

Ehrlinger Family



The Ehrlinger family emigrated from Germany prior to 1875. The family settled north of Frankenmuth and became an integral part of the Frankentrost community.

Frankentrost was settled in 1847 and was the second colony established by the German Lutheran immigrants in the Saginaw Valley. Immanuel Lutheran Church was the center of the community.

The early months of the colonists were filled with hardships. There were many cases of fever because of the swampy country. The log huts of the colonists were rude and bare; the floors were simply hard-packed clay; and instead of stoves, most of the settlers had fireplaces made of wood and lined with clay. Chairs, tables, beds and other household articles were almost all homemade. The little money which they originally had was soon spent and Frankentrost men found it necessary to work in sawmills to earn a livelihood. Sometimes they would alternately spend a month on their farms and a month in a mill. The chief article of food at the time was cornmeal.

The nearest home was six miles away; the foot path to Frankenmuth was readily overgrown with underbrush. Purchases had to be made in Saginaw or Flint, and frequently, it was all but impossible to get through to these towns. However, the Frankentrost colonists did not lose faith and courage. They told their pastor, the Rev. J.H.P. Graebner, "Pastor, sometimes we have bread and no potatoes, and sometimes we have potatoes and no bread, but we do have God's Word by which we are refreshed and strengthened".

Frankentrost remained an agricultural community and it was not until the 1890's that there was commercial activity outside the home.

The first commercial establishment was the Frankentrost Cheese Factory. It turned out 2500 loaves of cheese annually. The cheesemaker had his living quarters upstairs at the factory.

A saloon was built around 1892. Other commercial ventures included a harness shop, a blacksmith shop, a grocery store and a hardware store.

The first recorded birth of an Ehrlinger in Immanuel Lutheran Church records is that of Emilie Katharina Christine Ehrlinger, born July 21, 1888 and baptized July 29, 1888. Emilie was the daughter of Johann Simon and Maria nee Weiss Ehrlinger. Their home and their 160-acre farm were located on Hess Road. Two additional children, Martin and George, completed the family.

Emilie married Richard Hetzner and raised two sons, Carl and Elmer.

Martin married Emma Keinath. The family farm was then divided and Martin and Emma farmed 80 acres. Here they raised their three sons: Herbert, Arnold and Harold.

George married Bertha Schiefer. The couple settled on the remaining 80 acres of the family farm and there raised their four children: Viola (died at the age of 12), Edwin, Melvin and Bernice Auernhammer.

Johann Simon and Maria had eight grandchildren and, as of the year 2005, number in excess of 20 great-grandchildren.



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