

LIFE & LOVE MEMORIES OF LEON AMBROSE CLOUTIER



## The Life of Leon Cloutier (Our Papa)

Leon Ambrose Cloutier was born December 7, 1928 at home in Ardill, Saskatchewan to Clara Rheame and Albert Louis Cloutier. Leon



was second to the last born.

He had 12 brothers and sisters. Leon's father was born on the 26th of October, 1884 in St. Andre Avelluebec to Moise JB Cloutier and Justine Valade. Leon's mother was born on the 19th of September, 1893 in Ottawa, Ontario to Jean Baptiste Rheame and M. Louise Richer.

Leon's parents were married in Eastview Ontario in February of 1914.



The names of Leon's brothers and sisters and their birthdates are Eugene, October 1914; Madeline born December 23, 1915; Joseph born April 26, 1917; Georges born May 20, 1918; Lauraine born July 28, 1919; Pauline born October 10, 1920; Alfred born December 21, 1921; Jean born March 3, 1923; Arthur born August 12, 1924; M. Anne born January 18, 1926; Paul born January 2, 1930 and Celina born February 8, 1934.

**Leon's Memories of his Boyhood:**

The house we lived in, my father built with logs. My father obtained the land from the government. They wanted people to cultivate the land. My father at that time owned a few thousand acres. We had a farm. On the farm we had a wheat field, barley, oats, cattle, pea field, pigs, chickens, and oxen and goats. Yes. We did milk the goats.



Goat milk had many uses. In the winter dad would stuff moss in holes between logs. Dad built a new house on the property as the family outgrew the other house. Dad used the old house to store wheat, barley and oats. While building the second house, my father got a nail in his eye and had to wear a patch over his eye for a while. Dad traded pigs for food and supplies, salt, flour, puffed wheat. We got lard from the hog after the slaughter. Grasshoppers rust and hail

storms ruined crops. Dad, mom and all of us would pray the rosary to save our crops. Mom had a fry pan and stirred blood and salt so as not to curdle while making blood sausage. Fall was butcher time. Dad would slaughter in the barn enough meat for the winter. We each had our own jobs to do. My older brothers would jump the freight trains to Detroit to work in the factories to make money. They would buy used cars and bring home to sell for a profit.

When my dad planted the wheat, he would plant 3-5 acres of peas. When the thrasher came through, the peas were thrashed first.



We had pea soup all winter long. Mother and the girls would have a large garden for the wintertime.



We had fresh carrots, beets and all kinds of vegetables in the ground. Chickens would lay good in the summer time because of the gravel in the ground. Mother had 2-3 crocks in the basement with a salt solution that was slimy. She put eggs in the solution so we could have fresh eggs in the winter. We had no ice in the summer time so we used the wells which were about 300 feet deep to keep the food cold. We never went hungry. We had lots of hogs, heifers, chickens and we made preparations to see that we had plenty of food which people don't do today. We had plenty of jackrabbits and we would snare them. We had some deer, reindeer and moose. Dad shot a moose one time and supplied us with plenty of meat. Girls did the housework, Eugene took care of the chickens, Art took care of the barns, Fred took care of the pigs, and my job was to carry in the

Wood at night. If the wood was not in the house at nighttime, ad would wake me up to go out for it.

We made our living from the ground which people could not do today. Lionel Roy, a friend of mine, who did not have a mother, came over practically everyday and even though we were friends, we fought a lot. His dad cut wood with a double head axe. We built a little house in the woods to play in. One day we ran out of bread and I ran to Mrs. Satchor's house and told her my mother needed a loaf of bread. In a week or so, Mrs. Satchor came over with her cow and my mother said, "Leon take the cow out to the bull while Mrs. Satchor and I have a cup of tea". Mrs. Satchor asked my mother for the towel she wrapped the bread in that I borrowed from her. Mother did not remember borrowing the bread. When I came in, after Mrs. Satchor left, Mother asked about the bread I'd gotten from Mrs. Satchor and I was surprised she had found out. Mother told me to go to the barn and to take my pants off. I was out there forever, waiting for her to give me ' a lickin' with the switch. She forgot about sending me to the barn. When dinner came, someone asked about Leon and my mother said to go get me from the barn. Art went out to get me but came back in to say that I had my pants down. Mother came to get me and

left the switch behind. I guess she felt bad that I had been out there all that time with my pants down and probably felt that that was punishment enough.

We went to the Bigen School and we had a little song. "We belong to the Bigen Gang. We are rough and we are tough..." The school had a little jigger (trailer pulled by a little engine) and my sister and I would get it rolling faster and faster downhill and then jump off. The Cloutiers won a bid for a cleaning job. Washing floors every Saturday, sweeping every night, wiping down all the desks in the morning. In the winter Art would go early to light up the big wood furnace, so that we wouldn't freeze our Fannies off while we were there cleaning. This was a \$5.00 a month job which provided extra income for the family.

