**The Rise of the Modern State in Prussia**

1. **Early History of Prussia**

* "Prussia" derived from *Pruteno* (or *Bruteno*), chief priest of Prussia (6th C)
* By 1237, Prussians controlled Livonia (Latvia and Estonia). Ostsiedlung Process—Prussian migrations to Slovenia to Estonia, and Transylvania
* By 1252 Prussians conquered Skalvians and west-Baltic Curonians
* 1308 - Prussia conquered by the Teutonic Knights during the Prussian Crusade and administered a Teutonic Order state
* 1356 - **Hanseatic League** - a group of trading cities in northern Europe. Gained monopoly on all trade leaving the interior of Europe and Scandinavia and on all trade in the Baltic
* 1454–1466 - **Thirteen Years' War** - Prussian Confederation, a coalition of Hanseatic cities, rebelled against Teutonic Order and requested help from the Polish king.
* 1517 – Martin Luther nails 95 Theses to All Saints Church in Wittenberg
* 1525, **Albert of Prussia**, 37th Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, and member of the **House of Hohenzollern**, became a Protestant. Luther advised him to secularize Prussia, make it safe for Protestants, consolidate it, and make it his **Duchy of Prussia**. Father of Prussia?

1. **Brandenburg Prussia** (1618-1701)

* 1618 - Hohenzollerns intermarried with Duchy of Prussia, and secured succession upon the latter's extinction in the male line
* 1648 - [**Peace of Westphalia**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_of_Westphalia), which ended the **Thirty Years' War** (Protestants vs. Catholics in the HRE, fueled by internal politics and Euro balance of power). Brandenburg gained Minden and Halberstadt (Saxony-Anhalt)
* After 1648, the **Holy Roman Empire** was largely a diplomatic fiction; as Voltaire said in 1756, “This agglomeration which was called and which still calls itself the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire.”
* No German state, but “300 Germanies”
* 1653 - Succession in Farther Pomerania led to incorporation of Duchy of Magdeburg
* Prussia was an HRE state which, in 1653, was granted elector power by HRE nobles to collect taxes to maintain an army in return for decreeing serfdom permanent.

**→Brief Timeline of Hohenzollern Rulers**

* 1640-1688 Frederick William the Great Elector
* 1688-1713 Frederick I
* 1713-1740 Frederick William, The Soldier King
* 1740-1786 Frederick II, The Great

