

Kueffner Family



The Kueffner name was brought to America in the 1840's when several German mission colonies were being organized by Lutherans in mid-Michigan. Johann Kueffner brought his family name when he came in 1849 and decided to settle in Frankentrost – seven miles northwest of Frankenmuth – because the pastor who led the congregation there was from his home town of Harsdorf.

Johann was typical of the early settlers. His father, Adam, was a day laborer and he was one of four children. His mother's name was Kathrina Kolb. Johann was born March 4, 1820 and baptized March 8, 1820. According to Bayerish law, he attended school from ages 6 to 13. He was confirmed in 1833 and lived with his parents and supported them in their old age.

Kueffner entered the German Army in 1842 and served six years. In a brief biography written in about 1883, Kueffner said his religion was a strong influence in his decision to come to America. He wrote: *"In my youth I had always taken great pleasure in reading God's Word and I read a lot in Johann Arnd's true Christian book. With all this in mind, I came to the decision to go to America because it was so hard to make an honest living in Germany"*.

Kueffner left Harsdorf with a group headed by John Henry Philip Graebner on March 26, 1849 and boarded a ship at Bremen April 3. He arrived in New York May 1, took a steamer to Albany, a train to Buffalo, and a steamship across Lake Erie to Detroit. From there women and children rode in farm wagons and men traveled beside them on foot. Kueffner arrived in Frankentrost May 12, 1849.

Sixteen days later he and Anna Elizabeth Neukamm, whom he brought with him, were married by Pastor Graebner at the new settlement.

Kueffner wrote of those early days: *"Even though we had many hardships the first year, the Lord always protected us so that we didn't fall short. But we had crosses to bear, we had one child born dead and four daughters and two sons-in-law who died in their best years . . ."*

The couple had 10 children in all. Eva lived to be 33, Barbara only 27, Maria died at 23, and Margaretha died with child when she was only 35. Three sons were born after them – Johann in 1857, a son born dead in 1859, and Peter in 1860. The couple's other children were – Katarina born in 1863, Conrad in 1865, and Elizabeth in 1869.

Like most of the other early settlers in Frankentrost, Kueffner was a farmer. He bought 80 acres in 1867 for \$500 on Holland Road, just east of Beyer Road. The home he built for his family remains as of 2005. Kueffner applied for U.S. citizenship February 1, 1853 and became a citizen March 23, 1855. He died December 16, 1904 at the age of 84. Pastor G. Storm officiated at his funeral. He was buried in St. John's Cemetery in Frankentrost.

Johann's great-great-grandson, Doug, is the architect who designed the Bavarian Inn Lodge. Doug is a descendant of Johann and Anna Elizabeth's fifth child, Johann. His grandfather's name was also Johann.



Researched & Compiled by Bavarian Inn Lodge
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