

Michigan Hotel Serves Meals in Bavarian Custom

Frankenmuth, Mich.—(UP)—Shortly after World War II, a man walked into one of the three hotels in this village. He signed the register and gave Hong Kong as his home address. "You know, it was while I was interned in a Japanese prison camp that I first heard about Frankenmuth and the chicken dinners served here," he said. "I told myself that as soon as I was free I would come over here and see if it's true that you are served all you can eat."

He found out it was true, just as countless people have been finding out for the past century. Waitresses keep all dishes heaping full, and the meal ends only when the diner has reached—or exceeded—his capacity.

Big Meals Tradition
Meals big and flavorful are a tradition that the pioneers of Frankenmuth brought with them from their native Bavaria in the middle of the 19th century. The settlement was made as a missionary effort. Anxious to convert the Indian to Christianity, a Lutheran parish in Germany decided to send not only a missionary but a whole congregation to the new world so that the natives could see religion in everyday action.

The Indians soon moved northwest, crowded out by the white man. But the Bavarian pioneers remained to make their township one of the most fertile in the country. Conservation experts consider the land more fertile today than when the virgin soil was first plowed and thank good agricultural practices for that.

The village utilized other Bavarian skills, too. Today it has two large breweries that use old German recipes, two precision tool plants where traditional German skills are displayed and two large insurance firms which were begun as informal, neighborhood groups to practice the virtues of German thrift.

Hotel Brought Journey
One of the early business places was a tiny hotel which broke the arduous journey between Flint and Saginaw, now both automobile centers. Not only did weary travelers welcome the rest, they enjoyed the meals that were served on a scale that was large even by the generous standards of the timberland frontier. Word spread, and people made the trip by horse and buggy and bicycles. Business grew slowly but steadily.

Then, with the advent of the automobile, the whole state of Michigan discovered Frankenmuth. In 1928, William Zehnder traded a 120-acre farm for the Exchange Hotel and began a family operation that continues today as a team effort by his seven children. The little hotel, now known as Zehnder's, began to expand by a series of additions, but always the "original room" where the first dinners were served was preserved, and today it is still used for private parties.

All You Can Eat
Two other hotels also serve meals on an all-you-can-eat basis. Over a typical spring week end they will serve 13,000 meals—this in a village of only 1,300. Visitors come from all over the United States and "Frankenmuth-style chicken dinners" can be seen advertised as far away as California and Florida.

Mass production methods are used in the most modern kitchens, gleaming in porcelain and stainless steel. But all food is prepared immediately before serving, and even epicures can-

not tell the difference between it and the food cooked in a family kitchen. Frankenmuth's Bavarian heritage is demonstrated by the bustling waitresses who refuse to allow a plate to become empty and who look hurt when the guest admits that he hasn't left room for dessert. Not only are they a buxom and blonde as Rhineland maidens, but they retain their Bavarian accent and are wont to lapse into their own tongue when they return to the kitchen. That "language" is a mixture of German, Bavarian dialect and English and the result is as distinctive—and sounds much like—Pennsylvania Dutch.

Frankenmuthers have retained their traditional Bavarian independence and self-reliance. When U.S. Army Engineers' plans for flood control on the Cass river were shelved, the village went ahead and built its own dikes to solve a recurring flood problem. Informed that such action would jeopardize their share of any appropriations Congress might make in the future, the villagers informed Washington that they have never thought about federal aid, that they preferred paying their own way. Its village government is held up as a model; it is a miniature city manager set-up without the

formality of the title. Its township taxes are always paid in full and are always the first to be turned over to the county treasurer. Its schools, both public and parochial are big and new. Its two Lutheran churches are flourishing, and the community has sent more young men into the ministry or parish teaching profession than any place 20 times its size. But it is its chicken dinners that have given Frankenmuth its widest fame. This is the centennial year of the original Exchange Hotel, but no special observance is planned. Everything will be as normal, including the exhortation: "Eat all you can!"



RECEIVING BOUQUETS from Soviet pioneers at Kishinev station (Kishinev is capital of Moldavia), President Tito of Yugoslavia is welcomed to Russia for his historic talks with Bulganin and Khrushchev. (International)

