

August 8, 1811

Opelousas, Louisiana

A letter from Etienne Alexandre de Clouet to his wife Marie Aspasie Fusilier in anticipation of his possible death in a due

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Opelousas 8th August, 1811 My dear Friend (female gender), If this reaches you this will be a fatal blow for you, my poor father and my dear sisters, in fact, all of the family, but you know I have received a slap in the face (been humiliated) from this rascally person, in spite of my desire to live, my good friend, to work for you and my dear and well beloved Lesima, the object of my tenderness, these reflections (thoughts) have not been abandoned.

Since all that has passed with me and that young man, my honor has always dominated all those wise reflections (thoughts) and I prefer to run this chance than to live with a spot (stain) that is so dirty.

You must, my sweet friend, console yourself with your dear daughter, take care of your health for her, you can mourn your husband _____ do not doubt the affection that he has for you, but I repeat that you should take care of yourself for your dear Lesima and to him or her that, you will give life to, because I am persuaded that you are with child—if it is a son, he will carry the name of my dear father and if a daughter, give her your name or name her after Aunt Catiche. I leave that to your discretion (?), my Dear Heart. _____ believe my sweet friend and be convinced by the love that you have always shown evidence of. Since I have enjoyed the good fortune that our union one to the other, you will respect my memory, to hold to my demands that I firstly made, that you never abandon my poor father, never cease to consult him for aft you do. I want to advise you that I do not want anyone but him to have the goodness of my dear daughter in _____ and that you will name him as tutor for my dear child and the future (son or daughter) if you have the good fortune to give (him or her) life, unless (he or she) arrives _____. I recognize you, my

²Original letter on file at the Louisiana Room, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Dear Heart, for other good - that papa owes me, and you will wait until my affairs permit him all the rest of my proprietary interests till they come into his hands and he will employ in his judgment what is most advantageous for my Dear Lesima of which I cannot think but spill a few tears. I recommend to my poor and crippled father, and also to you My Heart, to neglect nothing for the education of this dear and interesting child. If, unfortunately, my father is deceased before this dear girl is raised and married, he will name a tutor of his confidence and yours my Sweetheart and if you come to have a son I recommend also that papa pays attention that his education be more thorough than if it would be a girl. In short, my dear friend, it would take me too much time to make you know how much _____ and of that dear child have occupied my time and makes me regret my life. Yes, I miss _____ to bear witness.

Communicate this to papa that I hope to you, also that I have left my confidence in him to be your supporter and of my dear child. You will keep, my Sweetheart, for your service, four of my horses which are Crain Blanc (White Mane), Gouleaux, Cotrale, _____ which is a very tame horse. I recommend that you never use Cotrale, as you know that he isn't _____ I leave him to you because he is an animal to which I was attached and of which I used since many a year. All the rest of my tame horses will be sold and the proceeds put at profit (interest) for my dear Lesima.

If you desire, my Sweetheart, to live with Papa and my poor sisters and like I have asked that you keep Camilien always at your service, but if you leave home deprive not Papa and all the family of your dear daughter, then papa will keep him (Camilien) to make him work and credit the account of this dear child.

Farewell, my sweet half (better half), I am dead in sweet hope(?) that you do not cause alarm to Papa and my Poor sisters. Leave them at least the satisfaction of this dear child that all of you will be consoled by the dearness of your caresses, of my grandmother and my poor aunt. In short, that she be the object of your consolation.[?]