

FAQ: Brandenburg

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For general information see FAQ.

NB: This faq.brandenburg emphasizes East Brandenburg (Neumark).

CONTENTS:

- Q1: Where is Brandenburg?
- Q2: What was Brandenburg's recent history?
- Q3: What were the administrative areas of Brandenburg?
- Q4: What were the court districts in Brandenburg province before 1900?
- Q5: How do I find locations and maps for Brandenburg before 1945??
- Q6: Are there web sites of interest to Brandenburg researchers?
- Q7: Is there a listserv for Brandenburg family researchers?
- Q8: When were civil registers introduced?
- Q9: What books discuss hints and sources for East German searchers?
- Q10: What about Mennonites in Brandenburg province?
- Q11: What German archives are available for Brandenburg?

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Q1: Where is Brandenburg?

Brandenburg was a Prussian province. Its capital until 1920 was Berlin (pronounce: berr-LEEN), later Potsdam (pronounce: POTS-dum).

Q2: What was Brandenburg's recent history?

The province was created in 1816 of the former Mark Brandenburg and included the Mittelmark, Uckermark, Prignitz, most of Neumark, some areas of Schlesien, Sachsen (Niederlausitz) and of the grand duchy of Posen. Brandenburg East of the Oder and Neisse rivers was cleansed of its ethnic German population and given to Poland in 1945. The Western powers were silent on the ethnic cleansing.

Q3: What were the administrative areas of Brandenburg?

In 1900 the province of Brandenburg had the following districts and Kreise (counties):
* marks total or partial loss to Poland in 1945.

Berlin

Regierungsbezirk (district) of Potsdam with 18 Kreise (counties):
Angermünde, Beeskow-Storkow, Brandenburg-Stadt, Charlottenburg,
Jüterbog-Luckenwalde, Niederbarnim, Oberbarnim, Osthavelland,
Ostprignitz, Potsdam-Stadt, Prenzlau, Ruppín, Spandau-Stadt, Teltow,
Templin, Westhavelland, Westprignitz, Zauch-Belzig.

Regierungsbezirk (district) of Frankfurt an der Oder with 20 Kreise (counties): *Arnswalde, *Frankfurt (Stadt), *Friedeberg, *Guben (Stadt)
*Guben-Land, Kalau, *Königsberg, Kottbus (Stadt), Kottbus-Land,
*Krossen, *Landsberg-Stadt, *Landsberg-Land, Lebus, Lübben, Luckau,
*Oststernberg, *Soldin, *Sorau, Spremberg, *Weststernberg,
*Züllichau-Schwiebus, *Forst-Stadt (1897).

(The Neumark covered the Kreise of Soldin, Königsberg, Landsberg, Friedeberg, Arnswalde, Krossen, Züllichau, Kottbus and in Pommern: Dramburg, Schivelbein)

Each Kreis was headed by the Landrat who presided over the Landratsamt. The Landratsamt records are deposited in Berlin and the Polish archives with published brief inventories. The Landrat was in charge of passport and emigrations matters and reported to the district Regierung who in turn gave data to the provincial Oberpräsidium in Berlin.

Q4: What were the court districts in Brandenburg province before 1900?

The highest provincial court was the Oberlandesgericht in Berlin.

The lower courts (Landgerichte) and lowest courts (Amtsgerichte) were

<http://www.jura.uni-sb.de/laenderberichte/brandb.htm>

Landgericht Berlin with Amtsgericht Berlin I

Landgericht Berlin II with (15) Amtsgerichte:

Alt-Landsberg, Berlin II, Bernau, Charlottenburg, Königs-Wusterhausen, Köpenick, Liebenwalde, Mittenwalde, Nauen, Oranienburg, Rixdorf, Spandau, Straußberg, Trebbin, Zossen.

Landgericht Frankfurt an der Oder with (11) Amtsgerichte:

Beeskow, Wendisch-Buchholz, Drossen, Frankfurt, Fürstenwalde, Müncheberg, Reppen, Seelow, Sonnenburg, Storkow, Zielenzig.

Landgericht Guben with (10) Amtsgerichte:

Forst, Fürstenberg, Guben, Krossen, Pförten, Schwiebus, Sommerfeld, Sorau, Triebel, Züllichau.

