

Most of the information in the following sketch was collected by Myrtle O. (Brandenburg) Meadows, of St. Petersburg, Florida.

**THE BRANDENBURG FAMILY AND ITS ORIGINS,
ALONG WITH PERSONS, PLACES AND THINGS BEARING
THE BRANDENBURG NAME**

Approximately 916 A. D., a Slavonic tribe, called the Wends, settled in the area of present-day Prussia between the Elbe and Havel Rivers, which later became the kingdom of Brandenburg. They cleared the forests and swamps and built a village of crude houses and called their settlement "Brannabor." Another tribe, the Haveili, settled in the area around the Havel River. The Wends and Haveili were semi-barbarian tribes, and inhabited the region long before the Christian era.

Soon trouble brewed. During the winter of 928-929, Henry I "the Fowler," waged war against the Haveili and Wends. His troops crossed the frozen marshes surrounding the Elbe and Havel Rivers; they captured Brannabor and the surrounding territory because of the distress of the inhabitants due to fighting, bitter cold and hunger. By defeating the Haveili and Wends, Henry the Fowler converted Brannabor into a berg [fort] after the fashion of fortified places that he had established elsewhere. Hence the settlement became known as "Brannaberg," which eventually evolved into "Brandenberg."

It was not until 1125, that Brandenburg became a real part of what was in the 1800s to become the nation of Germany. Even then, they took little part in the history of Germany until 1134, when Albrecht (the Bear) became Margrave of Brandenburg. Albrecht was bequeathed the Mark [kingdom] by the Wendish Chief who died childless. The prosperity of the duchy under Albrecht was so pronounced, that it excited the envy of the leaders of the surrounding Marks (or Marches). Albrecht was both aggressive and progressive. He built towns and fortified them, and built up and equipped a strong and efficient army. He introduced educational reforms.

The population of Brandenburg became a fusion of Germanic and Slavonic tribes, due to the wide movement of people from other areas into the land between the Elbe and Havel Rivers. The German tribes moved in seeking free land. By the beginning of the 12th century, people in other Germanic states had become aware of the worth of the Brandenburg area and were eager to occupy it. However, life in Brandenburg was crude as compared to the more cultured societies of nearby kingdoms that had been settled longer. When Albrecht died, the duchy was passed on to his two sons, Otto and Bernard.

By 1240, Berlin had begun to take the place of the town of Brandenburg as the political and cultural center of the kingdom. Berlin was ruled by the Hohenzollen family, who were much stronger and had more wealth. Between 1323 and 1411, the Margrave of Brandenburg was ruled by the Princes of the Houses of Fittelsbach and Luxembourg. In 1336, a Margrave of Brandenburg was appointed as one of the seven electors to the German throne. Between 1356 and 1417, the duchy of Brandenburg drifted into and out of anarchy and declined in wealth and power.

Origins - 2

The Brandenburgs, the ruling family, were among the first to embrace Protestantism. On April 18, 1417, Sigismund, the peace-loving Margrave of Brandenburg, in order to pay for thirty years of war with the Archbishop of Magdeburg, sold the duchy and all the court positions for 400,000 golden guilders to Frederick VI (Hohenzollern). After that, Berlin became the capital and seat of government. It also became a city of imperial splendor under Frederick VI.

The House of Brandenburg did not make any further mark in German history until about the year 1700, when a noble by the name of Solomon Brandenburg began to acquire large territories and power. Amongst those territories, was the island in the Havel River on which was located a castle, an academy of learning and a cathedral. This is the property that we have heard so much about over the years. Apparently, Solomon did something to deeply offend Frederick the Great, the Margrave of Prussia. As a result of this offense, he and his family were banished from the country and all his lands and other possessions were confiscated. As far as we can ascertain, he took his family to reside in Paris [sic], although German emigrants were not popular in France at the time. Solomon was too old to immigrate further. However, three [sic] of his sons, in order to escape further prosecution, emigrated to America.

