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## **Jam maker preserves family custom**

**By Pat Brennan** Toronto Star

### NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE -

Each fall the Greaves family gathers to put down some preserves for winter - and thousands start smacking their lips.

It's been that way ever since Grandma Greaves decided to peddle door-to-door some of the excess jars of jams and jellies she cooked up in her farm kitchen near here.

Now, some 60 years later, Grandma's recipe - with no pectin, no color, no filler and no preservatives - is still followed and the jams and jellies are as eagerly awaited as each fall's issue of *Beaujoulais Nouveau*.

In 1927, Grandpa Greaves went big time with his wife's recipe and opened William Greaves Jams and Jellies store on the main street of this historic town at the mouth of the Niagara River.

He ran the store with the help of his five sons and their children until he died two years ago at age 95.

### **Delicious Aroma**

Now, 71-year-old William Jr. runs the shop and his children, grandchildren and nephews continue to turn out the treats from the family kitchen in the back of the store.

The delicious aroma wafting down the main street attracts many customers to the store and thousands more travel here specifically to choose from the 20 flavours of jams and jellies and pick up some Greaves' chili and mustards as well.

"We distribute to small independent stores throughout southern Ontario but we don't sell to the large supermarkets because we just aren't geared up for that kind of production," said William Jr. However, Eaton's and Simpsons carry Greaves' jams and jellies at Christmas.

"Nobody makes production equipment small enough for our operation so we just have to keep repairing the equipment we have been using for years," he said.

On the production line, William Jr's nephew, Fred, alternates between stirring a cooking cauldron of black currant jam and topping off the bottles as they come off the filling machine. Another nephew, Dave, screws on the tops and washes the bottles before packing them in boxes.

Their fathers, Fred and Gordon, were two of the five sons the original William Greaves brought with him into the store in 1927. Fred and Gordon have died and their brother, Roy, was killed in World War II. The fifth son returned to farming nearby.

Down the street a little you'll find William's daughter, Mary Ann, running the warehouse while her brother, another William, is out making deliveries around southern Ontario.

Their annual production sells out by word-of-mouth, the same marketing approach that kept Grandma Greaves so busy years ago.

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Factory/Office: 1 Walker Rd, Niagara-on-the-Lake



But some things have changed. When Grandma Greaves first started making preserves she used only the fresh fruit available from her own and neighbours' farms but today the fruits come from Poland, Mexico, British Columbia and, of course, the Niagara fruit belt.

There have been plenty of offers from big companies to buy the Greaves firm and name but William said their operation pays the family members a good wage and selling it wouldn't give everyone the same standard of living. "Besides, we're having fun."

Now there's a third William Greaves in the picture but, at 9 months old, he doesn't contribute much other than continuity.

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