



A Window In Time: A Family History for the Engle, Hought, Falkenberg, Griep, Christen, and related families

*Falkenberg, Griep, Christen, Dahms, Vick, Lübbe, Lindemann,
Martens, Haack Family History Section*

Hannelore Falkenberg nee Griep and Karl-Heinz Falkenberg

Section 4 - Family History for Falkenberg, Griep, Christen, Dahms, Vick, Lübbe, Lindemann, Martens, Haack

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To My Children and Grandchildren



Glimpses into the past

By Hannelore Falkenberg

When my mother, who was born January 1, 1897, was very young, her grandmother walked with her from her house in Hamburg, Himmerdeich, to where she lived with her oldest daughter, Emma Wichelmann, in Hamburg Barmbeck, Alter Teichweg. It must have been a walking distance of about one hour and it was a cold winter evening. My mother told me that when her hands were so cold her grandmother Grabbed first one hand, then the other and put them into her coat pocket.

(Picture above is of Hannelore Falkenberg (Griep) in 1982 at Ulrica's wedding with Oma Saussen)

My recollection of my great-grandmother is that she was very old and wrinkled, sitting in a big wooden chair in her room. We had visited for someone's birthday once when my sister and I were very young. In the evening after supper we were led into great-grandmother's room to say "good bye" to her. I have her my hand very shyly and with great restraint, because she looked to me with her wrinkled face like an old witch. My sister, being one and a half years younger, started

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to cry and absolutely refused to give her her hand. After that we never saw her again, and I believe she must have died soon after our visit.

My mother's mother was Line Haack, nee Meyer, and she grew up in the suburb of Hamburg in Ochsenwerder, which was near the river Elbe. The farmers there grew vegetables and flowers for the city, and brought their produce by barge to the market in the city near where today is the main railroad station. Today that market place is very large and modernized.

My grandmother had older sisters: Emma and Anne, she herself was a twin to Ferdinand, and the youngest was Willi. As was the fashion at that time for young women, who did not come from rich families, Emma went into household service. She became pregnant either by a son of that family or perhaps by the man of the house. Since they did not want a poor girl like that in their family they married her off to a gardener/florist. Apparently for this they gave him land near the railroad in the city and a small house with a garden. They added a little glass house to the house, which became their flower shop. Across the street on the bigger piece of land they raised flowers and trees to sell. Emma's first baby was a girl they named Kaethe. I never met her, but my mother said that she was always a bit "nose-up" to them. When grown up, she married a man named Blender, who worked for the justice system as a higher-up clerk. After Kaethe, Tante Emma had another girl Grethe, then a son Friedrich, and the youngest daughter Hertha. They all got married: Grethe to a man who was station master at the railroad, Friedrich had a family and was also a Landscape gardener. He died of TB. Hertha married an organist and had one son. I remember the last name was Grimme. He taught music and Inge Oeler, a girl in my class, took piano lessons from that organist. As far as I know Grethe also had only one son, who became like his father, a stationmaster at the railroad; he got married to a girl who cared for feet, like a foot doctor here, but not doing operations.

We did not stay in close contact with all my grandmothers' or other family relations. therefore I do not know what happened to most of them. By this time they are most probably all dead. The grave for the Wichelmann family is in Ohlsdorf next to my grandparents family plot, just a row before. It got a new stone and had only the name "Grimme" on it.

GRANDMOTHER'S OTHER SISTERS

After Emma, my grandmother's next oldest sister was Anne. She married the owner of a "Gastwirtschaft", something a bit better than a pub. It was located at the end of the streetcar line in the suburbs, where there were still fields and some woods. In the garden, hedges were planted & chairs separate "booths", where in the summer time tables & chairs were placed for the guests. In chilly weather the guests could sit in a glass enclosed veranda. I remember once when we visited there, Tante Anne's daughter Elfriede was allowed to give my sister and myself an ice on a stick (langnese ice). In my mother's photo pictures I saw one with Tante Anne in the uniform as a streetcar conductor. My mother said her husband was drafted into the army and she had to provide for her two children, Elfriede and Walter, and since all men had gone, they needed women to take over for the men. NOTE: After World War II, Frieda had a small wooden bungalow which she built in the garden where she had an ice cream saloon. Frieda and Walter divided an inheritance and Walter purchased the property and tore down the wooden building and the bungalow. They built a new building, downstairs there were shops, and upstairs apartments. Their last name was Matthias. Elfriede got married, had probably children, but I do not know her married name. Walter got married to Elly. They have two boys, who became engineer and/or architect. Walter was a smart business man. When his mother died (his father having died way before her), he had the Gastwirtschaft removed and built a large house with single businesses downstairs and apartments upstairs. Dad and I would have liked to get an apartment from him, but they were so expensive and we had no money. Walter then had a dry cleaning business at the other side of town, in Gross Flottbek. They lived there also in their own row-house, very modern of course. It is a preferred location.

