



Modern Times



Museum Hours and Research Archives Hours

The Granville Historical Society & Museum Research facility are closed for the duration of the public health emergency.

We look forward to seeing you all soon.

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Dear Members,

I've recently been using the extra time I have at home to go through some boxes in my attic. They are full of letters and photographs of my parents and their parents. This note is just to remind you that we are always looking for 20th century photos of Granville. If you feel like doing the same, we'd love to add your items, or copies of them, to our archives.

Your Fearless Leader, Cynthia

A few weeks ago I was on one of the more popular social media sites that I visit regularly and began reading a current posting. I thought it was a great piece and provided me with a fuller understanding of one of our local businesses and it's history in the community. With our current work from home status, I asked if I could share this story with our Granville Historical Society family. I was granted permission as well as permission from the family for whom this story tells.

Thank you to Josh Petersen, Grandson of Bernie and Hila who kindly gave permission to share this story with our GHS family. We hope you too will enjoy learning about the history of this local business.

~ Jodi Lavelly

The Elm's Pizza Parlor

Our story...

Though the Elm's Pizza Parlor has only been serving food to Central Ohio since 1984, its roots stretch all the way back to 1936, when Luther Hudson Williams purchased the building on 113 East Elm Street to start his own Chevrolet car dealership.

The new dealership was called Hud's Chevrolet Sales and was the only Chevrolet dealership in Granville. "Hud", as the townspeople called him, sold Chevrolet models like the Bel Air, El Camino, Impala, and the Corvair.

Hud's son, Bernard Williams, grew up around the dealership and starting around the age of 5 years old, learned the trade of selling automobiles along side his father. Hud's Chevrolet would be the Williams family business all the way up until 1963.

In 1953, the same year the famed Corvette was first sold, Luther Hudson built on another addition to the building that they would use as their "show room". This new added wing of the building would eventually be turned into the Elm's Pizza Parlor over 31 years later.

After another 10 years of selling cars, "Hud" Williams passed away and General Motors decided to close the doors in 1963 to Hud's Chevrolet Sales. Over the next 21 years Bernie oversaw the building, providing for his 6 kids by becoming a successful General Motors car salesman and by leasing out the empty space to NAPA and a handful of other local businesses.

But in August of 1981, while Bernie and his son Doug were going for a ride in Bernie's 1946 Globe Swift airplane, the aircraft's electrical equipment burned out while taking off causing the plane to crash and leaving them both with major injuries. As time passed the family started to piece their lives back together realizing that they needed a new profession to support themselves.

Bernie's wife, Genevieve Hilah Williams had a sister, Jackie Gregg, and a few other relatives who were already in the pizza business, and it seemed to be an idea that could also work in Granville. Together Hilah and Bernie figured a pizza shop would be the perfect business for a family with 6 children to operate.

3 years after the crash that changed the Williams family forever, their new idea was finally realized when the doors opened once again to 113 East Elm Street. But this time not as a family run car dealership, but rather as a family owned pizza shop called "Elms Pizza Parlor". Instead of a "show room", there was a dining room.

Actually Hilah almost named the restaurant "Show Room Pizza" because where the business now stood used to be the show room floor for the car dealership 31 years before. Then there was the idea of naming it "Elm's Street Pizza", which Hilah did not want because the horror movie, "Nightmare on Elm's Street" had just been released earlier that year.

The family eventually shortened the name and simplified it down to "Elm's Pizza Parlor", a name that has been engrained into the very fabric of Granville, Ohio for over 36 years now.

Over the years, every one of Bernie and Hilah's children and grandchildren have worked at the Elms. Whether rolling out their famous thin crust pizza, creating their own custom dough and pizza sauce, baking pans of home-made lasagna, delivering piping hot food, or greeting their walk-in customers with a familiar friendly face, the entire Williams family has helped to make the Elm's Pizza Parlor a cornerstone of tradition in Granville.

With the average life span for a new startup restaurant at only 3 years, the Elm's Pizza Parlor and more importantly the family who own and operate it, have bucked the odds by making top notch pizza made from scratch, while creating a welcomed family atmosphere that has been well received since day one.

"The Elms", as many of the regulars call it, has not only been a great place for food, but has seen its share of other uses. There have been weddings, birthday parties, baby showers, music concerts, and college football parties inside the doors at Elms Pizza. Friday nights are especially busy after a Granville Blue Aces home football game or Saturday afternoons in the Fall when the Ohio State Buckeyes are on the tv.

The restaurant is not only family-run, but is family for many of the town locals and Williams family friends who you can find hanging out at a small table in the back room nearly every day.

Every day is unique while staying amazingly consistent at the same time at the Elm's Pizza Parlor. Each year it continues to feed people from seemingly all walks of life from cheerleading camps, to sports teams, to local fire and policemen, to famous musicians and even an Olympic athlete. Even the current mayor of Granville has worked as a delivery driver for the pizza shop.

So if you are new to town, just driving through, or a local familiar face, we urge you to stop in and say hello, and while you are at it enjoy some of the finest local, hand-made food that Granville has to offer.

