

# Bergdolt Family



The first members of the Bergdolt family came to Frankenmuth from Nordstetten, West Germany in February 1923. Johann Michael and his brother Johann George made the voyage aboard the American ship the "Minnie Cotta" when Michael was 23 years old and George was 27.

Passage for the brothers was arranged by their uncle Fritz Bickel who lived in Frankenmuth and visited the family in Germany the year before. The original plans called for Michael's brother, Wilhelm, and sister, Katherina, to make the trip with him; but when the time came to leave, Michael was joined by his older brother George and the others remained in Germany.

Frankenmuth was founded in 1845 and the Bergdolt family arrived 78 years later. By this time the community was thriving; farms were established, stores and businesses lined the streets. In fact, Frankenmuth's reputation as a community with good food and friendly German hospitality was already well-known.

Unlike the earlier settlers who were challenged by the area's wilderness, the Bergdolt family made an easy transition to their new homeland. There was no language to learn because everyone in Frankenmuth still spoke German. Their uncle helped them get settled and find work.

At first, both brothers were employed at the Star of the West Milling Company. Michael later helped area farmers, the Bickels, Kraffts and Keinaths.

Michael married Florence Schiefer Maurer on October 25, 1930. Florence's former husband, Richard Schiefer, had died and left her with four children and their farm. Michael and Florence had six children of their own.

The family included: Erna Maurer Hutchinson, Dorothy Maurer Weber, Lorna Maurer Weiss and Arnold Maurer, a farmer and shop worker.

Other family members were Raymond Bergdolt, a Lutheran school teacher for 27 years; Lenore Bergdolt Poellet; Norman Bergdolt, farmer of the homestead; Wilmar Bergdolt, an agricultural engineer; Ruth Bergdolt, employed at Frankenmuth Mutual Insurance Company; and Paul Bergdolt, an automotive engineer at Saginaw Steering Gear. There were 33 grandchildren.

Michael became active in local politics and served as a Tuscola Township Trustee for many years. He also served in various offices at St. Lorenz Lutheran Church and sang in the male chorus.

George kept the same job as a miller at the Star of the West until he retired. He married Emma Matilda Kuhl in November 1930 in Frankentrost. The couple lived at 500 East Genesee, Frankenmuth.

George and Emma had two children: Harold Michael and Waldemar George, a Lutheran school teacher for many years. There were six grandchildren – Barbara, Karin, Kathryn, Karl, Kurt, and Karol.

Michael and George were the sons of Anna Marie Bickel and Johann Friedrich Bergdolt. Michael was born in August, 1900 and was confirmed on April 5, 1914. He died on August 31, 1986.

Michael's son Raymond was the Maintenance and Housekeeping Manager at the Frankenmuth Bavarian Inn Motor Lodge.



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