The twin-brother of my grandmother was Ferdinand. He was also a landscape gardener, who worked at one time near Schleswig, in Kropp at the institute for mentally sick people. There he got to know and married a nurse/caretaker. She was from Denmark and through out her life never learned to speak German. Onkel Ferdinand also got to know a man who was a Baptist and persuaded Onkel Ferdinand to become one as well. In later life he became a baptist preacher, and as I got to know him, he was the nicest person. By that time he already had lost one leg due to poor blood circulation probably., and got around in a self-driven-by-hand chair. His children were Heinrich, also a landscape gardener in Lurup at the large cemetery, who himself had two girls Elsbeth and ?? Heinrich had two sisters: Lydia and Elsa. Tante Lydia was a staff nurse in the hospital near the harbor. The "Hafenkrankenhaus", a very nice lady. She never married and died of cancer about 1947. Her sister Elsa was for a long time housekeeper for a family. Then late in life got married to a

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farmer from north of Eckernförde. That country is the "Geest" with sandy soil and the farmers there are not rich. Only Onkel Heini had children: Elsbeth never married and was a secretary. I forgot her sister's name, but she got married.

My grandmother herself was a cook when she was young. Got married to Wilhelm Christian Haack, and had two daughters, my mother Gertrud and her younger sister Bertha. Another pair of boy-twins died at birth. (Home - birth, no special equipment to keep tiny babies alive). My grandfather brought into this marriage a daughter, who was my Tante Martha.

As was the custom, when boys had gone through their apprenticeship, they were supposed to go walking away and try to get work in other districts. Somewhere I read that they had to go at least 50 kilometers away, to get experience.

One place my grandfather told me about was a shoemaker who took him and had him sleep in a kind of cupboard bed. Soon my grandfather noticed that it was full of fleas and he left. He came to Lütjenburg at the Baltic Sea, where he found his first wife. She was still owned by a large rancher (Gutsbesitzer), and Opa said he had to ask permission to marry her. How long he stayed there, where he worked and what his wife's name was, nobody knows. It is only known in the family that he came to Hamburg with his three year old daughter Martha. He rented a room in Hamburg and his landlady took care of Martha until he married my Grandmother, Line Meyer. From my mother I got two pieces of very old gold finger ring with a black pearl. She told me it was from Opa's first wife. This ring was worn thin from lots of work. I never had it repaired. It would belong to Tante Martha's boys, Karl-Heinz and Hans-Uwe. Both were killed in the second world war and her family died out.

Bertha was my mother's younger sister. She was tall and blond, whereas my mother was darker and very small. When my mother was born nobody believed that she would survive, and she had an emergency christening. Of her two sisters, she lived the longest, until she was 82 years old. She was very fond of her sister Bertha, because Bertha was outgoing, could talk freely in public, and had lots of friends. As a young girl she was a member of a walking club. They made tours into the surrounding country, while singing and playing the guitar. In our attic in Billwerder we still had that guitar hanging around, still in good order, until that house burned down in 1949. As my mother told me, she and Bertha always played together and many times used their half-sister Martha's things. Martha always became very upset about it, because she already was in an apprenticeship as an ironing lady, and was gone during the day.

