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PERSONAL LETTER from Gabrielle Declouet in St. Martinville, to her brother, Paul Declouet at Brookland School in Greenwood Depot, Virginia, followed by a letter from his parents, Alexander Declouet and Louise Declouet.
St. Martinville, December 10, 1860

My dear brother,

I have a great desire to see you. Mimi's (Henriette Lebreton Benoit, our aunt) little daughter is ill. They think the trouble is in her head. All of Noe's (Noemi de l'Homme) children had a cold. There is an old negress at Tonton's (Josephine Declouet de l'Homme) who is paralyzed. She is the old Marie Barriere. Didi has a sore throat. Our cousins Favrot came here. They dined here Saturday and Sunday. They brought their little sister (Octavine) to take her to the convent (Sacred Heart Convent in Grand Coteau, La.). Their (Didier Favrot) brother /came. Every day our little sister (Corrine) wakes up at two o'clock in the morning. The other day Mama had been to Miss Laurent's room and our little sister screamed. Papa went to Mama's bed, he embraced her and she calmed down right away. If you don't come soon, all the snipes will be caught. Litetia and Cook send their greetings.

Goodbye, my dear brother, I kiss you with all my heart.

Gabrielle Declouet

(In Alexander Declouet's hand):

My dear Paul,

I wrote to you by the last mail answering your letter of November 26 and I am adding only a few lines to Gabi's letter in order not to leave a blank sheet and to give you news fresher than Gabi's news.

We received yesterday another letter from Clouet (Alexander, your brother) to Blanche (your sister). He seemed in good spirit and ready to have a

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good time, not, however, without spending a good deal of money. It is painful for me to be obliged to warn him to be very thrifty.

Business in the city is in a miserable condition and I see myself compelled to go to Opelousas today to borrow (from Mr. Lartic Dupre) in order to be able to defray my expenses. I shall have to pay a high rate of interest but I still consider myself lucky to be able to obtain from him part of what is needed as in the city with the best signatures and guarantees, it is hard to get money at 4 and 5 percent a month.

It rained a little this morning but the weather cleared up and we will have a magnificent Spring day. After a few days like this one, the plantation will progress. I think I told you in my last letter that 260 arpents have been planted and I thought I would obtain a plantation of 500 to 700. The day before yesterday, we went with Ninise (Blanche, your sister), Miss Laurent and Christine (your sister) to spend the day at Dauterive's who was about to end his grinding.

(In Louise Declouet's hand):

Papa not have had time to finish his letter, I am coming to tell you farewell for him and add a few lines to fill Gabi's paper. We are all feeling well and over there also. just came from there to do some errands. Our dear little Corrine is well and judging by appearances, is gaining. She is plump and rosy, has large eyes very much like Gabi's except that they are deep blue. Within the last few days she began to laugh. You would not recognize the same child who was so thin and skinny two months ago when you left. She is the pastime and the occupation of the whole household. Goodbye, my dear child, it is getting late. Until another time. I am afraid that you cannot read me.

Your mother, Louise Declouet