Note: The above story is very interesting, but does not stand up under documented proof. In the 18th century, when the Brandenburgs emigrated to America, Germany was not a nation, but a lot of small kingdoms, each ruled by its own ruler. Therefore, anyone banished from one kingdom had only to move to one ruled by another ruler. They did not have to move to France, where those who professed the Protestant religion were prosecuted. In France, the language was not German (there is proof that the Brandenburgs spoke German). Moreover, the Brandenburgs, whose ships' records remain, did not leave from Havre-la-Grace, as those leaving France traditionally did; they left from Rotterdam, where most German immigrants took ship for America.

Furthermore, Barbara (Brandenburg) Franks' obituary in 1839 (still extant) said she was born in Germany. John Anthony (Johann Anton) Brandenburg's hometown in Germany was found in Niederhatter in the parish of Altstadt in the Rheinland-Pfalz (The Palatinate). His father's name was Gerhard Brandenburger. In the next parish was Winkelbach, the hometown of William Henry (Wilhelm Heinrich) Brandenburg Senior (German records).

As for the supposed three sons whose ships' records were found as landing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Jacob Brandenburg who landed in Philadelphia in 1776, was not the Jacob Brandenburg who lived in New Market District, Frederick County, Maryland. The Jacob in New Market was the son of Alexander Henry Brandenburg; was born in America; and married Elizabeth Rine. Nor was he the father of the Anthony Brandenburg who died in Warren County, Ohio. That Anthony was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1762 (his pension record).

According to most genealogists, there were more than three sons of Solomon, the supposed Prince of Prussia. (In one branch, tradition says there were seven sons of Solomon, and in another branch that there were five.) From where different branches moved within the United States, there was a connection among the families of Alexander Henry, William Henry Senior, Mathias, Christopher, and Jacob (or Samuel) who married Susannah Schuster. The latter was the father of the Anthony who died in Warren County, Ohio. Although what relationship there was, has not yet been determined. John Martin Brandenburg emigrated to South Carolina. However, it appears from interaction between his descendants and the those of the other branches, that he may have been a member of the same German family.

BRANDENBURG COAT-OF-ARMS

According to Siebmarher's Heraldic Register, there is recorded a description of the Brandenburg Coat-of-Arms. The shield contains the picture of an armed eagle whose wings are marked with a clover leaf and a sickle. In 1507, Maximillian I granted the dignity of the Lord of the Privy Seal to the Brandenburgs. As a sign of this newly-acquired dignity, added to the Coat-of-Arms was a breast shield on the eagle, on which was engraved a scepter. Later the shield was more often found crowned.

The office of Chamberlain to the King of Prussia was held by the Brandenburgs. (See also the drawing of the Brandenburg Coat-of-Arms.)

HOUSE OF BRANDENBURG: die Herren von [the men of]

They were of the nobility of the Eifel, and stemmed from Gottfried, the youngest son of the Count of Vianden. From this noble family's history were two lines, the older died out with Gebbard in 1500, and the younger with the Vicount von Elclay at the end of the 18th century. In 1411, Frederick von Brandenburg inherited the Trier, when he married the heir, a daughter of Dietrich von Clerve. He inherited at the same time the Lord High Stewardship of Clervaux. Johann von Brandenburg, who lived until the end of the 1400s, was Lord of Meisenburg. The seal of this older Count von Brandenburg stands perpetual in a little triangle red shield, this in a red field. Upon the helm within the bifal horns stands two outstretched eagle claws.

FREDERICK III

Frederick III has often been criticized for having paid such a high price for the title of King. For in a tormented time, which saw unprecedented changes of destiny, he was said to have placed his military forces too readily at the disposal of Viennese politics, thereby tying his own hands. There is, however, probably no doubt that the favorable attitude of the Imperial Court could not have been obtained more cheaply. It clarified the situation to note that Prince Eugene of Savoy saw the advantages of the agreement of November 16th to be in favor of the Brandenburgs, and was supposed to have said that the ministers who advised the Emperor to recognize the Prussian King should be hung.

