

50 Years Of Building . . . Oot Bros.

KNOW
YOUR
B
U
I
L
D
E
R

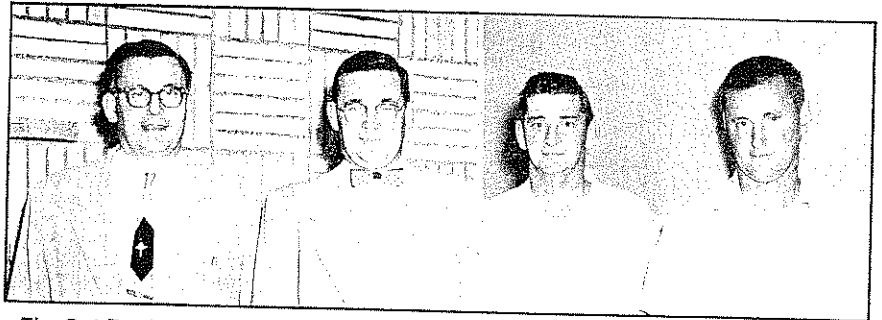


LEONARD F. OOT, Founder of the Bros., 1921

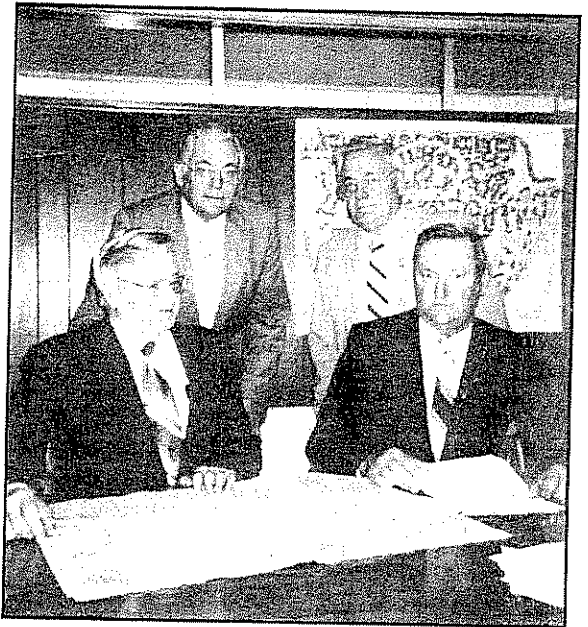
OOT BROTHERS BUILDERS, Inc.

Freemont Manor
PLAN BOOK

• FLOOR PLANS OF HOMES • FIVE DIFFERENT DESIGNS •
• HOW TO FINANCE • COMPLETE MONTHLY COSTS



The Oot Brothers 25 years ago . . . From left, Earl, Leo, Donald and Bob pose for a picture taken at the Parade of Homes, a building contest used as a marketing gimmick for companies in the area.



Two bedroom homes for \$14,415 were featured in this booklet.

The Oot Brothers today . . . With the Wall Street Journal on the desk and the site plan for Erie Village in back, Donald and Robert, are seated in front, and Earl and Leo standing, as they get an early start on a busy day.

. . . And It All Began Here

By Wendy Williams

In the 1920s, Leonard Oot was farming 65 acres off East Ave. in Minoa near Limestone Creek.

Farming wasn't his first love, so he dabbled in plumbing, masonry, logging, and even ran a bakery in Chittenango, until he realized he and his partner were eating most of the profits.

However, in 1932, Leonard Oot undertook a project of lasting significance. With meager equipment and a vast store of determination and talent, he built a house on North Manlius Rd. with his young sons Earl and Leo helping.

Two more sons, Robert and Donald, later joined them and Oot Brothers Inc. is this year celebrating the 50th anniversary of the "birth of their business," — that house on North Manlius Rd. Since then the firm has built more than 5,000 living units in the Syracuse area.

Admitting they were "too young" at the time to be a major part of the business, Leo and Earl both remember working very hard for their father back in the 30s. "We had to work or else," Earl says. "When he put his fist down we jumped, he was a meek man but strong and demanded hard work."

