

Umbach Family



The years 1838 to 1854 marked the time when almost 5,000 German Lutherans migrated to America due to government rules and regulations which restricted confessional Lutherans in their worship. Violations to these rules produced fines or imprisonment.

A series of four migrations of German Lutherans took place: 1838-1839 the Saxon migration to Missouri; 1839 the Prussian migrations to Buffalo, New York and Wisconsin; 1843 the Prussian migrations to Wheatfield, New York and Wisconsin; 1854 the Wendish migration to Texas. The emigration of Old Lutherans from Bavaria to America (Frankenmuth was the first colony) was different from the other major Lutheran migrations in that these colonies were developed for the express purpose of pursuing mission work among American Indians.

The Umbach family, unlike most Frankenmuth German families, did not come from Bavaria but rather from the northeastern part of Germany. Caspar Umbach came to America in 1849 from Cuxhager, Germany to escape militarism. He was a cabinet maker by trade and settled in St. Louis, Missouri, opening a furniture store. He was married to Marie Geisel, whose father, Conrad Geisel, and family had come to New York from Hessen Nassau, Germany in 1836 with a group of other Saxon immigrants. They settled in Perry County, Missouri. This group was called the "Berliners" and contrary to the advice of their spiritual leader, Pastor Stephen, they preceded the Saxon migration. In 1839, this New York group set off by steamboat and on April 22nd, joined the other settlers in Perry County.

Casper and Marie had nine children, the oldest being Conrad, born June 10, 1858. Conrad married Anna Kathryn Zimmerly who was born in Ft. Wayne, Indiana in 1862.

Conrad, a Lutheran minister, accepted a position as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Sebewaing, Michigan and served that congregation for many years. He died in 1918 during the flu epidemic while in his pastoral office. After his death his widow Anna moved to Frankenmuth.

Conrad and Anna had one son, Paul, born May 1, 1884 in Perry County, Missouri. They also adopted a niece, Elsa, who was born in 1895.

Paul became a Lutheran school teacher, teaching in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Detroit, Frankenmuth and Bach, Michigan. In 1911, Paul married Clara Kloha, who died on July 13, 1917. They had four children: Arthur Umbach, Esther Lohrmann, Hildegard Eagan and Clara Rummel.

In 1920, he married Amalie Trinklein. Six children were born to this marriage: Gertrude Warnick, Theodore Umbach, Richard Umbach, Victor Umbach, Kathryn Millerwise and Doris Gruber.

After his retirement Paul moved back to Frankenmuth and frequently served as a substitute teacher until the age of eighty years. His home was located next to the old Indian cemetery and log cabin replica of the first church and school, which also served as a parsonage and a home for some of the Indian children. While living there he conducted many tours through the log cabin and adjoining church museum.

Paul died August 27, 1969 and Amalie died May 23, 1974. They had 32 grandchildren and 57 great-grandchildren.



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