

Zucker Family



he Zucker name came to this area through Johann Zucker. He arrived in Frankenmuth two years after the community began in 1845 and became one of the founders of St. John's Lutheran Church.

Like many of the early arrivals, Johann came from Rosstal, Germany. He was born February 23, 1834 and made the voyage at age 13. It is not known who came with him. At first he lived on West Tuscola where the Ludwig Weber farm is now. Later he moved east to the site of the Tuscola Apartments.

Most of the early settlers became farmers, as John did. Although the land was much cheaper than in Germany, and the soil was often better, the occupation was a difficult one. The dense forests with their towering trees had to be cleared for cropland. The task took months of back-breaking labor.

The saw mills in Saginaw were always in the market for logs to be used for construction or as fuel. The farmers were able to earn some money until their fields were clear enough for planting. Corn and potatoes were among the first crops harvested.

Johann married Barbara nee Nuechterlein April 26, 1854. They had two sons, Martin and Michael. After Barbara died ten years later, Johann married Margaret nee Schmitzer September 7, 1865. Johann and Margaret had three children: John, Anna Reif and Kunigunda List.

Their grandchildren were: Herbert List, Lenora Sparks, Wilmar Zucker, Anita Rauh King, Esther Stonebraker, Meta Mayer, Rudolph Zucker, Corletta Beranek, Caroline Stachowiak, Margaret Yakstis, Arthur H. Reif and Linda Weinmueller.

Johann worked as a carpenter as well as doing farming. He became involved in the formation of the second German Lutheran Church in Frankenmuth and was one of its original 26 male communicant members.

Up until 1879, Frankenmuth had only one church – St. Lorenz Lutheran. It was named after a church in Germany and served not only as a spiritual house for the settlers, but also a reminder of their homeland. By November 30, 1879 a new congregation was formed. It was a merger of two small congregations in Frankenmuth Township – St. Paul's Church, about four miles south of the village on Canada Road and Bethel Church, in 'middle Franken' about two miles north of St. Lorenz. There were also a few members from St. Lorenz who were dissatisfied with procedures and joined the new group.

Johann was one of the original officers of the church. He served with John Kusterer as a deacon. The congregation built a frame church on West Tuscola in 1880 with dedication ceremonies held November 7. The St. John's Lutheran Church was only one mile east of St. Lorenz Church and had a pipe organ that had once been used at St. Lorenz Church. The church membership remained small for the first 15 years. German services were discontinued in 1960. A parish center was built in 1969. The original frame church was damaged beyond repair during the tornado that swept through Frankenmuth in 1996. A new sanctuary and fellowship hall was built at 1200 East Genesee in Frankenmuth and was dedicated in 2000. Membership as of 2007 is around 600.

Johann died in 1913 at the age of 79. He is buried in St. John's Cemetery. His second wife Margaret died ten years later in 1923 and is also buried in St. John's Cemetery.



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