

# Simon DeGroot

Hi, my name is Simon DeGroot. You all know me as Si or some of you, when you were kids, might remember calling me Jackie. I guess I had a certain resemblance to Jackie Gleason.

I was born on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1901 in the Town of Vandebroek to Joseph and Sarah DeGroot. I had 5 brothers; Frank, Pete, John, Hank, and Ted, and 4 sisters; Stein, Ann, Marie and Kate.

As a young man I worked for a short time at Appleton Coated where I met Linda Willenkamp. We were married on May 6, 1925. We celebrated 50 years of marriage in 1975. We adopted one daughter, Mary Jane, who gave us 5 grandchildren; Alan, whom everyone calls Buzz, Wanda, the only girl, Glen, who passed away on Oct 4<sup>th</sup>, 1958 from a crib death at the age of 9 weeks, Paul and Eric. I have 3 great grandchildren; Tracy, Matthew and Erica and one great great grandson, Corbin.

Before the depression, John Hietpas and I started the Little Chute Bottling Co which was better known as the pop factory. John was like another brother, we did everything together including family vacations. We started that in a bathtub at 609 W. Main St. (Kidding, it was really the garage). When we outgrew that space, we moved to the building on Jefferson Street. That was in the 1930's. During the war, when sugar was rationed, we had to go out at night to buy ours on the black market. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts used to come for field trips; they all got a bottle of pop, which was a big deal for them. After 25 years, I had to quit because my feet were always wet and I got what doctors called Rheumatism. In 1953, we sold the business to Ed Spierings and Jerry Berken.

Then I had this idea to open up a fish market. Mary Jane helped by backing my car into the garage door. I made her pay the \$26.00 replacement cost and used that towards remodeling the garage into the fish market you probably all remember. I delivered to a lot of taverns for the Friday night fish fries and had plenty of regular customers behind the house.

After the Fish Market, I was reunited with my partner, John. We both worked for the Village of Little Chute. I drove the truck and he filled it with the village garbage. I worked there until I retired. Then I tended the bridge and some other side jobs, mostly cleaning.

I died just before my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1976. Linda joined me in heaven in 1990.

I am Paul, one of Simon's grandsons. Thank you for listening.

Little Chute Historical Society Cemetery Walk 2012

Simon DeGroot & John Hietpas



Simon DeGroot & Linda Wedding  
John & Ella Hietpas, Attendants

