

Gugel Family



he Gugel name came to this area when John Michael Gugel arrived in Frankenmuth in 1848 and founded a family that played an active role in early politics, the business community, the Lutheran church and the local schools.

John Michael was born March 5, 1830 in Rosstal, Germany. Like many young men of his era, he was lured to America by the promise of economic opportunity and pushed here by an insensitive German government that had no concern for the lower class.

John left Germany April 10, 1848 at the age of 18 and arrived in Frankenmuth June 18, 1848. He was taken in by John G. Hubinger and given work at the John G. Hubinger Mill in Frankenmuth – one of the largest local businesses. The job lasted four years and ended when John became ill. Later he worked as a clerk in the Hubinger General Store for 14 years.

John's expectations of raising a family and becoming a landowner in America came true. On December 29, 1852, he married Anna Barbara Bernthal. She was born February 12, 1830 in Rosstal – the same year and same hometown as John's. She also came to America in 1848, the same year John came. The couple eventually had 13 children, eight who survived. They established the Gugel homestead on Tuscola Road, two miles west of Main Street. The house, now more than 100 years old, still stands.

Anna Barbara died March 31, 1872 when she was only 42 years old. John made a trip back to Germany the following year and married Kunigunde Weiss on May 18, 1873. The couple returned to Frankenmuth and had two children. After Kunigunde died of tuberculosis December 2, 1878, he took a third wife – Barbara Hauck. They married November 23, 1879 in Frankenmuth. This union added four stepchildren to the Gugel clan.

John became a farmer and eventually acquired 400 acres of land. He held positions in Frankenmuth Township as constable, highway commissioner, school trustee, and was the Frankenmuth Township Supervisor from 1881-1890. He died May 31, 1981 and is buried in St. Lorenz Cemetery.

The Gugel name and community involvement was carried on by his children. His sons George and Paulas owned and operated the Gugel Brothers General Store. Paulas also became a director of the first established Frankenmuth State Bank in 1910. Both men were treasurers of local businesses and St. Lorenz Church. Another son, John Mathias, became a Lutheran pastor. The other children, by John's first marriage, were John Konrad, a farmer who died at the age of 33, and four daughters – Anna Roedel, Anna Weiss, Eva Weiss, and Margaretha Lotter.

John's children by his second wife were Wolfgang Christian – a farmer who took over the homestead – and Balthus Gottlieb, who owned Gugel Funeral Home in Saginaw. Christian, like his father, was the Supervisor of Frankenmuth Township for 10 years. He also served as treasurer of Saginaw County for four years and was the director of the Mutual Fire Insurance Company in Frankenmuth. Because the family owned acreage on both sides of the Cass River, he instigated the erection of the Gugel Bridge, restored by Tiny Zehnder.

John's stepchildren from his third marriage were Elizabeth Bierlein, Barbara Loesel, Paul Hauck and Katherine Krafft. There are 41 grandchildren and 400-500 descendants.

His parents, Johann George Gugel and Elizabeth Satzinger, came to America with four of John's sisters and brothers, 11 years after John arrived.



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