

Keinath Family



The Keinath immigrants left southwest Germany in the 1800's and settled in the states of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan.

Most of the Keinath immigrants were farmers. They came to America to escape the poverty and poor economic prospects in the Kingdom of Württemberg. Their homeland, known geographically as the Swabian Alb, has rocky soil difficult to farm. The Keinaths had been living in that region since at least the 1400s, with their name spelled in various ways.

Johannes (1807-1887) and Anna Margaretha (Bauer) Keinath (1809-1886) had lived in Mähringen, Württemberg (about 20 miles south of Stuttgart). Their ten children were born there between 1832 and 1853. Six of their seven living children made the emigrant journey with them, sailing on the ship "Redwood" from Le Havre, France and arriving in New York on May 17, 1854.

The Keinath family first lived briefly in Coldwater, Michigan, but had moved to Frankenmuth by 1855. Their oldest son Georg immigrated to Frankenmuth separately. In contrast to the Keinaths, most Frankenmuth settlers emigrated from Franconia, the northern part of Bavaria.

The Keinath family bought land for their farm northeast of Frankenmuth. Their farmhouse still stands at 4720 S. Block Road (north of Roedel Road). The farm acreage is still owned by a Keinath descendant.

The Keinath family joined St. Lorenz Lutheran Church, founded with the settling of Frankenmuth in 1845.

The two oldest Keinath children married siblings from a neighboring farm. Georg (1832-1902) married Barbara Hecht in 1857. They worked the Keinath farm and raised eight children there. Christiana Keinath (1835-1895) married Leonhard Hecht in 1857. They worked the Hecht farm and raised five sons and three daughters on that farm.

The other five children of Johannes and Anna Margaretha Keinath also found spouses in the area. Maria Elisabeth (1837-1873) married Christian Schlatterer around 1859 and they lived in Saginaw. Johannes (1838-1909) married Barbara Nuechterlein in 1862.

Ernst Friedrich (1842-1898) married Anna Barbara Loesel and they moved to a farm in Millington. Johann Konrad (1848-1929) married Magdalena Margaretha Grillenberger in 1874.

Johann Jakob (born 1853) married Anna Margaretha Held in 1876. He died in 1928 in Alva, Oklahoma.

The homestead farm on S. Block Road was worked by five generations of Keinaths: Johannes, Georg, Johannes, Edwin, and Norbert. Many of the subsequent generations of Keinath descendants have continued in farming to this time, either in the Frankenmuth area or in other communities to the east such as Vassar, Richville, Reese, Millington, Deckerville, and Caro.

From 1938-1968, Herbert L. Keinath served the Frankenmuth community, first as its village engineer and later as its first city manager. Frankenmuth now has a Keinath Street, a Keinath Park, and a Herbert Keinath Fountain (by the Chamber of Commerce). There are now more Keinaths living in Michigan than in any other state of the USA.

