

Rodammer Family



he Rodammer name came to this area through Johann Leonhard Rodammer. Johann was among the nearly 100 Germans (the second group) who came to Frankenmuth in 1846. They brought manpower, courage and enthusiasm to the original settlers who were struggling in the isolated colony.

Johann Leonhard was born in Weissenbronn September 17, 1808. He was baptized and confirmed there. Johann Leonhard was 38 when he traveled to America. He was accompanied by his wife, Margareth Barbara Lotter, and his children, Johann Friederich, Johann Georg and Johann Michael. Johann was a farmer like many of the other early immigrants.

The group assembled at Nuernberg March 6, 1846 and sang the hymn "All Glory Be to God on High" as they pulled out of the train station there. They made their way on foot and by wagon to Lobenstein. Here an innkeeper spread two feet of straw on the floor and the travelers slept on it. They took another train and finally a boat to Bremen, arriving March 12. They waited a week while a new ship for their voyage was supposed to be completed. When it was still not finished and more delays were likely, they booked passage on a two-mast freighter that had been converted into a passenger ship. But the conversion seemed to be minor. Tobacco odors lingered since the vessel was formerly used to transplant the tobacco. All of the passengers were crowded together in one large warehouse-like room for the voyage.

Religious devotions were conducted morning and evening. Frankenmuth was established as a Lutheran mission to educate the heathen Indians and the second group of colonists supposedly adhered to that conviction. However, some immigrants who came after the settlement was founded did so because of the economic opportunities that could be theirs in America.

The ship reached New York harbor May 9, 1845 and the settlers arrived in Frankenmuth May 27, 1846. At first they lived in the pastor's house or with the original colonists. Later they built a communal log cabin and finally they built their own cabins. That Christmas the settlers dedicated their log church. New Year's Eve a church bell they brought from Germany rang for thirty minutes while they sang hymns.

Johann Leonhard became a farmer and settled at 8395 Tuscola Road. The couple had four more children in America: Johann Adam, Johann Adam, Maria Margareth and Johann. They all died at a very young age.

Johann Leonhard's oldest son John Friederich served in the Civil War and earned a medal from the Michigan militia of the Union Army.

There were 34 grandchildren of the original Rodammer settlers: Eva Maria Roth, Michael, Anna Rauh, Katherina Zehnder Knoll, Margareth Zucker, Wilhem, Elizabeth, Leonhard, Martin, Wilhelmina Zimmerman, Michael, Georg, Hanna Keinath, Johann, Fritz and Lizzy Trump.

Also: Mathias, Otto, Herman, Richard, Kunigunda Pillsbury, Frieda Strandes, Katherina Nuechterlein, Marie Deuring, Anna, Barbara Beyerlein, Friedrich, Ludwig, Klara, John, Renata, Hedwig Eischer, Meta Schluckebier and Emma Eischer.

Johann Leonhard died August 18, 1860 and Margareth Barbara died July 6, 1893. Both are buried in St. Lorenz Cemetery.

Johann and Margareth's descendants total more than 600 as of the year 2005.



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