

# Riess Family



The Riess name came to America in 1867 when J. (John) George Riess arrived in Frankenmuth. J. George was born in Marktpechofen, Kreis Anspach in Bayern (Bavaria) Germany May 29, 1829. His mother died when he was two; his father died a short time later; and he was raised by his grandmother. The family was very poor. When J. George was old enough, he enlisted as a mercenary in the "Schleswig-Holsteinischen Armee" during its war with Denmark. After that he enlisted and served in the Bavarian Army for several years. Following J. George's honorable discharge from the Bavarian Army in 1851, he worked as a butler for wealthy families that included service for the English Ambassador to Bavaria.

J. George immigrated to America in 1867 to join his girlfriend, Maria Burckhardt (b. 1849). Maria and her family had already arrived in the new country and settled in Frankenmuth. Once J. George arrived in Frankenmuth and joined his sweetheart, he found work at the Hubinger Brothers Mill. J. George and Maria married in 1868. Their first home was located near the Mill that operated in what is today the immediate vicinity of the Holzbrucke (Covered Wooden Bridge).

At the time of J. George's arrival, suitable land for farming was difficult to find. There came a time when a 24-acre tract of farmland on Flint Road became available because its owner, a local Civil War veteran on his way home following his honorable discharge from the Union Army, was killed. J. George purchased that parcel of farmland and began farming. Because of the tragic circumstances that caused the land to become available, J. George was never quite sure that he had clear title to the land. To be certain he had a home for his family, he purchased a parcel of woods in Birch Run Township. Later two 40-acre tracts of land, contiguous to his 24-acre farm, became available.

He and his brother-in-law, John Conrad Weber, jointly purchased the two parcels. J. George had little interest in farming. His oldest son, George J., became the farmer for the family. In 1925 George J. purchased a second 56-acre farm across the road from the original Riess farm. (The barn built on that 56-acre farm still stands as of the year 2003; named the *George J. and Regina Riess Heritage Farm*. It is owned and preserved for history by the William Jr. and Dorothy Zehnder Foundation).

George J. and his wife, Regina Keinath, had six children: Alma, Clara Worden, Bertha, Ludwig, Adolph and Emma Herzog.

Adolph continued working the family farms with the help of his brother and sisters, and his sister Clara's four children. In 1989, Adolph was recognized with a special award from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod for the Riess family's many years of volunteer services, generous contributions and efforts on behalf of the International Lutheran Hour.

Karl, the second son of J. George and Maria Riess, became a Lutheran Teacher. He served congregations in Detroit, Sebawaing and Beaver, Michigan. He married Margaretha Grueber and they had nine children: Reverend Oswald Riess, Adela (Reverend Fred) Fischer, Erna Koch, Flora Tomke, Victor, Reverend Richard Riess, Harold and Mildred Eshelman (her twin brother Arthur died in infancy).

Christina, the only daughter of J. George and Maria Riess married Andrew Loesel, a farmer. They had six children: Caroline Eischer, Walter, Edwin, Lydia Bender, Reverend Berthold Loesel and Reverend Herman Loesel.

Maria died in 1907 and J. George died in 1921. The couple had three children, 21 grandchildren and 59 great-grandchildren.



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