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# "IT'S ABOUT THE PEOPLE"

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We Celebrate  
We Believe*

## Joseph P Detaeje Jr.

In His Own Words

### About Joe's Interview

Joe was interviewed in 2009 as part of the interviews of members of the families of Couillardville.

Joe was an enthusiastic and colorful storyteller. His unique insights into life in Couillardville is a special gift. He enjoyed being with friends and making new ones, always happy to "buy you a beer."

The article is a small portion of his interview. See Machine Shed Memories for more of the Detaeje Family of Couillardville.



Young Joe Detaeje Jr.

It was horse and buggy days and the snow was so deep that they just couldn't get out here with the doctor so they got a midwife to come in and I was born on the kitchen table. I was born December 24, 1934, it was a cold Christmas Eve night.

### Grandma Mary Hanna Detaeje

My mother said I was 2 years old when Grandpa August Detaeje passed away. Grandma Mary then lived in the house with us. Grandma and I did a lot of things together. We gardened together, farmed together and we did so

many things together. When the County crew would go through they'd stop, and the Watkins man would stop, there were always meals at Grandma's house. She cooked for the bridge crew that built the bridge, and they boarded here. She was a very good woman, and she helped a lot of people and did a lot of things for everybody.

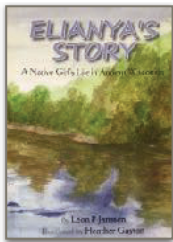
### Mom & Dad: Joseph Sr & Viola Ristow Detaeje

Well, Mom and Dad were very great parents. They were strict parents, in one way. In other ways, they weren't. If you worked hard for what you wanted, I got my quarter allowance a week or \$.50 a week, and if they had it, they give it to you. I remember raising a family and working for my mom and dad, and I'd get paid \$35.00 a week at the start. That was decent money in those days. But they did a lot for me and they taught me a lot about respect and discipline, which I had to have in my life.

### Inside this Issue

Joe's Interview	Pg 1
Grandma Mary Detaeje	Pg 1
Mom & Dad Detaeje	Pg 1
Couillardville School	Pg 2
Couillardville Store	Pg 3
My wife Doris	Pg 3
Trapper Joe.	Pg 4

# Sit by a warm fire and explore some local history!



Set around the year A.D. 1000, long before the arrival of non-Native settlers in the region, "Elianya's Story" paints a picture of what daily life may have been like for a young girl growing up in the traditional culture of that era. Though the episodes are fictional, they are based upon careful research into the likely social conditions of that time and the landscape of the area.

This book is being used in schools around WI to support 5th grade Wisconsin history. [www.elianyasstory.com](http://www.elianyasstory.com)



**MACHINE SHED MEMORIES - A Chronicle of Rural Life in Wisconsin** [www.machineshedmemories.com](http://www.machineshedmemories.com) \$29.95. Contact Leon Janssen if you have questions at [leonpjanssen@yahoo.com](mailto:leonpjanssen@yahoo.com) or 262.442.6447.

They enjoyed going on a vacation or fishing trip. They went a lot with our neighbors; Alan and Ruth Johnston who lived across the river. They used to go up to Johnson's cabin on Marshall Lake for a week or sometimes two weeks and my sister and I would run the farm.

My mother was a very, very strict housekeeper. She was a person that everything had to be just perfect. And she kept it that way. Every one of my pair of pants were all pressed just perfect. Other than that, I would just say they were just very good, clean, respectable, hard-working people.



Mrs. Agnes Flynn, teacher. Joe Jr. in the back row, second from the right

## Couillardville School.

Agnes Flynn lived on the hill right up here by the school, and was an excellent, excellent, excellent teacher. I mean she was an older person that walked with a limp and she loved children and loved to teach. She was one of the greatest innovators in teachers that I have ever worked with. I had her for at least six of the grades. I know I had her in 8th grade, and when I got through high school, I said I knew more algebra than most of the kids that come from

the city schools. She took time to sit with you and work with you with each individual. Now some people could learn in 2 minutes. But it'd take some of the kids 10 minutes. And in today's society there's just no way they would have the time and not only that, they don't take the time to teach these children. Sure, they got special ed rooms, but she only had one room. There were several special ed kids in that room, and she had to take care of them all. And they all got out of it learning a lot.

Continued on page 3

## Couillardville Store

My Grandma and Grandpa Detaeje run it. And they had a meat market there and they had a butcher plant out in back where they used to butcher the cattle.

