

Worden Family



The community of Frankenmuth was enjoying "village status" by the time George William Worden brought his family name here November 1, 1928. Gone were the early days of hardship when the settlers had to clear acres of forests, survive in simple shelters, and walk to East Saginaw for supplies.

Frankenmuth had a mature business community with shops owned by second generation family businessmen. Main Street was paved and lighted and the community enjoyed telephone service. Automobiles made travel much faster and more comfortable.

The local government continued its conservative stance on fiscal matters and the population proudly paid school and property taxes on time. The village had its own power company, road construction was going on in all areas, and fire protection was provided.

The only services not developed were a central water works system. Water still was obtained from hand-dug wells near the streets. It was 1934 before the issue was addressed.

Another water-related problem also remained in the lower part of the village along the Cass River. Springtime brought seasonal flooding. Almost all of the buildings in this part of the village, including the hotels, mills, and a number of homes, suffered flood damage each year. Streets became impassable and business places operated with water on the first floor.

Two of the most severe floods occurred in 1907 and 40 years later. On Easter Sunday, in 1947, Zehnder's Restaurant had six inches of water on the first floor. The force of the water buckled the floor of the main dining room.

Shortly after, plans were made to build a dike. When red tape from the federal government slowed progress down, the city went ahead with construction and the cost was shared between the township village and Zehnder's Inc.

William Worden was only 18 when he arrived in the village. He was born March 12, 1910 in Flint. For a time he lived in Birch Run before he came to Frankenmuth. His great-grandfather, Oliver Hazard Worden, was born October 22, 1832 in Clarkston, New York. Oliver was a Civil War veteran and a carriage maker by trade.

William worked as a caretaker and chauffeur. He lived on Maple Road. William married Clara Anna Reiss October 21, 1933 and they had four children. Their son George Lewis worked as the executive director of the Michigan Education Association. Harold Alroy was president of Worden Floor Covering, Inc., a local business. Their daughter, Lois Ann Zolton, was a sales consultant, while the youngest child, Ralph George, was a supervisor.

There were 12 grandchildren. They are: George Lewis Worden II, David Michael Worden, Karen Jean Worden, Robert Alan Worden, Mary Ann Worden, Darrell Ronald Zolton, Mark Regan Zolton, Jill Clareanne Zolton, Kimberly Mae Worden, Deborah Kay Worden, Tammara Lynn Worden and Jennifer Clare Worden.

George's mother was Tessie M. nee Spencer and his father was Lewis Oliver Worden. His paternal grandparents were Lena nee Harding and George Alonz Worden. His mother's parents were Mary M. nee Curtis and William G. Spencer.



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