

# Schmitt Family



The Schmitt name came to this area from Germany via Detroit through Dr. George Schmitt, Frankenmuth's first resident dentist. Dr. Schmitt was born September 27, 1875 in Framersheim Hessen Darmstadt, Germany. His uncle announced he was going to America and would take one person with him. George at 16 was the most eligible to make the trip. They set sail July 24, 1892 and arrived in America August 6, 1892. George did not recall the voyage with relish; he became violently ill the first days of the trip from the first meal served on the ship.

George had attained the equivalency of two years of preparatory school when he arrived in the Detroit/Dearborn area. He attended high school and received private tutoring from the principal to help him learn the English language. He entered Detroit College of Medicine (Wayne State University) taking on many jobs to pay for his education. He graduated with a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree in 1903.

After graduation he stayed in Detroit and Dearborn and became acquainted with many prominent people, including Henry Ford. Ford borrowed money from George to be used on his automobile ventures. After the third request for funds, George refused as he himself was still struggling financially. His association with Detroit dentists and money pressures from friends and family proved to be too expensive, causing him to pick up roots and move to Montrose. Here he not only served Montrose but also New Lothrop and Frankenmuth. He would spend two days in each village and made the day long trips by horse and buggy.

A log sawer for the lumber mill in Frankenmuth advised him to come and stay in Frankenmuth. In February 1904 he took up residence in a house located at 546 South Main Street. His dentist chair was set up in the original Goetz Hotel, now Zehnders Restaurant.

In 1906 he married Rosina Katherina Weber at the St. Lorenz Parsonage. The couple moved into a residence located next to the Exchange Hotel, now the south parking lot of Zehnders. Here he continued his dental practice. Lacking gas and electricity, much of his work was done by foot power. A heavy wheel operated the drill or polishing wheel for the dentures. When an evening patient arrived, of which there were many, Mrs. Schmitt held the oil lamp while the doctor worked on the patient's aching jaw. Teeth extractions cost 25 cents and extraction of all teeth and a complete denture was done for \$10.00. Lack of funds did not keep a patient from receiving help.

Because his work was so demanding, his social life was an occasional visit to Mrs. Schmitt's parents. In later years, he did join the American Dental Association and the Michigan State Dental Society. He was a charter member of Frankenmuth Rotary Club and a member of the Germania Club of Saginaw, the Gray Fox and the Frankenmuth German Club.

Dr. Schmitt's children included: Reinhold, a dental technician who graduated from Ferris and Bode Dental Institute at Buffalo, New York and married Rosella Pillsbury; Irma Worms, a graduate from Ferris State University and the Julliard School of Music, and a chorus singer at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York; Nestor, a dental technician and an accomplished performing musician who married Arlene Mueller; Walter, a dental technician with his own lab who married Irene Johnson; and Rosalie, a cosmetologist who married pharmacist Harry Boesenecker. Two children, Arno (age 5) and Charlotte (age 12) died tragically within seven months of each other in 1931.

Dr. Schmitt practiced dentistry for over 50 years and passed away at the age of 88 in 1964. Mrs. Schmitt passed away 6 years later at the age of 82. They had 18 grandchildren.



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