We had a family band, named after the schooled. It was called, " The Bigen Band". Of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

Everyone that was in the band was Joe Cloutier, George Cloutier, Fred Cloutier, Gene Cloutier, Art Cloutier and little Leon Cloutier. I have a picture of that.



My brother Gene was very good with the violin and the guitar. When he came home I smelled the resin on the bow. Naturally it smelled like cigarette smoke.

*Footnote: The picture of the band was given to me by my little sister in Edmonton, when I was there for a visit in 2006. The sign being held is the sign that Leon and Celina saw when they arrived at the Edmonton airport.*



I was about 5-6 years old when my baby sister, Celina, was born. What I remember is my Dad bought us a little red wagon to play with the night she was born. The next morning my mother had a big pot of boiling water on the stove to provide humidity. Somehow, the pot got tipped over, scalding little Paul. Yes, he was scalded to death. What a horrible and sad tragedy that was for our family! It still amazes me that we endured that awful and sad death!

One day I looked down the road and all I could see was dust. There were about four tractors and thrashing machines coming. And the priest was with them on his motorcycle. Now the priest was

French and I remember that people at church would fall asleep during his sermon. He would say it in French first and then in English. It didn't matter either way; the people would still fall asleep.

Roland ran in the house and said, "Mama, they're coming and they're hungry; you've got to feed them." Now, my mother was making meat pies. The men brought the horses in and combed and fed them. Then everyone came in the house to eat. After the dinner, naturally, we had a little jig. This was a thrill to me!

Best is yet to come - when you are a little kid you like noise, horses, thrashing machines, etc. My Dad went to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and told the radio station he was going to have a farm sale and told the fellow at the radio station that his name was Albert Cloutier. So, this guy gets on the radio and said there is going to be a farm sale at Mr. Kolter's come Saturday. My Dad was so upset. He told the fellow at the radio station my name is spelled CLOUTIER - not with a "K". Anyhow, we had a wonderful sale - cows, bulls, wagons, tractors, chickens and we had 4 Huskies. They were beautiful dogs and my Dad told the auctioneer not to separate the Huskies. What happened is that the 3 pups were sold and the mother left behind. The next morning I looked out the window and

the mother had hanged herself. It was cold and she was stiff as a board. She had been chained up and of course, she was trying to get away to look for her pups and ended up hanging herself from the chain.

One day, somebody drove us up to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan to get the Greyhound bus to go to Windsor, Ontario. Many times my Dad would disappear and that's what he was doing - going to Windsor, Ontario to look for a place for us to move to. We didn't move to Windsor - we moved to Ruthun, Ontario which is 18 or 20 miles from Windsor.

I don't know where my Dad got his education but his main goal was to raise his kids right. On New Year's Eve the whole gang of us would line up for absolution. And me being so little, his hand felt so big on my head. He would say, "You been a good boy to your Mama and Daddy and your brothers and sisters?" And I would say, "Yes" and do the sign of the cross.

Things that happened it amazes me that my brothers are still alive! They dug a well, not sure how deep it was, but it was very deep, and they were dropping the forms down in there with barbed wire around

it to hold it together. When the horse was backing up the ropes got messed up and my mother was standing in the kitchen window and she saw Gene go up in the air and then down into the bottom of the well and Art too. We were 25 miles away from anywhere. Someone got to the bottom of the well and got them out and when me and my sister got home from school we could smell the iodine. That iodine was the perfect remedy in those days. My poor mother. What she endured. My poor brothers. The pain they had that day and for days to come. Again, it amazes me how we all survived those horrible tragedies. But, we had to keep going. What else was there to do , but to keep on going.

Harrows are used to till the soil. We had four or five horses pulling them. Every once in a while you pick them up and shake them off to get the weeds out of them. My brother Gene went down to pick up the harrows and the horses stopped and something spooked them and they took off and the harrows went over my brother's body. Again, how we all lived through that stuff I will never know.



The above photo is of a modern day Harrow to give you an idea of what this looks like.

*Footnote: My dad was a pretty good man. Many years ago he had George, Joe, Fred, Art and myself go down to the Oxley retreat house down on Lake Erie. For many years we did that. It was time for reflection for all the great gifts that God has given us and a time to pray for thanks.*

### Sibling Marriages

Dad built a beautiful home on Todd Lane; we were there for 15 years. Then George, Joe, Fred and Gene got married. The house was too big and Dad moved downtown to Central Avenue. Pauline and Roland were married in Windsor.