During December, 1700, the Elector traveled with his family and a large following to Konigsberg. For here, in the Prussian capital, the coronation was to take place and the new kingdom was to be founded in the sovereign duchy. On January 15, a herald proclaimed, amid the ringing of bells and the thunder of cannons in Konigsberg's streets, that Providence had been disposed to make the most serene and all-powerful Prince Frederick, King of Prussia. On the 17 January, there followed the first acceptance of knights into the order of the Black Eagle, which was established especially for the coronation, which from then on remained the most elegant order of the Prussian kings.

On January 18, clothed in glorious robes and surrounded by the noble gathering in the audience hall of Konigsberg Castle, Frederick placed the crown on his own head. Nobody gave him the throne. Neither worldly nor religious ruler gave him permission for his undertaking. Even the Imperial Court had only recognized in amicable fashion what Frederick now did according to his own good pleasure. After the coronation, the royal couple went to the castle church to thank God for the blessings received and to receive anointing. A celebration that lasted a long time, formed the conclusion of the remarkable act. A roasted ox and two fountains, one of red and another of white wine, were given to the population of the coronation city. Silver coronation coins were strewn in the streets, and more weighty acts of grace were also performed. The king finally left Konigsberg in March. The body of the citizenry accompanied him triumphantly beyond the gates. In May, he made a grand entry into Berlin, which, thanks to the extravagant preparations which the officials of the palace made for it, did not lag in glamour behind the celebration in the Prussian capitol.

Thus it was completed. That which Frederick had longed for, Danckelmann had advised against, and Warterbery had vigorously pursued, was now achieved. The Brandenburg state, as the kingdom of Prussia, now assumed not only in terms of military strength, but also in terms of title, an independent position among the powers of Europe.

HOUSE OF HOHENZOLLERN

A royal family of Germany, originating as a family of counts in Swabia in the 11th or 12th century and named for their ancestral castle, Zollern (later Hohenzollern) , located near Hechingen, Swabia. The first to bear the name was probably Wezel of Zolorin, or Zollern. In 1227, one of the Hohenzollern counts, Conrad III, was awarded the burgraviate of Nuremberg by the Holy Roman Emperor, and thus two branches of the family, the Swabian and the Franconian, were established, the Swabian being the elder branch. Through marriages and purchase of lands, Conrad's domains were augmented by his Franconian heirs, who supported the Hohenstauien and Hapsburg rulers of the Empire between the 12th and 15th centuries. One of the Franconian Hohenzollerns, Burgrave Frederick VI of Nuremberg, became elector and margrave of Brandenburg as Frederick I in 1417. He was succeeded by eleven electors, the last, Frederick III, securing the kingship in Prussia as Frederick I in 1701.

They ruled over Brandenburg from the 14th century onward, and furnished Kriegs of Prussia (German Emperors) between 1871 and 1918. After Frederick's death in 1713, Frederick William I, Frederick II (the Great), Frederick William II, III, and IV, and

William I held the Prussian throne. William I became ruler of the German empire in 1871, and his successors were Frederick III and William II. (Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1859-1941). Kaiser Wilhelm fled to Holland at the termination of World War I, where he died.

The Swabian branch of the Hohenzollerns, which ruled the petty principalities of Hohenzollern-Hechingen and Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, was relatively unimportant in German history. In 1849, Charles Anthony, Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen of the Swabian branch, ceded his principality to the Prussian king. His son, Leopold, was considered as candidate for the Spanish throne in 1870. His second son, Charles, became Carol I, King of Romania, in 1866. Charles' [Carol I] descendants retained the throne until the abdication of King Michael in 1947. The Hohenzollern-Hechingen line of the Swabian branch became extinct in 1869.

PROVINCE OF BRANDENBURG

The Brandenburg region is a historic state in the united Federal Republic of Germany. The region constituted the nucleus of the Kingdom of Prussia (1701-1871) and of the German Empire (1871-1918), with Berlin as the capital. The city of Potsdam is the capital of the state of Brandenburg.

