

# Koehler Family



he Koehler name came to this area through Frederick A. Koehler. In 1850, Frederick left his homeland, Germany, and came to Saginaw to set up a blacksmith shop. His early business thrived on fashioning tools for Saginaw Valley lumberjacks, river men, and saw mills engaged in the area's lumbering industry. Most of the iron work on the fleet of lumber vessels owned and operated by the illustrious Jesse Hoyt, was done by the young firm. It was Frederick Koehler who bolted into place the wood trestles for the first Genesee Street Bridge across the Saginaw River. When the lumbering industry began to fade, Koehler Brothers was prepared to meet the need for structural iron and steel.

In 1880, the business was taken over by James A. and Clarkson A. Koehler, sons of the founder. In 1912, James H. and Charles J. Koehler, sons of Clarkson, took over. James A. Koehler had no sons. Succeeding James H. and Charles J. Koehler was James F. "Bud" Koehler.

Kim J. Koehler succeeded his father by becoming the fifth generation to manage the business. The federal government exercised an eminent domain purchase of select real estate which allowed for a favorable liquidation of the business in 1993.

The first shop was located on the southwest corner of Tuscola and Washington. Their second location was 208-212 South Water. It was in existence for more than 40 years. The third location was 2000 Holland, the location of the former Strable Lumber and Salt Block.

The Koehler name was not introduced to Frankenmuth until 1952, more than 100 years later, when James "Bud" Koehler moved to the Frankenmuth area.

James F. Koehler was born January 12, 1923 in Saginaw, Michigan to Charles J. and Elsie H. Seekell Koehler. "Bud" attended Saginaw schools and then worked for the family business, eventually becoming president.

"Bud" married Elizabeth "Betty" Blair of Bay City, Michigan on February 17, 1945. They had three children:

Gary B. Koehler was born February 26, 1948. He is an artist, unmarried and resides in New York City.

Karen A. Koehler was born April 28, 1950 and married Alfred J. Lapres. They reside in Traverse City, Michigan, and have two children, Kara and Dustin.

Kim J. Koehler was born February 28, 1952 and married Anne C. Wenzel of Frankenmuth on October 11, 1974. They reside in the Frankenmuth area and have twins, Jaimi Elizabeth and Joshua Wenzel, born May 17, 1979. Jaimi and Joshua graduated from Frankenmuth High School. In August 2005, Jaimi Elizabeth married Aaron Stanley.

Kim James Koehler attended Frankenmuth High School and graduated in 1970. He was class president, a member of the National Honor Society, earned 11 varsity letters, and captained the football and golf teams. He earned his degree from Saginaw Valley State University and then taught adolescent, special needs students. Anne Koehler was Merchandising Manager at Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland. Both Kim and Anne are active members of St. Lorenz Lutheran Church in Frankenmuth.



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