1. **1640-1688 Frederick William**, The *Great Elector*
   1. First important Hohenzollern ruler, Laid foundation for Prussian state.
   2. Domestic Policy
      1. FW was staunch Calvinist who supported the rising commercial class. Promoted trade, **mercantilism**, monopolies, subsidies, tariffs, and infrastructure
      2. Construction of the Oder-Spree Canal (1662-68) to divert trade from Swedish-controlled port of Stettin, to Berlin → Elbe
      3. **Religious tolerance** (rare in 17th C. Europe). Louis XIV’s **Revocation of the Edict of Nantes** outraged FW. 8 November 1685 he issued **Edict of Potsdam**, offering all Huguenots a refuge under generous terms. 20,000+ Huguenots took advantage. Invited talented merchants, craftsmen, etc.
      4. To reduce power of the nobility in Estates-General, FW made a deal with the nobles. In return for a free hand in running the government (read: depriving the Estates of their power), he:
         1. gave nobles almost unlimited power over their peasants
         2. exempted nobles from taxation
         3. awarded nobles highest ranks in army and bureaucracy
   3. Foreign Policy: Military Hero
      1. Built Prussian army, and in so doing, a sense of “**nationalism**”
      2. 1672 - Franco-Dutch War - on side of Dutch. Increased power of mil and ↑central gov
      3. 1675 - Victory with Swedes at Battle of Warsaw. "The beginning of Prussian military history". Then the Swedes turned on him at the behest of Louis XIV. FW heroically marched troops to defeat Swedes at **Battle of Fehrbellin**, destroying the myth of Swedish military
      4. FW used the army he built in wars with Poland and Sweden to enforce his will at home. When the local estates refused to consent to new taxes, he levied them anyway, backing up his demands with troops. He then used the tax money to expand army. Army grew from 2,000 men in 1656 to 45,000 in 1675
2. **1688-1713 Frederick I**
   1. 3rd son of FW, cousin of William III of England
   2. In 1708, 1/3 of Prussians died in Plague (ended in Prenzlau. Did not reach Berlin)
   3. Founded a new city south of Dorotheenstadt (in Mitte) and named it **Friedrichstadt**
   4. Patron of the Academy. University of Halle (1694). Academy of Art (1696). Academy of Sciences (1700)
   5. Leopold I, Archduke of Austria and HRE, was convinced by Frederick to allow Prussia to be ruled as a kingdom. This agreement was probably made in exchange for an alliance against Louis XIV in the War of the Spanish Succession
   6. **Great Northern War** (1700–1721) – Alliance of Russia-Denmark-Poland and Saxony **ended Sweden’s power** in Southern Baltic. Prussians sought domination of former Swedish holdings
   7. Argued Prussia never belonged to the HRE and therefore the Elector of Brandenburg should be "**King Frederick I in Prussia" (1701)**
   8. Entombed in the Berliner Dom
3. **1713-1740 Frederick William I**, The Soldier King
   1. Encouraged farming. Stored grain in good times, sold it in bad times
   2. Dictated the manual of **Regulations for State Officials**, containing 35 chapters detailing the precise duties of every public servant in Prussia
   3. Absolutist and Autocratic
   4. Fondness for military display, leading to his strange efforts to hire the tallest men he could find in Europe for a special regiment, nicknamed the **Potsdam Giants**.
   5. “It is certain that nowhere in the world one can see troops comparable with the Prussians for beauty, cleanliness, and order. Although in drill, training, and marching much is forced and affected, nearly everything is useful and efficient. Directed by the King in person, and only by him. Besides, he looks after the whole public administration in all its branches. With such care and thoroughness that not a thaler [a monetary unit] is spent unless he has given his signature. Those who do not see it cannot believe that there is any man in the world, however intelligent and able he may be, who can settle so many things personally in a single day as Frederick William the First, who works from 3 o'clock in the morning till 10, and spends the rest of' the day in looking after and drilling his army...” - Count von Seckendorf
   6. Never started a war
4. **1740-1786 Frederick II**, The Great ("**Old** [**Fritz**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fritz_%28disambiguation%29)")
   1. Background
      1. Born in Berlin. Raised by Huguenot tutors. Polylingual. Enlightened.
      2. In youth, given a regiment of children to drill as cadets. Fritz was beaten for being thrown off a bolting horse and for wearing gloves in cold weather
      3. Interested in music and philosophy, not war
      4. Unsuccessfully attempted to flee from his authoritarian father
   2. **Enlightened Absolutism**: Transformed Prussia from a European backwater to an economically strong and politically modern state…
   3. **Economy**
      1. Reorganized tax system
      2. Commissioned successful tycoon and art collector **Johann Ernst Gotzkowsky** to promote trade and to compete with France
      3. Provided Prussia's fledgling industries with raw materials (seized Silesia to this end), and protected them with **high tariffs** and few restrictions on internal trade
      4. Controlled grain prices and S&D of grain