The earliest known inhabitants of Brandenburg were the Suevi, a Germanic people. During the early Middle Ages a number of Slavic tribes occupied the region. In the 10th century they were conquered and Christianized by the German king Henry I (the Fowler). Henry's son, Emperor Otto I, divided the territory into two margravates, or counties, which were later united as the margravate of Brandenburg. In the centuries that followed, German settlers colonized the area, and the size and influence of the margravate increased, mostly at the expense of Poland and Bohemia. From 1323 to 1411, Brandenburg was ruled by princes of the houses of Wittelsbach and Luxembourg. In 1356 Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV recognized it as one of the seven imperial electorates. In 1415 Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund placed the electorate under the rule of Frederick, burgrave of Numbert (1371-1440). Frederick, a prince of the house of Hohenzollern, and his successors quelled the turbulent nobility, established a centralized government, and greatly extended the boundaries of the electorate.

The Reformation was introduced about 1540, and the electors of Brandenburg subsequently became leading champions of the Protestant cause. In 1614 Elector John Sigismund ordered preparation of the Confession of Brandenburg, a declaration of faith, to reconcile the tenets of Lutheranism and Calvinism and to terminate disputes provoked by the Augsburg Confession. In 1618 John Sigismund gained, through marriage, the duchy of Prussia (the southern parts of the former fief of the Teutonic Order of Knights).

Although large sections of the region were devastated during the first two decades of the Thirty Years' War, Brandenburg-Prussia emerged as one of the strongest states in Germany, under the rule of Frederick William, known as the Great Elector. In 1701 Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I established Brandenburg-Prussia as the kingdom of Prussia under Frederick William's son, Frederick III, who then became Frederick I of Prussia.

Thereafter, the history of Brandenburg until the defeat of Germany in World War II, is inseparable from Prussian history. At the Berlin Conference in 1945, part of Brandenburg was given to Poland. The rest was placed in the Soviet Zone of Occupation, and from 1947, when Prussia was dissolved as a political entity, until 1952, it retained the name of Brandenburg as a state in East Germany. In 1990 East and West Germany united and became the Federal Republic of Germany.

The region is flat with marshes and sandy plains; slightly elevated, and well-forested; chief rivers: Elbe and Oder; products: rye, barley, hemp, flax, potatoes, tobacco and wool; manufacturing: some machinery, textiles, beet sugar; some mining, liquors, and miscellaneous manufacturing.

CITY OF BRANDENBURG

Administrative district of Brandenburg province, Germany, on the Havel River, 37 miles west-southwest of Berlin. It is a manufacturing and trading center, with shipyards and textile, tin plate, bicycle, paper, hosiery and beer manufacturing. Brandenburg is made up of three sections - Old Town, New Town and Cathedral Town. Cathedral Town, on an island in the Havel River, is the site of the cathedral and its academy of learning, which was built in 1170, and a medieval castle. In Old Town, on the right bank of the river, opposite New Town, is the town hall, a structure completed in the 14th century.

Brandenburg is also noted for its encircling walls and the Kathainenkirche, a Gothic edifice built between the 14th and 16th centuries. Brandenburg was taken from the Slavs by Henry I, called Henry the Fowler, in 927 and 928. In 948, it became the seat of a bishopric. Population in 1992 was estimated to be 88,200.

ARCHBISHOP ALBERT OF BRANDENBURG

Albert of Brandenburg (1490-1545), archbishop of Magdeburg and archbishop and elector of Mainz, was the first German ruler to receive Jusuits in his dominions. He was the younger son of John Cicero, the elector of Brandenburg. In 1513 he became archbishop of Magdeburg. The following year he became archbishop and elector of Mainz, and in 1518 he was named a cardinal. In order to pay the expenses involved in obtaining high office, he was granted permission by the pope to sell indulgences. Among his agents in this enterprise was the German monk Johann Tetzel, against whom the 95 theses of Martin Luther were directed. In the ensuing struggle between Catholics and Protestants, Albert adhered to the Catholic church, but acted as peacemaker between the two factions at the Imperial Diet at Augsburg in 1530. Despite his loyalty to the Catholic church, he granted religious liberty to his subjects, many of whom were Protestants, on condition that they pay his debts of about half a million florins.

