepts the proposition I will try and gain favor in his eyes, and make myself popular among the men, study tactics continually and show that I fully understand it. Thus I mean to manage and think I can secure employment and perhaps office. Just want and see what I can do. If Gov'. [Governor] Wise doesn't accept it, I will try Col. [Colonel] McCausland who was this year a professor at the V.M.I. and a graduate of Lexington, show him my recommendations, and with with recommendations from Chew, Rouse &c. [& etc.] (who left yesterday evening in the cars, having been detained from some reason until then) I will be sure to get something to do. Anyhow it won't cost me anything to stay there for I can sleep with the Cadets, eat with them &c. [& etc.] Don't you think my plan a very possible and also a very probable one? I do. My high school coat looks very much improved and I am wearing it now. I was very fortunate to get the pistol it is a regular Army pistol. I would have been entirely without weapons if I had not got it! It was very kind in the old Sergeant, as he is called to let me have it. If I hadn't got it, I intended to get a single barreled pistol from one of the Cadets for \$2.50. I would have gotten the latter anyhow but hadn't time, getting my check so lately cashed. I could have sold it for \$5.00 in K.V. [Kanawha Valley] You must not be disheartened but cheer up. Pa will soon be with you. You have a pleasant boarding house in the country, a kind friend from home and it is a safe place comparatively -- though it is hard to tell, where safety is now. Cheer up. I will write frequently and let you know how I am getting on. I will tell you where to direct your letters when I get there. Kiss little Meggie for me. I must now tell you good bye.

Your devoted - loving son -

Eugene F. Cordell

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