

May 4, 1830
New Orleans, Louisiana

PERSONAL LETTER from Alexander DeClouet in New Orleans to his aunt, presumably Josephine Declouet de l'Homme

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My dear and beloved aunt, I am writing to you in haste. I have only a few minutes to give you. I had certainly promised myself to write to you at length but circumstances prevented me to do so. I have been in town three days. I stopped on the coast where I left Uranie rather sick.

Before my arrival in this city, I thought that the Bolivar, the ship on which I will leave, was sailing from New Orleans only the 10th of May. But since my arrival, I learned that it is leaving on the 5th, thus, I will see that tomorrow afternoon, I will not be in New Orleans any longer and that consequently I have very little free time. It would have proved almost useless for me to write this letter to you as Mr. Nee is bringing it. He could have told you all that you desire to know. But I thought it would give you more pleasure if you received a few lines written by me. Yet, at the same time, I am sorry not to be able to write to you more at length. Here is the reason, It is now past midnight, I am very tired and Mr. Nee is leaving tomorrow at 10 O'clock. I am obliged to finish my letter right away to give it to him tomorrow. Otherwise, I would write to you a longer letter. But if this one is not long, be persuaded that it is dictated by a great affection. I am especially writing to you to beg and urge you to console yourself. Be without any anxiety, the ship on which I am embarking is superb, you find on board all desirable commodities. I am sure that you would feel like leaving also if you could see this ship. The passengers make up a charming society. I believe there are 8 ladies. Mr. Senecal of whom Mr. Nee spoke to you is among the passengers. He is one of the most amiable men I have seen. He is obliging, good, kind, in a word, charming, and you can believe I will feel better on board than if he were not

¹Original letter on file at the Louisiana Room, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

there.

But, my dear aunt, time is pressing. If I have a favor to ask from you it is not to worry. You will hear from me in less than four months. My only sorrow when leaving is to think that you will surrender yourself into sadness, melancholy. Why are you so cruel? Why give me this pain you could so easily dissipate? Why destroy yourself by useless regrets? It is almost a crime not to take care of your health, to let yourself die gradually. Are you guilty of this, my dear aunt? The religion you profess orders you to resign yourself to Providence with serenity. Resign yourself. Put aside the memories of misfortunes to which you have already paid a large tribute of pain and tears. You must not carry things to extremes, you still have links which tie you too strongly to life. Think of your dear nephew. Think of what it will be for him to return to a land of sorrow and pain, to return and not to see you any longer and try to keep yourself alive. Goodby, farewell to Nome and Catiche², Sinclair, Clevre and all the children. I kiss them all and you also with all my heart.

Alexander Declouet

²Declouet Lastrapes