

1851
Dec. 25

PERSONAL LETTER from Alexander Declouet in St. Martinville,
to his son, Alexander Declouet, Jr. at St. Charles College in Grand Coteau.
December 25, 1851

My dear Clouet,

B. FAVROT
COLLECTION

Since you returned to college, we have not had the pleasure to hear from you. I was waiting on a letter from you in order to write to you, but being tired of waiting, I am deciding to give you a good example by writing to you first. Answer me immediately, I beg you, so that I can hear from you before my departure for New Orleans which, I think, will take place Tuesday or Wednesday of next week, that is on the 30th or 31st of this month. I am leaving to attend the Railroad Convention assembled in New Orleans on the next 2 and 5 January. I am hoping to be able to return home for a few days before the appointed day for the meeting of the Legislature which will take place on January 19. In such a case, if I have time and circumstances allow this, I shall do my utmost to go to see you and kiss you. I do not think that your Mama (Marie Louise Benoit Declouet) could go to see you before my return from the city, between the 10th and 15th of next month.

When you write to us, let me know how you fared during the severe cold of the last few days. We thought about you quite often. You could not believe, my dear children, what emptiness your absence makes us feel in the house and on the plantation. Therefore, I refuse to believe that you will not make the greatest efforts to compensate us, through your assiduity and good conduct, for the sorrow and deprivation caused by our separation. To be deprived from your company, to make all kinds of sacrifices in order to give you a good education, should you not take advantage of all that, would be the greatest pain you could inflict upon me. Think often of this, my dear

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T. B. FAVROT
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children, often remember the advices I gave you. Remain always for Paul (your brother) what an elder brother, a good brother should be toward a younger and less sensible brother. Ask the President for the permission to be sitting next to each other in the study hall so that you can help Paul in his lessons and his behaviour.

With the beginning of a new year, you must have an increase of work. Let me know a little, about how you get along in your new class, with your new books and new studies. Courage, my son, do not let difficulties discourage you. "An effortless triumph is a triumph without glory". You must conquer laziness, you must conquer these faults often experienced in front of dull or difficult studies, any one can accomplish easy and pleasant tasks, to overcome obstacles, to conquer over difficulties, this is worth while, this trains your mind and your heart, this can form a man useful to himself and to society.

Between us, we spoke about starting drawing. Have you started? This would be my wish: either drawing or music. If you have started or you are about to start drawing, let me know about the supplies of paper, crayons, etc. If it is preferable that I take care of them myself, you should send me a note informing me about the quality of the paper, the crayons, etc.

If you or Paul may think about something which could give you some pleasure and that I could bring you from the city, you must write immediately and tell me about it. I would be happy to bring you something according to your taste.

Nothing new here, my dear son. Christine (your sister) and Henri are still very nice and amusing. Christine is improving every day, before

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long she will speak as well as Henri, she often speaks about you. Mimi (Henriette Lebreton Benoit, your aunt) and your Mama are at mass at this moment. Mimi and Ninise (Blanche, your sister) went to St. Martinville on board Mr. Lastrapes's little boat , the , which passed here this morning coming from Breaux Bridge. Following the severe cold and the heavy rains we have had a fair amount of game. Your uncle killed two cranes in the enclosure.

I still am planting sugar cane, but the plantation does not progress much, the bad weather harms it.

Goodbye, my dear children, be good and studious and think to please your parents who love you so much. Let us hear from you more often, my dear Clouet. Farewell, in our minds and our hearts we are embracing you,

Your father who loves you,

Alexander Declouet