

THE LaBERGE FAMILY HISTORY
VOLUME 1

Life for everyone who lives it can be full of excitement and adventure, work and success and disappointment. However, when you are young and live that life, it is most often an active life of the here and now. It is almost always a life of the present and a life consumed by interests of the moment, and in the obligations and enjoyment of wife, children and work.

As one grows older, though, life frequently offers the chance to become becomes more reflective, and gives to each of us the opportunity to wonder why we are as we are. It seems to be only then that we, having ourselves become adults, wonder about the many ways that our lives were molded by the lives of our parents, their parents and those who went before them. It is only then that we seek to know our ancestors who defined the genetic and behavioral patterns that make us so much the way we are. turned out.

Unfortunately, however, by the time that we acquire this interest in the lives and circumstances of those who have preceded us, they are most often gone, no longer available to give the insights that might allow us to understand them better in the context of their times. That surely was the case with me.

My Mom and Dad married in their early thirties, somewhat late by today's standards. By the time I was nineteen and passing from adolescence they were in their fifties and working very hard to support a family with four children. There was then very little time or inclination to talk of the past.

By then I was in the Navy and in the South Pacific in WW II. I came home, went back to college at the Notre Dame, graduated four years later and then went to the far off Mojave Dessert in California to work, all of this taking place without ever seeming to have time to become adult in my relationship with my parents.

When finally they retired and came from Maywood, Illinois to Pasadena, California we were physically much closer and saw each other frequently, but those of you who have had a bunch of kids know how centered on their little childrens' lives parents and grandparents can become. And then all of a sudden, both my mother and father were gone. We had the chance to love each other, and had used that time I hope quite well that way. But what we had not done as adults, was to know each other well and I had not availed myself of the time given me to know what they knew of who and what they were, nor to tell me what they knew of those who came before them.

These genealogical volumes are my chance to avoid this traditional time gap between when my next generation gets interested in the questions I am interested in now and my inevitable time of non-availability.

I hope that my children, who will sooner or later become interested in all this, will further these explorations, not only adding the information of their own generations, but also by adding to the history of the long-gone generations whose catalogue is commenced here.

Until I started these genealogical collections, I really did believe, whenever I thought about it which wasn't very frequently, that what I was, was in the main because of what I, myself, had done, some good, some not so good. Now, some years into this family research, I know far better than I did before how hard immediate forebears had worked to allow me the chance for success in the physical world that their own circumstances had not permitted them.

My parents primary and overwhelming concern was the rearing and proper education of their children, denying themselves in their lives the myriad of conveniences and extravagances that I and my family accept as routine. I only hope that they in some after-life can peek at this manuscript as it goes together and know that, albeit quite late in coming, their eldest son now understands and appreciates the depths of their sacrifice.

So also, by understanding better my parents' parents and their parents before them, I have come to realize how much more difficult their lives were than mine, and, perhaps, why there was at the same time such love and unhappiness and tension between my father and his sister, Aunt Helene, to the great despair of all the family.

Though I never realized it, my father and his sister, were the only two children of a non-English speaking immigrant family who struggled their whole lives, as did the families of most other first generation immigrants, to gain acceptance from their neighbors already established in main-stream America. Their relationships were severely marked by this environment. However, my brothers, sister and I knew none of this struggle having been isolated from it by the protecting lives of our parents and grandparents.

So also, the genes and habits and beliefs of all the forebears described in these genealogical bear on what I am, what my children are and what there children may be. It is for this reason, the knowing of oneself that all the time taken to compile this information seems appropriate. It is also for that same reason, the knowing of oneself, that I hope those who read these volumes are the better for their struggle through these books.