Leo recalls working until 2 a.m. on some projects and getting up at 6 a.m. the next morning to finish what had been started the night before. That discipline paid off, because all the brothers still working long hours to complete their projects, a persistence that has made them successful today.

Earl and Leo explained that it wasn't until after both had served in the armed forces during World War Two that their building business really took off. "Glen Doyle and A.S. Maynard of Minoa's First National Bank (now Lincoln's Minoa office) bought some land on Fremont Rd. and they in-

duced us into building on it," Earl said. In 1946, the Oot Bros. developed area around Kendall Dr. East.

That was the beginning of the "Oot empire," that would eventually expand to virtually every side of the Salt City.

Leo is a master carpenter, Earl a lawyer and real estate broker, Donald handles Oot Plumbing, and Bob oversees development on the city's north side, — the brothers who make Oot Bros. Inc. move ahead.

Most of the early Oot building was in the Fremont-Minoa area. In 1955, the Oots financed and built the Fremont sewer plant, the first built in the state with private capital. That allowed them to build more than 500 homes in Fremont Heights (also known as Oot Park) and later Fremont Manor and the most recent section, Fremont Hills.

With more residents, the services had to increase also. The Oot brothers built the Fremont Plaza stores in 1957 and the following year the bowling center, Fremont Lanes. More recently, the Oot firm built Medical East, a structure on North Burdick St. that houses general practitioners and specialists. The Oots are now planning to expand services at that location because of its success.

Being "Minoa boys at heart," they also concentrated development in the area where they grew up.

"We made Minoa two and one half times its original size," Earl quipped. Some of the projects include Minoa Acres, in the Hulbert and Willard St. areas; the homes in Canterbury Woods and

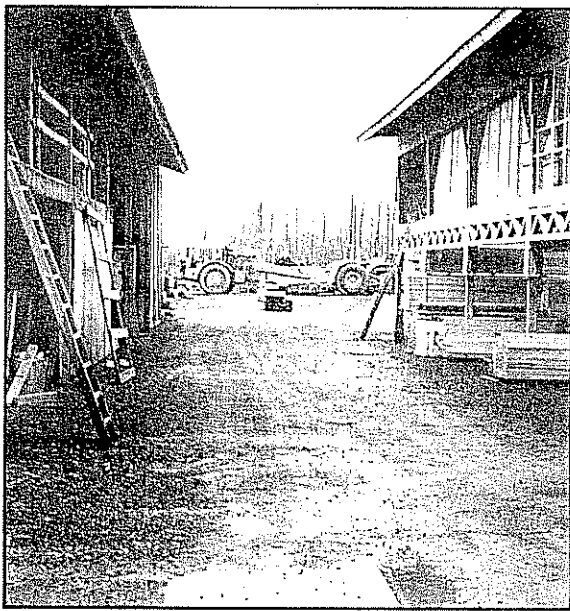
Edgerton Estates apartments.

However, Earl admits that if they did it over again, they would have started building north of the city in Liverpool and North Syracuse, much sooner than they did. "The conditions are much better out there, the soil is better and the tax and assessment structure make it more economically feasible."

Earl said. They can sell three houses for every one they build there, he noted. Some of the Oot efforts on the north side include Oot Acres, Moyer Heights along the Thruway; Oot Meadows, near Buckley and Hopkins Rd.; and Old Mill apartments.

The Oots also have developments in Manlius, Pompey,

(Continued on next Page)



As their inventory continued to grow, the Oot Bros. moved their stock from a house on Rt. 290 to the Doow Lumber Co. on North Manlius Rd. in 1960. The lumber yard, pictured here, has also grown since then. In the background is shown a "land mover," a piece of equipment priced in the mid-200,000 range - a little more efficient than the horse scoop used to excavate the land for the first house 50 years ago! Photo/Graham L. Johnson.

Started With Just One House

(Cont. from Preceding Page) Skaneateles, Fayetteville, and Chittenango. They have developed more than 5,000 living units in apartments, townhouses, and single family homes that cover thousands of acres.

