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PERSONAL LETTER from Blanche Declouet in St. Martinville, to
her brother, Paul Declouet at Brookland School in Greenwood Depot, Virginia.
St. Martinville, October 27, 1857

My dear Paul,

Only a few lines to give you news which are good with the exception that whooping cough has been here for some time. Little John brought it from St. Martinville but it has not reached our home yet. Mama (Marie Louise Benoit Declouet) is afraid for Titine (Christine, our sister) and Gabie (Gabrielle, our sister).

Several little negroes have already been affected by it. I am writing this little letter in haste as shortly the bell will call us to lunch and Son will leave right away for the post office. Mama is sending you by the same mail two newspapers, one for you and the other for Quaité (Alexander, our brother). It is the last time, my dear Paul, that I shall have the pleasure to write to you in our dear old hut because my vacations ended on the 22nd, which was last Thursday but I did not leave on the appointed day because Mama had not finished my clothes as the trip we took to the lower Bayou delayed her a great deal. Finally, I think that I shall leave tomorrow. From the convent (Sacred Heart Convent in Grand Coteau, La.), I shall write to you as soon as possible. Today, Papa (Alexander Declouet) is expecting for dinner Mr. Misses Taylor and I think that he will bring along Messieurs Voorhies and others. Papa will start his cane harvest next month but he does not know yet on what day. I understand almost nothing about the machine and the new sugar refinery. When you come you will see many little negroes that you do not know because there have been many newly born infants. A negress had a little girl yesterday evening, she is Riquette's daughter, the one called Eugenie, also Marinette had a big boy.

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Tonton's (Josephine Declouet de l'Homme) Rosette has been very ill but she is better now. Victoire, Mimi's (Henriette Lebreton Benoit, our aunt) cook, had a child but he died within two or three days. There was a time when all Little Uncle's (Jean Baptiste Benoit) negroes were sick, only three or four could pick up his cotton.

Goodbye, dear brother. All the family joins me to kiss you.

Your sister who loves you,

Ninise Declouet