Landgericht Kottbus with (12) Amtsgerichte:

Dobrilugk, Finsterwalde, Kalau, Kirchhain, Kottbus, Lieberose, Lübben, Lübbenau, Luckau, Peitz, Senftenberg, Spremberg.,

Landgericht Landsberg an der Warte with (15) Amtsgerichte:

Arnswalde, Bärwalde, Berlinchen, Driesen, Friedeberg, Königsberg, Küstrin, Landsberg, Lippehne, Neudamm, Neuwedell, Reetz, Soldin, Woldenburg, Zehden

Landgericht Neuruppin with (15) Amtsgerichte:

Fehrbellin, Gransee, Havelberg, Kremmen, Kyritz, Lenzen, Lindow, Meyenburg, Neuruppin, Perleberg, Pritzwalk, Rheinsberg, Wittenberge, Wittstock, Wusterhausen.

Landgericht Potsdam with (11) Amtsgerichte:

Baruth, Beelitz, Belzig, Brandenburg, Dahme, Jüterbog, Luckenwalde, Potsdam, Rathenow, Treuenbrietzen, Werder.

Landgericht Prenzlau with (12) Amtsgerichte:

Angermünde, Brüssow, Eberswalde, Freienwalde, Lychen, Oderberg, Prenzlau, Schwedt, Strasburg in der Uckermark, Templin, Wriezen, Zehdenick.

The whereabouts in Poland of the records for the Landgerichte and Amtsgerichte is unknown. Some are deposited in the archives AP Gorzow Wielkopolski (Landsberg). Any land holding usually means that there were and often still are today deed and mortgage records (Grund- und Hypotheken-Acten) which were administered by the Amtsgericht. They usually start with a land title history (=tituli possessionis) going back 50 or more years from the beginning of the first deed book. Legal basis for these land records is the Prussian Hypotheken-Ordnung of 1783 which initially applied to crownlands only. The court at that time was called Domainen-Justiz-Amt (until 1806), Land- or Stadt-Gericht (1806-1849), Kreisgericht (1849-1879), Amtsgericht (after 1879).

Additional records are Erbrezesse, Erbvergleiche (probates), Vormundschaftsakten (Guardianships), Pupillenakten (orphan records), last testaments and wills, Erbscheine.

A remarriage of a widower/widow was always documented in the Amtsgericht stating in detail the estate rights of surviving children as well as rights and duties of parents and step parents. This is a source at the Amtsgericht which is widely unknown and untapped (and unfiled by the LDS). If you are looking for records which describe the life and tribulations of your ancestors, you cannot miss looking at the court records.

The Acta of the Driesen court (Amtsgericht) in Brandenburg (Neumark) have also survived the times with deeds and additional information at the Polish State Archives in Szczecin (Stettin) today.

Current LDS filming project:

* Brandenburg -- This is another sizable project involving
Amtgericht court records:

* Brandenburg and Berlin Amtgerichte - While there are a fair number of church records on microfilm for Berlin and the province of Brandenburg, virtually no court records have been available on microfilm until this project recently came on line. Started in 1993, this involves an extensive amount of court records. Filming continues at this time.

For research of estates the estate directories (Güteradreßbücher) list the owners and economic information (acreage, livestock etc.):

Handbuch des Grundbesitzes im Deutschen Reiche.

I. Das Königreich Preußen - Provinz Brandenburg

1st ed. Berlin 1879

2nd ed. Berlin 1885

3rd ed. Berlin 1896

4th ed. Berlin 1903

5th ed. Berlin 1910

Niekammers Landwirtschaftliches Güter-Adreßbuch.

Band 1: Provinz Brandenburg

1st ed. Leipzig 1907

2nd ed. Leipzig 1914

3rd ed. Leipzig 1923

4th ed. Leipzig 1929

Q5: How do I find locations and maps for Brandenburg before 1945??

A5: An atlas is usually not the best tool to locate small towns or villages. Maps of scales 1:25,000 (Meßtischblatt) or 1:100,000 (Karte des Deutschen Reiches and Kreiskarten) and gazetteers (Ortsverzeichnis) are.

Topographical Maps (Meßtischblätter 1:25000) may also be purchased from Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie Richard-Strauß-Allee 11 60958 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

For maps for sale in the US see

<http://www.genealogyunlimited.com>

For Ost-Brandenburg the above institute sells the following 1:100.000 maps:
Arnswalde, Crossen, Forst, Friedeberg, Landsberg, Oststernberg, Soldin, Sorau and Stadtkreis Forst.

Großblätter are available for:

Frankfurt/Oder, Guben, Königsberg/Neumark, Meseritz, Schwerin/Warthe, Weststernberg, Züllichau-Schwiebus.

