

Knieling Family



The family name Knieling was established by Konrad Knieling in Frankenmuth in about 1869, 24 years after the community was founded as a Lutheran mission to convert the Chippewa Indians.

The settlement's original purpose was long since abandoned and there wasn't a group of Indians within miles of Frankenmuth. Instead the community thrived as a colony that preserved the German language and traditions of the homeland.

The schools taught German and later both German and English. Church services were also conducted in German. The settlers followed their German customs, including the celebration of "Kaerwa" – the bayerisch word for "Kirchweich", which means a church dedication festival. The observance had its origin in Germany in the 16th century and was celebrated on the anniversary of the dedication of a church in the village or city. Since everyone in the community was a member of the church, it was a civic as well as a religious holiday.

As the centuries passed, the observance became more of a folk festival. It took on the same tone in Frankenmuth with feasting, visiting and, in some cases, drinking. The celebration was discontinued after many "outsiders from East Saginaw" attended and it got out of hand. In 1909, a local minister instituted the observance of an annual mission festival on the last Sunday of August to replace the "Kirchweichfest". It continues as of 2005.

Konrad came from Denta (or Deuta) Kurhessen. He probably farmed in Frankenmuth because 1872 Birch Run Township records show that he paid \$3.97 in taxes for 40 acres located in the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of section 4.

Section 4 is bordered by Townline Road on the north, Dehmel Road on the east, Busch Road on the south, and Beyer Road on the west.

Konrad married Maria Huhne and the couple had seven children: Daniel, Christian Heinrich, Leonhard Simon, Louise Katharina, Johann Michael, Sophie Friedericke and Kunigunde Katharina.

Daniel was born January 3, 1868 in Germany and was an infant when he made the voyage with his parents. Church records show he was confirmed Palm Sunday 1881 at St. Lorenz Church in Frankenmuth. He married Barbara Elizabeth Friedericka Fischhaber November 24, 1910. The ceremony was conducted by Rev. E.A. Meyer of St. Lorenz Lutheran Church. Witnesses were Leonhard Knieling and August Fischhaber. There was a 16 year age difference between the bride and the groom. He was age 42 and she was age 26.

Daniel became a farmer and owned land located between Busch and Rathbun on Block Road in Birch Run Township. He and Elizabeth had 10 children in 12 years. They are: Alma Letzkees, Herman, Walter, Margaret LaMountain, Linda Fox, Emma Gugel, Selma (born August 2, 1918 and died three months later), Carl, Florence Christiansen, and Norman (born September 21, 1923 – four months after Daniel died).

All four sons actively served in World War II abroad.

Daniel was 55 at the time of his death. Elizabeth died December 2, 1934 at the age of 50.

There are 26 grandchildren and 46 great-grandchildren as of 2005.



Researched & Compiled by Bavarian Inn Lodge
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