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origin
3039 E. 91st Street
Chicago 17, Illinois
Aug. 25, 1944

Dear Mrs. Lalaster:

Perhaps you will be interested in hearing about my vacation trip to Kentucky. For some time I had been wanting to go down into the part of the country from which my mother's father, Hugh Lalaster, came, and as I also wanted to make a visit to my sister Lois and her daughter, Ann, in Indianapolis, I combined the two ideas and made Kentucky my destination, with stop-overs in Lafayette and Indianapolis, Indiana.

On the way down I stopped over-night, ^{in Lafayette, Ind.} with my sister-in-law, Nina (Harry's widow) and had a very pleasant visit with her. I asked how Dorsey ("Bud" to the family) was getting along at West Point, and was surprised almost to the point of a shock to learn that he stood 7th in a class of 842! I told her that I would have been thrilled to learn that he was within the upper tenth of his class, but that this was almost too much for me to grasp. He is chairman of the most important committee of the student body, and will have charge of arrangements for their June week graduation, etc. Of course I am very proud of him. Those who attain the highest standing in their class are permitted to choose their branch of service. I believe that "Bud" prefers the Engineers. Nina is planning to spend the winter in New York or New Jersey in order to be near Dorsey, for she feels that he will surely be sent over-seas within a short while after graduation. She may drive through about the middle of September, and would like to have me go with her. Since I have two weeks left of my vacation I might be able to go. She thought we might possibly drive on up to Maine. Of course I would have to return from New York by train, as she would remain there.

After leaving Lafayette I went on (the next afternoon) to Indianapolis and spent a couple of days with Lois and Ann, and then took the Bus for Madison, Indiana, down the Ohio River, and found that there was no Bus connection there for the part of Kentucky I wished to visit. I had selected my own route, and it seemed from the road maps to be the most direct route to Campbellsburg, where I wanted to see Mr. Ben Lalaster (a second cousin). From Madison I had to take a Bus to a little place called Lamb, which was merely a wide space in the road, and then walk about a mile down to the ferry, and was ferried across on a creaky old boat, and then had to walk about another mile up into the little city of Carrolton, Ky. I really enjoyed the walks, although my luggage was a bit heavy. As it was mid-afternoon when I reached Carrolton I decided to spend the night there, and went to a movie "The White Cliffs of Dover" which I enjoyed very much. I caught the 6:00 AM bus for Campbellsburg, and had a delicious breakfast at a little country town hotel, with plenty of southern hospitality. Phoned out to Ben Lalaster, and he came in and took me out to his farm home where I spent the morning. He and his wife were invited out to dimer, at some friends in town, and we visited until time for them to leave, when they returned me to the Hotel, and I took the 1:30 PM Bus to New Castle. I had wanted to meet this Mr. Lalaster, as he is the oldest member of the Lalaster family in that section of the State, and he lived in the old home of his father (also a Benjamin Lalaster) who was my grandfather's nephew - my mother's own cousin. He has a very nice farm home - a large two story house very nicely and comfortably furnished.

At New Castle I went directly to the Court House, and looked up old records of wills, deeds, marriages, etc, pertaining to the Lalaster family, as my grandfather was born in or near that place. Among other items of interest I found an appraisal of the personal property of the brother of my great-grandfather. This was my grandfather Hugh's uncle, for whom he was named. A list of his slaves, with their ages and value, was quite interesting, so I will quote that part of the appraisal:

Charity, negro woman,	age 50	\$200.00	: Ann Eliza, negro girl,	age 14,	\$500.00
Caroline	" "	33	500.00	: Elvira	" " " 10 350.00
Charlotte	" "	30	500.00	: Dorinda	" " " 9 300.00
Isham	" blind man	" 28	-	: Perry	" boy " 9 350.00
Jourdan	" man	" 24	750.00	: Amanda	" girl " 8 250.00
Levi	" "	" 26	750.00	: Alexander	" boy " 3 175.00
Warfield	" "	" 22	700.00	: Hannah	" girl " 3 150.00
Alfred	" "	" 21	750.00	: Mary	" " " 2 125.00
Oliver	" "	" 18	700.00	: William Henry	" boy " 1 100.00
					\$7,150.00

This Hugh LeMaster, my grandfather's uncle, was a Revolutionary soldier, and applied for a pension when he was 83 years old. He died at the age of 87. I had always supposed that he asked for a pension because he needed it, but from the value of his property, both real and personal, I must have been mistaken, for he seems to have been "pretty well fixed" for his day and generation.

After "browsing around" in the dusty court records until closing time at the Court House, I decided that if it were possible I would go on over to Eminence that evening, and found a rural mail carrier who took me over there (a distance of at least five miles) for a 50¢ taxi fee. It was well worth it, as Eminence is quite a nice little place, with a comfortable hotel. I located a LeMaster relative, Mrs. Lucy LeMaster Smith, and spent a pleasant evening in her home. I also met her sister who was visiting her from Columbia, Missouri.

