

## St. James Restaurant

Founded: 1878

Location: Original location unknown, Avilla; Auburn and Van Scoyoc Streets (1908); 204 East Albion Street (1993)

Born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1821, Jonathan James was a plasterer and farmer before coming to Noble County in 1860. He farmed for eight years in Indiana before opening a hotel in Avilla, which he later was forced to sell due to ill health. In 1878, however, he built the St. James House, a new hotel in the same town, which became a success. By 1908 the hotel, dubbed the “New” St. James House, was being operated at Auburn and Van Scoyoc Streets by Fred Schmenk. The rate was \$1.50 per day. “Meals first-class, everything in season,” Schmenk declared in an advertisement. “The beds are soft and clean and are sure to bring peaceful slumbers.”

William S. Freeman purchased the St. James in November 1948. He opened the St. James Restaurant on 28 April 1949. The restaurant, which served steak, prime rib, chicken, and seafood, stayed in the Freeman family, being inherited by William Freeman, Sr.’s children. Broasted chicken and Bill’s Bean Soup were favorites in the 1980s. William G. Freeman was president in the 1990s.