

1859
Sept. 20

PERSONAL LETTER from Louise Declouet in St. Martinville, to her son Paul Declouet at Brookland School in Greenwood Depot, Virginia.
St. Martinville, September 20, 1859

My dear Paul,

A few days ago, I received your letter of September 3. I did not answer sooner because I knew that Clouet (Alexander, your brother) had written to you the day before. Also, we took a trip up there from Friday evening until Sunday evening. Papa (Alexander Declouet) had remained alone with Mr. Larmes and we were quite surprised to see him arriving on Sunday morning with Cousin (Louis Erasmi?) Nee who is still here. I think he will remain with us for a few more days. I assure you, my dear Paul, that you are not the only sad person as since your departure we are very bored and no one in the house can cope with the emptiness you created. We think of you ceaselessly and constantly speak about you. Everything here makes me think of you. As to Clouet, I guarantee you that he is as gloomy as possible. Gabi (your sister) often speaks about you and pretends that she loves you more than she loves Clouet, although you teased her so much. She says that you are too far away from us now, that she has forgotten all the tricks that you played on her.

The painters are finished and left since last week. Mr. Larmer is still at his fence. I am not going to tell you anything about the Vigilance committees, I believe that Clouet gave you an account. Moreover, nothing new since the memorable expedition of Queue Tortue (Turtle Trail). It is to be wished it is the first and the last of that kind. Only last night, we heard that Governor Wickliffe called on the former Governor Mouton but we do not know more recent news. He went home yesterday. He had come with an escort, according to what we were told but we had no details. In his visit to Lafayette, he passed through

1859 the Opelousas.

Sept. 20

(con't.)

Give us some news of the old lady who had been entrusted to your cares. How is she, amiable, pretty, ugly, has she been satisfied with you? Where did you leave her? Miss Laurent wishes to know if your farewells were touching. Finally if there were tears shed and kisses given when you parted. We insist on knowing all this. The Dufouchard family left a week ago. The old sick man was much better. I wish this recovery will continue.

We are all feeling well and kiss you. Ninise (Blanche, your sister) went to bed a little while ago. She is not well without being really ill. I think she will get up for dinner. Titine (Christine, your sister) and Gabi (your sister) are in school. Yesterday, Monday, you know it is a bad day, both of them cried before noon as a start. Lutetia has been sick since last week. She has fever every day. I don't think she will return to her school this week. At her home, everybody was ill. I believe with a cold, but no one was very sick. We went to see them two Sundays ago. Miss Laurent thanks you for your picture. She tells you that the coachman is striking by his ressemblance, his haircut looks like yours. Colas (your dog) is splendid and is getting very amusing. He plays with everybody and is always friendly. Sapho (your dog) had her little ones but I believe that all of them died as they could not be found anywhere.

Goodbye, all of us kiss you. You must write often. I see with pleasure that your year started well. Goodbye, dear Paul, apply yourself with energy in order to come to join us soon.

Your mother,

Louise Declouct

Handwritten in French. Original on file in Dupre Library at the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, La.