

# The Story of Leon & Jeanette (Prindle) Cook

## LEON COOK'S EARLY YEARS

James Leon Cook graduated from the Bangor High School in 1934.

### NAME CONFUSION: JAMES OR LEON?

Leon James Cook was actually born with his given name as James "Leon" Cook.

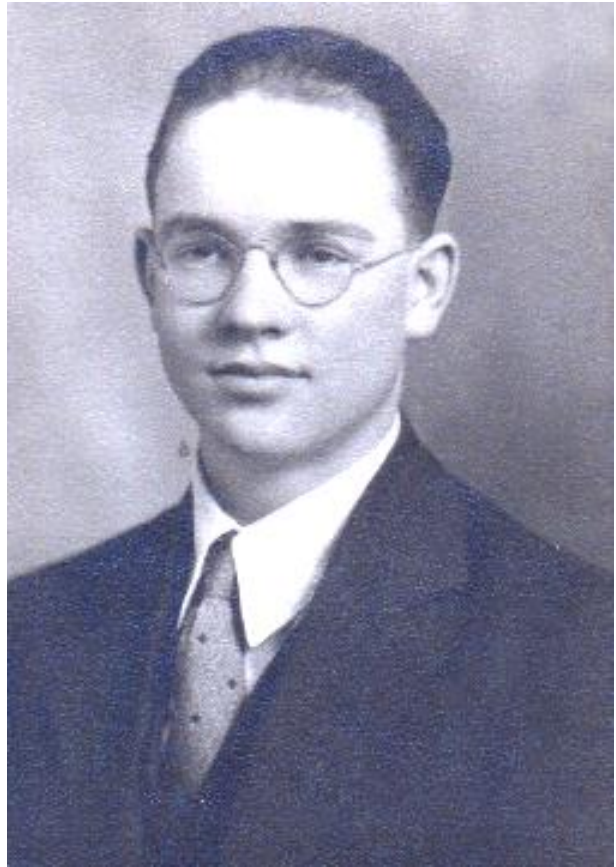


He always went by Leon. When Leon was in the military in World War II the military mixed up his first and second names on all his official paperwork. Feeling that trying to straighten out the government might be a bit too big a task to take on, Leon decided to legally change his name to match the "official" records.

## FARMING AT FISH CREEK

The Jones/Cook family farm in Fish Creek was 200 acres in size, about half wooded (Bangor Twnsp: 40 acres in NW 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Sec 13; plus 160 acres in N 1/2 of SE 1/4 & NE 1/4 of SW 1/4 & SE 1/4 of SE 1/4 of Sec 14 in T16N, R5W). It had been jointly owned by the 4 Jones daughters as an inheritance from their father, John L. Jones. Jim Cook

had been farming it until he died in 1937. Leon continued his father's occupation at the farm.



## LEON BUYS THE FAMILY FARM

On July 6, 1942, Leon Cook bought for \$4800 his mother and aunt's share of the farm and farmed it for himself (LaCrosse Reg of Deeds, Warranty Vol 197, p.229).

Leon had to go through some legal efforts to confirm none of the other numerous Jones in the area had title to the land (Vol 197,p.241: Edward R. Jones, Richard E. Jones, Edward D. Jones, E.E.Jones, Ebenezer Jones, O.W. Jones, John L. Jones, Richard Daves, LaCrosse & Milw RR, George Morgan, Samuel Wilson, Lewis E. Evans, John Jones Thames)

Leon Cook using the "Hay Buck"



other. They always got along well together and enjoyed doing many tasks as a couple.

### **LEON & JEANNETTE SELL THE FISH CREEK FARM**

Leon & Jeanette Cook sold the farm for \$9000 to Wm. & Ella Wehrs on Mar 20, 1950 for economic reasons (Vol 228,p.405,#537425).

Gladys settled the mortgage with Farmers National Bank of Sparta on July 29, 1942 (Vol 116,p.517).

Changes in farming required higher investment and Leon had just lost 2 herds of cattle.

Leon and his brother, Ralph, worked at the Wegner's Garage during slow times in their farming activities. The garage was conveniently located across the highway from their farm, on County Hwy Y.

### **FAMILY MOVE TO BANGOR & NEW JOBS**

Leon & Jeannette Cook built a house (concrete block) overlooking the Milwaukee Road Railroad tracks on the south side of Bangor.

### **LEON FALLS IN LOVE WITH JEANNETTE -- MARRIAGE IN 1943**

Leon met Jeanette Prindle. They were married on May 29, 1943.

