

Graebner Family



The Graebner name came to this area when, in 1846, Wilhelm Loehe appealed for emigrants to establish a second colony in the new world, and J.H.P. Graebner was selected as its leader. Johann Heinrich Philip Graebner was born July 7, 1819 in Burghaig, near Kulmbach, Germany, to Johann and Anna Katherina nee Rehm Graebner. His father was a music teacher who died in 1834. In 1839, Johann learned of Wilhelm Loehe's activities, but did not become personally acquainted with him until 1845, when he began to study theology under Loehe's guidance. Loehe thought so highly of Johann that he made him teacher of his children.

This second colony was to bear the name Frankentrost, meaning the consolation of the Franconians. After their arrival in Michigan on June 11, 1847, they bought land and founded Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church at Frankentrost, seven miles northwest of Frankenmuth. They applied for membership in the Missouri Synod while at the same time candidate Graebner applied for ordination as pastor. J.H.P. Graebner was ordained on September 5, 1847, at St. Lorenz Lutheran Church in Frankenmuth by Pastor August Craemer, assisted by William Hattstaedt. At the end of October, Pastor Graebner conducted the first service in the first house built in Frankentrost.

On August 27, 1848, J.H.P. Graebner married Jacobine Denninger at Monroe, Michigan. The wedding trip of the Graebners from Detroit to Frankentrost lasted three days. The congregation at Frankentrost erected a two-room, twenty by thirty foot log hut. The one room served the congregation as a church; the other room the Graebners used as a sleeping room, kitchen, study and school.

Pastor J.H.P. Graebner served the congregation at Frankentrost until the fall of 1853, when he accepted a call to the congregation in Roseville, Macomb County, Michigan.

At the time he left Frankentrost, Immanuel Lutheran Church had 160 members and they had 20 children in the school.

Pastor Graebner stayed at Roseville for six years and then went to St. Charles, Missouri, where he served for 30 years.

After assisting his son-in-law, Reverend Jungkuntz in Columbia City, Indiana, he came to Saginaw to make his home with his son, Conrad, for his retirement.

Pastor Graebner and his wife, Jacobine, had five sons and two daughters: Augustus Lawrence, Johann Konrad, Karl Friederich, Heinrich, Wilhelm, Regina, and Kunigunde.

August, born in Frankentrost in 1849, and a grandchild, Theodore, became distinguished professors at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Frederick (Friederich) was a pastor in Bay City, Michigan.

Pastor Graebner died on May 27, 1898, at the home of his son, Conrad, in Saginaw. He had celebrated his 50th anniversary in the ministry the year before, in 1897. The Sunday before his death, he preached at Trinity Lutheran Church in Saginaw. He was survived by his wife, Jacobine, four sons and two daughters.



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