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11.28.1978 Letter from Charlotte Michaud to JoAnne Lapointe

Charlotte Michaud

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Nov. 28, 1978

Dear Joanne —

You may have found me abrupt in turning down your invitation to meet a new employee at the Heritage Center when we met at the nuns' banquet. I sounded abrupt to myself & regretted that I hadn't given you some explanation. I ended my residence in Lewiston & Old Orchard Beach, because my doctor in Maine informed me, in 1974, that I should no longer live at home. Before he told me, he had also told that to my nephew who is the only close relative I have - he being the son of my only brother. This nephew grew up with mother & me, because he was orphaned in his childhood & before that his mother was in failing health from the time of his birth. Therefore, this nephew was eager to have me move in with him & his family, but they live here in Framingham, where he has a good-paying job with General Motors. It took me two years to make up my mind since it meant ending so many ties dear to me. It was lucky for me that I did make the decision in 1976, because in 1977 it was apparent I had cancer in the uterus. Followed treatments of X-Rays & hospitalization in Boston for 3 days of radium treatments. This last is very difficult to bear, but I survived it &

it's only a year ago this month that I had the surgery that's supposed to have cleared me & from which both the surgeon & my physician here say I made a "remarkable recovery." However, it took me a long while to regain my usual strength. Uppermost in my mind thereafter was to test myself to learn if I could still write stories suitable for the Journal Magazine to publish.

It took me ^{more time} ~~than before~~ to organize my facts & put them into writing order, but I managed & it was a great satisfaction for me & great comfort, too, when so many wrote to say they enjoyed their reading.

So much I could have written for your Heritage Ctr., had I been closer to sources of needed information, so I tried to fill-in by telling you about early Lew-Abb. Fr. Amer. families of note & suggesting names of persons who could supply the needed information. I seldom, if ever, got replies from you & surmised you were too busy - as I know you must be with your school activities & directing the Ctr. - so, I assumed, you put my suggestions to some use through Ctr. personnel.

More recently, the Sisters of Charity asked that I write about their Centenary & that was a novel experience for me. Followed their invitation to attend their Nov. 19 festivities. My first thought was to reply I couldn't possibly attend. I have lived very quietly since the surgery, go nowhere except for personal needs & have sold my car - but, what I now call "my family" here

-2-

Thought the trip to Lew. might be a pleasant change for me & they thought I was well enough to undertake it - so I checked bus & plane travel facilities & found that both would require so much travel time besides waits of one or two hours along the way, that I cancelled the idea even though I had already accepted the nuns' invitation. Learning of my cancellation, two cousins who live some 35 miles from Lew., offered to drive me both ways to Lew., providing we could leave the morning of Nov. 19 & return the next day. One of these cousins is a nurse (retired) so family & I agreed it was wonderful.

However, the trip was terribly wearisome for me. Soon after my arrival at Ramada Inn where we had very comfortable lodgings in two large adjoining rooms, visitors came to see me. My cousins took over hostess duties, but I had but a short period to rest, during which other visitors came - whom my cousins entertained in their room until they realized I was through resting. I dressed for the banquet & joined my visitors so that we were about the last ones to be seated in that banquet hall. My loss of hearing made it impossible for me to follow the program, except for what one cousin could tell me occasionally.

I had to locate the Mother General of the nuns, who had invited me & the other nun with whom I had had correspondence about the story the Journal published Nov. 18 - Had had no previous acquaintance with either.

Locating both of them caused me to circulate among the seated guests, now being served & that occasioned many greetings from other acquaintances & brought others to my table later on - including yourself. While this gave me great satisfaction & pleasure, it also took its toll on my wearied body.

We left before the speeches that must have followed the meal, but, even then, it was 9.30 pm. I had 'phone calls to make to many, but had to cancel them through sheer weariness.

When I was planning the trip I had hoped to be in New 3 or 4 days (not knowing then how high lodging & meals would be) & so I had notified many friends of my coming. Now that the banquet was over & that I had that other long trip to undertake the next day, I was just exhausted & dead-tired!

Fortunately, those 2 cousins were a great help & comfort to me during my stay. Frankly, I would have been afraid to be by myself at the inn, despite the fact I lived alone so many years. Time has taken its toll!

We made the return trip under the best of circumstances & you can ^{guess} ~~imagine~~ what a relief it was to be home when I awoke on Tuesday to not a day-long ~~the~~ snow-storm - 1st of the season here. After a week of much resting, I got back to normal strength, but still have many letters to write to explain my seeming lack of cordiality toward friends of many yrs whom I didn't even 'phone to during my stay.

This puts you up-to-date on my account, but rest assured I'm still willing to help the Centre as much as I can from this distance. I think you've done remarkably well - you & your husband - in that notable endeavor & especially in obtaining helpful finances,

Charlotte Michaud