Presently, one of the major projects on the table is the 500-unit Erie Village cluster development east of North Burdick St. near Limestone Creek. "That project has been on the drawing board for 12 years, we've worked intensely for the past three years, and it's always been a dream of ours to develop the area," Earl said. The plan recently received Manlius Town Board approval for a Residential-three zone and section 281 consideration for cluster housing. The preliminary plan is currently before the Town Planning Board and the Oots would like to lay the first foundation this July.

As Earl explained, "the market is coming, there is a built up emotion for buying and we can't miss it." Earl said the developers have faced "horrendous losses" in recent years and over 50 per cent of the area's builders have gone out of business in the past three years.

"We were pretty successful

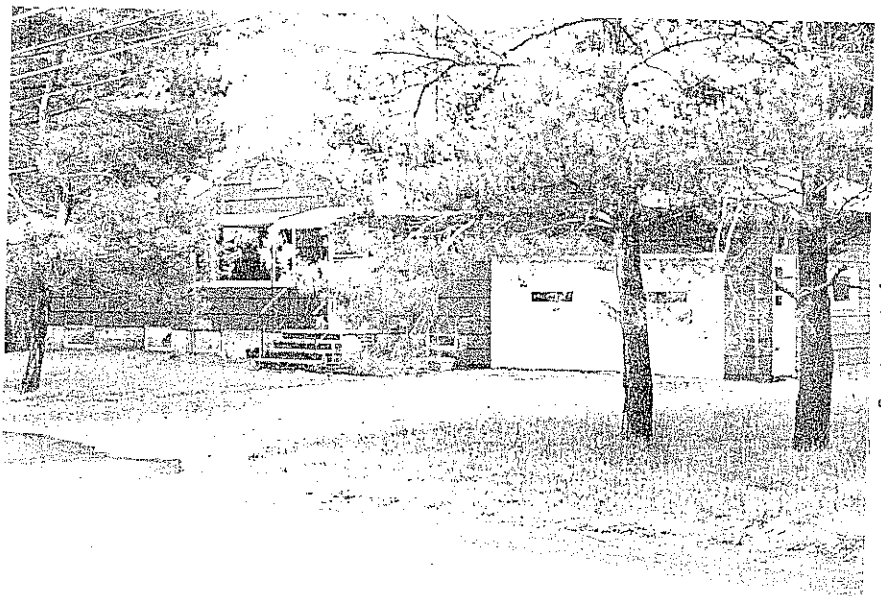
right after the war up until about five years ago," Earl said, "Now we're losing thousands a year." He looks ahead to see the trend finally turning.

All four Oot brothers hope their innovative building ideas will keep them at the top of their field. Their latest development is the "Energy Home" they plan for the Erie Village site. The structure uses ground water for heating and cooling and passive solar wherever possible. "This is initially much more expensive than conventional building," Earl explained, "However, it will pay for itself in two or three years."

"We're interested in anything new and different, we're the initiators," Earl said, "But after we've spent the time and money perfecting these new building ideas, everyone jumps on the bandwagon."

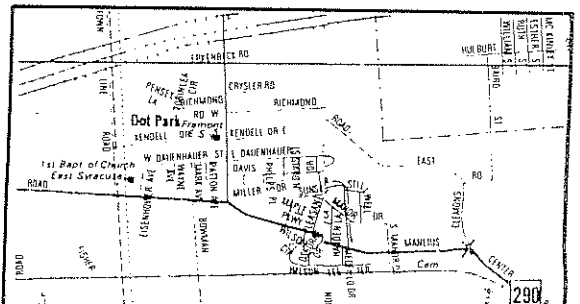
Once the Erie Village project is off the ground, what's the next undertaking for the Oot brothers? "Now it's just a matter of continuing and finishing what we have already begun," Earl explained, "We get a call every day to buy more land, but now there are no plans to add to what we already have."

But, who knows? Maybe a younger generation will want to



This is where it all began . . . Leonard Oot built this Cape Cod on North Manlius Rd. in 1932 using a horse and scoop to excavate the land for the foundation. His young sons, Leo and Earl, helped him. Photo/Graham L. Johnson.

take over what Leonard Oot began 50 years ago when he built that first house on North Manlius Rd.



*"We're Minoa boys at heart . . .
and we built up the area
2½ times its original size"*