When Madeline

married in 1935, I cried because she would not be coming home. She explained to me that now that she married Alfred Lavoy, she would be living with him. I was very sad. Madeline and I were very close, even in later years and when we would get on the phone with one another, we just cried from missing each other. We had a special bond. Since Madeline was the oldest, she used to bathe me when I was a baby and helped mom with the other children and the household. Years later, I asked Madeline if I ever peed in her face when I was a baby. She said, "Oh, what's the difference! That's what baby boys do." As for the reception, Dad had been saving a jug of wine for Madeline's wedding, but some hoboies had stolen it from the barn. But we all had a good time celebrating, nonetheless. We had a dance in the house. Gene played the violin, Fred the guitar; I played the guitar and mouth organ. We all had a good time.

Lauraine got married in the winter to Wilfrid Brule.



Pauline got married in the winter to Roland Godin.

Mary Anne married Bill Nelsen and Celina married Arthur Menard, Joseph married Dorelice Gignac and George married Huguette Carriere. Arthur married Yvette Gagnon, Alfred married MaryRose Nantais. Every Sunday afternoon or evening they would have dinner

at mom's house on Todd Lane and play cards and have a good time. There are a lot of peaches, pears and grapes and there were a lot of rose bushes there.

I recall that Roland, Pauline's husband, had a thrashing machine. Only the 'well-to-do' farmers were able to afford this type of modern equipment.

### When I became a Carpenter

One day I came home from school and told my Dad I was not going to school any more. I told dad I wanted to become a carpenter. My dad said to me, "you do"? I said, "Dad, I have never wanted anything more than this." So, dad told mom to pack my suitcase. Then my dad took me to Toronto.

There, I met with Mr. Pickett for construction and he was a young guy. He said "so Leon you want to become a carpenter do you"? I told him that I would love to and Mr. Pickett said he had a job for me for five years. The pay was 35 cents per hour. Mr. Pickett said that after five years he would give me my union papers. Mr. Pickett put me to work with a nice old guy that was supposed to be my teacher and we got along good together and after 4 ½ years the man died. Then Mr. Pickett told me to come over and he would give me

My carpenter papers. He told me that I had put in 4 ½ years and that was plenty. So I became a carpenter.

We moved to Windsor across street from soldiers' barracks. Dad and his brother worked for Ford Motor Co. Moved to Ruthun, Ontario and rented a farm. Got contract from Heinz for tomatoes and corn. When picked we would take to Heinz and they would say, "too ripe, not ripe enough, too big, too small" so Dad decided to get hogs. The lease ran out on the farm so we moved to Broderick Road in Windsor and rented a house. Not long afterwards bought about 50 acres on Todd Lane. The property came from Ford Motor Co. and was pretty rough. Tanks were over and had started to rot and rust.

During WWII Arthur was in the Army, and George was in the Navy. In 1946 I was walking down Oulette Avenue looking for a job and heard hammering. I went inside and bowling alleys were being installed. The superintendent's name was Parker and I asked him if he needed a carpenter, which he did. He asked when I could start and I said the next morning.

We got along very well and he asked me to join the company, which I did.

Just before my wife and I got married I built a mobile home because I knew I was going to be on the road building bowling alleys. We had it in McGregor and when the bowling alley was finished we went down the road and the hitch broke. Well it was what they call cold steel. It did not bend it just broke off. It almost went down to the ditch, but thank God it did not. So we got it back on and went down to Mount Hamilton to build the bowling alleys and I was in Chipawa, Ontario and one of the wheels came off on a Sunday morning. I stayed there for a while and a man came back with a welder. He said "I cannot do too much with that as whoever built this put the wheels on backwards. He welded the wheels back on and then I went six to eight years without a flat tire.

I built bowling alleys by taking two by twelves standing on edge, sixteen inch on centers, and when we got that done we would take a two by four, put five on a two by twelve, every two feet, then we used to make it perfectly level and we would start building our alleys. Now how you build an alley is by the material being roughly an inch and five eighths by three and five eighths. You build one board on top of

the other until you get forty two inches high. Start measuring. If it is too high you plane it down, if it is too low you build it up. When you lay it down it has to be forty two inches perfect. Sometimes you lay them down sometimes you throw them down. Before you can do that you have to put three by three hang arms, screwed to the bowling alley. You have to tar the back of the bowling alley so nothing gets through it. Then you put the liquid Styrofoam in between so you cannot hear the noise downstairs. Then you build your bowling alley, you put your gutter in which is one by six and two, two by six and match them in and it makes the gutter. So when you get that in there you start sanding. I had a forty two inch sander that I carried around in my truck. When you finish sanding you put three coats of polyseam on it all and you keep on sanding. That finishes the alley. We used two if there was twelve or sixteen and we would put everyone on the first alley and we would start bowling that night after work. The length of the alley is one hundred five inches long.

