

Rosstal History



This room is named after a community in Germany. Many of our early settlers in Frankenmuth came from Rosstal, so we still have close ties with them. Rosstal, a small city of about 4000 residents, has long been a favorite tourist spot in the neighborhoods of Schwabach, Nürnberg, Fürth and Erlangen in the region of Rangau Middle Franken, Germany. The “Kirchweih” in August and the “Martinimarkt” in November lures many visitors.

The stately St. Laurentius Kirche with its huge apse and lantern crowned tower stands in the middle of an “einst befestigten Kirchhof” (a fortified church). Originally a Catholic church, it had its first Lutheran sermon in 1525. In August of 1528, the church’s members voted to have their pastors preach only sermons following the Lutheran persuasion. In 1530 services were held in the German language rather than Latin. By 1534 the pastors of the congregation were allowed to marry.

The congregation had its share of setbacks. From July 1585 to January 1586, one hundred forty-five members died of the plague. In 1627, the church, known at that time as the most beautiful church within a 15 mile radius of Nuernberg, was hit by lightning and was almost completely destroyed by fire. The church was rebuilt in two years. During the Thirty Year War, the congregation frequently had to flee. Church records indicate there were 632 funerals in the area in 1632. The congregation would return only to have to flee again. It got to the point where the pastor of the congregation began to speak of Nuernberg as his home rather than Rosstal where his parish was located. The war brought so many deaths that not until 1656 did the church register more births than deaths. Between 1685 and 1732 there was an influx of refugees from Austria – many of them joining the St. Laurentius Church.

In 1837, a St. Laurentius pastor heard of Wilhelm Loehe, who had just become a pastor at Neuendettelsau, a neighboring village. Wilhelm Loehe had heard of the need for missionaries in America to minister to the many Germans who had immigrated to the New World but had no spiritual leader. Pastor Loehe formed an organization which collected funds to send missionaries to America. Pastor Loehe, besides being interested in sending pastors to serve the German Lutherans in America, was also interested in sending missionaries to bring the Gospel to the Indians of America. Rather than send just a missionary, he decided to send a small group of Lutherans to show the Indians “how beautiful it is to live with Jesus”.

Hence, Frankenmuth was established in 1845. Pastor August Craemer, their newly ordained pastor, brought this group to Michigan. Of the thirteen emigrants leaving Neuendettelsau, eight came from Rosstal. Included in the group were the names of Haspel, List, Bernthal, Walther and Bierlein.

In 1846, a large group of 90-100 came to join the first group. Of those, twenty were from Rosstal. The following year, 1847, thirty-nine Rosstal residents, along with other emigrants, left to help establish the colony in Frankentrost, located eight miles north of Frankenmuth. Included in this group were the names Herbst, Leinberger, Huber, Bauer, Keller, Fischhaber, Bierlein, Nuechterlein and Zucker. Many of them, shy of the hard work in establishing a new colony, remained with relatives in Frankenmuth. Future years brought additional residents from Rosstal which included the names of Mueller, Kern, Greul, Herzog, Rogner, Werthner, Hegelheimer, Gugel, Stengel, Weiss, Loesel and Bettschnitt. Most of the above names are still prevalent in the Frankenmuth area today and are featured in the guestrooms of the Bavarian Inn Lodge.



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