“Opinion-Interpretive,” *St. Petersburg Times*, St. Petersburg, Florida, Tuesday, 15 August, 1961.

THE BRANDENBURG GATE IN BERLIN

The Brandenburg Gate, chief landmark on the border between East and West Berlin, has been a centerpiece of German history in times of triumph and defeat. Since World War II, it stood as a symbol of reunification for all Germans.

Yesterday, the Communists blocked four of the five passages through the gate standing at the end of Unter den Linden, the fashionable avenue of Germany’s Imperial days. And the fifth [gate] was left open only to Western traffic entering and leaving the Communist part of the divided city.

Prussian King, Friedrich Wilhelm II, ordered the building of the six-pillared, Greek-style gate in 1791, at one end of the city’s main thoroughfares, the Unter den Linden. It was topped by the quadriga, the Goddess Victoria in a chariot, drawn by four horses. Napoleon removed the quadriga and took it to Paris as a document of his victory over the Prussians. After Napoleon’s defeat, the statuary group was restored. German troops, returning triumphantly from their 1870-1871 war against France, marched through the Brandenburg Gate.

At the end of World War I, the Communists, trying to seize power in Berlin, hoisted the Red flag atop the gate for the first time. Nazi storm troopers marched through the gate on January 31, 1933, in a giant torchlight parade after Hitler took over the reins of government in Germany.

Only scratched in World War II air raids, the famed gate was riddled by bullets during the Soviet army’s battle for Berlin. The quadriga was almost completely destroyed. The Russians removed its remains and again raised the Red flag on the East German side of the gate, a symbol of the Communist hold on the eastern half of the city. On June 17, 1953, East Germans rose against their Communist rulers and youths tore down the Red flag. The uprising was suppressed and the flag went back up. A replica of the quadriga was set up atop the monument again, and the East Germans even renovated the gate.

Note: After the reunification of Germany, the Brandenburg Gates were once again open.

THE BRANDENBURG CONCERTOS

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) wrote the Brandenburg Concertos. The lovely, melodious concertos were named in honor of Bach’s patron at the time, who was the elector of Brandenburg.

BRANDENBURG CASTLE RUINS, GERMANY

The ruin of the Brandenburg double-castle near Lauchroden, is located on the right side of the Werra River. It is close to the railway station at Herleshausen. The superstructure of the “western castle” and “eastern castle” were due to a direct aftermath of war. (See print of the ruined double-castle made in 1907.)

BRANDENBURG CASTLE RUINS, LUXEMBOURG

I recently visited the ruins of the Brandenburg Castle in Brandenburg, Luxembourg. At the foot of the ruins, in the village of Brandenburg, stands a small church, wherein, I discovered the following data:

Nicholas v Brandenburg, --- - 1350
Friedrich v Brandenburg, 1367-1379
Hermann v Brandenburg, 1379 - ---
Johann v Brandenburg, 1463-1479

I assume the “v” stands for “von.” According to the 1958 issue of *Baedeker's Autoguide - Benslus*, this castle was destroyed by the French in 1668. Please pass this information on to anyone you know who might be interested.

Andrew L. Brandenburg
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PLACES IN THE UNITED STATES NAMED AFTER MEMBERS OF THE BRANDENBURG FAMILY

Several places in the United States were named in honor of members of the Brandenburg family. There are at least three Brandenburg Cemeteries, many early Brandenburg Schools and the Brandenburg Church in Carroll County, Maryland. It seemed appropriate in a history of the Brandenburgs to include those places.

Brandenburg, Kentucky and Brandenburg Mountain in Arizona were named after descendants of Mathias and Hester (Wolgamot) Brandenburg. It is unknown who Brandenburg, Montana was named after. All of the following information was sent to me by others researching the Brandenburg family.