Leon meets Anne Richard

I met my wife at the Rainings Barn dance on Melvin Road. The whole gang used to go there every Saturday night. They had the greatest music there. I asked this beautiful lady in a green dress to dance with me. We went dancing several dances. She went home and I went home. I was with five friends and I told them "That is the lady I am going to marry" and they told me I was crazy. We were only fifteen and sixteen years old. So we waited patiently. or rather, impatiently. We also waited until after Anne's graduation from High School.



**Then, on the 7th of August 1948 we finally were married.**



It was a quiet wedding. We were married at St. John's the Baptist Catholic Church, which was a beautiful church and still is. This church is in Amherstburg, Ontario, Anne's home town.

The reception was in the Central Baptist Hall. There was no booze.

We went on our honeymoon. We slept in the Prince Edward Hotel.

Nice but expensive. The second night we headed out to Cooksville.

That is where my first job was.



We slept in a single little building and it was really nice. Next morning went out to the truck to get my wallet and I could not find it. I called my boss, told him what happened. He said "I will be there within the hour." I took everything out of the truck and when my boss got there I told him I found it. He said "Good."

My boss introduced me to Mr. Shaw, the man who I was going to build the alleys for. We got acquainted and Monday we started building the alleys. He was such a nice man. About a year after you build you have to come back to resurface the alleys. he said. I came back to resurface the alleys and he said, "I had to mortgage my home and my business when I built this alley." He then said that in one year he paid for the whole thing. So I guess it was a pretty good business to get into. When I left there I went to Oaksville. It was a six lane bowling alley only and it did not take long to do that. Then I went to the Penitentiary. We built thirty two alleys there. It was beautiful when it was done.

#### After Leon married Anne

I went with a crew to McGregor, a very small town in Ontario. There were no restaurants or hotels so we stayed with the man having the bowling alleys installed. Reanue was his name. (In 2006, on a reunion trip, I visited the same bowling alley. where my niece from McGregor was playing on a league. What a cute little bowling alley. only six lanes.) After McGregor we went to Cooksville, Ontario and installed six alleys. Then we went to Mt. Hamilton, Ontario and installed twelve alleys for Mr. Shaw. (Years later, Mr. Shaw confided

in me that he played the horses to repay the mortgage that he took on his home, in order to finance the building jobs.) At this time, I was told to resurface his bowling alleys. We had a special job at Kingston Penitentiary installing twenty-four alleys. . My wife came on Fridays to visit me and left on Sunday afternoon. I told the crew if they cooperated with me I would arrange a nice banquet for them. My boss agreed and said he would work it out. I finished before the deadline and we had a nice banquet from the Hilton Hotel. The next job was in Anchorage, Alaska. Our plane was filled with bowling alley material. We had six lanes to install. We landed on the ice and there were three big 18-wheelers waiting for us to load the materials into and travel in. That job took about three or four months.



My dad died at age 79 in 1964 and Mom was living in the house on Central Avenue. Years later, it was decided that mom be moved to Sandwich Street in an apartment overlooking Detroit. Mom lived there until her death at age 98. This was like an assisted living facility run by Catholic nuns.

She had called her kids to move in with them, but they found out that if she did that, she would lose her pension.

At St. Patrick's Church in Windsor, I met Father Sullivan and we got along very well together. He said he wanted me to build a rectory. I did. And it was beautiful. Here is the rectory:



He told me that when we got to Florida that he would sell me the house of his sister and, you know, that happened. Then I sent him a plane ticket to visit us and he flew into Miami. When I met him, he asked me to call him Chuck. We went to the horse races and I won a few bucks. I called my wife and said, "Honey, I'm not coming home tonight; we're going to stay in a hotel". About two weeks later I took him back to the airport for his return flight home.

### **Move to Florida - Began Building Career**

I moved to Florida in 1956 and came down here with \$500.00. I went to work for Jim Brooks whose wife, Corrine, was President of First Federal of Delray. I worked for Jim for three or four weeks and

Jim said "Come Friday, I am going to pay you off and I do not want you to work for me anymore". He told me he wanted me to go out on my own. I told Jim that I did not have any money and Jim told me that I didn't need any. He told me that he, and his wife, Corrine, and my wife, Anne and I would go out to dinner at Tropical Acres on Saturday night and discuss my new business. He said that they would fix it all up so that I could go out on my own. We all went out to dinner and on Monday; I went to First Federal of Delray and applied for a loan. Mrs. Brooks asked me how many loans I wanted and I said one. She was surprised I only wanted one loan and Mrs. Brooks said that was what her husband liked about Me., that I was very sensible. So Mrs. Brooks gave me the loan and I started the house. I sold one, then two, then three, and just kept on going. Mr. Brooks turned out to be a real good guy to help me out like that. I am not sure how many homes I built but 99% of the homes have a bay window in them. That is my trade mark. I built a bunch of homes by Bethesda Hospital, and across from the hospital, east of Seacrest Boulevard and also in the McDonald Park area, where I later built my second family home on SE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue., all in Boynton Beach, Florida.

