

Spafford Greenhouse



In the early 1900's James Spafford started a greenhouse business as hobby for his wife Nellie and stepdaughter Ora Temple.

What started as hobby soon turned into a thriving business and in 1905 Jim built two 50 ft long greenhouses so they could expand. They grew mostly carnations at that time, but also had a variety of garden flowers.

Before long, business grew to the point that Nellie and Ora could not keep up so Jim gave up his trade as a carpenter to concentrate on the greenhouse business. It was at this time that the decision was made to grow only chrysanthemums.

William E. Spafford, son of Jim and Nellie, grew up working in the greenhouses. William could not return to college for health reasons, so he continued working with his father in the business. In 1915 Bill became the owner of W.E. Spafford Greenhouses. In 1930 Bill married Marie Steiss, a math teacher at Barker Central School. Together they ran the business until his death in 1962.

The business grew to include the propagation of mum cuttings for sales to other growers as well. The cutting business grew rapidly with sales of over one million cutting per year. They propagated and sold over 300 varieties of chrysanthemums. To handle this volume of business, during the period between 1915-1936, more greenhouses were built bringing the total to over 30,000 square feet of glass.

One of their favorites, a large white mum they propagated from a mutant, was named Jean-Elizabeth after their daughters. This variety later received a plant patent.

In 1957 David "Corky" Trinder and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Bill and Marie Spafford, went to work for the Spafford's and when Bill passed away in 1962 "Corky" became co-owner and manager of the business with Marie.

In 1967 Albert and Frances Origer worked with Marie until 1969, when Marie retired. The Origers ran the business until it closed in 1974.

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