Bertha got married to Franz Wollschlaeger, who was also the life of any party. Mother and father were not quite sure of him. Franz started a business with a partner, Lange, in a plumbing outfit. Mr. Lange did the office work, but Franz had to do the delivering of bathtubs, sinks, etc. In a large handcart called a "Schott'sche Karre". Business was doing fine and Franz liked to live great. He rented a nice apartment and furnished it with good furniture. When Tante Bertha was expecting her first child, my cousin Hella, she was shocked to discover that she had gonorrhea and talked to my mother and father. Since penicillin was not on the market at that time, she took many hot "sitzbath". up to a point it might have helped, but when Hella was about 16 or 17 years old, her eyes became bad. The glass-skin over her eyes got scars. A few times she was in the hospital to have it operated on. First it was good, but very soon these "scars" came back, and it never went away. My parents think, that it came from the infection her mother got from her father while she was expecting her. When Hella was little, her father always sent her with her mother into the Goehrde, where he had rented an apartment from relatives - much - removed. Once when they came back from this summer vacation, my Tante Bertha discovered a strangers toothbrush in her bathroom. Of course she told my mother, whereupon both my parents became detectives following Franz W. around. They saw him meeting a housemaid working at Johannsen, a window dressing business located between Steindamm and Grosse Allee near the main railroad station. It was clear to the three, Bertha, Gertrud, and Hans, that Franz had done this before and picked up the venereal disease infecting his wife when she was expecting. This was also the reason why there was less and less money. At that time going bankrupt was a great shame, so Franz told nobody about his failing finances and his falling out with his business partner. When his wife and daughter were in the Goehrde one summer and he visited them, he told them that he had to go back to Hamburg on business. he wanted to be back for the "schuetzenfest", the big yearly country fair. The forest of the Goehrde is large, but well looked after, not a natural wild forest. A forester discovered a day or so after Franz had left, him hanging from a tree branch. What a shock for all concerned!! There was no money left, only debts. My Opa had to sell the handmade bedroom set of Bertha and Franz to cover the minimum of debt. Then Tante Bertha went back to work as a secretary. She was very good at this and always had to travel with her boss to Berlin for business meetings to keep track of things. My cousin Hella in the meantime was looked after by our grandmother. Little by little Bertha had finally paid off the debt, when she got a pimple on the side of her nose and went to a doctor. He just took tweezers and ripped it out. Bertha was very particular in dressing for work, and just put face powder over it. The next thing was that it got infected, she got blood poisoning and died in the Elise-Averdick Hospital in Hamburg, just around the corner from where she then lived with her parents and small daughter. My grandparents were devastated, since she was their loveliest daughter. From Franz W. family they never got any help in coordinating the debt or taking care of Hella. His brothers and sister never offered anything. They were only upset that my Opa had sold the handmade bedroom set to pay part of Franz's debt. My Opa forbade my parents to tell Hella the truth. My Opa then proceeded never to let Hella know that her father had killed

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himself, since it did not go together with his Lutheran upbringing. (Only my mother told me, perhaps hoping to tell Hella. I never did.) Although Bertha was the hero in surviving the venereal disease and paying off all debt by working hard she was never mentioned much afterwards.

Martha in the meantime had married her cousin Wilhelm Haack. (another Wilhelm Haack). he was the son of a brother of my grandfather Wilhelm Haack. They lived in Suederdeich Bei Wesselburen in Dithmarschen, where Onkel Wilhelm as a master builder had a business. As I said before, their two boys were killed in the second world war.

Now we finally come to my grandmother's youngest brother Willi Meyer. When he was small, his mother moved away from Ochsenwerder and her drunken husband and moved in with her oldest daughter Emma Wichelmann. Willi also became a landscape gardener, and apparently through his brother Ferdinand got a job in Kropp. He also got to know a girl Anna, whom he married. She was five years his senior and looked like it. I saw a picture of them when they were young. Onkel Willi looked like a teenager and Tante Anna like his older cousin or sister. They had two girls, Grethe and Anni. When those girls were still very young Onkel Willi got a job with the Lutheran church in Billwerder as a landscape gardener taking care of the cemetery and surroundings. He also was the caretaker of the church and the bookkeeper for the pastor. In back of the pastor's garden and the cemetery Onkel Willi had a large plot of land where he raised flowers for the cemetery. Every Saturday the whole cemetery was raked clean and the graves looked meticulously taken care of. Then the church was dusted and the numbers for the songs and psalms for Sunday put into the holders in front of the church. His daughter Anni was his helper for this, also another unmarried neighbor, Tante Ische or better Luise Schertel. She lived in business as a master furniture maker. He made most of the caskets for the dead people in that community. Every new year at midnight Onkel Willi had to ring in the new year with the church bells in the tower. He did not like us much to help him, but once or twice we got there to ring the bells, then go out onto the balcony, look towards the city and hear all the church bells ringing and a lot of fireworks going up from the people in the streets.

As quiet and quaint this life in Billwerder was to us at that time, it was not so. Hitler had come to power and in 1937 there must have been a campaign to get everybody into the party. Onkel Willi at that time was very much for the party and always collected from house to house for the "Winterhilfswerk". (To help needy people in the winter). For every contribution of a certain amount, one received a kind of pin to wear that winter. When he persuaded my father to join the party and my father refused, he told him that he would then bring him into the "konzentration" camp. Upon that my father contacted the pastor who in return talked to Onkel Willi, either to forget the party or loose his job. After that my Onkel Willi never wanted anything to do with us children. His job situation was too good to loose and he had to take care of his

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family. The remainder of all these pins we found later in his attic. When he came to Tante Anni's birthday we were allowed to play with it and take a few home. My grandmother had died of breast cancer in 1936, when she was only 64 years old. She and Opa with Hella had moved from the city Billwerder next door to Onkel Willi and Tante Anna, so that Hella and my grandmother would get better in Billwerder. She never did.