*Footnote: Leon built approximately 185 single family homes.*

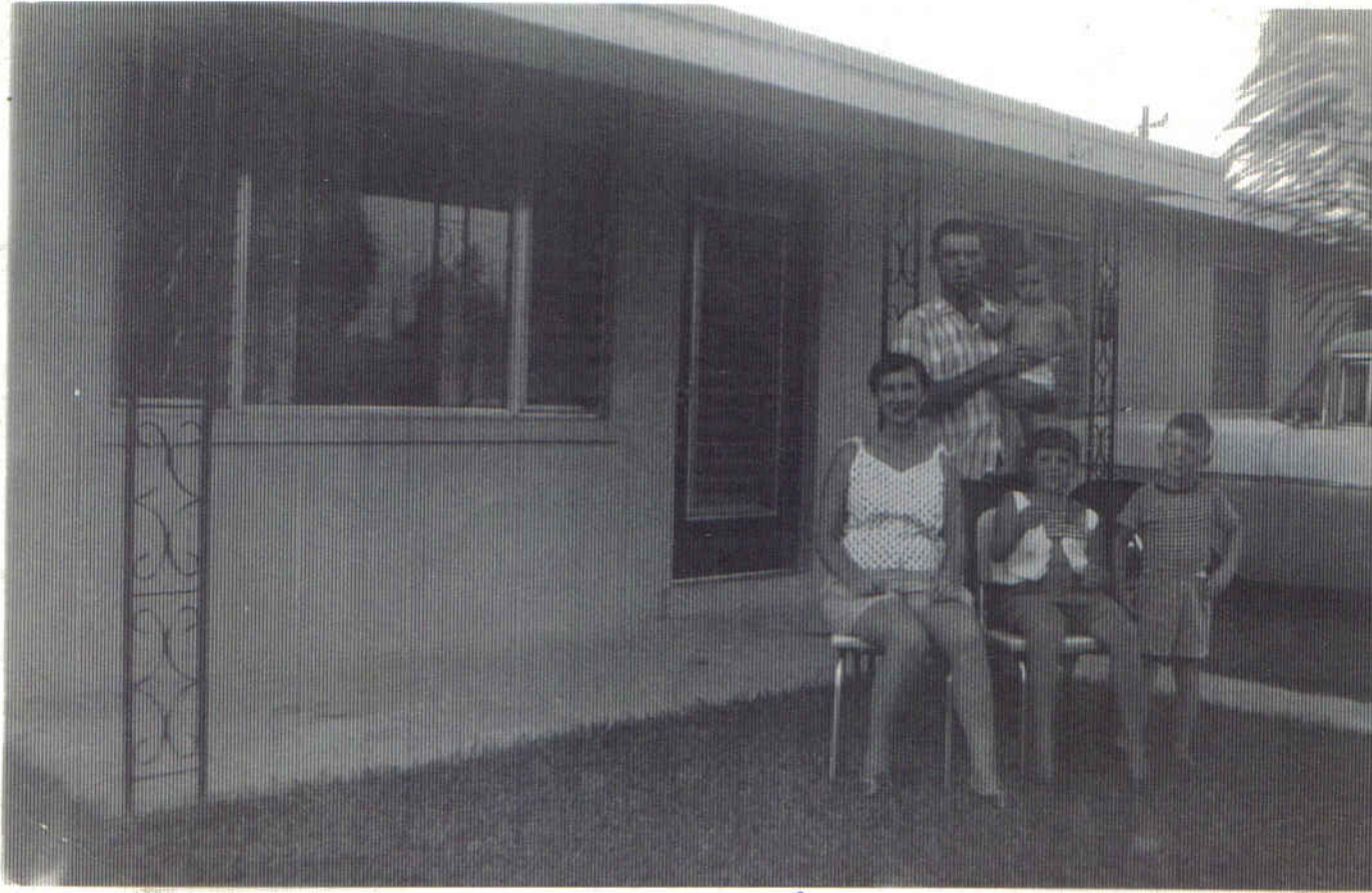
When I first moved to Boynton, there was no church and the congregation met in a theatre and that is where mass was.

Then the theater became a drug store. Just recently they demolished three quarters of St. Marks and built a nice new church. They left a part of my construction up inside the front of the church as a reminder to the church that I originally built in honor of the men and women of the church that had helped to build it or raise money to build it. I also ushered at St. Marks for many years and also volunteered for fund raisers. They put on a play at the Delray playhouse to raise funds for the construction of the church. the name of the show was "With a little bit of Muck, you'll make a buck."(The song was to the tune of "With a little bit of Luck" from 'My Fair Lady'.) We had more fun making that show. All four of their children attended St. Mark's school through grade eight. We started out living in a house (more like a shack) off of federal highway in Boynton when Laura was just a baby.



