

Wolkensdoerfer Family



he Wolkensdoerfer family name came to this area when Georg Leonard Wolkensdoerfer (born October 29, 1825) left his ancestral home of Oberzenn, Central Franconia, Kingdom of Bavaria, with his wife Anna Eva Buechlein (born August 30, 1827) in the spring of 1852.

They settled in the Frankentrost area of rural Frankenmuth Township and built their log cabin near the corner of Maple and Bradley Roads.

The following year, 1853, Georg's brother, Johann Leonard, and his sister, Anna Barbara, also joined them here in Michigan. They, however, settled in East Saginaw. Anna Barbara married John N. Pflueger in 1856 and Johann Leonard married Anna Margaret Denmark.

Georg Leonard and Anna Eva had four children: Frederick Thomas born May 25, 1853 was baptized at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Frankentrost; Johann Lorenz was born in 1855 and died in 1930; Anna Barbara was born in 1857 and died in 1937; and Thomas Frederick was born in 1861 and died in 1863.

The family remained on their 83-acre farm in sections of five and six of Frankenmuth Township until Georg Leonard died in 1910.

The log house that Georg Leonard built in 1853 is presently located in Cross Park, just south of Frankenmuth. It is owned by the Frankenmuth Historical Association and is being used for educational programs depicting the early life of the Frankenmuth settlers.

The log house is 18 feet by 30 feet in size and 1½ stories high. The first floor is divided in half and has a stove and chimney. The interior walls on the first floor are whitewashed. The second floor is not divided and was probably used for the Wolkensdoerfer's children. There is a 24-inch stairway on the north wall.

The log house was extensively remodeled in the 1870's when the interior was lathed and plastered, doors and windows lengthened, the original stairway removed and a new, more convenient stairway installed on the east wall. The exterior was also covered with four-inch wood siding so that it resembled the Wolkensdoerfer's neighboring houses.

In 1883, the Wolkensdoerfer family built a new two-story frame house directly in front of the log house.

The log house was rediscovered in 1975 on the Bill Daeschlein farm when Harry Boesnecker brought the log house's availability to the attention of the Frankenmuth Historical Association.

In 1976, the house was removed for storage for eventual restoration.

In 1983, the restoration work began under the financial support of Robert W. Hesse of Saginaw, who supported the work in memory of his brother, George W. Hesse.

The log house dedication in Cross Park took place on September 21, 1985. This was 132 years after Georg Leonard Wolkensdoerfer first built it.



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