The cousins in grandmother's family must have been a nice bunch. My mother told me that they always came together once a month in somebody's house to play a card game called "66". It was a harmless entertainment. The men smoked a good cigar (once a month only), and the women sat doing needlepoint or knitting and talking. Then the hostess, who had baked a cake earlier, made coffee around 9 P.M. or so and when my mother came home from work she smelled the coffee and the good cigars and knew they had good company. It was held in turn at my grandparents home, Onkel Willi's home, Wichelmann's home or Tante Dora and Onkel Wilhelm Bahlmann's home. (Tante Dora was Onkel Wilhelm Haack's sister from Dithmarschen). Onkel Wilhelm Bahlmann had his own business as auto upholsterer, and he was a loud and boisterous man, always in a good mood. He had gone to school with Tante Dora and at one time had dipped her braids in front of him into the inkwell on his desk. What a mess that must have been!

Cassandra Engle's Interview with her Oma

CASSANDRA: This is Cassandra Engle for Mr. Wright's 2nd period English class. For my family history project interview I will be interviewing Hannelore Falkenberg, my Oma. She was born Hannelore Griep on October 23, 1927 in Hamburg Germany. She married Karl-Heinz Falkenberg.

CASSANDRA: Okay, the first question is where did you grow up, when you went to school?

OMA: Okay, I grew up in the suburbs of the city of Hamburg in Germany, in the northern part of Germany.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: And I went to school the first four years to elementary school and then I took a test and I entered high school. It was a different system than what you have here.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: Ah, what next.

Hannelore Falkenberg (Griep) during World War II in the mountains.

CASSANDRA: Okay. What types of classes did you take?

OMA: What kind of classes?

CASSANDRA: Yea.

OMA: Oh, we did not have a choice. We had to take them in high school um, German, of course, then, ah, Spanish, and then finally some Latin. And history, and math, and physics,

and chemistry.

CASSANDRA: Did you like your classes?

OMA: Yeah, it was interesting. Oh and we had music too. And art.

CASSANDRA: Did you like those classes too?

OMA: Ah. And we also had to have gym every day.

CASSANDRA: Umm

OMA: And I was very good at that.



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CASSANDRA: (Chuckle) Did you have any after school activities?

OMA: No, because it was war and there was no time, we were sitting in air raid shelters or bunkers in between and we were glad when we could go home or in the morning go to school.

CASSANDRA: So that was during World War II?

OMA: Yes.

CASSANDRA: How old were you when the war started?

OMA: How what?

CASSANDRA: How old were you when the war started?

OMA: Ah, jeepers, twelve, thirteen.

CASSANDRA: What were your responsibilities?

OMA: My responsibility where? At home?

CASSANDRA: Yeah.

OMA: (Chuckle) Oh, I don't know. Um, we in the, since we had a large garden we had to pick berries and help out in the garden because we had to preserve as much as we could and my mother had a lot to do because otherwise we would not have enough to eat.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm, What did you do during the summer?

OMA: In the summer. Well, we went swimming a lot because we lived across the street and a field from the river Bille and there was a nice swimming hole where we always went swimming at least five times during the summer.

CASSANDRA: (Chuckle)

OMA: It was fun.

CASSANDRA: Okay. When you dated or took someone out, what did you do?

OMA: We didn't date any in high school or college, it was war-time.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: So I don't know, I can't tell you that much about dating.

CASSANDRA: Okay.

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OMA: And not only that, I went to an all girls high school and college. There weren't any boys. And during the war all the boys were drafted who were of age.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: So, nothing.

CASSANDRA: So when you were in school, you were a good student?

OMA: Ah, when I did my home work, yes.

CASSANDRA: (Chuckle)

OMA: Many times I didn't, and then it showed in my report card.

CASSANDRA: Yeah.

OMA: Okay.

CASSANDRA: Um, when you were in high school, what did you, um, want to do with your life? Did you think that you knew what kind of job you wanted to do?

OMA: No, no. I had no idea and we didn't have any, no advise either.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: And, so I don't know, I liked to cook at the time. And mainly I guess because, um, we needed something to eat.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: So I went into home economics, ah, college in order to get there and get something to eat. (Chuckle)

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm. So how old were you when you went to college?

OMA: Ah, Gott, 17?

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: I think 17, 18 or 19.

CASSANDRA: Okay. (Chuckle) Do you think you had a healthy life style?

OMA: Oh yeah, I think so. We didn't get much, many hardly any sweets. We had a lot of fruit and berries in the garden, and vegetables.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

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OMA: And I think that kept us healthy and we had only meat on Sundays because the rations were not very much. And the fat was very little, what we got.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: We had a good diet, and health wise I think because we didn't get fat on what we ate. And we had enough to survive and stay healthy.