This was the house from hell. Laura was less than 2 years

Old, when she pulled a cup of hot coffee off the table and scalded her shoulder. Then there were rats the size of cats and I was told to place poisoned corn in the rafters and around the house to kill off the rats. Anne and I were so happy to move to 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue in north Boynton where I built our first home.



*I am holding little Laura. Anne and Cathy are seated. Paul to the right.*

This is where I built our second family home on SE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. all in



Boynton Beach, Florida.

I became very active in the National Home Builders Association.



As a matter of fact I was chairman of the Florida Home Builders in Perini Land Development on Australian Avenue, West Palm Beach. Mr. Perini gave the home builders 15 lots and they were sold to the builders for about \$1,500 each. We took that money and got entertainers such as Bill Monroe in our Parade of Homes. While I was building my house for this parade of homes, the nicest old man stopped by and told me he was a retired carpenter. He said he and his wife were looking for a house. We worked out a deal - I gave him

\$500 for the deposit in return for him doing some of the work and he did a wonderful job!

The builders were supposed to come up with a name for these homes and I wrote "Retired" backwards and came up with "Deriter" homes. People would ask me what that meant and I told them that someday I would be 'retired'.

I became charter president of Florida Atlantic Builders Association.

I built a concrete roof house at 127 SE 27th Avenue in Boynton Beach. 42 yards of solid concrete in one shot. As a matter of fact I built two more. *(the photo of the house on 27<sup>th</sup> ave is MIA for now)*

Realizing that I could not do it all alone, I hired my brothers, Art and Jean. The two of them layed the bricks and did the stucco. I also hired a few subcontractors and became good friends with them as well. It was what we call networking today. I learned that I could rely on these friends for favors, here and there. And vice versa.

I started building homes in 1957 and retired in 1998. I incorporated as "Homes By Leon". I started with one or two homes a year. Sometimes I sat on one for a year or more. Aside from my

brother, Art laying the bricks, I did all of the work myself. I dug footers, formed and poured footers, put up a stem wall at least eighteen inches above the crown of the road. I would then fill the inside of the stem wall and get plumbing roughed in. One day I was pouring the floor in the hot sun by myself and John Churry came by and said "you damn Canadian, go sit in the shade". *After that, John Churry did all the concrete pouring for Homes by Leon and another lifelong friendship had begun.* After I got the floor in I would start working on the kitchen cabinets at night. They would be ready to be installed when the house was completed. In the daytime, I laid blocks or got my brother Art to lay them. He charged 10 cents per block. Now it would be \$1.50. When the blocks were laid, I formed the tie-beam, 4-5 rods in a beam. I poured the beam by buckets. We used to plaster the houses inside and out. When it was done, I would trim the house out, get the septic tank in, level the yard with Carr sod (Mr. Carr would lay the sod), would get an "Open House" sign and hopefully, sell immediately. This particular house sold for \$10,500.00. If you got a mortgage, the payments were \$58.00 per month. That is about the time he really got started in 1958. When I retired in 1998, I

was building up to 20 houses per year. The cost was \$58,000.00.

Mortgage payments were \$157.00 per month.

23


## KNOW YOUR BUILDER —

The story of Leon Cloutier is the typical American Horatio Alger success story.


A poor farm boy from the prairies of Western Canada, Leon was forced to quit school at 14, went to work as an apprentice carpenter when his family moved to Windsor, Ontario, across the river from Detroit.

After serving his five year apprenticeship, he took a young bride and a set of carpenter's tools and crossed the border into the land of opportunity to seek his fortune. After a couple of years he had saved enough money to take his young family on a two-week vacation to the Sunshine State and liked the place so well he returned bag and baggage and settled in Boynton Beach to work as a carpenter. In a short time he was in business for himself building "spec" homes (homes built on speculation) and in his first 18 years as an independent home builder he has built and sold more than 450 homes in Boynton Beach, Delray Beach, Lantana, Gulfstream and Ocean Ridge.

Leon takes an active interest in business, civic and church affairs. He is a past president of the Florida Atlantic Home Builders Association, Life State Director F.H.B.A., Life Nat'l. Director N.H.B.A., Past Area V.P., F.H.B.A.




LEON works at his desk long enough to do necessary routine, preferring to supervise and inspect every important job in the field himself.



PARKER THROCKMORTON is on duty 9 to 5 (except Saturdays and Sundays) in the "Derrier" model (spell it backwards) to answer visitor's questions and make appointments to consult with Leon on building your new home with your personal touches and requirements.

