

# Stern Family



The first Stern family came to Frankenmuth in 1846. A second Stern family followed in 1847. The first family to emigrate was made up of Georg Martin Stern, his wife Anna Sophia nee Krauss, and their four children: Anna Sophia, Johann Michael, Anna Barbara and Anna Katharina. Georg Martin Stern had been a master weaver in or near Graefensteinberg, a town close to Gunzenhausen, Germany. To gain religious and economic freedom in America, his family joined the group of about 90 emigrants who organized to leave Germany for Frankenmuth in 1846.

After they arrived in Frankenmuth they began to clear land for farming. They had purchased 50 acres of virgin forest, not far from the parsonage which then served as church and Indian school. The Sterns lived in a log house on their land, the northwest corner of Junction and Dehmel Roads. Tragedy struck the Stern family all too soon. In March of 1847, Georg Martin was killed by a falling tree. To support the family, Anna Sophia, the oldest child, left Frankenmuth to become a domestic worker. Stories passed down the generations tell that she first worked for a family in Saginaw, which was frowned upon by the Frankenmuth settlers, since her employers were neither German nor Lutheran. Later she worked for Missionary Auch's family in Sebewaing, another German-Lutheran mission to the Indians, located almost 30 miles northeast of Frankenmuth.

Anna Sophia's mother had told her that once she turned 18, it would be time for her to return home and get married so that the family would have a man around the farm again. So three days after her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, Anna Sophia married George Adam Bickel. He had also immigrated from Graefensteinberg. Georg Adam Bickel took over the Stern farm and purchased an additional 50 acres of forest next to it. The Bickels lived in a log house at first, but as their family grew larger, they built one of the first frame houses in Frankenmuth.

Mrs. Stern continued to live in her log house just west of the Bickel house.

Anna Sophia Bickel was a strong woman and could cut wood as well as any man; she helped the men with the threshing and also did the cooking. She gave birth to 11 children and all but one survived to adulthood. Periodically she took butter to Saginaw to sell. This involved walking about 11 miles, selling the butter, shopping for her family, and walking back again by the end of the day. There were no roads then, only trails through the forest for her to use. Her husband helped with Frankenmuth's Indian mission and learned the Indian's language.

The other three Stern children also married German-born spouses and established farms near each other east of Frankenmuth.

Johann Michael Stern married Marie Barbara Rupp. Their farm was located at the northeast corner of Reese and Frankenmuth Roads. Their brick home is still in use, as of the year 2005, and has changed little in appearance from the time it was erected in 1884.

Anna Barbara Stern married Michael Veitengruber in 1856. The Veitengruber's farmland lay along Frankenmuth, Reese and Tuscola Roads. The farm is still owned by Veitengrubers, as of 2005.

Anna Katharina Stern, the youngest of the family, married Johannes Ziegler in 1863. Their farmland lay west of Reese Road on both sides of Tuscola Road. This land remains in the Ziegler family.

The second Stern family to immigrate came to Frankenmuth in 1847. Johann Michael Stern and his wife Anna Sophia and their four children, ages 5 through 11, began a farm northwest of Frankenmuth, now on the north side of Stern Road which was named after them. The Stern farm acreage, as of the year 2005, is owned by Robert Stern of Missouri.



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