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PERSONAL LETTER from Alexander Declouet, Jr. in St. Martinville,
to his brother, Paul Declouet at Brookland School in Greenwood Depot, Virginia.
St. Martinville, November, 1859

My dear Paul,

I received in the last few days two letters from you which gave me much pleasure. Since I wrote to you, we had two severe freezes which rather damaged the canes. However if it continues to be cold, the loss will not be as bad as if it was hot.

We had freezing weather on the 12 and 13 of this month, exactly like last year. All the beautiful canes in the old savanna on this bank froze. They are at the present time in winrows (?) as are most of the remaining canes. Two hundred barrels have been collected and this year we will barely go over four hundred. The fabrication at this moment is very good. Everything at the refinery runs well although somewhat slowly because of the distant transportation. When the cutting of the canes will be nearer, the refinery will acquire speed and both machines will be running. The machine, the furnace and the pan operate very well. Mr Jouan's new invention, a copper boiler, is a complete failure. It does not work at all, we gave it up right away. Papa (Alexander Declouet) kept Mr. Jouan as overseer. He replaces us at the refinery when we are going to dinner. He oversees on his own time, he does not have much to do. He is a good fellow, a little eccentric, sometimes he amuses me. The other day, I went with him to a circus at St. Martin and on the way back he related to me that in 1827 he went to Mobile and he had as a companion a big Newfoundland dog. This dog followed him everywhere and he transported this dog's kennel wherever he went. It seems that the change of climate and food made his poor dog very ill, so he got busy treating and healing his companion to whom he gave medicine upon medicine,

1859 enema upon enema. After some time, the poor dog died, causing to him a great
Nov. sorrow.
(con't.)

Gabi (Gabrielle, our sister) wrote to you a letter the other day. She composed it herself, she was telling me what she wanted to tell you and I kept on writing. Once the letter was finished, Mama (Louise Benoit Declouet) put it in an envelope and mailed it without addressing it so that Mr. Maraist sent it back through the same messenger giving the information that he did not know what to do with it.

Dr. Landry broke his arm falling from horseback. He was probably going to see his sawmill. This is all I can tell you from Catiche's (Declouet Lastrapes, our great aunt) home. For a rather long time, we have not heard from Tonton's (Josephine Declouet de l'Homme) or Mimi's (Henriette LeBreton Benoit, our aunt). You probably know that Tato (Henri Benoit, our cousin) goes to school in the city. Last Tuesday, I went to hunt snipes with Joe Canard outside St. Martin and we killed 21 between the two of us. There are many French ducks right now and with the first rain the number will increase. Poor old Marguerite died.

Goodbye, my dear Paul, nothing else to tell you. A thousand of friendly greetings to the I. V. A . from me and offer my respects to Mr. and Mrs. Dinwiddie (Principal of Brookland School).

Your brother and best friend,

Alexander Declouet, Jr.