

1858
Feb. 5

PERSONAL LETTER to Alexandre and Paul Declouet at Brookland Academy in Greenwood Depot, Virginia, from their former teacher at Louisiana College, James B. Gilbert, in Middle Granville Washington County, New York.

Middle Granville, Washington County, N. Y.
February 5, 1858

T. B. FAVROT
COLLECTION

My dear friends,

You will hardly imagine the great pleasure your letter gave me. I should have answered it before this, if I had been at home when the letter reached our place. I have been absent from home for nearly seven weeks. Most of the time in Troy, New York.

I return a strange fondness towards Louisiana and her good people. No word readily calls my attention than the names of your native states. Almost daily I go back to stay awhile on the banks of the Mississippi. St. and his venerable college halls will live in my memory to the last.

Pleasant days there measured off two of the most eventful years of my life - I now and then take up an old Catalogue of Louisiana College to recall the names of those who made up our little world, which was walled in from the greater. I find great pleasure in this meeting in mind the old familiar faces.

And when you mentioned the names of Delahoussaye, Gaudet and Roman I welcomed them as I used to do when they met me daily in the classroom. I am also very glad to learn that they are in the University.

But my dear young friends I can have for no one of all my acquaintances in Louisiana the same feeling of interest as for you and your kind

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family. For your father (Alexandre Declouet) and mother (Marie Louise Benoit), for your sisters, that beautiful spot which you cherish as home is of all other places in Louisiana, fixed on my mind. If I had not spent any-time with the families of Louisiana, had I never come into the household circle of any who live along the streams of your almost tropical state I had only half known her people.

I consider myself fortunate in having made the acquaintance of your father's family. I must hold in lasting gratitude the kindness of your father and mother and toward you as my pupils and towards your sisters as the ornaments of the social circle, who tho, quite young were still as lightsome, happy beings giving joy to all. I have feelings of interest such as I have for long known friendly. In all respects I am happy in having formed my impressions of I on their life in the groves that live the waters of the Teche. The grand old cypress trees and the rich plains with their countless birds combine to add a peculiar attractiveness to the place of your birth.

The advantages which you find in your present school will in many respects be greater than at Louisiana College and they should be to make up for the loss of seeing your friends as you did in St. James. The hills which wall in your quiet valley are very pleasant for you and to you who never have been used to them they have a new look not common to those who are born under the shadows of them.

If you should ever visit New York City or its vicinity I should be very happy to see you wherever I may be. A trip north during house vacation would be very interesting to you and I think it quite well that Americans of the United States travel so as to become acquainted with the different classes

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of people in the states North, East and West. With all the peculiarities we have there are more things which unite us as a people than we suppose.

Do you know where the Cader boys are? Where Frere is and Ed Rousseau, J. Denegre and I. Chalavus are? I would be obliged to you for information concerning any of the former students of Louisiana College.

I shall hope to hear from you often. Will you please remember me to your family. I expect to write to your father. I shall always feel a deep interest in your success in life.

God bless you evermore.

Yours very truly,

James B. Gilbert

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