

Bruns Family



The family name of Bruns was brought to Frankenmuth in 1926; 58 years after Carl Bruns left Germany which was in 1868. Carl settled and raised a family in Buena Vista on Janes Avenue near 13th Street. This area was more populated than Frankenmuth at the time and also more progressive. Railroads ran from East Saginaw to Detroit – making the trip in four hours. The lumber industry was prospering. In fact, the Cass River was so full of logs you could hardly see the water near the saw mills. Plank roads made travel easy by wagon. Salt mines also helped the local economy grow.

Like the Bruns family, many of the residents of East Saginaw were German. They farmed and also made a good living lumbering off their land. The salt mine operators were always eager to purchase lumber. They needed plenty of it to heat their large boilers so brine could be boiled into salt.

By 1866 there were 70 salt mines along the river to the bay. A single mine had as many as 300 boilers. Despite the abundance of forest in the area, lumber remained expensive.

Carl was born on March 28, 1838 in Schwerin in the province of Mecklenburg which is now East Germany. He left behind a brother and three sisters when he came to America. Carl was a member of St. Matthews Lutheran Church on King Road. He died in November 1905 and left behind 13 children, six of which were still living at home. The children were: John, William, George, Charles, Mrs. John Gutmann, Mrs. Ernest Sagasser, Mrs. Albert Bartel, Frederick, Michael, Carrie, Katherine, Henry and Louis.

Carl's son Charles was born in 1886. Charles married Mary nee Barton. He lived on 13th Street near Janes Avenue. Charles worked at Mitts & Merrill in Saginaw, Michigan. The couple had two sons: Herbert and Percy. Charles died of the flu in 1921 at age 35.

Eventually Mary remarried Peter Theer and moved into the Bridgeport area, on Portsmouth, between King Road and Hess Road. The son, Percy, resided on the farm until his death in 2001.

Carl's other grandson, Herbert, married Elsie Jordan January 24, 1926 at her parents' home on King Road in Bridgeport. Herbert was born on April 27, 1907 in Saginaw. He was baptized at St. John's Lutheran Church in Saginaw. His confirmation was at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Bridgeport, Michigan.

In 1933, Herbert moved onto one of the Jordan farms at 7515 Roedel Road in Frankenmuth. He was a hardworking farmer but never took a leadership role. He was humble and low-key, yet he was a concerned individual. Herbert had a "live and let live" attitude.

Herbert and Elsie had three children: Dorothy Bradley, a housewife and mother; Donald, a plant manager; and Eugene, a Michigan State policeman. Dorothy and Donald still reside in Frankenmuth. Eugene lives in Lapeer.

Their grandchildren are: Jeffrey and Paul Bradley, Sharon, David, Michael, Lori, Brian, Kevin and Keith Bruns.

Herbert died in 1971 and is buried in St. Lorenz Cemetery.

