
LePage Bakeries

Charlotte Michaud

Winter 12-3-1979

Letter to Charlotte Michaud from Regis LePage

Regis LePage

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Lepage Bakeries

60 Second Street, Auburn, Maine 04210

Regis A. Lepage

December 3, 1979

Miss Charlotte Michaud
44 Janebar Circle
Framingham, Ma 01701

Dear Charlotte,

I am dictating to Mrs. Michael Masters the facts that you wanted to receive from me regarding the Lepage Family and business. All of this is out of memory and might be misquoted on dates but they will be pretty near accurate. I will start at the beginning in case you are interested.

Francois Regis Lepage was born at St. Francois, Ile d'Orleans on March 13, 1873. As you know, we do not have in French 70s, 80s or 90s. The 70 is 60 + 13 -- in other words, the auspices under which he was born couldn't have been more unlucky but he was one of the most lucky men in the world.

The Lepage Family came from Ouenne, France which is 120 miles southeast of Paris. The ancestors, Louis, Rene and their sister, Constance took the journey to the coast and in 1663 they signed a contract with the Lord of Orleans Island to work on his domain for 3 years without pay, naturally, to pay for their passage to New France. After serving their 3 years of bondage my ancestor Louis was granted roughly 50 acres of land on Orleans Island where my father was born. Up to this day after 316 years my first cousin which would be my father's nephew is still tilling the same farm.

At the age of 13 my father was sent to his uncle, a Catholic priest, to a parish in Levis, Quebec, who took care of his education. It seems that he had the equivalent of two years of high school which was enormous in those days. At the age of 16 he took the road to the "land of milk and honey," the United States.

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From what I heard my father say, I think he went first to New Bedford for a while and then went to Falmouth, Mass. on Cape Cod where he learned his trade as a baker in a small bakery in town. He couldn't speak a word of English and nobody could speak a word of French so under those circumstances he became, at the age of 17, bilingual.

There is a period there that's a gray area -- I remember him saying that he went to Brunswick to work for a baker there. He finally settled in Auburn with the Dupont Bakery.

He went back to Orleans Island to marry my mother and established himself permanently in Auburn where he spent all his life. *maiden name?*

He became foreman of the Dupont Bakery and by 1903 he decided that he wanted to go in business for himself. There was a Mr. Mailhot working at Dupont's with him who was a boarder at my father's home and he joined my father in opening the Lepage-Mailhot Bakery on Chestnut St. which was close to Oxford St. There is yet a bakery in that location named Lacasse Bakery.

Strange things happened on that particular situation. When my father told Mr. Dupont that he wanted to go into business for himself Mr. Dupont offered to finance him to be a competitor. The next generation was able to return the good deed by buying the Dupont Bakery and having the principals on pension.

In 1910, *Had's 2d Regis* Regis A. was born. After 8 girls it was quite a celebration in New Auburn. But the same year he bought land on Park St. and built what was in those days a modern bakery. The first floor was the bakery and the next 3 floors were apartments. Things went well and always had success year after year. ✓

When I became ready for high school, my father thought that with 9 sisters and my mother and aunt making 11 women in the house that I should leave and go to boarding school for my education. Of course in those days the pastor of the parish was always consulted where the children

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should go to school. It was further complicated by the lack of finances to send a young man to American academies, so I was educated in the Province of Quebec, all in French naturally, plus Latin and Greek and received my B.A. Degree at the University of Montreal in 1931. I thought I would go into the baking business immediately but my father that had vision insisted that I would get a Masters Degree in Business. You must realize that I could quote all the French classics by heart but I had never heard of Shakespeare. Consequently, I enrolled at Boston University for a Masters in Business and naturally I had to take special courses in English and practically lived at the Boston Public Library reading every book that my professor would mention. So, I acquired the knowledge of the English language and I was quite thrilled to receive my M.B.A. in May of 1933.

I operated the bakery for 40 years. Got married to Corinne Croteau whose father was Dr. Croteau of Livermore Falls. We had 4 great children all college educated.

My oldest son graduated from Villanova with a B.A. and from Tulane University with an M.B.A. He is now President of the company and doing well.

The second child, a daughter, Lucille has a B.A. Degree from Marymount College of Tarrytown (N.Y.). She spent her Junior Year at Marymount of Paris and followed courses at the Sorbonne and Institut Catholique. We were quite thrilled when her mentor at the Sorbonne told her that she spoke perfect French like a Parisian and she received on her thesis the mention "Tres Bien" which would mean Summa Cum Laude.

Our second daughter, Francoise, went to Marymount of Virginia, transferred to Marymount of Tarrytown where she received her B.A. Degree; went to Catholic University for her Masters; was a Professor at Marymount of Virginia for a few years and is now residing in Tiburon, California as a Chairman of the Political Science Department. She received her Doctorate from Catholic University in 1979.

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The youngest son, Regis F., graduated from the University of Denver and is the Account Executive of the Fast Food business in New England. *located where?*

The bakery now, from my father's original 5 people in 1903, has grown to 550 employees with a payroll of \$7 million a year.

Now, Charlotte, we have a complete display of photos in our waiting room at our office on Second St. in Auburn. If the newspaper, or if you should wish to come in to choose what you want so that you might use it in your article, you are welcome to them -- they're all there from the moment my father bought his furniture at F. X. Marcotte, to my son as President of the Company.

I didn't go into a lot of detail but if you wish me to elaborate on any particular point, please let me know.

Yours,



Regis A. Lepage

RAL/gm