

Haspel Family



The group of 15 missionary settlers that founded St. Lorenz Lutheran Church and Frankenmuth in 1845 included Martin and Anna Margaretha Haspel. Martin Haspel was born April 18, 1815 in Rosstal, Germany. He married Anna Margaretha Leinberger on March 10, 1839. They had a daughter, Margaretha, four years later in 1843.

Pastor Wilhelm Loehe, from Neuendettelsau, Germany, planned and organized the founding of four German settlements in Michigan: Frankenmuth, Frankentrost, Frankenlust, and Frankenhilf. His purpose was to establish Christian communities which would be a witness to others and to the Indians still living in the area.

The group, led by Pastor August Craemer, left Neuendettelsau on April 5, 1845 and made their way to Bremerhaven. On April 20, 1845, they boarded the ship "Caroline" and headed for America. The trip was not without danger. They encountered six severe storms and a collision with another ship. On top of all this, smallpox broke out. Two men and two children died. One of these was the two year old daughter of Martin and Anna Margaretha Haspel. The little girl was buried at sea at 3:00 a.m. amid the glow of lanterns and the reading of the burial rites by Pastor Craemer.

After a 50 day trip and two days in quarantine in the harbor of New York, they disembarked on June 9, 1845.

On June 12, 1845, they boarded a ship which took them up the Hudson River to Albany. From there they took a train to Monroe, Michigan.

On July 3rd, they left Detroit by ship and a week later reached the Saginaw River near Bay City. They stayed in Saginaw while the men made their way out to the spot on the Cass River where they planned to settle. They cleared enough land to build two log huts. Conrad Weber and Martin Haspel soon bought a yoke of oxen to help make their work easier.

At last, after the preparations were completed, the whole group moved to their new home on August 18, 1845. This date can be considered as the day of the founding of Frankenmuth. Early in September, Martin Haspel and Leonhard Bernthal went to Sebewaing to help build a mission house to serve the Indian mission. It was not until the spring of 1846 that Martin and the other colonists began to build log cabins on their own farms. Besides farming, Martin also operated a tannery for two years in co-ownership with Peter Schluckebier.

Martin and Anna Margaretha had six children. Their firstborn, Margaretha, died of smallpox in 1845. Another child was stillborn on June 10, 1846. On December 10, 1847, another girl, Maria Margaretha, was born stillborn but brought to life, thanks to Anna Margaretha Pickelmann. Maria died before 1884. A fourth child, Anna Margaretha, was born in 1847. She was microcephalic and died in 1894. A fifth child died at birth in 1851, and the last child, Katharina, was born August 1, 1853, and died six days later.

Martin's wife, Anna Margaretha, died on November 23, 1884. Martin then married Maria nee Hoefer Schauer Engel on May 19, 1886. Martin Haspel died August 5, 1894. Both Martin and Anna are buried in the old St. Lorenz Cemetery. There are no descendants of this Haspel family.



Researched & Compiled by Bavarian Inn Lodge
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