Hildner Family

The research has been done to try to establish the genealogy of the Hildners living in Frankenmuth, but family members have had difficulty finding the link between the Frankenmuth and the Germany Hildners.

It is known that the Hildner family name originated in Austria, having migrated there from Hungary and, subsequently, moving to southern Germany to avoid religious persecution in Austria (the Hildners were Lutheran whereas the state religion of Austria was Catholic). The Hildners settled in the Munich-Nuernberg-Regensburg area of southern Germany.

As far as can be determined, Johann George Hildner came from this area. When he came to America he settled in Ann Arbor. It has not yet been determined when or why the family came to Frankenmuth. However, George J. Hildner was a farmer in Frankenmuth. According to an 1877 property map, a J.G. Hildner owned 40 acres 2½ miles north of Frankenmuth on M-83 as well as an additional 40 acres 1 mile east.

George was married to Johanna Nuechterlein. Born to this marriage were six children: Rev. George, Alfred, Otto, Therese Reichle, Hildegard Pfeil and Caroline Wall.

Alfred continued farming on North Gera Road, marrying Emma Wimmer on February 3, 1920.

Their marriage was blessed with three children: Natalie, married to Fred Loesel; Viola, married to Ludwig Krafft; and Harold, married to Anita Bickel.

Harold and Anita raised their three sons on the family homestead. Their sons are Jack of Lander, Wyoming, Tom of Bozeman, Montana, and Tim of Frankenmuth.

In the sketches of the pioneers of Frankenmuth, it will be noticed that the names of the Germans, both male and female, do not show much variety in the selection. Especially the name "John" is found to predominate. John is the English for the German- "Johann", the Hebrew- "Johannis", and the French- "Jean". The name John is of Jewish origin and means "The Gracious Gift of God".

Next in the order we find the name "George". It is a true German name, though found in English history. The name probably has its origin in St. George, the patron of chivalry. The history is that he was born of noble Christian parents in Cappadocia, became a great soldier, and after testifying to his faith before Diocletian, was tortured and put to death at Nicomedia. The name signifies landholder, husbandman.