

1876
July 24 PERSONAL LETTER from Jane Roman Declouet in Galveston, Texas, to
her husband, Paul L. Declouet in St. Martinville, La.
Monday, July 24, 1876

My dear Paul,

As I wrote to Christine and Gabie (your sisters) this morning I expected to answer your letter of the 19th only tomorrow but I thought that it is the day of the picnic and I do not want you to be without news. We did not go to bathe this morning because our carriage did not come. We suppose that Mr. Astugueville went on a spree (according to his expression) yesterday. Blanche (your sister) is returning from her dinner with Edwige and Lizima (our daughters). Charley (our son) wanted to remain with mama. The day was good except for a little (our daughter) whim of Lizzie but after dinner, she followed the other children and they had a good time.

The transfer company took care today of your father's (Alexander Declouet) little trunk that we had used as a carpet bag. We found it so inconvenient that having a few articles to mail I used it as a box especially because of your socks I wanted to send you. I thought you may have been short of them.

I am very happy that the Dominique affair is over, it is one great cause of worry less for me.

Please, do not apologize for scribbling. I can always read you, even if the words were abbreviated. I would be most grateful for your writing to me. I know all that it involves and my greatest regret is that you shorten your sleep.

Tuesday: We went to bathe yesterday evening with Ernestine as coachman. Our baker is ill and will not be able to accompany us. On top of all that, it had been raining since we returned from the bath and our party might be ruined.

We are expecting Mrs. Broussard and her young girls. She is so good

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and amiable that we would like to see her. The old man is still full of attentions for me and he leaves his little children to come to assist me saying he has to take care of another child. I must hold him with both hands to fight the waves and yet often I am pushed up and do not touch the bottom. When I am a little tired of such violent shocks he leads me to a deeper water where we rest, waves only carry us.

With each bath, our hair is dripping wet and we look like drowned people. I would need you and regret you are not with us, first for the good it would do you and then for my own satisfaction. No way to have Lizzie make her mind. She remains on the shore with Edwige or Ernestine to gather shells. Charley has the most fun and disappears under the waves. The rain has stopped, I must leave you to get ready for the picnic. Kiss my darling (George, my son) for me and take care that he does not forget me, it would make me sad. Farewell, my dear friend. I am waiting for your vacation as much as Charley does. The children kiss you and are good.

Forever yours,

Jane

26 (Wednesday): The party is over. We spent the day 5 miles from the city. Unfortunately it was in the cemetery. If I had known it in advance, I would not have gone. It is a new one, few people there, nevertheless... Happily, the place is large and we stayed near the house under a lilac tree. There were 22 of us, among them five children from 8 to 3. We ate delicious oysters when we came out of the water. No bath this morning, the sea was very calm and there was danger to encounter some big fish. Again, farewell,

Jane

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

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PERSONAL LETTER from Jane Roman Declouet in Galveston, Texas,
to her husband, Paul L. Declouet in St. Martinville, La.
Galveston, July 31, 1876

My dear friend,

Sunday is a good day for news, it is the second I have a letter from you. It is dated on the 25th and as usual, each evening I read you I experience a joy mixed with sadness. For my Charley (our son), it comes on the dot: tears each time. He is telling you that he will not be able to answer your letter today because he is going to town with Naine Vige (Edwige Lauve) to bring my letter and see if there are others. The last time I went to town I bought him a little cane and for the little girls a little piano 75. They are delighted with it. We went to call on the ladies Broussard yesterday afternoon and they made us enjoy ice cream. They are very kind to us and Vigette (Edwige, our daughter) made their conquest, they find her amiable and well brought up. She (Vigette) is happy to meet little friends, you know how she likes to chat. One thing she said and which amused Mrs. Broussard is that Marie, the nurse, up to now shows a good disposition.

Through Christine's (your sister) letter to Blanche (your sister) receive yesterday we also learned your father's (Alexander Declouet) arrival. We were glad to hear that he swims also and that his health is good. Blanche will soon answer Christine's letter which she enjoyed.

I took this morning my 17th bath with Blanche and Ernestine. I did not take Charley along because he coughs badly. He was hot yesterday while taking his nap and I suppose that this little cold is due to his having ceased to perspire.

I have not seen a baby as beautiful as my big George. Marie Broussard's boy made me think of him but he does not have this fine firm flesh so pleasant to kiss.

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But tell me what you read in my letter, you must not exaggerate my progress. I do not want to remove your illusions but my recovery is not striking. What is true is that I can stand bathing better than persons enjoying good health. Morning and evening we walk a mile and a half on the beach inhaling a delightful breeze. I forgot to tell you that old Broussard is kept home by a sore foot. I urged him to recover quickly because since his absence we bathe in the sand, we are afraid to go far. When you come, bring a mosquito bar, because mosquitoes are fearful. Take care to bring your trunk, even if it is too large for your clothes. We can use it. I hope that his hat is all right otherwise one could give it away, it cost only a dollar. I think now is the sweet potatoes's season if you could send a barrel, the children would be happy. Edwige (Lauve) likes them.

So long, my dear friend, do your best to come soon. Charley's impatience is contagious. Kiss the family for me. Blanche and the children kiss you, for you all the sincere and devoted affection my heart contains,

Jane

P. S. After dinner we bet 805. We take two carriages, this is why it is so costly. Today, all day long, we sewed our costumes. Blanche's one is finished. Charley's one, Ernestine's one. Tonight, Edwige and I and Charley and Ernestine carried our basket to go bathing, but there was lightening and I was afraid to take a chance, especially because my old comrade did not advise me to go. All the ladies said the opposite, but I preferred to come back before the rain which is falling right now. Lizette (our daughter) has a little cold and she is waiting for her costume with impatience. Lizzie tries to be spoilt and Charley is splendid. It is late, good night, I kiss you with all my love, the children also.

Monday - 20: We are coming from the bath. Nemours, Blanche,

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Charley and Ernestine in the baker's carriage driven by the owner himself. It is exactly as it should be, we don't need to dress up and wear hats. The man is rich and Laure's former acquaintance. We left the little girls asleep with Naine Vige who had pricked her foot with a needle. The bath was delightful and the waves so strong, you cannot wish for a more pleasant bath and we regret that you are not enjoying this.

Goodbye, dear friend, no more little tender chit chat for today. The main things have been said and will interest you more. Blanche is very fond of bathing and kisses you as we all do.

Yours forever,

Jane