CASSANDRA: Yeah.

OMA: We didn't have any diseases like people have nowadays.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: Okay what else?

CASSANDRA: Do you think you have a healthy life style now?

OMA: Yes, I think so. Because, ah, we study a lot about ah, living healthy.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: And, uh, we read a lot of Dr. Walker's books and he was a guy who was old ah, he was still tending his garden when he was 116 years old and he died when he was about 120.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: So I think ah, and he studies all the chemistry of the body, how to eat the right selections together and what not to eat together.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: Therefore, yeah, we live quite healthy.

CASSANDRA: That's good. Are you happy with your life?

OMA: Yes. I think it was very interesting. I went half a way, half, yeah, half way around the earth. (Chuckle)

CASSANDRA: (Chuckle)

OMA: From Europe all the way to California.

CASSANDRA: Umm hmm.

OMA: And we lived in Canada and northern New York and we visited a lot of places.

CASSANDRA: Is there anything you would want to change in your life?

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OMA: Ah, as I said before, it would be nice to be, have all the life experience and have everything we have today and be 20 or 30 again.

CASSANDRA: Ah, yeah. (Chuckle)

OMA: (Chuckle)

CASSANDRA: Okay that was the last question.

OMA: I hope...

The Falkenbergs Travel to America

By Jessica Engle

Text to follow



Hamburg, Germany



Nautical flag of Hamburg, Germany above, Map below



Geography

From www2.genealogy.net/gene/reg/HAM/hamburg-e.html

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Hamburg City is north on the banks of river Elbe, that is the bordering river between Saxony in the south and Holstein in the north. The modern "Free and Hanse City Hamburg" = Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg (FHH in short) is one of the Laender of the Federal Republic of Germany from the beginning (Old Laender)

The FHH (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg) was a free city in middle age until the 19th century.. In 1871 it became part of the Reich and 1937 was reorganized into a larger community including the neighbour cities of Altona (in the West), Barmbeck (in the East) and Harburg (South on the opposite bank of river Elbe). Free city means it was directly linked to the German Emperor of the Holy Roman Reich of German Nation till 1806. The modern Hamburg is a so called city state organized in Burroughs = "Bezirke" (see Burroghs). It had a decreasing number of inhabitants of at the end 1.6 million people until the reunification of Germany when it started to grow again.

After reformation in 16th century Hamburg became Lutheran. Outside the walls of Hmburg in Altona as part of the Dukedom of Schleswig - Holstein religious liberty allowed others to live in this region and work in Hamburg. This part was ruled by the Danish Kings as German Dukes of the German Reich. So very early other congregations such as Roman Catholics and Mennonites lived in Altona. Even Jews lived there. The name of the street "Große Freiheit" (Great Freedom) reminds these times. Still today there is a Roman Catholic Church in that street filled otherwise with nightclubs and red light facilities. This not really was a political arrangement but the Lutheran Pastors were very cautious about their "rights". The Council, but, was happy about all this economic activities.

The region "Centre Hamburg" (Bezirk Mitte) is the real "Althamburg" (Old Hamburg) and had until abt. 1806 heavy enforcements. The surrounding villages were not part of the FHH but many were "owned" by the City of Hamburg, Since beginning of the 20th century Hamburg has a University. Part of this is the "Stabi", the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg - Carl von Ossietzky [Hamburg State und University Library] -

City Description

This comes from www.hamburg.de

Hamburg lies about 100 km away from the open sea on the River Elbe. With 1,7 million inhabitants, it is the second largest city in the Federal Republic of Germany. In one respect, however, Hamburg takes first place: it is the greenest city in Germany. 13 % of the city are park and greenland, 23 % protected countryside and 6% nature reserves.

Hamburg owes its economic prosperity to its long tradition as a commercial city and port.

City History

This comes from www.hamburg.de

1200 years and still young: From the "Hammaburg" to a Metropolis

9th century

A fort-like archbishopric mission on the "Hammaburg" site is built. Even after the destruction of the fort by the Vikings in 845 A.D. a settlement of about 200 inhabitants with a small Elba harbour develops.

1188

Count Adolf III of Schauenburg founds the Hamburg Neustadt (new town) on the already dammed Alster next to the archiepiscopal Altstadt (old town). A year later is the official "hour of birth" of the Hamburg harbour as it is already entitled to duty-free status on the passage to the North Sea by rights granted to it by Kaiser Barbarossa.

1321

Hamburg's entry into the Hanseatic League, the most important economic organization of the early and later Middle Ages, unleashes a tremendous trading boom in the harbour city.

c. 1400

Piracy on the Elba and North Sea takes the upper hand so much so that Hamburg employs war ships to protect merchant vessels. Only after several sea battles is it possible to capture Klaus Störtebeker, probably the most famous of German pirates. He is executed in Hamburg. The traditional tale portrays the macabre release of his comrades in compliance with archaic law: already beheaded, Störtebeker makes a final inspection of his crew standing as a guard of honour.

