

1859
Dec. 20

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

My dear Paul,

Already a few days ago, Gabi (your sister) and I received your letters of November 27. I think that Gabi is preparing to compose an answer. As you must know, this is a very important thing for her to write a letter. It takes her several days before she is ready to mail it. The freeze of November 13 harmed the crops a great deal. Papa (Alexander Declouet) hardly made 300 bushels, however with the sugar off the tops of the bushels, I believe he will go over 300 bushels, besides, we are not the only ones. All the sugar planters made a great loss. Some of them will not even gather half of the crop. Mr. Durand, our neighbor, made only 160 bushels. He could not start grinding because of a lack of water for the boilers. He was obliged to cart barrels of water from Bayou Teche.

At last, John Brown was hanged, thank God. There were no new troubles nor excitement. I wish that everything was over concerning him because I could not help feeling uneasy about you. Our young ladies spent two days up there during last weekend. They had a grand time. They played the game of 21. Christine (your sister) had left with them and Papa went to join them Saturday morning, so I remained all alone with Clouet (Alexander, your brother) as my guardian and my dear big Gabi who refused to leave me all alone. It was a real struggle before she made up her mind. Her heart was divided. She desired to follow the group but it made her sad to leave "my dear mama all alone." Clouet took her to St. Martin for an outing and gave her toys and candy

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as a payment. I do not remember if I told you that Dr. Landry broke his right arm falling from a horse. Again, I have a marriage to announce to you, but of blacks. Saturday evening, Sama married Miss Suzanne Champagne. It is uncle Ursin who conducted the wedding ceremony and the next day Sama moved to the other bank. They had a supper and danced all night.

I have also received your letter of December, Ninise (Blanche, your sister) also. And Papa has received your last bulletin which is rather good but Mr. Dinwiddie (Principal of Brookland School) complains that you do not attend enough classes and work enough. I find this strange. It seems to me that it is his duty to give you rather more than not enough work. Let Miss Julie continue to believe that Clouet is married. This is enough to amuse us and you also. Your friend, Mr. Schaumburg, had a very good idea to make her believe this.

Have a good time during your week of vacation in order to resume your studies with more vim and courage. Above all, when you travel, be very prudent and exact at your post on time.

We had a little rain all day yesterday with an eastern wind but yesterday a change happened when the wind blew toward the north and this morning everything is frozen. The weather is gloomy and very cold. The lilacs are covered with snipes and Clouet has been killing a quantity of them during the last few days. There were wild geese and bustards within the enclosure but so wild, they were out of reach. It is time for me to say goodbye. My paper draws to its end and it is getting late. We are well and kiss you tenderly. Miss Laurent sends friendly greetings. Goodbye again. Write often even if it is a few lines.

Your mother who cherishes you,

Louise Declouet

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