

Block Family



The German Lutheran mission colony of Frankenmuth was 23 years old and had made considerable progress by the time Johann Friedrich Block brought his family name there in about 1868.

The original idea of converting the pagan Indians to Lutheranism was abandoned years earlier when the Chippewa Indians in the area moved on to a less-disturbed natural game environment. The Franconian colonists then turned their attention to the business of making a living in their new land of opportunity.

The once-virgin forests were reduced to make way for cropland. The clearing was already six miles long and three to four miles wide. About 200 families lived in the Frankenmuth district.

The center of town was shifted from the Lutheran Church south to Hubinger's Mill. Stores, a brewery, taverns, and homes of many craftsmen, clustered around the mill. The old log-houses originally built by the settlers were being replaced by frame houses.

The citizens of the area, for the most part, were described as "well to do". Land values increased so much that observers said the poor could no longer afford to settle in Frankenmuth. Cleared land sold for as much as \$100 an acre while distant forest land sold for \$40 an acre.

Johann was married for about three years when he and his wife Johanna Karolina (Tank) made the voyage to Frankenmuth. Johann was 26 years old and his wife was 31. Johann was born on August 24, 1842 in Jagon Pomerania, Germany.

He was confirmed on October 5, 1856 at Doelitz Pomerania.

It is believed the young couple lived in Pomerania until they began their voyage.

The Blocks had seven children: Pauline Ernestine Wilhelmine was a wife and mother; Friedrich Wilhelm was a blacksmith and farmer; Ehrhardt Michael was a farmer along with his brothers, Christian Friedrich, August Wilhelm, Michael Friedrich Ludwig and John Adam; August also owned a tavern.

Johann and Johanna eventually settled on a farm 3½ miles southwest of Frankenmuth in Birch Run Township. Johann worked as a farmer until he died on July 5, 1890 at the age of 48. His wife died three months later on October 10, 1890. They are buried in St. Lorenz Cemetery.

Their grandchildren are: Walter and Bernard Schaefer; Agnes Belfie; Alma Engelhardt; Irma Bickel; Henry, Fred and Herbert Rummel; Anna Braeutigam; Walter, Oscar, Carl, Fred, Ervin and Ernst Block; Marie Poellet; and Caroline Baum.

Also Agnes Schiefer; Herman Block; Caroline Schuknecht; Lorna Heine; Lydia Dittmar; Richard, Alvin and Edwin Block; Erna Schellhas; Elmer, Arthur and Clarence Block; and Selma Loesel.



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