BRANDENBURG, KENTUCKY

Brandenburg, Kentucky was named in honor of Solomon O. Brandenburg, a son of Mathias. Solomon bought land and built a landing dock by the Ohio River in what is now Meade County, west of Louisville. The place was originally called “Brandenburg's Landing,” but after Solomon donated land to the city, the town was named after him.

When I visited Brandenburg in the 1990s, the original town was little more than a site in a ravine next to the river, the remains of the courthouse on the hill to the east (where originally Solomon's Old Walnut Tavern stood), two historic plaques telling of the town's history, a motel, a restaurant, and a few business buildings and houses. Brandenburg descendants that lived there, told me a tornado hit the town a few years before, and wiped out most of the historic part by the river. Brandenburg is now a curious town, because the courthouse, library and businesses are spread all over the place - but back in the hills, away from the river.

BRANDENBURG, MONTANA

Letters to Dr. W. J. Moore from Suzanne Baines, Morro, California (see #599):

19 June 1967

Dear Mr. Moore:

...I have written to a woman in Rosebud, Montana, asking for help in writing to "Brandenburg," Montana, because I had my letter returned, as there was no such post office. Yet I have a current map and it is on it.

Suzanne Baines

45 Fresno Ave., Morro Bay, CA 93442

Dear Mr. Moore:

23 June 1967

...I have been doing some research in Montana, and am getting closer to the town of "Brandenburg." Apparently they no longer have a post office. I have received the name of a woman who was raised there, and whose people still live there.

Sue (Brandenburg) Baines

BRANDENBURG MOUNTAIN, ARIZONA

Arizona Names, X Marks the Place (see #646), p. 90:

Pinal County, Arizona; Brandenburg Mountain; elevation 4367 feet; named in honor of James William Brandenburg. In the early 1880's, James William Brandenburg established a farm on Aravaipa Creek, where he farmed and raised fruit until 1912 [when he died]. He hauled and peddled his produce on the streets of Mammoth, Oracle, Florence and Tucson.

Reference: Mrs. Annie E. Forbach, Letter of 30 November 1973. [Annie was the daughter of James William Brandenburg.]

Letter to Myrtle O. Meadows from M. L. Browning: dated April 27, 1966:

Dear Mrs. Meadows,

I am sorry not to have answered your very nice note before this, but as usual, I seem to have more work than I can do. How much would the research cost? Perhaps we can get up a family fund to pay for it. It might take time, but would be better than never getting the information. And it would be cheaper than going to Europe and doing the research ourselves.

As you know, the Hohenzollern family was one of the greatest royal families in all of Europe. At one time the Emperor of Austria, Emperor of Germany, and King of England was close cousins. If I remember correctly (it has been a long time and the material is no longer available to me), Prince Bismarck's mother was a Brandenburg. His sister's two daughters are the connection. I think one married William I of Prussia, the mother of William II. The other girl married Alexander III Romanov, Czar of Russia; their son would become Nicholas II, Czar of Russia in 1886, upon the death of his father. Also, there are numerous connections in the past, these are the most recent.

In the past there was a great deal of in-breeding in the upper nobility. Germany has only been a country in the modern sense for little more than one hundred years. Before that, she was a conglomerate of small states. In order to seal treaties of allegiance, marriages [were made] between small kingdoms' royalty. Thus, it is safe to say that the blood of the Brandenburg family flows in the veins of most of the royal blood lines of central and western Europe, due to the very fact of royal marriages to seal treaties. Maria Antoinette was married to Louis Capet (later Louis XVI) as part of such an arrangement. The marriage of William of Orange to Mary Stuart was another example. Thus it goes.

As to the Brandenburg attorneys, they are cousins and I will try to look up the connection. I think I know, but I would like to be sure first. Also, I shall look up Admiral Streun. I should like to get acquainted with more people at A. W. Give some thought to a combined fund for that research. I know I will be happy to contribute. Trusting that you are both well.

I remain, respectfully yours, M. L. Browning