

Matzke Family



he son of Martin and Christina Matzke, Christian Matzke, came to the Frankenmuth area with his wife, Wilhelmina nee Tank, in 1869. Both of them were born in Prussia, Germany, in November of 1834.

Accompanying them on the trip were: their three children William (age 9), Augusta (age 6), and Otto (age 2); Christian's mother (who became ill on the voyage across the ocean and was buried at sea); Christian's brother Michael and his wife; and Wilhelmina's two sisters (one married Adam Weiss, who was a widower and had seven children; and the other, Hanna, married Johann Frederick Block).

Unlike most German immigrants, Christian was able to speak English. Christian and Wilhelmina settled on 90 acres on the southeast corner of Busch and Beyer Roads where three more children were born: Elizabeth, Henry and Johann.

The oldest son, William, a farmer, and his wife Anna nee Eischer, had eight children: Louis, Augusta Zeilinger, Martin, Emma Merrow, Herman, Ann Elbera and Ida Howard. Ida later married her stepbrother, George Kueffner.

Otto, a farmer, married Anna Brenner. Their marriage was blessed with a son, Norman.

Elizabeth married a Mr. LaRouche and had a daughter. After his death Elizabeth married Louie Hoerlein and had two more children, Louis and Edna.

Henry, also a lifetime farmer and a member of St. Lorenz Lutheran Church, married Barbara Poellet. They were married on Pentecost Monday after the morning church service. It was the usual custom to get married after a regular church service.

After the ceremony the guests proceeded to the home of the bride's parents or to the new home of the groom. The guests were served dinner at noon and another big meal for supper. Meals were prepared by the bride's family and served by the bride's friends. A wood stove in the house and kerosene stoves outside were used to cook the sumptuous meals. Two, if not three, meats were always served which usually included beef and pork and always a "wedding sausage". This custom is still carried out at some local weddings today. At Henry and Barbara's wedding the bride's mother made and cut enough noodles to serve 150 guests. Vegetables and fruit for the pies were home grown. Bread, doughnuts, cakes and cookies were baked the week before the wedding. Tables and chairs were borrowed from the neighbors and dishes and flatware were donated by the general stores in town if some of the wedding food items were purchased there. Friends of the groom took care of all the buggies and fed and watered the horses.

Henry and Barbara's marriage was blessed with four children: Otto and Herbert, both died as infants, Caroline Nuechterlein and Selma "Sammy" Beyerlein. Henry, an avid fisherman and always full of humor, always wore boots. When asked by a neighbor why he wore boots roofing a house he replied, "One never knows when we'll have high water".

Johann, also a farmer, married Sophia May and had nine children: Walter, Arthur, Edwin "Bill", Alfred "OBB", Elsie Roeser, Dorothy Patterson, Linda Ashby and Ella Creer. A son Clarence died in infancy.

Wilhelmina died in 1910 at the age of 76 years and Christian died 9 years later at the age of 84. Both are buried in St. Lorenz Cemetery.



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