

# Habke Family



he blacksmith shop played an important role in the early history of America and also Frankenmuth's history. The horses needed shoeing, plowshares had to be reshaped and the wooden spoke-wheels needed iron rims.

Working over the fire of a hearth, the blacksmith's job was difficult and demanding. Useful in its day, the valuable trade-off blacksmithing was soon to be rendered unnecessary through industrial advancements. Farm wagons were replaced with rubber tires and tractors replaced farm horses. With most of their work gone, welding torches replaced the blacksmith's hearth and welders replaced the blacksmith.

A well-known blacksmith shop in Frankenmuth was Habke's Blacksmith and Wagon Shop, established in 1880 by Gustav Habke. It was located in the center of the business district on Main Street, next to the American State Bank and across the road from the Frankenmuth State Bank.

Gustav Habke was born in Germany in the year 1855. He brought the Habke name to Frankenmuth in the later 1870's.

Gustav married Anna Barbara Woelzlein who was born in 1863 in Buena Vista Township. They had four children: Johann (John) George Ludwig, Maria Katharina Franziska, Johann Jakob Frederick (Fred) Gustav and Henry J.

Gustav died June 4, 1931 in Birch Run, Michigan. Anna Barbara died November 11, 1949 in Frankenmuth. John J. Habke was born January 17, 1885.

On September 3, 1910, he married Marie Pietsch, the daughter of Josef (Joseph) and Wilhelmina nee Seibert Pietsch.

Marie was born February 22, 1887 in Katsch, Austria and came to Frankenmuth with her parents and brother, Frank, shortly after she was born.

John and Marie had two children, Aileen L. and Fred J. John J. Habke died January 30, 1950 and Marie died January 12, 1956.

Maria Katharina F. Habke was born March 16, 1881. She married Herman Frederick Fischer, son of Theodore and Katherine nee Ranke Fischer, on November 29, 1906. They had one daughter, Gretchen A. Fischer.

Gretchen, born in 1913, was a waitress at Fischer's Hotel and married Orlando Chase, born in 1912. Orlando Chase was a bartender at Fischer's. Gretchen died in 1973 and Orlando died in 1976.

Fred J. Habke was born August 25, 1888. He married Emma Wirsing on September 21, 1910. They had four children: Marianne, Dorothy L., Lester and Raymond. Fred J. died February 17, 1941 and Emma died in 1967.

Henry J. Habke was born in 1895. He and his wife, Alvina M., had one son, Edwin A., who was born in 1925 and died in 1945. Henry died in 1941 and Alvina in 1961.