For German-Polish place name dictionary, see

<http://www.calle.com/world/poland/index.html>

<http://www.atsnotes.com/other/gerpol.html>

Historical maps:

Bliss, Winfried: Die Plankammer der Regierung Frankfurt/Oder.

Spezialinventar 1670 bis 1870. 1978.

(An inventory of the map collection in GStA.PK in Berlin-Dahlem.

The village maps often list names of the peasants).

Q6: Are there web sites of interest to Brandenburg researchers?

Here is a sampling of web sites:

+ Neumark Genealogical Research Homepage

<http://members.aol.com/MCTeichert/Neumark.html>

+ Information on German archives:

<http://www.bawue.de/~hanacek/info/darchive.htm>

<http://www.germany.net/teilnehmer/100.110994/index.htm>

+ Landesarchiv Berlin:

<http://www.kulturbox.de/landesarchiv>

+ Evang. Zentralarchiv Berlin:

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/eza>

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/eza/eza3e.htm>

+ Information on Wends/Sorbs:

<http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/harrisfarm/wendish.htm>

Stiftung Martin-Opitz-Bibliothek Herne.

(ehemals Bücherei des deutschen Ostens)

Inhalt: Über die Bibliothek. Die Martin-Opitz-Bibliothek....

e-mail: charly@charly.ping.de

<http://w3g.med.uni-giessen.de/~geneal/kp/fome/andere/mob.html>

Herder -Institut Marburg e.V. Gisonenweg 5 - 7, 35037 Marburg/Lahn

Telephon: 06421/184-0, Telefax: 184-139

e-mail: herder@mail.uni-marburg.de....

<http://www.uni-marburg.de/herder-institut/bibliohp.html>

<http://w3g.med.uni-giessen.de/~geneal/kp/fome/andere/herdermb.html>

<http://www.uni-marburg.de/herder-institut/klassi.html>

Amtsgericht Potsdam:

<http://www.amtsgericht-potsdam.org/>

Genealogival sources:

<http://www.feefhs.org/s&f/kbak-ae.html> Sources A-E

<http://www.feefhs.org/s&f/kbak-fg.html> Sources F-G

<http://www.feefhs.org/s&f/kbak-hk.html> Sources H-K

<http://www.feefhs.org/s&f/kblz-lo.html> Sources L-O

<http://www.feefhs.org/s&f/kblz-ps.html> Sources P-S

<http://www.feefhs.org/s&f/kblz-tz.html> Sources T-Z

Berlin and Brandenburg libraries:

<http://www.sbb.spk-berlin.de>

<http://www.ub.fu-berlin.de/>

<http://www.kulturbox.de/zlb/>

<http://www.ub.fu-berlin.de/index.html>

<http://www.fh-brandenburg.de/bibliothek/www.htm>

[http://www.fh-potsdam.de/~ BiB/bio_home.htm](http://www.fh-potsdam.de/~BiB/bio_home.htm)

<http://www.bbaw.de/index.html>

Q7: Is there a listserv for Brandenburg family researchers?

For a mailing list for anyone with a genealogical interest in Brandenburg see

Brandenburg-L (English & German)

* <http://list.genealogy.net/mailman/listinfo/brandenburg-l>

Neumark-L (German only)

* <http://neumark.genealogy.net>

A more general list is PRUSSIA-ROOTS-L@rootsweb.com

To subscribe send the word "subscribe" (without the quotes) as the only text in the body of a message to PRUSSIA-ROOTS-L-request@rootsweb.com (mail mode) or PRUSSIA-ROOTS-D-request@rootsweb.com (digest mode).

Q8: When were civil registers introduced?

Civil registers of births, marriages, deaths were introduced in October 1874. The Civil registry office is called Standesamt. Before this time, the Lutheran church records (1815-1874) or special Dissidenten-Register (1847-1874) served as official registers, and a duplicate copy was deposited at the local court (Amtsgericht).

Most Standesamt (Polish: Urzed Stanu Cywilnego) records remained in the old offices and were taken over by the Polish authorities in the areas annexed by Poland in 1945. They are listed in the Gazetteer of Polish People's Republic Localities. The full title is SPIS MIEJSCOWOSCI POLSKIEJ RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ LUDOWEJ, published in Warsaw 1968, and on LDS microfilm #844,922.

Prior to 1874, the church records (Kirchenbücher) of the official churches (Evangelic and catholic) served as recognized documents for the purpose of proving one's birth, marriage, and death and had to meet certain standards of accuracy and completeness. Members of minor (unrecognised) churches had to record their vital statistics with the pastor of the official churches.

