

From “Mum’s” Side of the Family:

The Houtteman Kids about 1910



Back Row: Octave (9), Emma (12), Virginia (1),
Richard (11)
Front Row: Julia (4), Margaret (7)
Not Pictured: Loretta and John

Emma Houtteman was the oldest child of Adolf and Eugenie (Ervinck) Houtteman.

Adolf and Eugenie both came from Belgium in the late 1800s and were married at Our Lady of Sorrows in Detroit in 1897. Adolf worked as a molder in an iron works.

This photo was taken about 1910 when Emma was about 12 and the family was living on Belvidere Street in Detroit.

Emma is holding her baby sister, Virginia. Siblings Loretta (1912) and John, aka Jack (1919) are not yet born.

Census takers had trouble with the family name; one year it was “Ottoman,” another year it was recorded as “Eddamond.”



Our Lady of Sorrows, the first Belgian church in Detroit.

Emma married Arthur Schmelzer on November 22, 1923.
The marriage was blessed by Father Pamphile C. DePew.

Arthur and Emma were the parents of:

Margaret	b. 1925
John	b. 1926
Jean	b. 1927
Richard	b. 1929
Joann	b. 1931
Lawrence	b. 1940

Margaret and Jean each married McCarty brothers after World War II. Margaret and Edward McCarty on January 26, 1946 and Jean and Robert L. McCarty on June 12, 1948.

Meet “Hard Luck” Houtteman

Emma’s cousin Arthur had a son named Arthur Houtteman Jr. Born in 1924, Art was a pitcher for the Detroit Tigers and later the Indians and the Orioles. Too young for the draft, he was snapped up at 17 to play for the Tigers in 1944. His nickname emerged around 1948 when he struggled to gain wins, despite great talent. Joe DiMaggio named Houtteman as one of toughest pitchers he had faced. In 1949, he was in a head on collision with a fruit truck. Forcing himself to quickly recover from a skull fracture, he was back on the mound in 2 months. He was named “Most Courageous Athlete” that year by the Philadelphia Sports Writers and shared the stage with Bob Hope, awarded a special plaque for sportsmanship. Isn’t that something? In 1952, Art and his wife were devastated when they lost their 7 month old daughter, Sharon in a car accident. Art left baseball at age 32. Art and Shelagh had 3 more children and he enjoyed living and working in the Detroit area until he died in 2003.

