

Zimmerman Family



The Zimmerman name came to this area through Johann Michael Zimmerman (1848-1923) who was born in Hengdorf Bavaria, Germany. While in the military he received several medals. In 1876, Johann Michael married Katherine Lammerman (b. 1853). Together they came to America in 1881, arriving at the New York port of entry. From there they traveled to Albany, then to Buffalo, and on through the Great Lakes to Frankenmuth.

Arriving in Frankenmuth, Johann settled on a farm on Warnick Road where he engaged in farming and also did masonry work, putting up foundations for houses and barns.

By the time the Zimmermans came to Frankenmuth the community was no longer "a colony in the wilderness". Almost all of the land had been cleared for farming. An atlas of Saginaw County published in 1877 indicates that all the land had been sold, almost exclusively to the German immigrants. Prior to 1854 the Frankenmuth area belonged to Bridgeport Township, but that year, the Board of Supervisors of Saginaw County created a separate Township of Frankenmuth.

There were no fewer than 25 businesses in Frankenmuth: a hotel, two breweries, a sawmill, a flour mill, a tannery, four wagon and blacksmith shops, a furniture shop, two shoemakers and cobblers, a drugstore, four building firms and cabinet shops, four general stores, one harness shop, two meat markets, a shingle mill, plus a number of other businesses which men conducted from their homes.

In the spring of 1879, construction of the new St. Lorenz Church was begun. The architect was a Mr. Griese of Cleveland, Ohio. The church was 126 feet long, 63 feet wide, with a tower 168 feet high in which four new bells were placed. There were balconies on three sides. Bricks were hauled by horse and wagon from Saginaw. The organ was built by Gieseke of Evansville, Indiana.

At the cornerstone-laying in August of 1879, a theology student from Frankenmuth delivered an English message, undoubtedly the first English sermon delivered in Frankenmuth. The church was dedicated in 1880. Seating capacity of the church was 1150. The builder had agreed to build the church for \$21,000, but after he had finished the job, he showed the congregation that he had underestimated the cost by about \$1,000. The congregation paid the additional cost.

Johann Michael and Katherine raised their ten children in this environment. Konrad, the oldest, became a blacksmith in Freeland. Margarethe became a housewife. Johann Michael Ludwig followed in his father's footsteps and became a farmer and stonemason. Johann Adam became a laborer and Anna Margarethe a housewife. Anna Barbara died at a young age. Leonard was a farm laborer and Otto, a farmer, also worked a business. Agnes and Hanna were both housewives.

The couple had 30 grandchildren, and as of the year 2005, their descendants numbered 100.



Researched & Compiled by Bavarian Inn Lodge
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