Church book Guide:

Kirchenbücher, Kirchenbuch-Duplikate und Standesamtsregister der ehemals brandenburgischen Kreise, Königsberg, Soldin, Landsberg, Arnswalde, Friedeberg, Ost- und Weststernberg, Crossen, Züllichau-Schwiebus, Guben und Sorau o:stl. der Neise), Schwerin, Meseritz, Bomst

Bestandsverzeichnis 2000

304 Seiten, Festeinband, 1 Kartenbeilage, Preis 49,- DM + Versandk., ISBN 3-9803515-5-6

Bestellungen an:

Druckerei Verlag G. Grüneberg, Finkenbergstr. 6, 19309 Lenzen (Elbe)

Q9: What books discuss hints and sources for East German searchers?

Wegweiser für Forschung nach Vorfahren aus den Ostdeutschen und Sudetendeutschen Gebieten sowie aus den deutschen Siedlungsräumen in Mittel-, Ost- und Südosteuropa (AGoFF-Wegweiser): Verlag Degener & Co, 91413 Neustadt, Germany (1991 and later) (The out-of-print English edition is being revised presently)

Germanic Genealogy (by Edward R.Brandt et alii), 2nd edition. 1997, St.Paul MN, 517 pp., 1st edition, 1995.

W.Krallert: Atlas zur Geschichte der deutschen Ostsiedlung, Velhagen & Klasing, Bielefeld-Berlin-Hannover 1958.

Q10: What about Mennonites in Brandenburg province?

The Prussian census gives the following numbers for Mennonites in the two Brandenburg districts:

	1821	1828	1831	1837	1849	1861
Potsdam	42	6	2	10	15	17
Frankfurt/Oder	280	238	231	31	13	2

Most Mennonites lived in Kreis Friedeberg, Amt Driesen in the Neumark in Brenkenhoffswalde, Franztal and Neu-Dessau who emigrated in 1834 to Deutsch-Wymyschle in Poland and to Volhynia and to Gnadenfeld, Russia.

see: Mennonite Life, April 1969 p.83-86;

Goertz, A.: Mennoniten im Neumärkischen Amt Driesen, Brandenburg, in: Ostdeutsche Familienkunde 1996 p.277-283

Goertz, A.: Aus den Grund- und Hypotheken-Akten des Neumärkischen Amtes Driesen. Erbzinsgut Neu-Dessau, Kr. Friedeberg, in: Ostdeutsche Familienkunde 1999, p.260-272

Goertz, A.: Mennonites in Amt Driesen of the Neumark, Brandenburg, in: Mennonite Family History (Morgantown PA), 2001, p. 47-51.

Goertz, A.: Aus den Praestations-Tabellen des Neumärkischen Amtes Driesen, in: Ostdeutsche Familienkunde 2001, p.17-25.

Q11: What German archives are available for Brandenburg?

There is the Landeshauptarchiv in Potsdam and the Geh. Staatsarchiv in Berlin-Dahlem with the Brandenburg records in the Hauptabteilung X (X HA): HA. X Brandenburg (selective listing of records)