1558

Germany's first stock exchange comes into being in the Hanseatic city. The economic competition between Hamburg and the then still Danish Altona intensifies in the period following. The "Gottroper Vergleich" (Gottrop Settlement) brings contractual reconciliation with Altona only first in 1768.

Up to 1840

seefaring continues to gain importance. Trans-continental trading routes via steamships and sailing ships strengthen Hamburg's position. Measured by loading capacity the Hamburg harbour gains a leading role in the world.

1842

a devastating fire destroys a third of all buildings in Hamburg. Nevertheless the economy grows substantially in the following years, not least thanks to better traffic routes, such as the Elbbrücken (Elba bridges) and train line to Berlin.

1888

Hamburg receives the Freihafen (free harbour) as a concession for the entry of the Free and Hanseatic City into the German Reich. With the building of the Speicherstadt the largest continuous warehouse complex in the world comes into existence.

Since 1911 a tunnel at the St. Pauli-Landungsbrücken connects both sides of the Elba. The construction with lifts for cars is today still in operation and can be counted among the oddest attractions in the city. The population exceeds the million mark for the first time in 1913, the harbour is the third largest in the world and is the most significant trading centre in Europe.

1937

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the "Groß-Hamburg-Gesetz" (Greater Hamburg Law) joins the previously independent cities of Altona, Wandsbek, Harburg, Wihelmsburg and other towns into the current municipal area.

1945

half of all flats and 80 per cent of the harbour are destroyed in air attacks. Streams of refugees and forced emigrants arrive in Hamburg. In 1950 there are 180,781 of them here.

1962

a storm tide takes sleeping Hamburgers by surprise. The catastrophe has serious consequences: 315 lives are lost and 20,000 people are evacuated.

In the 70s and 80s

there is a change in the employment structure: Due to rationalizations in freight traffic and the falling importance of the German shipbuilding industry Hamburg's economy has a new focus. The Hanseatic city is developing into a modern media and services location with an efficient container port. With the addition of the Köhlbrandbrücke (Köhlbrand Bridge) and the new Elbtunnel in 1974 the traffic routes continue to be improved.

1997

As a former city republic and independent Bundesland the city is celebrating its splendid, Renaissance-style Rathaus (city hall). During the 100th anniversary of this building Hamburg is looking back on an independent political and cultural history. Citizens, whose view of themselves is shaped by independence, are proud of their city: Hamburg - the Gateway to the World.

Seehausen, Germany

Witten an der Ruhr

Mecklenburg, Germany

General Information

- **Introduction**

If you look at a map of present-day Germany, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern appears as a state in northeastern Germany, bounded on the north by the Baltic Sea (Ostsee), on the west by Schleswig-Holstein, on the southwest by Lower Saxony, on the south by Brandenburg, and on the east by Poland. The state lies in a fertile plain containing many forests and lakes and is crossed by the Elde, Warnow, and several other rivers. Prior to 1934, Mecklenburg borders were not the same as they are today. Territories which were once the Grand Duchies of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz were united into one State of Mecklenburg in 1934. Then, in 1945, Pomerania, another Prussian province, was split into two sections. The part west of the Oder River was added to Mecklenburg, making what is, today, the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

- **Political Divisions**

Throughout the 1800's, Mecklenburg was divided into the two grand duchies, Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Mecklenburg-Strelitz was further divided into two parts, one on either side of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. The government was a limited monarchy, ruled by grand dukes. Each duchy was a separate state, but both bodies met annually to make common laws and impose common taxes for the whole of Mecklenburg. Both duchies used the same flag and coat of arms.

Mecklenburg-Schwerin consisted of: The Duchy of Schwerin, The Principality of Schwerin, The Wenden District of the Duchy of Güstrow, The Lordship of Wismar (Wismar and the surrounding area were under the rule of Sweden from 1648 to 1803), Rostock District, and The Domain of Scattered Convents.

Mecklenburg-Strelitz consisted of: Stargard District of the Duchy of Güstrow on the eastern side of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and The Principality of Ratzeburg on the western side of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

The Dukes in Mecklenburg-Strelitz in the 1800's were as follows:

1794-1816 Karl II.
1816-1860 Georg Friedrich

The Dukes in Mecklenburg-Schwerin in the 1800's were as follows:

1785-1837 Friedrich Franz I.

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1837-1842 Paul Friedrich

1842-1883 Friedrich Franz II.

