Prussia -- From Teutonic Knights To Modern Day Economics

If you haven't noticed by now, I have a bit of an odd sense of humor. So, I got a bit of a laugh when I was "doing my homework" on Prussia and learned its motto was "To Each His Own."

What a crock, considering this land (encompassing parts of modern-day Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Russia) was once ruled by the House of Hohenzollern. You might have heard of these guys, their castles are found throughout Germany.

To each his own my foot — just as long as you did what the ruling house told you to do. I know, it sounds a bit harsh, but Prussia was ruled in an orderly fashion by those with a military zeal.

Oh, isn't that just a nice way of saying it had an authoritarian regime thingy going on?

All right, that's not entirely fair. At one point within Prussia's history it was a democracy.

Prussia's history is a long one, spanning the days of the [Holy Roman Empire](), the German Empire, and the [Weimar Republic](). It wasn't until the Nazis came to power in the 1930's when was Prussia merged with the country of Germany (naming Hermann Göring as Prime Minister) that Prussia ceased to "unofficially" exist. Officially, it wasn't until 1947.

But, I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me start at the beginning…

The Birth Of Prussia

The area of Prussia was started by the [Teutonic Knights]() in the 13th century, now known as Old Prussia. In 1525 it became the Duchy of Prussia, ruled by its first duke — Albert I. It remained a Dukedom until 1618, although there was an area known as Royal Prussia from 1466 to 1772.

After 1618, the Duchy became Brandenburg-Prussia remaining that way for just shy of a hundred years. In 1701 it became the Kingdom in Prussia; then the Kingdom of Prussia in 1772. In 1918 the Kingdom OF Prussia morphed again, this time to the Free State of Prussia.

Got all these dates straight? Glad someone does. ;-)

Characteristics Of Prussia

Regardless of its Duchy, Kingdom, or Democraic status; Prussia's land was perfect for farming. Its wheat production was partly responsible for its vast wealth.

Prussia was also responsible for many great (and not so great) royal and military leaders, like

Frederick the Great, King Wilhelm II, and Otto von Bismarck.

Its Prussian precision also helped this vast agricultural land with a national rail system, all the better to bring the veggies to the people of the Kingdom, which was quite vast by this time in the late 19th century. Hey, someone had to feed 60% of the total population of Germany, right? Eventually some 62% of Germany's population lived within the boundaries of Prussia.

Prussia — From Yesterday To Today

Too bad much of Prussia was pieced off after the end of [World War I](#). But, it did survive and flourish through other wars in its long reign, like the [Napoleonic Wars](#) (where it gained more land), the Schleswig Wars, and the Austrian-Prussian War.

Ooh, I almost left out the Franco-Prussian War.

It was also broken up after [World War II](#).

If you're walking down a street in some town in a number of [Germany's federal states](#) ([Brandenburg](#), [Saxony-Anhalt](#), [Lower Saxony](#), [North Rhine-Westphalia](#), [Hesse](#), [Schleswig-Holstein](#), [Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania](#), Baden-Württemberg, and [Rhineland-Palatinate](#) — yeah that many) you're in the region that was once mighty Prussia.

Funny, after the [reunification of Germany](#) in 1990 there was talk about renaming [Berlin](#) and Brandenburg back to Prussia. Obviously, it didn't happen. But, at least today — its motto seems to be right.