

Roedel Family



he community of Frankenmuth had made considerable progress since it was founded in 1845 as a Lutheran mission to bring Christianity to the Indians. There were nearly 350 residents, including 43 school-age children, as well as homes and businesses, where towering oak trees grew only seven years earlier. As the population increased, the community did not change its religious focus. However, the enthusiasm to convert the Indians weakened since most of the Chippewa Indians left the Frankenmuth area.

John Leonhard Roedel brought his family name to Frankenmuth from Oberwurbach, Germany April 23, 1852. By this time, the local congregation had outgrown the original St. Lorenz Lutheran Church and a new frame structure was built, with three windows on each side. It was dedicated just five months after John arrived. The following year a chimney was added and a heating stove was installed, allowing the worshippers to attend services in warmth for the first time.

John and his wife, Margaretha nee Ortner, traveled with their young son, John Jr. to America. John Jr. was only 12 weeks old when the couple arrived in Frankenmuth.

They purchased a farm at 2245 South Gera Road, north of Frankenmuth, in 1866. At that time, their son John Jr., was fourteen years old. Their other children were: George John, George Leonhard, Marie Gugel, Barbara Geyer and Katherine Bernthal.

John Jr. grew up on a farm on Dehmel Road. When he was 27 years of age, he moved to the family farmhouse on Gera Road that was built in 1879. Much of the land there was wooded and he had to work hard to clear it and farm it.

At the age of 32 years, John Jr. married Barbara nee Geyer on May 7, 1884. They raised a family of six children in the farmhouse. They had three sons: Bernhard Jr., Arthur G. and Otto; and three daughters: Martha, Bertha and Erna.

John Jr. was active in the Lutheran Church. He was a trustee for several years. The couple had 28 grandchildren who all joined them to celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary in May of 1929.

In 1921, John Jr.'s son Otto took over the family farm. Otto and his wife Linda nee Fischer raised six children there.

John Jr. died May 23, 1932 at the age of 80 and is buried in St. Lorenz Cemetery. His wife Barbara died August 17, 1944 when she was 81.

In 1950, John Jr.'s grandson Howard and his wife Grace nee Hecht Roedel moved to the homestead to farm. They had four daughters: Kay, Pat, Amy and Joy.

As of the year 2005, John Leonhard Roedel Jr.'s great-granddaughter, Joy nee Roedel Leach lives at the farm with her husband Mark and their daughters, Erin and Leah. Joy's daughters are the fifth generation to grow up on the farm. The house is the same one that was built in 1879.



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