

1-17
1861
July 19

PERSONAL LETTER from Alexander Declouet, Jr. in St. Martinville,
to his father, Alexander Declouet in Richmond, Virginia.
St. Martinville, July 19, 1861

My dear Papa,

Your few lines from Huntsville on the 13th of this month reached us this morning and gave us a great pleasure as they had been awaited with much impatience.

Yesterday, I went to Tonton (Josephine Declouet de l'Homme). All of them were very well with the exception of Little Uncle's (Jean Baptis te Benoit) little girl (Arthemise) who is still somewhat suffering.

We drilled yesterday afternoon. There was a crowd. Mr. Charles (Tertron) divided the company into two brigades. Here, we drill on Thursdays and Sundays and at the Pont they drill on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Little Uncle has been appointed 3rd Lieutenant. The company is now completed, the list is closed and we do not take any more new soldiers, unless 15 appear at the same time which would bring the number to a hundred men. As soon as we receive all the caps and all the uniforms are finished, we will have a big parade. We will go to St. Martin for mass and have our flag blessed.

On the plantation, everything is well. We have a few sick people but nothing serious. We have found some cypress logs for the weather boarding of the corn warehouse. Mr. Lafraigne had twelve of them in the Chretien savanna and twenty-five in the Big Wood. Almost all of them are in good condition. We will share them and saw his according to his wish. In the enclosure, they still work on the fences of the canebrak. The weather does not allow us to make much hay. They transported a quantity of logs of copalm from Durand's son. The sawmill ran all week. Miche is almost finished Mr. John's dining room.

1861
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(con't.)

It is about all the information I can furnish you on what happened on the plantation since last week.

We are feeling very well, Mama (Louise Benoit Declouet) has more courage than I expected. Poor Tonton is pitiful. She is still so alarmed. She is sure that you also will leave for the war. She has no more confidence in our success than when you were here. It is useless to try to comfort her. Our dear little Corinne (my sister) is always full of life. She is as mischievous as ever and she understands everything said to her. Christine and Gabi (my sisters) have always a good appetite. Last night they rode old Zidore's horse. They were so happy. Miss Laurent has been very well. She sends you friendly greetings.

Goodbye, dear Papa, let us hear from you often. If by any chance you pass near Greenwood, try to meet Mr. Dinwiddie (principal of Brookland School). The day before yesterday I received a very amiable letter from Mrs. Dinwiddie and she gave me news of almost all my school friends. Three of her brothers-in-law belong to the same company as Paul (my brother). We received this morning a letter from Paul dated the 8th of this month, from Lewisburg. He was to leave the next day with two of his friends to go to Charleston to bring muskets to General Wise's army. It is tomorrow that you have a meeting and as you must think, we are impatient to know the result of your first discussions.

Send me our President's message as soon as it is published. Send me also from time to time an issue of the "Richmond Enquirer".

Goodbye again, dear Papa. I am afraid it will be difficult for you to read what I wrote across the pages. We embrace you with all our affection.

Your son, Alexander Declouet, Jr.