      5. Mint Edict (1763) - revalued Joachimsthaler. Introduced **Reichsthaler**
      6. Gotzkowsky built a silk factory and Royal Porcelain Manufacture (still standing on Leipzigerstr.)
      7. Canals (ex- connected Vistula and Oder)
      8. Drained swamps for agriculture, introduced new crops (ex - potato and turnip)
      9. Built one of the best education systems in Europe
   4. **Bureaucracy** – “The absolute subordination of the Civil Service from the highest to the lowest, their unquestioning obedience to the King, together with their absolute responsibility not only for then- own actions, but also for those of their colleagues and their inferiors, created among them an extremely strong sense of professional honour, solidarity, era of professional pride. The influence of the nobility and of Society diminished unceasingly” *(The Foundations of Germany,* J. Ellis Barker*)*
   5. **Law**
      1. Appointed **Samuel von Cocceji**, 30 year law professor from Frankfurt, to develop a **Legal Code** based on **Enlightened Rationalism**
      2. Eliminated courts exclusive to nobles
      3. Judicial appointments based on training and merit
      4. No one could act as a lawyer without legal training
      5. Litigation had to be completed in 1 year
      6. Small jurisdictions merged into a single court. Other courts eliminated.
      7. Clear hierarchy established. Can’t go from court to court until you win
      8. Abolished torture, corporal punishment. All death penalty cases reviewed by Fritz.
      9. Sent the guilty to Spandau prison
      10. "I must not interfere with the Courts. The statutes must be obeyed and on that, the sovereign must be silent." –Old Fritz
      11. “The Prussian code was an attempt to provide a specific, detailed solution for specific, detailed fact situations. The end sought was a complete catalog of such solutions available to the judge for any case that might come before him.” - The Civil Law Tradition, John Henry Merryman
      12. Note: legal reform in Prussia was later catalyzed by the fallout of the French Revolution and the est. of the Code Napoleon
   6. **Culture and Arts**
      1. Spoke French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian
      2. Relatively free press
      3. Built: Berlin State Opera, the Royal Library, **Sanssouci**
      4. Played flute. Composed 100+ sonatas
      5. Hung out with **JS Bach** and **Voltaire**
      6. Patronized musicians (ex – CPE Bach)
      7. Patronized **Berlin Academy**. To compete with London and Paris. Kant, Leibniz, et. al. “An educated people can be easily governed.” – Old Fritz
   7. **Religious Tolerance**
      1. Friend of Voltaire. Not religious. In his *Political Testament* (1768), he called religion "an old metaphysical fairy tale, full of miraculous legends, paradoxes, and nonsense." He warned his successor not to allow "saintly charlatans" to gain influence. He defined theologians as "animals without reason."
      2. Tolerance as a means to economic development
      3. Encouraged Jews to trade (esp. the silk and Royal Porcelain). Protected them.
5. **Foreign Policy**
   1. “Don't forget your great guns which are the most respectable arguments of the rights of kings” – Old Fritz
   2. Saw weakness of Prussia in Europe. Prussia was a distant 5th. Inherited scattered set of territories. **Consolidated into Empire**
   3. 1740-1748 - **Wars of the Austrian Succession** (King George’s War) Fought over Frederick the Great’s desire to seize Silesia from the Hapsburgs in return for his agreeing to Maria Theresa’s accession to the Austrian throne (the so-called Pragmatic Sanction).
      1. First Silesian War (1740–1742)
      2. Second Silesian War (1744–1745)
      3. Victory in Silesia →**“The Great”** (though many called him "The Unique,")
   4. King in Prussia (1740–1772)→**King of Prussia** (1772–1786)
   5. 1756-1763 - **Seven Years' War** (French and Indian War) - Prussia & Britain vs. Austria, France, Russia, Saxony, and Sweden. France lost her colonial holdings in North America which were transferred to Britain. Balance of power changes. Incorporated Saxony.
   6. Frederick preferred to lead military forces personally. Napoleon & Clausewitz admired him as among the greatest tacticians of all time
   7. Devised a **balance of power** scheme with Russia to divide Poland. Not fond of Polish. Invited Germans to displace Poles and develop Poland. Settled ~300,000 colonists on territories he had conquered, and enforced **Germanization** (through education and legal reform).
6. **Conclusions**
   1. Fritz was a revered Absolutist who built Prussia, but left no trained successor. As such, Napoleon was almost destroyed Prussia. However, Prussia was made so much stronger than any other German state that it was to unite Germany in the next century, and impose a rather Prussian veneer to 300 Germanies.
   2. 1786-1797 Frederick William II  
      →French Revolution, 1789
   3. 1797-1840 Frederick William III  
      →Napoleonic Wars
   4. 1840-1861 Frederick William IV  
      →Revolutions of 1848
   5. 1861-1888 William I  
      →Minister President → Iron Chancellor Bismarck (1862-1890)

→Unified Germany

* 1. 1888-1918 William II

→Abdication of William II