Leon worked for about two years in the Ford garage in Bangor, using his mechanical and welding experience.

Jeannette was born in Viroqua (Vernon Cty) on February 12, 1924. She was raised in the city of LaCrosse, WI.

In about 1950 Leon also started work at the Trane Company in LaCrosse.

Leon and Jeannette always displayed a deep, dedicated and devoted love to each

In about 1971, the Cook family purchased a South African monkey. "John L" became like another member of the family, living with Leon &

Jeannette for about 8 years.





### **LEON'S INTERESTS**

Leon enjoyed taking things apart just to see how they worked. He liked to remodel, build things and generally working with his hands.

Leon liked doing yard and garden work. He enjoyed feeding birds, squirrels, and other wild animals. His love of the outdoors was experienced by the many camping trips that the Cook family took.

Leon was a quiet and gentleperson. He was confident in his ideas, which is another way of saying that Leon didn't feel he was wrong very often.

As Leon grew older, he always wanted to keep busy with his mind and hands. He enjoyed many crafts, from kit assembly to plastic needlework.

The Leon Cook family were long-time and active members of the First United Presbyterian Church of Bangor.

### **RETIREMENT FROM TRANE COMPANY**

Leon worked as a receiving inspector for the Trane Company in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. He retired on January 1, 1982, after putting 31 years.

### **THE MOVE TO LA CROSSE & WEST SALEM**

After Leon retired, Leon & Jeannette moved to LaCrosse. Jeannette's mother lived with them. It put them closer to the nursing home that Leon's mother was in. It put them closer to the medical facilities that had grown increasingly important in their later years. They lived on the south side near Losey Blvd.

When the upkeep of a home became too



much to handle for Leon & Jeannette they moved to Onalaska and into a mobile home.

Both served as deacons in the North Presbyterian Church, LaCrosse, where they were members for the last dozen years of their marriage.

In around 1990, Leon & Jeannette moved to West Salem, where their children, Bill and Rita, lived. They

continued their lifestyle of being busy with crafts, camping, and taking care of their grandchildren.

### **HEALTH PROBLEMS**

Leon had a brain tumor in the early 1970's, requiring an extensive operation. He recovered fairly well. He had a relapse brain problem in the mid-1980's, which was also resolved.

Leon had a heart bypass operation in the late 1980's. He continued to have medical problems in the early 1990's.

As Leon's eyesight worsened, he enjoyed the "talking" book program. To watch television, he had to have a screen magnifier and sit close.

### **FINAL REST FOR LEON**

On February 8, 1994, Leon and Jeannette were visiting with a neighbor at home in West Salem, with Leon sitting in his favorite chair. Leon quietly made a slight gasp and finally succumbed to his ongoing heart complications.

Visitation with friends and family was held in Bangor on February 10. The funeral was conducted at the North Presbyterian Church in LaCrosse the next day. Leon's male grandchildren served as pallbearers: Mark & Fred Hansen (Janet's boys); Scott Knudtson (Jane's boy); Mike, Kevin & Greg Thompson (Rita's boys); and Josh Cook (Bill's boy).

Leon's body was laid to final rest in the mausoleum at the Woodlawn Cemetery, in south LaCrosse, WI on February 11, 1994

In 2001, Jeannette was working at the Moulder Nursing Home in West Salem. She had found a traveling companion, Erven Kroll, with whom she had a lot in common. He drove a van for the handicapped 5 days a week, taking them to work and clinics. Jeannette rides with when residents of Moulders need to go for a check up. Together, they took tours to Macinact Island and to Branson MO [4]

## CHILDREN

### 1. JANET MARY COOK

Janet Mary Cook was born on Apr 30, 1945 in La Crosse, WI. Janet was married to Douglas (Oggie) Paul Hansen on May 1, 1964 at age 22. They had five children, Paul, Kavin, Kathy, Mark and Fred.

Doug continued to be busy with the cows and all the barn work. He doesn't do as much coon hunting as he used to do, but hasn't given up on the deer hunting. [6]

Janet worked at the University of Wisconsin part-time, in addition to her usual farm tasks. [3]. In 2001, she started doing something a little different, working with grades and getting the classes organized [6].

