

Paris

November 8, 1830

PERSONAL LETTER from Alexander Declouet in Paris, France, to his aunt, Josephine Declouet de l'Homme at Atakapas in St. Martin Parish. ¹

Alexander Declouet

My very dear aunt,

Since I returned to Paris I have not been able yet to write to you. A chance is being offered and I am hurrying to take advantage of it. I left Bordeaux two weeks ago. My uncle Brognier's (Declouet) family was in good health. Since that time, I heard from them and learned with pleasure that Alexander (Brognier's son), your godchild, had returned from Spain as terrible troubles burst out in this kingdom and as he serves the king. Monsignor Ferdinand VII, he might have lost his life. I am very sorry I was unable to meet him but as I was wasting my time in Bordeaux it was impossible for me to wait for him any longer. My uncle Brognier often writes to his family but he does not mention the time he will return home. He is so absorbed with the colony's affairs that in his letters he does not speak about anything else. (Note: Brognier Declouet founded the colony of Cienfuegos in Cuba in 1819.)

I cannot tell you to what extent I shall be sorry to leave France without having been acquainted with it and I am certain you would feel the same, but let us hope for the best.

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

For already five months I have been in France, up to now, I did almost nothing. It is true that having arrived at the time when all the classes were closed certainly I could not start studying. But this does not prevent me to figure that five months were lost and as I count every moment since I have been separated from my family, it means a great deal already. Here, at last, I am in Paris. As I wanted to get busy as soon as possible I went to consult Mr. St. Avis whom I trust a great deal. He advised me to board with a gentleman who would guide me in my studies. Blindly, I followed his advice and entered this boardinghouse where I found myself feeling terrible in every regard. I have been here for five days. As I could not accept to remain here three months (according to my contract) I found myself compelled to pay thirty dollars to the owner of the pension so that he would let me leave. You can imagine how discouraging all this is for me. Now, I have decided to rent a room. I shall do my best to try to take advantage of all a city such as Paris can offer. But as the end of the winter, if I see that I am not as successful as I wish in the studies I have undertaken, I shall take a tour and then will sail to America. I dare not make this decision hastily by fear I may be sorry later on. But the more I think of it, the more I am inclined to do so, because if my stay in France is not profitable to me, it is useless to remain and spend so much money. Besides, several other considerations make France not so pleasant for me. Here, I have few friends, no relatives. I find myself so alone and abandoned that it makes me sad and melancholy. Frightful presentiments often come to offset the pleasures I might enjoy. But all this should not worry you, my dear aunt, it is quite natural, it is what everyone feels when one is separated from what is the dearest to him. You will forgive me, my dear aunt, for this ugly little letter. I am writing you in haste, I have a quantity of things to do and I am so preoccupied that I don't know which way to turn. I wrote lately to you and all my relatives through some ladies who had the intention to go to St. Martin but I believe you will receive this letter before the ones I entrusted to them. If the ladies I mentioned do not remit those letters to you themselves it means they have changed their plans. I am not giving you political news as it would be endless, but up to the present time everything is very quiet and it seems that the peace of Europe will not be disturbed by the great events which took place.

I am telling you goodbye now, asking you to kiss for me all the uncles, aunts, and all the cousins. Try to write to me, my dear aunt as I am terribly worried. I left six months ago and I have not received yet a single letter. Farewell, I kiss you with all my affection and repeat that I am your affectionate nephew,