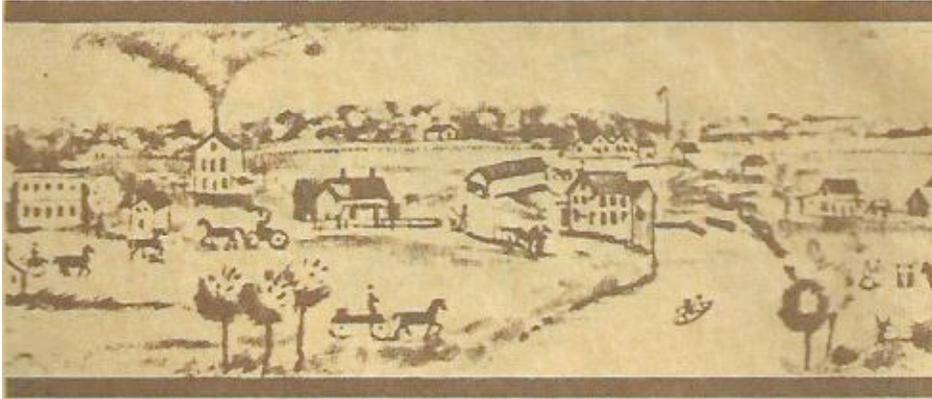


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OVER A CENTURY OF GOOD FOOD

Frankenmuth was founded in 1845 by a group of Bavarian immigrants whose intent it was to convert Chippewa Indians in the Saginaw Valley to Christianity. This attempt was not too successful, but a thriving small American community emerged. Because of its rich cultural background and heritage, and because of its pioneers and descendants' insistence on the basic fundamentals as pertains to thrift, morals and hard work, Frankenmuth has developed and is recognized nationally as one of America's Most Unique Small Towns. The Hotel and Restaurant which the Zehnder family now owns had its beginning in the year 1856 and has enjoyed serving the American public with good food and warm hospitality for over 125 years. The Family Style Dinners had their origin in Frankenmuth and this place is now world-famous for its Frankenmuth Style Chicken Dinners.



DEPICTION OF FRANKENMUTH 1850's

Those first Germans who came in 1845 to share their love of the Christian faith with the Indians also brought with them a great love for good food. This sharing of good food with one another and any traveler who happened upon the small community, soon gained it the reputation that Frankenmuth is still noted for, "Good Food and Warm Hospitality".



The Exchange Hotel



The New Exchange Hotel built in 1900 and located adjacent to the original Exchange Hotel



Zehnder's Hotel - 1934

(Above) The New Exchange Hotel built in 1900 and located adjacent to the original Exchange Hotel.

(Below) Zehnder's Hotel – 1934.

The Old Exchange Hotel was built in 1856 by J. C. Reichle and, as was always the case then, his wife was the cook. A large stein of beer for a nickel and a family style dinner, from soup to pie for fifteen cents, was the going price. For seventy-five cents, the weary traveler received lodging for himself and his horse, with a supper and breakfast included. The tradition of a Sunday dinner in Frankenmuth can be traced back to the late 19th century. Frankenmuth and good food were on the map. Reichle's family operated the business for twenty years. During the next fifty-two years the hotel was owned and operated by a large number of individuals, almost all of Bavarian lineage. Rittmaier, Felgner, Fischer, Robbel, Goetz, Goetzing, Kile, Hubinger, Auernhammer, Gugel, Hess and Conzelmann are all names associated with the hotel until 1927, when William Zehnder, Sr. purchased the then vacant property.



1938

(Top to bottom)

- 1. Zehnder's Gift Shop had its beginning in the two showcases in the lobby.
- 2. Main Dining Room – 1949
- 3. The Tap Room as it first appeared 1949



Zehnder's Gift Shop had its beginning in the two showcases in the lobby.



Main Dining Room - 1949



The Tap Room as it first appeared 1949

(Top to bottom)

- 1. Zehnder's Main Lobby
- 2. Zehnder's Original Dining Room
- 3. The Heritage Room as it appears today (1981).



Zehnder's Main Lobby



Zehnder's Original Dining Room



The Heritage Room as it appears today.

William Zehnder acquired the Exchange Hotel building in 1927 by trading his farm (the old Matthew Auernhammer farm) plus \$4,000.00, which he borrowed. After extensive remodeling, both inside and out, it was at this time that the front exterior was given the "Mount Vernon" look.

The Zehnder family opened the hotel for business on Mother's Day, 1928 with a total seating capacity of sixty. On that day, 312 dinners were served family style for \$1.00 per person. By 1938, the capacity had doubled and more additions shortly after the war expanded the seating to 700. Continuous additions and renovations have increased the seating capacity to 1250, with additional plans for future expansion.





790,000 lbs. of Chicken are used annually.

During the Great Depression years (1930-1940), because of Tuttle's unreasonable fine and the lack of patrons, Zehnder's almost failed, but with the assistance of his wife, two daughters, six sons, the bank and friends, William, Sr. and the business pulled through. One day the receipts were seven cents - - Fred Goetzinger bought a "Speckled Sports" cigar, remained in the barroom and smoked it to its tip.

After World War II, the business grew rapidly. On March 10, 1947 William Zehnder, Sr. turned the business over - - debts included - - to his children, Linda Trinklein, Ermia Nuechterlein, Fred, Herman, William, Jr., Eddie and Leonard. One son, Albert had died at the age of 28.

Since the early 1920's, people have been coming to Frankenmuth week in and week out by the thousands. On almost any Sunday afternoon, 4000 guests will come to Zehnder's and enjoy a chicken or steak dinner. Throughout the year, 800,000 guests will experience the friendly hospitality and excellent service that has made Zehnder's famous throughout the world.

Your hosts.....

(Left to right) Al Zehnder, Ermia "Bowsie" Nuechterlein, Eddie Zehnder, Marion Zehnder, Linda (Susie Zehnder) Baker, Russ Baker, Dee Trombley Zehnder