Clean design, the best materials, excellent workmanship and honest value are the reasons why "Homes by Leon" appeal to intelligent people who choose carefully, looking for comfort, convenience, their money's worth and peace of mind.

A few of the many homes by Leon are shown on the following pages. You are invited to consult with Leon regarding your new custom built home and remember . . . there is no cost or obligation.



Littlehouse Floor Plan  
Sq. Living Area 1276  
Garage 308

HOMES by LEON, Inc.  
GENERAL CONTRACTOR  
PHONE (305) 732-6803  
P. O. Box 524 BOYNTON BEACH, FL 33435

*Footnote: Leon built approximately 185 single family homes.*

When I came down to Florida, I met a priest and I said, Father what are you down here for? And he said I am down here to build a retreat house. He said it will be in North Palm Beach. A group of men all met down at the Holiday Inn on Lake Worth to discuss how to build the

Retreat House. You could see the girls down at the pool with bikinis. We thought it was going to be a great retreat. He shut the curtains., \*@\$&@\$&\*!!!!, but it was still a great retreat. Then we went to North Palm Beach. You went and meditated by yourself. It was nice for a whole bunch of men to go participate in talking with our Lord. You are just there to say the rosary and relax. Anyone reading this should look into this. It is really impressive. My own dad was the one that taught me about retreats.

#### #8 - Franklin

I bought some property in Franklin, North Carolina, but then had to sell it. Came back to Florida and bought the little house on North Dixie Highway for \$39,000.00. I sold it for \$250,000.00 in January of 2006. Then I bought this place in High Point. It is very expensive here but I like it. While I am recording this information for my book my granddaughter Christie is here cleaning my house for me. I think she will make some guy a real good wife one day. I have the nicest girls and it is so nice to have my kids around and I am so proud of them, and it feels so nice to be wanted.

I went to Edmonton several months ago to see my oldest sister, Madeline. She is such a sweetheart and has the nicest boys and girls. It's so nice to have family because I do not know what I would do without my girls.



They care for me and look after me. Some people do not have anybody. Parker Throckmorton, who was my 'right hand man' in my business for many years, did not have any kids and it was hard for

him and his wife, Lilia. But those are the choices you make in life and that is the way you make your life.

Last July (2005) I won a motorcycle and I put it in my yard for sale. A couple passing by said they would give me \$250,000. They thought the house was for sale. I said I cannot move out until after Christmas because I played Santa Claus every December. Now remember I paid only \$39,000.00 for this house on Old Dixie Highway. I bought my new home at High Point in Boynton Beach. I knew the construction was good because it was built by Jay Sarno. He was a long time builder in this area, just like me and also had been a good friend over the years. I fixed the place up the way I like it and it is so nice and I am happy now that I purchased this place.

I have to tell you about my beautiful kids. I have three daughters. They are Cathy, Laura, and Anita and my son Paul.



They have taken care of me so well. It is so nice to be loved. Paul calls me quite often and it is so nice to hear from him.



Then I have my grandkids and great-grandkids. I do not see them often enough as they live in Tennessee. While I am recording these tapes, that will be eventually typed up to create a book about my life, I am looking forward to seeing my grand-daughter and two great grand-daughters for Thanksgiving. Ya know, you have to be a certain age to appreciate having a family.



That is it in a nutshell. I am thinking about all of the things the Lord has blessed me with. There is so much. I've had such a beautiful life and met some of the best people, E.P. (Eddie) Giuliano, Sam Acquilano, Leo..., so many good guys. Those days were different - worked hard, needed money, but today the whole world has changed. It's dirty, filthy laundry money.

*Reflection:* "That's what I like about my life - I only went to the 7th grade but I always looked up to my Dad and am grateful for the values that he instilled in me."

I loved all my brothers and sisters, naturally my Mamma and Daddy, my kids, Anne, my wife of 57 years who passed away in September

2005. I think I have about 170 nephews and great nephews and they are all wonderful young men.

Recently I met a nice lady. Her name is Martha and we play cards a lot. She has been a very good friend. Takes me to my doctor's appointments and we sometimes to lunch or dinner and to listen to music sometimes at the American Legion or the Eagles Club but mostly we play cards and drink apricot brandy. Martha used to work for an accounting firm as a bookkeeper, where colleagues, EP Guilliano and Sam Acculano frequented. I saw her a few times at the American Legion and after we started talking, I realized how I had come to know her.

Reflection: (It was a beautiful life and I am so thankful to God for the blessings that he gave me throughout my life.

So, I think this is the end for now.....)

In a nutshell, these are all the things I think about of which the Lord has blessed me with. )

As most of you already know, Leon died before he could finish his life's memoirs. The following has been added by his daughters and we encourage family members to come forward with additional memories that they would like to share with us and the rest of the family.

