

1-5
1859
Oct. 26

PERSONAL LETTER from Henriette St. Clair at Malakoff
Plantation, to her nephew, Paul Declouet at Brookland School in Greenwood
Depot, Virginia.

Malakoff Plantation, October 26, 1859

My dear Paul,

I have received your dear portrait with the greatest pleasure and I intended to write to you to thank you to have thought of me, but St. Clair (my husband) having decided to send Henry to town I had to prepare him and it gave me a great deal of trouble, then the sorrow his departure caused me left me paralysed. I had no more courage and I postponed from day to day writing, but I do not want to wait any longer to thank you for your attention. Please, do not believe that we forget you, very often we speak about you and every evening, when looking at Tato's/portrait which is on the mantel piece we see your dear face looking at us gently and this saddens me as I know you are so far from your parents. Take courage, it will not be so long from now and I hope that this thought alone must give you a great desire to get ahead.

Your mother (Marie Louise Benoit Declouet) slept here with Gabi (Gabrielle, your sister) Saturday last and they were feeling well.

Your father (Alexander Declouet) will begin cutting the sugar canes tomorrow Thursday, I think it will be your uncle's turn on November 1.

Please, transmit my friendly greetings to Charles and Henry. They ought to write to me once in a while, it would give me pleasure.

Tato will write to you from the city. He started music, he is learning to play piano, his classes will begin in November. If you could imagine how lonely I feel, what an emptiness here. Here I am, in spite of myself sad thoughts come to me, I cannot continue.

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(con't.)

Write to me some time, it will give me pleasure and I will answer each time. Farewell, I kiss you a thousand times for your uncle and all of us, and also Charles and Rico,

Your devoted friend,

Henriette St. Clair

P. S. Everybody's feeling well at Tonton's (Josephine Declouet de l'Homme) and at your home.

Dear Paul,

Have some one look at Charlotteville, there must be a letter that Mimi wrote to you lately and which, by error, she addressed there.

Your uncle who loves you,

Benoit St. Clair