**Silent Night's Origin**

**Austria, of course, gave us that carol of carols, “Silent Night,” which owes its birth to an emergency. Just before Christmas, 1818, so the story goes, mice had eaten the organ bellows in the village church of Oberndorf, and a Christmas without music seemed inevitable. Undaunted, parish priest Joseph Mohr improvised the plain-spoken lyrics and asked his organist, Franz Gruber, to think up a simple tune for them which could be played on a guitar. *(Ernest O. Hauser, in Reader’s Digest)***

**On December 25, 1818, “Silent Night” was performed for the first time at the Church of St. Nikolaus in Oberndorff, Austria. In A.D. 336, the first recorded celebration of Christmas on December 25th took place in Rome. In 1223, St. Francis of Assisi assembled one of the first Nativity scenes in Greccio, Italy. *(Associated Press)***

**“Silent Night” was written as a last-minute replacement hymn in 1818. The organ at St. Nicholas’ Church at Oberndorf, Austria, was broken and wouldn’t be fixed in time for the Christmas service. Assistant priest, Joseph Mohr dug up an old poem he’d written and asked a friend of his, music teacher Franz Gruber, to write some music to accompany it that could be played on the guitar. On December 24, Gruber put the finishing touches on the song he’d entitled ‘Stille Nacht, Heilege Nacht (Silent Night, Holy Night).” *(Tidbits of Loveland)***

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