The next morning I started out to try to locate the place that my grandfather had owned when he left Kentucky in 1822, and which I had been told was facing the Fair Grounds at Eminence. It was a walk of about a mile from the heart of town. The present house is approached through an avenue of trees (and I wondered if perhaps they had been planted by my grand-father) and is at the crest of a hill. The owner of the place did not know who had owned the place so long ago, as his abstract did not go back that far. He had purchased it through the Farm Loan Bureau, or whatever it is called, and he suggested that I see his lawyer in New Castle, who had his abstract, as he might be able to tell something about it. He did not have this information, so I am still wondering, but I believe that it must have owned when he grandfather's place, from the description given me by the LeMasters. The owner said that he thought that a former house had stood between the present location and the highway, as he had found evidence of a foundation there.

Mr. Ben LeMaster told me of a little "family burying ground" of the Le Masters between Eminence and New Castle, where there were some very old stones, and said he thought my great-grandfather was buried there. I was not able to get out there, but he promised to drive out and copy the inscriptions for me "some day". I surely would appreciate having it, for it might give me some valuable information. I have never been able to find the birth date of James. He died 1831.

From Eminence I went down to Shelbyville, enroute to Frankfort, where I met Mrs. Beard, (a cousin of my friend Mona Osbourn, of Neosho, Missouri) who is a genealogist, and who helped me search the records in the State Historical Society. I spent the afternoon in the Court House at Shelbyville and found a number of interesting records of the LeMaster family, but nothing to tell me what I wanted most to know - just where the family had come from to Kentucky. Records of taxes paid in Jefferson, Shelby and Henry Counties were found to be all on the same property, as Jefferson County was sub-divided twice, and the "property on Dronnan's Creek" mentioned in these three county records are of one and the same property.

The Old Capitol Building at Frankfort is now entirely given over to the Historical Society, and it must be a beautiful place, although when I was there it was in great disorder, as they were giving it a very thorough cleaning and rearranging things, and you could hardly get around without stumbling over paint buckets, book cases, museum pieces, etc, which were pulled out into the center of the rooms to be out of the way of the workmen. Mrs. Beard and Mrs. Cannon, the Librarian were both very helpful and interested in my search for old family records. They are convinced that the James LeMaster who served in the Revolution in the Virginia Line is my great-grandfather, James, who came to Kentucky in 1792,

and settled in Jefferson County, Ky, for he was the only James Lallaster mentioned as living in that section of the State at that time. They believe the D.A.R. would accept these facts but my particular interest is in finding where the family came from in Virginia, and in obtaining positive proof that the James Lallaster who served in the Revolution, according to the records of the Quartermaster General's Office, is my great-grandfather. The Kentucky relatives say that they have been told that the family came from Culpepper Court House, Va. I have not looked into this matter, but shall write to the Court House there to see if they have any records of Lallasters.

I returned to New Castle on Friday evening, and had the most delightful part of my visit. As I had planned to spend the night there and go over to the Court House again to look up something I had failed to get previously, I inquired about a Hotel, and found that the proprietors were Mr. and Mrs. Arnette Lallaster, who were "second cousins once removed" - Mr. Lallaster's father was a brother of Ben Lallaster, and a second cousin of mine. Mrs. Lallaster was very much interested in the records I had with me, and I gave her some copies of my material to send to her son who is in service and at present in about the same part of France from which our ancestors are said to have come. They were very cordial, and when I went to settle my bill they would not allow me to pay for my room and breakfast, so I felt that I had really been visiting relatives in Kentucky.

I left New Castle about 11:00 AM and eventually found my way back via Carrolton and the ferry to Madison, where I had to wait about four hours, and spent part of that time in visiting the Lanier Mansion, home of a millionaire of the early days, and a most beautiful place....Spent Sunday with Lois and Ann in Indianapolis, and left there Monday AM for Chicago, stopping again to see Nina at LaFayette between trains, and back to Chicago by 9:00 PM.

I had only spent eight days of my three week's vacation, so I will have something to look forward to - either the trip to the East with Nina or a trip to the Southwest (Missouri and Oklahoma) at Christmas time. Although the account of my vacation may sound rather strenuous, I assure you that it really was restful and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Everyone down in Kentucky seems to be good natured, and life seems to move along serenely. I found everyone, even strangers, smiling and saying "good morning" whether they ever saw you before or not. It's a nice custom. I am sure I would enjoy another vacation in that part of the country.

Well, this seems to cover the details of my trip, and I hope that this long letter has not bored you. When I returned to the office I found my desk piled high with "unfinished business" which had accumulated in my absence, and I have been quite busy getting caught up again. For that reason I have written this mimeographed letter to send to my close friends and relatives, who may, or may not, have the patience to read it..... Anyway, please let me hear from you soon.

Sincerely, or "with love" as the case may be -

Grace Mahin