- a. **Paul Douglas Hansen** was born in La Crosse on Aug 14, 1964. He died on May 4, 1985 at age 20.
- b. **Kavin Douglas Hansen** was born on Nov 4, 1966 in LaCrosse, but died the same day.
- c. **Kathy Marie Hansen** was born on Oct 9, 1967 in LaCrosse, WI. She married Greg Bethel on Apr 9, 1988 at age 20, in Prescott, WI. They have two children, Ashlee and Nicholle.

Kathy continued to work with Aggregate Industries. Greg worked with Holst Companies [6].

Ashlee Ann Bethel was born in Prescott, WI on Dec 4, 1987. In 2001 she was in the band and

plays volleyball. She intends to try out for track. She made the A honor roll. [6].

Nicholle Ann Bethel was born on Oct 26, 1989 in Prescott, WI. Nikki is in the choir and also made the A honor roll [6].

- d. **Mark Allen Hansen** was born in LaCrosse, WI on Dec 9, 1969. He married Lisa Erickson on April 26, 1991 in Prescott. They have three children: Samantha, Shiann, and Paul.

Mark & Lisa finally got their house completed in the summer of 2001. She works at Public Health and he is in electronic design [6].

Samantha (Sam) Christine Hansen was born in Prescott, WI on Mar 26, 1992.

Shiann Lynn Hansen was born in Prescott, WI on Sep 22, 1994.

Paul Joseph (PJ) Hansen was born on Jun 9, 1997

- e. **Fred Lee Hansen** was born in LaCrosse, WI on Feb 20, 1971. He wrestled in the 98 pound class in high school. He won many first place matches.

After high school, Fred worked with the Forestry Service. He was stationed in Upper Michigan, buying a house while there. [2]

Fred and Dawn had a baby boy,

Coleb Lee Hansen on May 31, 2000.



## **2. JANE ANN COOK**

### **2. Jane**

Jane Cook attended the Milwaukee Beauty School. She graduated with a degree in beauty culture.

Jane had foot surgery in February, 1999 for bonion removal and had restricted movement for 6 weeks. [1]

The Knudtson's grew their homestead in a varied livestock farm. They started with some sheep and had good success in the lambing seasons. They had a set of triplets and then 5 sets of twins, all of which survived. "What a joy to watch them run and kick their feet in the air", says Jane [1]

Then came the Emus, a kind of flightless bird that stand 5-6 feet high, a little smaller than ostriches. They started out with 4 pair, but had no success with their breeding, not even eggs out of them. So they bought some eggs and hatched them out themselves. They did this for two years and then got rid of the first 4 pair. Two of the egg-raised birds were paired up and produced eggs in 1998. Three chicks were born. Emu chicks looks like a cute goose, with the long neck, but colored tanish with black stripes. [1]

In mid 1998 Jane added to their livestock collection by getting a black and brown llama, which they named "Lamaro". It lives up to their reputation of being good watch dogs for sheep. [1]

For Jane & Butches 31st wedding anniversary, the entire family took a limmo ride to Dubuque, Iowa to gamble. It wasn't a financial windfall successful, but being with the entire family was rewarding. [1]

Vicki Knudtson married Scott Brenstein on February 25, 1995 at St. Johns Church, in Barre Mills, Wi.

### **3. RITA MAE COOK THOMPSON**

Rita Mae Cook served as the sophomore class secretary. She also was the president of Future Homemakers of America (FHA). During her senior year she represented FHA at the annual Green Lake convention.

Virgil and his brother bought some hunting land in 2000. In 2001 they built a small cabin storage shed that is a place to warm up during hunting.

1. KEVIN: Kevin lived in Milwaukee going to school at night. He worked on a punch press [5].
2. MIKE & GREG: 2001 was a difficult year for Mike and Greg. The boys were not too happy with their parents because of the positions they took. Mike quit his job at Kwik Trip after 12 years and very good benefits. He now works at the Radisson Hotel in LaCrosse as a night shift janitor. He is happy working nights so he can run all day. [5]



#### **4. Bill Cook**

Bill graduated from Bangor High School  
in May, 1972

Bill lives in West Salem, WI

## **SOURCES**

- [1] Jane Knudtson round robin letter,  
3/2/1999
- [2] Round Robin letter from Janet  
(Cook) Hansen, April 14, 1998
- [3] Round Robin letter from Janet  
(Cook) Hansen, June 12, 2000
- [4] Round Robin letter from Jeannette  
Cook, Nov 9, 2001
- [5] Round Robin letter from Rita  
Thompson, Nov 6, 2001
- [6] Round Robin letter from Janet  
Hansen , Dec 2001