

# THE PORT LAVACA WAVE



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## Clegg recalls time as Wave carrier

By MELONY OVERTON  
PORT LAVACA WAVE

John H. Clegg III, 68, of Victoria, grew up in Port Lavaca throwing *The Port Lavaca Wave* as a young boy, an experience he said prepared him for owning his own business.

Clegg, who owns Clegg Industries in Victoria, became a carrier for *The Wave* at age 10 in 1957.

His father John H. Clegg, Jr., and uncle Roselle Clegg owned Clegg Shrimp Company in Port Lavaca, a shrimp processing plant that began in the 1940s.

Clegg wanted to go into business for himself at a young age.

"I wanted to earn money and that was a good way to do it. It was my first job getting into business for myself," Clegg said. "Back then, you bought those papers, threw them and sold subscriptions. The more subscriptions you sold the more papers you threw and the more money you collected. The only way was up."

When not working, Clegg and friends rode their bicycles around the DeShazor Addition, attending Roosevelt Elementary, Crockett Junior High and Calhoun High School.

"There wasn't a whole lot to do, but go to the drive-in theater, to the beach — all the stuff you would expect to see in the 60s like going to football games,

playing in the high school band, going to Victoria. We had no electronic toys at that time," he said.

Clegg remembers his family's first TV, window air unit and telephone that was not a party line.

Clegg also had a motor scooter he tinkered with, which eventually led to an interest in cars. Clegg worked for most of his childhood and teen years.

"We had one car until later on when I was in high school. I had a job and I had cars at that time," he said.

His carrier job and eventual employment at a filling station Miller's Mobile that was on the corner of Charlotte Drive and U.S. Highway 87 helped him

afford his hobbies.

Clegg threw papers for five years within the DeShazor Addition.

"It was a common practice and all done by young boys ages 8 to 15. There were no girls and no adults throwing the paper," he said. "We had 10 to 15 carriers at a time."

Clegg threw from his bicycle first and later his motor scooter.

"If the weather was bad, my mother took me around and I threw from the back seat of the car, an old Pontiac," he said.

The job paid 50 cents or a \$1 a month.

"Periodically we had to sell subscriptions to keep the customer base going. It was

more than throwing papers. I made cold calls if they weren't a subscriber. I would knock on every door to try to sell the subscriptions," Clegg said.

Clegg was paid extra on the days the paper had inserts.

"We'd get the basic newspaper and get stacks of inserts, maybe four or five from different stores," he said. "We'd have to sit on the living room floor in the house and do stacking, sorting and inserting and we'd get paid 2 cents extra per insert."

Clegg threw the paper before school.

"The night before I would start doing inserts and get

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John H. Clegg, III, of Victoria, has owned Clegg Industries in Victoria 45 years. Clegg credits his work ethic with his first childhood job as a Port Lavaca Wave carrier in the 60s. (Contributed photo)

everything ready. If the weather was bad, we had to put the paper in the plastic bags. I'd get up about 5 a.m. and go out and throw them in the dark," he said.

One time, Clegg had an accident on his motor scooter while on his route.

"I hit a dog, went over the handles of the motor scooter.

I was bleeding, papers were spread everywhere, but I got up and gathered everything and kept going. We didn't miss a beat. You couldn't do that because the papers have to go."

What Clegg enjoyed the most about being a newspaper carrier was being in business for himself.

"You can look at the

The job taught him how to collect money.

"This is a story I've never forgotten. It was the middle of summer. I knocked on the screen door because the other door was open and a little girl came to the door. I told her, 'Tell your Mommy I'm here to collect for the subscription.' She came back and said, 'My Mommy told me to tell you that she's not home.' I told her, 'Tell her I am not leaving until she comes to this door. That's the only way we got paid is if we collected the money,'" he said.

In addition to being a carrier and working at the filling station, Clegg also worked at Dairy Queen for 60 cents an hour.

"Being a carrier was not going to be a career, but it was job experience and a perfect thing for a kid to do," he said.

"I had to be able to manage resources. You did everything as a one-man operation from payables, receivables and production. That first job prepared me for every other job and to go into business for myself and own my own business for 45 years."

company website (Clegginc.com) and you can see if it helped me any," he said.