

# Frahm Family



he community of Frankenmuth has been well represented in county politics by the descendants of Charles "Carl" Frahm. His grandson Elmer was the first and only Chairman of the Saginaw County Board of Commissioners from Frankenmuth.

His great-grandson Ralph served two terms as a County Commissioner; and another great-grandson Walter served eight years on the Board of Commissioners. Previously Walter served 24 years on the Frankenmuth School Board, 23 years as its President.

The Frahm family involvement in community affairs continues with the present generation. Several of Elmer's grandsons serve on local township boards and commissions, as volunteer firefighters, as 4-H club leaders, and as coaches for youth sports. Walter and Ralph recently received the Paul Harris Service Award from the Frankenmuth Rotary Club.

The Frahm family name was established in Frankenmuth about 1852 when the German Lutheran colony was in its infancy. Frankenmuth was founded in 1845 as a mission to educate and convert the Chippewa Indians to Christianity. A group of 15 settlers arrived that first year with a Lutheran minister as their leader. Through their Christian lifestyle they were supposed to convince the Indians of the benefits of life with Jesus Christ.

Charles Frahm was born in 1825 in Mecklenburg, Germany, and was baptized and confirmed there. He was a farmer in Germany and left his homeland when he was 27 years old. He purchased and then farmed acreage in Section 36 of Blumfield Township and Section 1 of Frankenmuth Township.

Several members of Carl's descendants remain involved in production agriculture in Frankenmuth and Blumfield Townships.

The farming occupation was a difficult one in mid-Michigan in the 1850's. Land was thick with trees and brush that had to be cleared by hand. It took months, even years, before entire fields were ready to be planted. Many farmers were able to pay for their acreage by selling off their lumber.

Charles married Sophie Zarnko and they had six children. Richard (1858-1947), Frank (1863-1943), and Ernst (1870-1913) were farmers like their father. The other children were Martha (1867-1888), Alvina (1860-1862) and Anna (1865-1866). Richard married Fredericka Harms. Their children are: Elsie Kabat, Martha Frahm, Florence Frahm and Hilda Humpert. Frank married Sophia Herbst and their children were: Clara Garner, Gertrude, Harold and Elmer. Two other children died in infancy. Ernst never married and Martha died at the age of 20. Alvina and Anna died at infancy.

Charles died February 10, 1877 and is buried in Blumfield Township Cemetery. His wife Sophia died February 2, 1901. Their great-grandchildren are: Marion Thompson, Earl, William and Betty Garner; Alvin, Stuart, Carl and Donald Frahm; Dorothy Wolf, Arthur Frahm, Vernis Welling, Burton Frahm, Lois Frederick, Dale, Walter and Ralph Frahm, Howard and Jean Kabat, Evelyn Schulte, Delores Trudeau and Mary Ellen Burke. There are 53 great-great grandchildren, 55 great-great-great grandchildren and three great-great-great-great grandchildren.

Grandson Elmer began his term on the Saginaw County Board of Commissioners in 1951 when it was known as the County Board of Supervisors and had a membership of 55 persons. He was chairman from 1965 until he died in 1971. His son Ralph's terms were from 1973 to 1976 and Walter's terms were from 1984 to 1992. Both Walter and Ralph have served leadership roles in the dairy industry.



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