

# Frank Family



The Frank family name was brought to Frankenmuth in 1846 by the widow of G. Konrad Frank. Mrs. Eva Frank made the voyage with her son Johann and daughter Elisabeth. It was Johann and his descendants who began the Frank lineage here.

G. Konrad was a master carpenter who served in the German army 1806-1813. He died February 3, 1833 from the disease dropsy. Eva and her children left Germany in 1846 with the second wave of Lutheran immigrants to travel to mid-Michigan. The first group of colonists founded the Lutheran mission settlement one year earlier in 1845. It was to be a model community of Christian life aimed at converting the heathen Indians to Lutheranism.

Eva's brother, John Bernthal, was among the first group of colonists, so she and her family lived with him when they first arrived. He owned acreage one mile west of Frankenmuth. The early years in the settlement were filled with many hardships. Although the first colonists sent back letters to their friends and relatives with glowing reports of their new freedoms and opportunities, many in the second group were disappointed when they arrived. They described the sight as "so wretched and sad that people who come with great expectations into this 'promise land' break into tears and find it difficult to console themselves".

There was no road through the forests of Frankenmuth, only thickets and extensive swamps. They described the forests as "ominously silent, punctuated occasionally by the gloomy hooting of an owl, chattering of a squirrel or the call of some other wild animals; there were no song birds".

The farms were described this way: "cleared spaces surrounded by a split-rail fence, in the center a miserable hut built of natural logs.

The most miserable village in Germany has palaces by comparison".

Despite the depressing atmosphere, the early settlers persevered. Eva eventually married J.F. Nuechterlein and they had a daughter Anna Barbara. Meanwhile her other two children reached adulthood.

Johann Frank moved to a farm on Frank Road occupied today by Edwin and Edna Frank. He became a United States citizen April 24, 1852. On June 25, 1853 he married Dorothea Bierlein.

They had 10 children:

Johann died at age six weeks in 1854.

Maria born in 1855 was a housewife and lived to age 54.

Elisabeth born in 1858 was a housewife and died in 1938.

George born in 1859 lived to be only 28 years old. Kunigundi born in 1861 became a seamstress and died in 1946.

Leonhard born in 1862 became a farmer and lived to be 80 years old.

Johann born in 1864 was a carpenter and died in 1935.

Dorothea born in 1866 was a housewife and died in 1922.

Margaret born in 1867 was a housewife and died in 1921 at the age of 54.

Heinrich born in 1869 was a farmer and died in 1947.

Matthew born in 1871 was a farmer and died in 1947.

Johannes born in 1873 was a teacher and died in 1959.

There were 41 grandchildren.

Johann died December 13, 1900. His wife died May 7, 1905. Both are buried in St. Lorenz Cemetery. Their descendants totaled 682 in 1977.



*Researched & Compiled by Bavarian Inn Lodge*  
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