

Schaefer Family



The Schaefer name came to Frankenmuth through George Michael Schaefer. George left his job as a blacksmith and with his wife Anna Maria, their daughter Maria Katherina, and son Karl Friederich, came to Frankenmuth from Bavaria, Germany, within six years of the original immigrants of 1845.

In 1852 Georg Michael purchased land from John Hubinger (presently the site of the River Place) and opened up a blacksmith and carriage shop.

In July of that same year Anna Maria died, and by November Georg Michael married Maria Margarethe Hofman. Their marriage was blessed with seven children, two of which died at the age of four.

The location of the Schaefer Blacksmith Shop was on the south side of the river. This section of Frankenmuth, because one has to cross the river to get there, still carries the nickname "Canadian Side".

Prior to the building of a bridge in 1858, two or three boats were placed on each side of the river, and people wishing to cross, had to do their own rowing. The first bridge, a wooden structure, was built at a cost of \$2,200. It was replaced by an iron bridge in 1893, at a cost of \$7,500.

Georg Michael became influential in the community, serving as a township supervisor from 1859 to 1860, 1864-1866, and again 1874-1878.

Georg Michael operated the business successfully for 38 years at which time his oldest living son, George Adam, succeeded him in the business.

George Adam married Pauline Ernestine Block. In 1898 George Adam died leaving his widow with four small children.

One of George Adam's employees was George J. Rummel. He married the widow and took over the business.

In 1907, George Adam's son, Bernhard G., started working for his stepfather and became a member of the firm by the time he was 22 years old. The firm's name became Rummel and Schaefer.

Sales and service for Ford automobiles was added but after six months the firm switched to Willys-Overland. In those days an automobile could be purchased for four or five hundred dollars. The dealer profited about \$25 an auto.

In 1933 the firm acquired the Plymouth-Dodge dealership. Henry Rummel, a half-brother to Bernard G., became a partner in 1942.

After George Rummel's death in 1954, Barney's (Bernhard) son, Elmer and his son-in-law, Duane Bierlein, entered into partnership with Barney by purchasing the Rummel half of the business. The business was renamed Schaefer and Bierlein.

In 1957, after 50 years in the business, Barney retired leaving the business in the hands of his son-in-law.

In 1961 the business moved to its present location on the corner of Jefferson and Weiss, just 2 blocks south of the Bavarian Inn Lodge.

Randy Bierlein, grandson of Barney, joined the sales staff in 1972. Randy entered into partnership with his father, Duane, after the retirement of his uncle Elmer in 1983. In 2005, Randy's son Kyle joined the business.

Duane Bierlein passed away in April of 2006, leaving the 5th and 6th generations to tend to the business.



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