- Rep. 1 Oberpräsident der Provinz Brandenburg
- Rep. 2 A Kurmärkische Kriegs- und Domänenkammer zu Potsdam
- Rep. 2 B Regierung zu Potsdam
- Rep. 3 B Regierung zu Frankfurt a. d. Oder
- Rep. 4 B Oberlandesgericht zu Frankfurt a. d. Oder
- Rep. 5 A Stadtgerichte (Belzig, Bernau, Brandenburg a. d. Havel, Driesen, Nauen, Oranienburg, Perleberg, Prenzlau, Schwiebus, Spandau)
- Rep. 5 B Justizämter (Biesenthal, Fehrbellin, Gramzow, Liebenwalde, Löcknitz, Oranienburg, Potsdam, Rüdersdorf)
- Rep. 5 C Patrimonialgerichte (Gerichtsamt Tauchel)
- Rep. 5 D Kreisgerichte (Berlin, Frankfurt a. d. Oder, Potsdam, Spandau, Wriezen)
- Rep. 5 E Amtsgerichte (Altlandsberg, Angermünde, Arnswalde, Bärwalde, Baruth, Beelitz, Beeskow, Belzig, Berlin, Berlinchen, Bernau, Brandenburg, Brüssow, Buchholz, Calau, Cottbus, Crossen, Dahme, Doberlug, Driesen, Drossen, Eberswalde, Finsterwalde, Forst, Friedeberg, Fürstenberg, Fürstenwalde, Genthin, Gransee, Guben, Havelberg, Jüterbog, Kirchhain, Königsberg, Königs Wusterhausen, Kremmen, Küstrin, Kyritz, Landsberg a. d. Warthe, Lenzen, Liebenwalde, Lieberose, Lindow, Luckau, Luckenwalde, Lübben, Lübbenau, Lychen, Meyenburg, Mittenwalde, Müncheberg, Nauen, Neudamm, Neuruppin, Neuwedell, Oderberg, Oranienburg, Peitz, Perleberg, Potsdam, Prenzlau, Pritzwalk, Rathenow, Reetz, Reppen, Rheinsberg, Rüdersdorf, Schwedt, Schwiebus, Seelow, Senftenberg, Soldin, Sommerfeld, Sonnenburg, Sorau, Spremberg, Storkow, Strasburg, Strausberg, Templin, Tirschtiegel, Trebbin, Treuenbrietzen, Triebel, Vietz, Werder, Wittenberge, Wittstock, Woldenberg, Wriezen, Wusterhausen, Zehden, Zehdenick, Zielenzig, Zossen, Züllichau)
- Rep. 5 E Amtsgerichte (Meseritz, Unruhstadt)
- Rep. 5 F Landgerichte (Berlin, Cottbus, Frankfurt a. d. Oder, Guben, Landsberg a. d. Warthe, Neuruppin, Potsdam, Prenzlau)
- Rep. 5 F Landgericht zu Meseritz
- Rep. 5 H Arbeitsgerichte (Berlin)
- Rep. 5 N Erbgesundheitsgerichte (Cottbus, Landsberg a. d. Warthe, Prenzlau; dazu Schweidnitz)
- Rep. 6 A Ältere Kreisbehörden (Prignitz, Ruppin, Uckermark, Zauche)
- Rep. 6 B Landratsämter (Beeskow-Storkow, Kalau, Königsberg/Neumark, Cottbus, Niederbarnim, Ostprignitz, Sorau, Westhavelland, Westprignitz, Zauche-Belzig)
- Rep. 6 B Kreis Bomst
- Rep. 6 B Kreis Meseritz
- Rep. 6 C Kreisassessoren (Ober- und Niederbarnim, Königsberg/Neumark, Teltow)
- Rep. 7 Domänen- und Rentämter (Belzig, Bernstein, Bützow, Chorin, Cottbus-Peitz, Dahme, Friedrichsthal, Fürstenwalde, Grimnitz, Jüterbog, Köpenick, Neustadt a. d. Dosse, Zechlin, Zinna, Zossen)
- Rep. 8 Städte und Ortschaften (Bärwalde, Bernau, Brandenburg, Cottbus, Gransee, Kalau, Kyritz, Lenzen, Mittenwalde, Mohrin, Müncheberg, Pritzerbe, Alt-Ruppin, Seelow, Strausberg, Templin, Treuenbrietzen, Züllichau)
- Rep. 9 Johanniterorden, Aufschwörungstafeln
- Rep. 10 Stifter, Klöster und Kirchen (Domstift Havelberg, Komturei Lietzen)
- Rep. 15 A und B Oberförstereien (Havelberg, Zechlin)
- Rep. 15 D Andere Forstbehörden (Forsträte zu Altruppın, Oranienburg, Rheinsberg, Ruppın; Forstmeister zu Berlin, Rheinsberg; Holzschreiber zu Altruppın; Bauinspektor zu Zehdenick)
- Rep. 16 Kleine Erwerbungen
- Rep. 17 Oberamtsregierung der Niederlausitz zu Lübben
- Rep. 19 Steuerräte (Eberswalde, Kyritz, Potsdam)
- Rep. 20 Gouvernement zu Berlin
- Rep. 24 Generalkommission (Landeskulturamt) zu Frankfurt a. d. Oder

For pre-1806 Mahllisten, Praestations-Tabellen see HA II Generaldirektorium

Abt. 13 Neumark

Abt. 13 a v. Brenkenhoffsche und Schützsche Meliorations- und Pensionssachen in Pommern und der Neumark

Abt. 13 b v. Brenkenhoffsche Meliorations- und Pensionssachen im Netzedistrikt

Abt. 14 Kurmark

Brandenburg Landeshauptarchiv in Potsdam:

<http://www.landeshauptarchiv-brandenburg.de/netcms.aspx?PageID=42&NavI>

e-mail: poststelle@blha.brandenburg.de

[Return to main menu](#)