They ran that store and for, I don't know how long, but a few years before they bought the farm. Aunt Eleanor and Martin Jacquart then run that store. Aunt Eleanor was my grandmother's sister, and she married Martin Jacquart. After they closed the store, they remodeled it into a house. When Aunt Eleanor passed away, Uncle Martin went to live with his son, Harold Jacquart. Then I was living in Stiles and just got married, and was driving from Stiles here to help my dad run the farm, so then I bought the store/house from them. I lived there for a lot of years and it was a good structure, but built cheap like they were in those days, like I told the story before, you couldn't scrub the floor in the wintertime because if you did, the water would freeze on the floor. But we were very healthy. We were warm. It was heated by wood, I mean, but it was cold.



Front Room in Couillardville Store



Wedding 1953: Joe and Doris, Joe Sr. Vi, Janice Detaeje and Gail Janssen

## My wife Doris

I met Doris playing ball for Stiles and we got together. She was two years older than I was and I was 16 at that time. We went together for three years and we got married when I was 19, she was 21. I was living in Stiles in her mother's house and I was driving back and forth for four or five months from Stiles to here. When I bought the store across the river when I turned that into our home. She was a great young little woman. She weighed 96 pounds when we got married and she never got more than 116 pounds when she was carrying our children. But we had our first child, which was Margie and everything come out fine and then when she was carrying Mike, which was our second child, a year later, she ended up having a stroke, and we took her to the hospital in Oconto, well, they gave her 24 hours to live. Well, she come out of that one pretty

good and then after she had Mike she had a real serious stroke. It took a caesarean to keep her away from going through labor, but she had a very, very serious stroke and she laid in the hospital for 30 days. At that time, there was no therapy or anything else to get you back walking and moving, talking or anything else, and I went to the hospital every day, stopped at Dairy Queen in Oconto and buy a malt or something and I'd go in and feed her, because she had to get something solid because you can live only so many days on IVs, which she said she should live longer than anybody should have anyway. But then when she come home, we made it. I taught her how to walk and talk again. Practically she learned how to walk and talk with our two kids. And throughout the years she had 13 strokes and we were married 26 years and finally the last one she had was in 1980, and it took her.

Continued on page 4

My wife Doris continued from Pg 3

But the last five years she was in diapers and in bad shape and I carried her wherever we went and we'd go on vacation and go places and everything else, and I took care of Doris 'til the day she passed away and that was Doris and I. Everybody says how could you do that--she should have been in a nursing home. I said, no, God give me that cross to bear. We all got our crosses to bear and you have to bear that cross. And that was one of my crosses.



Mike, Joe Jr., Doris and Margie

Doris passed away in 1980, I ended up marrying a young girl, Nancy Ross. We got married and she lived with me for 18 years, some of the greatest years of my life, and we farmed together, hunted together and did everything together. and then we just grew apart. She's a heck of a good mother, and I had a stepdaughter with her and our two boys; Joseph and Robert.



The beautiful Detaeje Farm



### Trapper Joe

Well, I started trapping when I was a young man, I made thousands of dollars trapping in my life. One

year my friend Wally Conners trapped together, and between Stiles and here, which is only 4-1/2 miles, we caught 1,000 muskrats, and we sold those for \$4.00 a rat. Of course we skinned 'em and stretched 'em and took care of 'em. Then that particular year, I trapped fox just in the farmlands right around here, and I got 21 fox, and at that time, fox fur and muskrat fur was in demand because they made fur coats out of them But I ended up with \$2,100.00 on my foxes, sold 'em for \$100.00 a piece and got \$1,000.00 off the rats and man, I thought I was in heaven, had all kinds of money, which I did in those days. But it was very interesting, and I still love it, but as I got older, and the bones don't work as good and I can't wade the swamps and stuff like that, I don't trap anymore.

### What made Couillardville SPECIAL

We all were friends, we all did things together, we all worked together, we all ate together at banquets and everything else, we all farmed together and all of our organizations were complete family and a complete organization of the neighborhood. And today, it's so much harder because everybody's got their places to go and their things to do and their vehicles to get there with, so you go to someplace else to do these things, and we lost the great little special interest of Couillardville that used

to be here that's not here anymore. Other than the part that I loved growing up here, I had a pretty good living here, accomplished just about everything I wanted in my life. It just was one helluva great place to be born and raised. That's all I can say.

#### One last question for you Joe; were you ever a vegetarian?

“Vegetarian, you know is the old Indian word for a bad hunter. Well, I'm not really a bad hunter, and I guarantee you, I got venison and I got fish and I got everything I need so, no, I never was a vegetarian.”