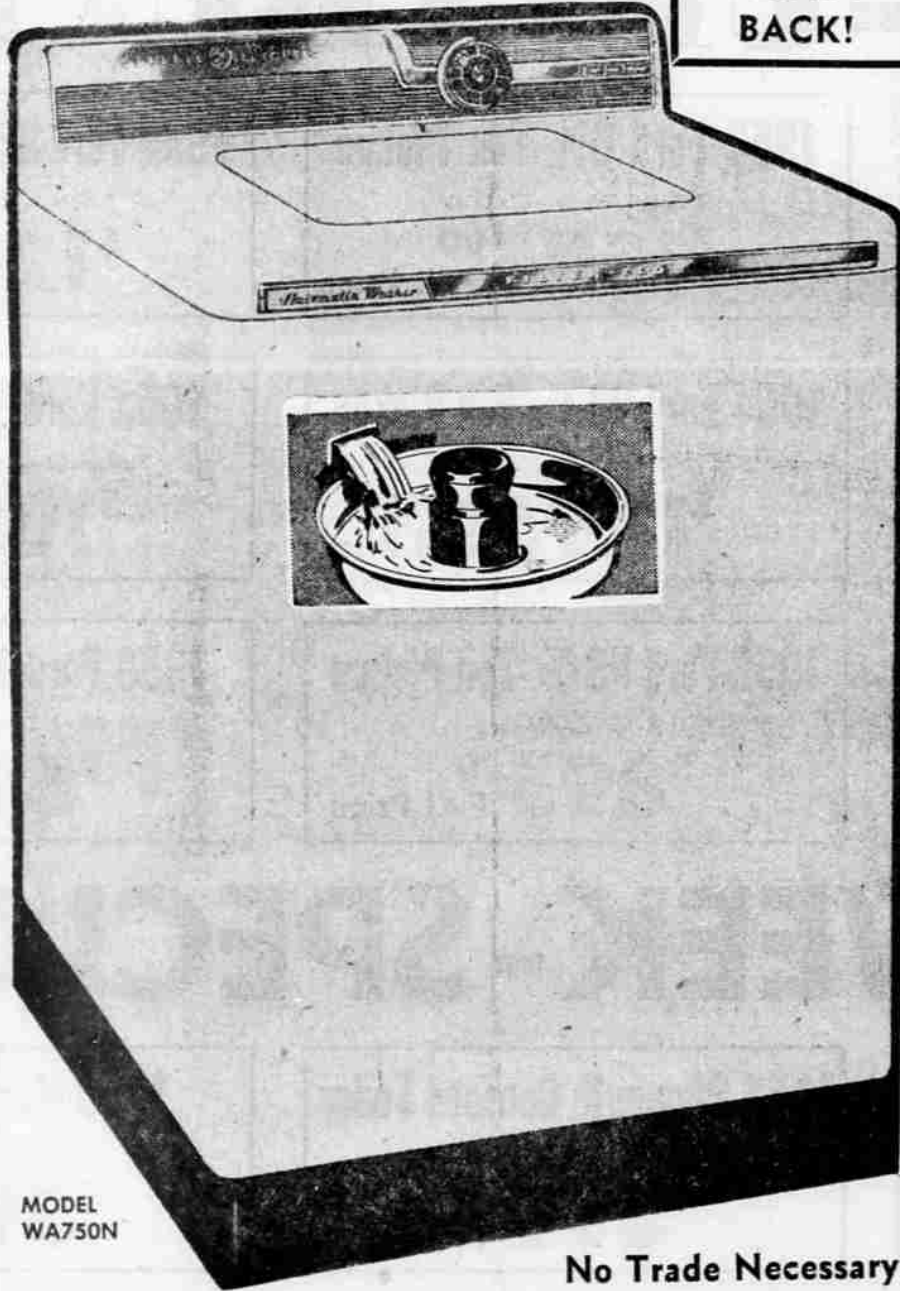
Emergency Board Studies Mental Hospital Site
Salem—(UP)—Members of the State Emergency Board yesterday inspected the 492-acre Wilsonville site for the state's new \$14,000,000 mental hospital and discussed its possibilities with Architect Glenn Stanton of Portland. Board members, who appeared favorably impressed with the site, were scheduled to meet later today to act on purchase of the site for \$243,886. It has already been approved by the State Board of Control.

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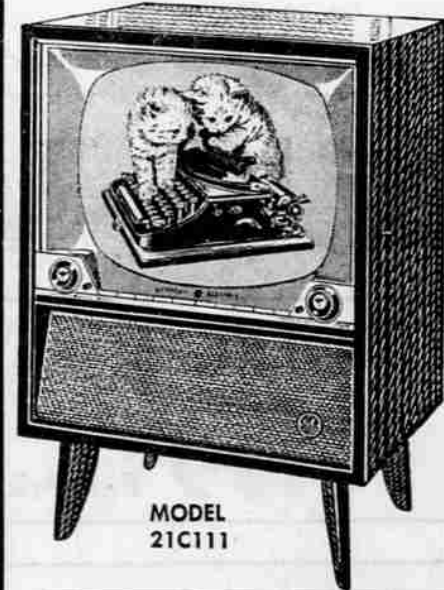
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