
FRANKENMUTH, MICHIGAN

Frankenmuth is a truly unique community. With a population of less than 5,000, it annually attracts almost 3.5 million visitors. Some come to sample the world-renowned cuisine, some shop for Christmas decorations, and some visitors simply wish to absorb the *gemütlichkeit*, the friendly ambience that permeates the town. Early community outreach, around 1845, had a different focus. Frankenmuth, which means “courage of the Franconians,” was the name taken by the mission colony dedicated to sharing the Christian gospel with local Chippewas. While it is easy to see the contrasts over time, it is important to recognize the bonds that connect the past and present. The Franconian standard of responsibility, individual and social, is evident today, and the desire of those first settlers to touch a larger community is reflected in the hospitality enjoyed by all who pass through this colorful hamlet. The settlers were firmly committed to maintaining their German Lutheran culture and heritage, and the transition, over many generations, from an agrarian village to a major tourist destination is a fascinating journey.

Under the auspices of the Frankenmuth Historical Association, a committee with roots back to the earliest founders has chosen a number of photographs to illustrate some of the steps on that journey.

The Images of America series celebrates the history of neighborhoods, towns, and cities across the country. Using archival photographs, each title presents the distinctive stories from the past that shape the character of the community today. Arcadia is proud to play a part in the preservation of local heritage, making history available to all.

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