

Gruber Family



The last of the four Franken communities established in the Saginaw Valley was Frankenhilf. This is where G. Michael Gruber and his wife Maria settled in the spring of 1851. G. Michael Gruber was born December 3, 1826. H. Maria nee Kress was born July 5, 1830 in Ansbach, Germany. Because of the deplorable conditions in their homeland, Michael and Maria could not get married. They answered the appeal of Pastor Loehe, set sail for America, and were married at sea on April 28, 1851.

Michael and Maria had 12 children: Regina, born April 1, 1852, married Leonard Trump; Johannes, born June 27, 1853, died the next day; Barbara, born September 14, 1854, married a Wiedemeier; Lizette, born July 23, 1856, married a Bieberitz; Margaretha, born July 16, 1858, married a Jaeckel-Kock; Maria, born February 14, 1860, married a Feige; Elizabeth, born September 29, 1863, married a Kiesel; Johanna, born July 2, 1865, married a Langschwager; Paul was born September 6, 1866; Paulina, born May 5, 1868, married a Bender; Johann was born May 25, 1871; George was born October 20, 1872 and died on April 29, 1880. Michael settled on the east corner of what is now M-46 and VanBuren Road. This was called Gruber's Corner. In 1853, when St. Michael's joined the Missouri Synod, Michael Gruber served as the first trustee and elder of the congregation. In 1883, he bought the Schwartz property on the west side of Gruber's Corner. His son, Paul, farmed this acreage.

Paul married Christine Kunigunda Fink in 1896 in Frankentrost. Kuni lived to the age of 91. Paul died of throat cancer on August 6, 1940 at age 73. Paul and Christine had nine children: Albert married Tillie Pfund (Phfund); Linda married Ed Janson; Walter married June

Mueller; William married Marie Arnold; Ernst married Emma Mueller; Edmund married Liz Beauden; Irma never married; Norman married Irene Stock; and Lorna married Ellis Briggs. Paul and Christine had 27 grandchildren.

Paul's son, Ernst, began farming on the homestead in 1927, raising wheat, oats, sugar beets and navy beans. He also raised livestock. Prior to this he worked in Schluckebier's Store in Reese, Michigan. He served his church on the cemetery commission and as a collector. He was also a trustee on the Public School Board.

Ernst married Emma Mueller on September 13, 1927. They had two sons: John Paul Conrad (born May 27, 1928) and James Edward (born June 2, 1934). He retired in 1966, and resided with his father-in-law, Conrad Mueller. He was known as Richville's unofficial mayor. He died on December 30, 1989.

Ernie's two sons lived on the homestead. John played pro baseball with the Chicago White Sox for two years. He served two years in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict from 1951 to 1953. He was employed by General Motors for 31 years. On January 27, 1951, he married Nancy Mallory and they had 3 children: Deanne Marie, Dennis John and Dawn Bethany. James was drafted into the service in 1955, after the Korean Conflict, and served some time in Germany. He worked for Carling Brewery for several years and then joined the staff at Frankenmuth Bank. He married Doris Umbach May 31, 1958, and they had three daughters: Susan Marie, Lynne Ann and Amy Beth. Amy Beth died of Hodgkin's lymphoma, at the age of 20.

In 1974, Detroit Edison acknowledged the Gruber's with a plaque indicating the farm was owned by the same family for more than 100 years.



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