

Hegenauer Family



here were many Germans among the 7,000 people living in East Saginaw in the mid 1800s. In fact, the original Frankenmuth settlers stayed in Saginaw for weeks until a communal shelter could be built for them on their newly purchased land 15 miles away.

East Saginaw was developed with good roads and there were many opportunities for employment there. Sawmills lined the banks of the river processing trees lumberman brought from surrounding communities. Salt mines were also large employers. There were nice frame houses, a railroad and even streetcars. Land values were sky high with corner lots in East Saginaw's business district selling from \$6,000 to \$8,000. An acre of forest land sold for \$200. Six years earlier it could have been purchased for merely \$8 an acre.

It was to East Saginaw that John Hegenauer and his wife Barbara came on October, 10, 1854. Two years later their son Johann Georg was born April 20, 1856. When John died, Barbara remarried Christian Hochtanner and the family moved to Frankenmuth in September of 1861. Young Johann Georg carried the Hegenauer name here.

As a teenager in 1870, Johann worked for his brother Martin on the land that became the Hegenauer homestead at 2035 Gera Road. Seven years later his mother deeded him the land so he was a landowner at the age of 21.

Johann farmed the acreage and made a good living. The soil in Frankenmuth was excellent to grow crops. It was a mixture of clay, gravel and dark loam. Johann probably raised corn, potatoes, wheat, oats and barley, like most of the other area farmers.

At first they used oxen to work the land. Later many farmers bought horses. They relied on "Yankees" in Bridgeport and Tuscola for their meat and eggs, and later, livestock and poultry.

On September 14, 1881 Johann married Anna Margareth Reif at a ceremony at St. Lorenz Lutheran Church. By this time the "new" St. Lorenz church was completed – an impressive \$22,000 brick structure with a seating capacity for 1,150. The church had a 168-foot tower with four bells. Farmers hauled bricks by horse and wagon from Saginaw to Frankenmuth for the construction of the church.

Johann and Anna had 10 children: Katherine Elizabeth Barbara Hildner (1882-1945); Johann Wilhelm; Caroline Sophie Reif (1885-1952); Frieda Margaretha Hubinger (1890); Hulda Marie Poellet (1892-1963); Elsa Margaretha Barbara Conzelmann (1896-1968); Hattie Ortmann (1898); Agnes Veitengruber (1900-1970); and Nora M. Boesnecker (1902). A baby boy died at birth in 1888.

Their grandchildren are: Natalie Zwack, Erna Dinse, Lorna Daenzer, Wilmar Hegenauer, Alvina Bernthal, Wyman Hegenauer, Arlene Weiss, Marie Geyer, William Hegenauer, Jr., Margaret Rohloff, Alvin and Harvey Reif.

Also Frederick Hubinger, Ralph Poellet, Margaretta Conzelmann, Ronald Ortmann, Virginia, Roberta and Rosemary Veitengruber, Doris, Donald and Harry Boesnecker; and Marjorie Engel.

Johann died October 9, 1918 at the age of 62. His wife Anna Margareth died in 1937 when she was 79.

