

Warnemuende Family



he German immigrants and their ancestors continued to settle in Frankenmuth well into the next century, although the colony was established in 1845 as a Lutheran mission to convert the Chippewa Indians. Some of these late arrivals were born in America, not Germany. Some lived nearby and just moved a few miles into Frankenmuth as the community diversified.

Elmer Warnemuende was typical of this second and third generation migration. His grandparents, John Fredrick Techintien and Elizabeth Sophie Cathirne (Fetting), were from Glasin, Germany. John Fredrick came to America in the mid 1800s and became a citizen of the United States on March 17, 1862. His daughter Augusta Elizabeth Catherine (Techintien) and her husband Herman Warnemuende Sr. lived in Bridgeport, a community just west of Frankenmuth.

Elmer was born there February 28, 1905. He was baptized April 9, 1905 at the tiny St. Matthew's Lutheran Church on King Road. He was also confirmed there April 13, 1919.

When he was 22 years old, Elmer married Laura G. Brenner, age 23, in a wedding ceremony April 30, 1927 in Flint, Michigan. He was a factory worker. Shortly after, in October of 1928, the young couple moved to Frankenmuth and the Warnemuende name was established here.

Elmer was a licensed electrician and worked for Hetzner's Garage in the 1930s and 1940s. During the World War II years, he worked at Universal Engineering. The plant was the first automobile manufacturing plant in Frankenmuth.

It was established in 1926, two years before Elmer moved to the community. During the Depression years, the company had only one employee working in the plant. During and after World War II the orders began to roll in and the plant was repeatedly enlarged. By 1969 the plant had 600 employees – making it the largest employer in Frankenmuth.

Later Elmer worked at Geyer Brothers Brewery, one of two breweries that operated in Frankenmuth. Geyer Brothers was established as the Cass River Brewery in 1862 and was sold to John George Geyer in 1874. He operated the brewery with his brother John Michael for a while, but the partnership dissolved in 1879. Later his heirs sold the company to a group of businessmen.

Elmer and his wife Laura had three children: Delphine Strobel, Donald and LeRoy. Their grandchildren were: Kay Novak; Kenneth and Kellie Strobel; Jeffry, Dale, Michael and Scott Warnemuende; Stephen (deceased), Melanie, Tamara, Laurah, Andrea and Dawn Warnemuende Jacobs. The great-grandchildren were: Norman Warnemuende, Todd Sells, William Sells III, Elaine, Ryan and Tonya Warnemuende.

When he was 55, Elmer became the custodian at St. John's Lutheran Church in Frankenmuth. He held that position for 20 years until he died March 10, 1980 at the age of 75. He is buried at Eastlawn Cemetery on Holland Road. His wife Laura continued living in Frankenmuth after he died.



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