

Bierlein Family



The Bierleins in Frankenmuth have more than one source that brought the Bierlein name to this area. Johann Matthaas Bierlein arrived here in 1848, three years after the German settlement was founded. He came after his brother Johann Bierlein, Sr. sent for him. Johann Sr. was one of Frankenmuth's 15 original settlers.

By 1848, the gloom of the earlier years in Frankenmuth must have lifted somewhat. The settlers replaced their original huts and shelters with log cabins. Fields were cleared of trees and brush and planted with corn, vegetables and grains. The settlers became lumbermen as well as farmers. They used the revenue they received from the hemlocks, oaks, beeches, maples and elms to supplement their farm income.

Some hardships remained. The lack of good water and other necessities of life made the settlers susceptible to diseases. Chills and fever took away their strength and certain epidemic periods claimed infants and young children. The mosquitoes flourished in many of the forest swamps spreading other diseases.

Johann Matthaas Bierlein was just 19 when he left Rosstal, Germany. He was born on November 17, 1829 and baptized that same day. He became a farmer like most of the other newcomers and settled on acreage on Junction Road. It was across from a parcel owned by his brother Johann George, Sr., who arrived in this area with him.

On August 10, 1853, Johann Matthaas married Maria (Wissner). Their ceremony was held at St. Lorenz Lutheran Church.

The couple eventually had 13 children, although three died young from diphtheria. All eight of Johann's sons were farmers like he was. The two daughters were housewives. The children were: John C., Heinrich, Georg Matthaas, Matthaas Albert, Johann Friedrich, Johann Adam, Georg Leonhard and Johann Paulus Bierlein, Anna Katherine Schiefer and Anna Maria List.

Their grandchildren are: Herman Schiefer, Emma Keinath, Martha Bauer, Peter, Oswald, Ludwig, Herman and Norman Bierlein; Sarah Atkins, Arthur, Walter F. and Martin G. Bierlein; Agnes M. Bickel, Clara Daenzer, Florence Landskroener, and Lydia Bickel; Herbert, Ella and Rudolph Bierlein; Helen Mary Reif Hecht, Edwin and Carl William Bierlein; Estella Crampton, Sigmund, Melchoir and Alma Bierlein; Lora A. Salbenblatt, Lorenz Bierlein, Esther Bauer Luebker, Clarence J. Bierlein, Delia Grauer, Edna Hornung, Isidor and Harvey List; Ewald, Meta and Richard Bierlein.

Johann Matthaas served the St. Lorenz congregation as an elder for many years. In 1899, he moved northeast to another nearby German Lutheran settlement called Frankenhilf. The community is now known as Richville.

Johann died on October 18, 1902 and is buried at St. Michael's Cemetery in Richville. His wife died on November 25, 1910.

Johann's parents were Johann Michael Bierlein and Barbara (Winkler). His paternal grandparents were Dorothea (Brunnkeimer) and Johann Leonhardt Bierlein. His maternal grandparents were Sophie (Frank) and George Winkler.

