

Laux Family



he handwritten papers found in the home of Johann Michael Laux tell about his great-great-grandfather's childhood trip to America. Johann Simon Laux was one of the few early German immigrants in Frankenmuth who wrote an autobiography telling about this trip and about early life in the Lutheran settlement.

In his own words, Simon was born (October 13, 1822) and baptized in Haundorf near Bunzenjhausen, Germany. His schooling began in Nuen-muhr, where he attended classes from ages 6 to 13. He was confirmed in 1836, the same year his father died. After that, it was his responsibility to take care of the field work for the family farm.

Simon's mother remarried John Peter Haempt, a weaver, and young Simon learned the weaving trade. He worked outside of the family business for a year and when his boss got sick and died, he took over the job of measuring.

Simon married Margaret Barbara Goergner from Graefenstreinberg, May 21, 1848. Five years later the young couple left their homeland and immigrated to America. Simon wrote that they began their voyage June 10, 1853, and he commented on their decision, "*It was difficult taking leave of the relatives*". His writings then describe the route he, his pregnant wife, and their two young children traveled. It was typical of the passage thousands of Germans made in the mid and late 1800s.

"We took the train from Gunzenhausen to Nuernberg, then to Hof which was the last place in Bavaria," he wrote. *"Then we entered Saxony where the main location was the large city of Leipzig, then came Magdeburg, Braunschweig and Hamburg. We arrived on June 15. We got on the ship on June 16.*

Our trip went well; only one time did we encounter heavy storms. We arrived in New York on August 19."

Once they reached the shore, the journey was not over. They had to travel another nine days to get to Frankenmuth. *"We took the train to Buffalo and then went by ship across Lake Erie to Detroit,"* Simon wrote. *"On the 28th of August, after a trip of two months and 18 days, by God's grace we arrived in Frankenmuth, healthy and in good spirits. This became our new home."*

The German Lutheran settlement was eight years old when the family arrived. Many of the earlier hardships were already overcome. Homes were established, businesses started, and roads improved. Productive farms offered the community a stable economic base and there were jobs at lumber mills and salt mines in nearby Saginaw.

Simon wrote that he had nine children, including two that had died by the time he wrote his life history. Their first child was born in Germany and died 10 days later. A son, Johann Michael, and daughter, Maria Margareta, were also born in Germany. Johann Peter, another son, was born November 5, 1853, three months after the couple arrived in Frankenmuth. The additional children were: George Martin, Maria Barbara, Eva Katharina, Johann George and Anna Sophia.

Simon's wife, Margaret Barbara, died September 24, 1885, and he wrote, "*It causes me great sorrow*". Two years later on October 19, 1887, he married Meta Rogner.

Simon died March 31, 1905 at the age of 82.

Simon is survived by more than 227 descendants.



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