The grand dukes of Mecklenburg Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz were deposed in 1918. The Mecklenburg-Strelitz line effectively died out. The current "head" of the Mecklenburg-Schwerin line is Christian Ludwig, Herzog zu Mecklenburg.

The lands of Mecklenburg were divided into Ritterschaft, Domanium, and Landschaft. The properties of the knights belonged to the Ritterschaft. All princely properties belonged to the Domanium. All the cities belonged to the Landschaft except Rostock and Wismar.

These sea ports had their own special category. The status of individual localities relative to these three divisions changed often. The divisions also overlapped each other extensively.

Niekammer's *Guter-Addressbücher* of 1908 shows the following division of lands into districts or counties (Amte) in Mecklenburg, some with overlapping jurisdiction as indicated:

- **D.A. = Domanialamt or Domaenenamt** (District of the Grand Duchy or crownland, the revenue of which goes to the reigning sovereign).
- Boizenburg (also part of the Ritterschaft)
- Bukow (also part of the Ritterschaft)
- Butrow (also a city district)
- Crivitz (also part of the Ritterschaft)
- Dargun (also a city district)
- Doberan (also a city district)
- Domitz (also a city district)
- Gadebusch (also part of the Ritterschaft and a city district)
- Grabow (also part of the Ritterschaft)
- Grevesmuhlen (also part of the Ritterschaft)
- Güstrow (also part of the Ritterschaft and a city district)
- Hagenow (also a city district)
- Lubz (also part of the Ritterschaft)
- Meustadt (also part of the Ritterschaft)
- Ribnitz (also part of the Ritterschaft and a city district)
- **R. A. = Ritterschaft Amte** (Knight district). Ritter means knight, a term of elevated free status, originally claimed for performance of military service to a sovereign; privileged "noble" rank. A "Rittergut" (estate of a knight) was formerly owned only by those of nobility. Later others who did not belong to families of nobility were permitted to acquire "Rittergüter."

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- Gnoien (also a city district)
- Goldberg (also a city district)
- Ivenak (also a city district)
- Mecklenburg (also a city district)
- Neukalen (also a city district)
- Plau (also a city district)
- Sternberg (also a city district)
- **Städte** (city) districts which were not also seats of D.A. or R.A were as follows:
- Malchin
- Parchim
- Ponzlin
- Rostock
- Tessin
- **K.A. - Klosteramt** (Monastery District). A Kloster is a cloister or monastery. Klostergüter were under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church.
- Amt Dobbertin
- Amt Malchow
- Amt Ribnitz
- Kloster zum Heiligen Kreuz
- Another **minor land district was the Rostocker** which included:
- Amt Ribnitz
- Amt Schwaan

Religious Divisions:

Mecklenburg was predominantly Evangelical Lutheran after 1549, with some Jewish families living throughout the duchies. There were a few Catholic areas, with the Catholic church controlling some of the land.

History

Early people began to colonize the Mecklenburg area about ten thousand years ago in the latter part of the Ice Age. The lives of the people in these early times were geared towards hunting and they had a great dependence on animals. Their tools were made from flint, bone and horn. Teutonic peoples inhabited the Mecklenburg area in the first centuries of the Christian era, but early in the 6th century, it was seized by various Slavic tribes. The early name for the Mecklenburg area was Vandalia and later it was called Wendenland. The land was not cultivated during the Slavic times, but was covered everywhere with primeval forest. It was isolated and culturally cut off from the rest of Germany.

The Mecklenburg region was conquered by Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony, in the latter half of the 12th century and the land was first opened up by Henry through a combination of missionary work and colonization. In 1348 it was elevated to a duchy. In 1549 Lutheranism was recognized as the State religion. Then, in 1621, Mecklenburg was split into two duchies: Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg -Güstrow (changed to Mecklenburg-Strelitz in 1701). Mecklenburg-Schwerin was about the size of the state of Connecticut. Mecklenburg-Strelitz was about as large as the state of Rhode Island in the United States, and was divided into two parts, one on either side of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

Between 1733 and 1755 the estate owners of Mecklenburg increased their land holdings. They were backed by the Kaiser of the Holy Roman Empire in this effort. By the Convention of Rostock in 1755 in Mecklenburg Schwerin, all power was placed in the hands of the Duke, nobles, and upper classes. The lower classes had no voice. Land was held under a Feudal system. From 1759 to 1764 all of Mecklenburg was occupied by Prussia. Unlike the surrounding areas, however, Mecklenburg managed to remain autonomous for another century.