### **MORE FAMILY MEMORIES AND PHOTOS & PROLOGUE**

Leon and Anne had one other child that was 'still born'. At the time, babies that were still born were just taken and buried and there wasn't any memorial service or funeral in those days. The baby was simply called, "Baby Cloutier". Years later before Anne passed away, it had been her wish to not only name the baby, but find out where the baby was buried and have a head stone made. Through the help

of our Aunt Jean (Anne's sister) and our Aunt MaryRose (Leon's sister-in-law), we were able to find out that 'Baby Cloutier' was buried in the 'Heavenly Rest Cemetery' in Windsor. Leon, Laura and Anita traveled there on their last two trips together to visit the gravesite. Arrangements were made to order a headstone and Anne had decided since she always loved the name MaryRose and Rosemary, that she would name Baby Cloutier, MaryRose. We now know that the baby was buried on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1953. This was a mission of love by our mother, Anne and our father, Leon to finally have some closure after raising the rest of the children and having reflected back on this sad part of their lives. We feel that it gave our parents a great sense of peace, to finally place a headstone and rename the sister that we were never able to know and that had only been referred to as 'Baby Cloutier'. We are very proud of our parents for the great sacrifices that they both made in their lives, to raise their four children and help instill in us, great pride and sense of family. Our sister, MaryRose (Baby) Cloutier is proud as well. Of that, we are sure.

Jean & Lorette Cloutier were the 1<sup>st</sup> to make the move to Florida. Five years later, Art & Yvette Cloutier followed. then Arther & Celine Menard. Lastly, Leon & Anne Cloutier.

The families stayed close knit and helped each other out. There were lots of family gatherings throughout the years, not to mention card games amongst the adults. Most notably, "Eucher". The Canadian relatives visited too, throughout the years and there was a lot of French swearing during those card games, but all in fun. They were not angry Frenchmen & women. just passionate about the game.

Every summer until Paul & Cathy were in high school, Leon would load up the car with the whole family and drive across the states to Canada. Six weeks or more of fun and visiting the relatives and friends. Lots of gatherings from both Leon and Anne's side. Favorite stops were "Duffy's Tavern", "Marie's Restaurant" and "The Legion" in Amherstburg. Anne's home town.

These were precious times when families insisted that the Cloutiers' stay at their homes. So, we stayed at Grandma Cloutiers

(Clara), Joe & Doris's farmhouse, George & Huegette's and on Anne's side of the family, Jean & Arnold Houson's and Joan & Bud Bebbington's!

Leon was close knit with all his family members as well as with Bud Bebbington, married to Joan Bebbington (sister to Anne Cloutier). You can say they were as close as brothers. Many a fun filled days and nights, sipping martini's while playing cards with the girls, Anne and Joan. Many fond memories of Canadian beer, good fish n' chips and music from Duffy's Tavern or the Anderden Club. Uncle Bud & Aunt Joan made a few trips to Florida to stay with Anne and Leon.

Jean & Arnold Houson and family came once to Florida when the children were little. Years later, Jean divorced Arnold & had remarried Ed St. Pierre. They came to Florida nearly every year. For about 30 years. They spent many holidays & enjoyed a lot of family events with the Cloutiers. Mom and dad would say they were 'a hoot and a holler' and looking back, we are grateful that we were able to get to know and become close with them.

There were family reunions every summer at Grandma Richard's house in her yard on Sandwich Street in Amherstburg. We

always tried to make it in time for the family reunions! What a hoot!!!

Lots of Canadian beer! Oh yeah!

During dad's business building days, Jean & Art (brothers) worked for Leon. Art's trade was brick and mortar. Jean eventually was building single family custom homes on his own. Art Menard (brother-in-law) was a hard worker but still new to the building world at this time and yet his diligence paid off. In later years, Art became a master craftsman & built several custom homes for resale also. Art and Celina Menard (Celina, Leon's youngest sister), had 7 children. 3 girls and 4 boys. Art & Yvette Cloutier had 6 children, 3 girls and 3 boys. Jean & Lorette Cloutier had 3 girls. Eventually, Jean & Lorette divorced, as did Art & Celina Menard. For most of Leon's life, all remained in Florida. close by except Art Menard, whose home became North Carolina. Celina remarried and moved to Tennessee but returned to Florida, permanently in 2003.

This is a photo that was taken when Anne & Leon lived at 240 SE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Boynton Beach. I believe that this was when Anita (their youngest daughter) and Teresa (one of Art and Yvette's daughters)

were confirmed at St. Mark's Catholic Church. The little boy is Cathy Cloutier's youngest son, Jimmy Lauder.



In retrospect, as our family reflects on this brave endeavor made by Jean, Art, Celina & Leon, it is admirable, to say the least. These were individuals looking not only for a prosperous and rewarding career, they were also looking for a good, warm place to raise their families and grow old together.

