

Schnell Family



The successful founding of Frankenmuth in 1845 encouraged Pastor Wilhelm Loehe of Neuendettelsau, Germany to establish additional colonies. The name Frankentrost (consolation of the Franks) was chosen for the second settlement, as Loehe remarked, "The first emigrants having had the 'courage' (Frankenmuth means courage of the Franks) to settle on strange Indian soil, the successors of these shall take consolation from these their brethren and rest assured that the same divine blessing and the same divine favor and guidance are to be their lot likewise."

In 1846 Loehe issued a call for participants and by the fall of the year a number of people announced their readiness to emigrate. They gathered a fund of 6,000 guilders (\$4000) for the purchase of land in the state of Michigan. The first group of these emigrants boarded the "Creole" on April 18, 1847. Pastor Phillip Graebner, chosen by Loehe to be the spiritual leader of this colony, followed with the rest on the "Hermine" on April 22. Among the passengers on the ship "Hermine" was George Adam Schnell, his wife Anna, and their five children. They landed safely on June 1, 1847 in New York Harbor.

The group traveled up the Hudson River to Albany and then went by rail to Buffalo. A steamer took them across Lake Erie to Detroit. The final leg of the journey to Frankenmuth was made by horse and wagon. They arrived in Frankenmuth on June 11, 1847. Land north of Frankenmuth was explored and a site selected for Frankentrost on the Vassar Plank Road (now Holland Road).

George Adam Schnell was born on January 6, 1799 in Germany, possibly Winsfeld Bayern, Germany. He and his family settled on property west of the present Immanuel Lutheran Church in Frankentrost.

The 1850 Saginaw County census shows his children as: Johann George, age 21; George Michael, age 18; Anna Maria, age 16; Maria Margaretha, age 12; and George Leonhard, age 7.

George Adam Schnell died a widower August 16, 1873 in Blumfield Township at the age of 74.

Leonhard, the youngest son of George Adam Schnell, was born November 12, 1842 in Winsfeld Bayern, Germany. He was about four and one half years old when he came to America with his family to live in Frankentrost. He married Ursula Kern, daughter of Frederick and Maria nee Winkler Kern. Ursula was born in Rosstal, Germany on November 16, 1843. After her father Frederick died in 1861, her mother brought the rest of the family – four daughters and two sons to Richville (Frankenhilf), Michigan, to join two sons who had emigrated earlier.

The wedding of Leonhard and Ursula was performed by Pastor F.A. Abner on February 7, 1864. Leonhard, of Blumfield Township, was 21 years old and Ursula, from Denmark Township, was 20 years old. Witnesses to the marriage were George Abraham and George Zeilinger, both from Blumfield Township.

Leonhard and Ursula's children were: Michael (1866-1938); John George (1868-1938); William (1869-1941); Margaret, Mrs. Ernest Hecht (1871-1960); George (1874-1912); Fred (1876-1918); Anna, Mrs. Ernst Schultz (1882-1971); Mary, Mrs. Matthew Weber (1884-1913); and Carl (1886-1960).

In the late 1860s, Leonhard moved his family to Denmark Township, east of Richville (Frankenhilf). He was a farmer who also served as an elder of St. Michael's Lutheran Church for six years. Ursula Schnell died October 23, 1919 and Leonhard died July 30, 1922.



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