In Mecklenburg during the 1700s and 1800s a type of Feudalism existed known as "Inherited Serfdom". The land owners controlled the economy and ruled their estates with absolute authority. The peasants were dependant entirely on the nobles who could even buy and sell them with or without their property. The tax rate on the peasants had to be reviewed every two to three years, and was usually increased at that time. They could not acquire any more land than they already had. Their Landlords produced crops for export from their vast estates by using the labor of these bonded peasants, servants and laborers. The landlords were known as "Landed Junkers". his word comes from "Jung Herr" which means "young noble".

By the 1800's the Landlords had driven away more and more peasants with their highhanded ways. They then incorporated those peasants' plots into their estates, and crop production expanded further. This callous robbery of the peasant properties was known as "peasant seizure". Ten thousand peasants lost their holdings in this way. In Mecklenburg, where the Nobility owned almost all of the land and dwellings, the number of estimated peasant

foreclosures went from 2,490 to nearly 12,000 by 1800 AD. The former peasants who ad land left held only small holdings which ensured little more than a bare livelihood for themselves.

In 1807 Baron von Stein tried to carry through a reform of the Feudal system. He felt the peasants' and laborers' lot had to be improved. He did not want to abolish the large Landholders, but they were to be limited in their political and administrative powers and to improve the state of their workers. At that time, workers worked from sunrise to sunset for a pfennig an hour, a very small amount. he value of goods (potatoes, corn, wood, etc.) was deducted from that and most of their work was paid for by these goods. Women and children performed heavy work. Baron von Stein's reform said that peasants could now change their place of residence without permission, and children were allowed to learn a trade. But the Landlords ought these progressive measures, refused to implement them, and the edict of Baron von Stein was never executed.

From 1806 to 1813 the country suffered great hardship and destruction. This period came to be known to all Mecklenburgers as the "Franzosentid" (period of French occupation). Robbery and pillage became commonplace. Both duchies, Mecklenburg Schwerin and Mecklenburg Strelitz, were forced to join the Confederation of the Rhine under Napoleon's protectorate. Of the more than 2,000 men who were conscripted from Mecklenburg to take part in Napoleon's campaign against Russia, less than one hundred came home again.

After Napoleon's defeat in Russia, the dukes of both Mecklenburgs were among the first to renounce the alliance with France. In the War of German Liberation which followed (1813-1815), Mecklenburg played a significant part in defeating Napoleon and liberating Germany from France. In 1815, the dukes of Mecklenburg were elevated to "Grand Dukes", and Mecklenburg became a Grand Duchy. With the coming of peace, however, there also came a period of economic depression which lasted until the early 1820s.

Legally, serfdom was abolished in Mecklenburg in 1820 and the peasants were freed from their obligations to land owners. But this worsened the conditions for most peasants because the land owners were freed , at the same time, of any obligations under feudal law to provide their tenants with any means of supporting themselves, thus leaving the peasants in even greater poverty. The servant of a noble landowner was not even permitted to marry unless his master gave him permission and a place to live.

Those villagers who were without land became cottagers or gardeners. Eventually they were simply known as day laborers (Tagelohners) and lived in poverty. They were deprived almost entirely of their earnings and thereafter were forced to work for a starvation wage on the Junker estates. They traveled the countryside, moving from estate to estate as the land owner required their labor for plowing, planting or harvesting crops. The life they lived gave no possibility of resistance in an effort to better their condition.

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Many peasants and labourers left Mecklenburg and emigrated to other countries as their conditions became unbearable. In the early 1840s, the liberal bourgeois party began to speak out against the noble landowners and the special privileges granted them. By 1848 there were secret meetings in many Mecklenburg towns of reform societies and a political revolution was a distinct possibility. However the revolution did not have enough support and eventually failed. The workers' situation in Mecklenburg remained bleak until, under the Soviet Military Administration, in October 1945 there was a land reform and the large estates and their landholders disappeared. The government took over their land. The Mecklenburg Duchies joined the German Empire in 1871 and after World War I were declared states of the new German Republic. In 1934 they were united into a single German state of Mecklenburg. After World War II Mecklenburg became part of the Soviet Zone. The state was dissolved in 1952, when East Germany was reorganized into districts. The area remained behind the Iron Curtain and part of East Germany until 1990 when Germany was unified and the state of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania was created.

The dukes of Mecklenburg-Schwerin had their castle (Schloß) and main residence in the city of [Schwerin](#). The seat of government and main home for the dukes of Mecklenburg-Strelitz was in Neustrelitz. Princess [Sophie Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz](#) became Queen Charlotte of England in 1761. Genealogical data concerning the house of Mecklenburg can be found on the [Internet Gotha](#), and some of its members can also be found in the royals databases at [Hull](#) and [PSU](#).

Source: Carol Gohsman Bowen contributed this page, from the German Genealogy web site (www.genealogy.com/gene/reg/ger1871.htm)

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