

Alexander Henry Brandenburg
(m. Anna [unknown])
Lived in Germany and Frederick County, Maryland

Alexander Henry 'Henry' Brandenburg

b: pre 1721, probably Rheinland-Phalz, Germany (daughter's birth, William Henry Brandenburg Senior's hometown: village of Winkelbach, Parish of Hochstenbach, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany)
m: ca 1740, Rheinland-Phalz, Germany (Barbara's birth)
d: Jul 1793, New Market District., Frederick Co., MD (his estate)
bur: Chance Farm, northwest of Kemptown, Frederick Co., MD (see note below)
occ: Farmer (estate, deed)
fa: **Solomon Brandenburg** (tradition - no proof that was his real name)
mo: **unknown**

Anna [unknown]

b: pre 1723, unknown, Germany (Barbara born in 1741)
d: pre 7 Feb 1809, New Market Dist., Frederick Co., MD (date will probated)
bur: Chance Farm (see note below)
fa: **unknown**
mo: **unknown**

CHILDREN

- * **1. Barbary 'Barbara' Brandenburg**
b: 1741, probably Rheinland-Phalz, Germany (tombstone, obituary)
m: **Jacob Franks I**, ca 1764, probably MD (birth of 1st child)
d: 12 Oct 1839, German Twp., Fayette Co., PA (obit, tombstone)
bur: Jacob's Lutheran Church Cem., German Twp., Fayette Co., PA (tombstone)
- * **2. John Conrad 'Conrad' Brandenburg/Brandeberry Senior**
b: ca 1747, probably Rheinland-Phalz, Germany (family group sheet)
m: **Elizabeth Baughman**, ca 1768, "near Philadelphia, PA" (b. of 1st child, 777)
d: 2 Apr 1814 to 8 May 1814, Centre Twp., Columbiana Co., OH (his Will)
bur: unknown, Columbiana Co., OH (his Will)
- * **3. Jacob Brandenburg**
b: 1761 to 1770, Frederick Co., MD (Barbara's obit, census)
m: **Elizabeth Rine/Rein**, 13 Feb 1789, Evangelical. Reformed Church, Frederick, MD (church record)
d: pre 13 Mar 1838, New Market Dist., Frederick Co., MD (will proved)
bur: Chance Farm (see father's burial)

THE ALEXANDER HENRY BRANDENBURG FAMILY

by Pat Bristley

Alexander Henry, Anna, Jacob and Elizabeth (Rine) were all buried on the hill near the road of Chance Farm. One of the Brandenburg descendants who farmed that land

in the early 1900s, showed me where the farm and family cemetery were located. He said the tombstones were still there when he farmed the land but they are now missing. He also told me that the house was situated in the gully near the creek. It is now missing, but I have photos of how the house and barn looked in the early 1900s. That house was not the original house, however. Now someone is living in a house trailer on the land.

At the time Alexander Henry Brandenburg brought his family to the United States, there was no Germany. The country at that time was a loosely-knit area, each section, or duchy, ruled by a separate prince, duke or count. The rulers had strong control over their peasants, and the peasant men were often sent off to fight as mercenaries for others, when the ruler wanted money. The ruler was paid for their services - not them. The period also closely followed the "one hundred year war," when the population of men in what is now Germany, was so depleted, that officials allowed men to have ten wives in order to re-populate the land. Even Catholic priests were allowed to marry.

It was also the period in Germany (about 1740) when ordinary men first used surnames. Probably an ancestor of the Brandenburgs had moved from the duchy of Brandenburg to the Rheinland-Pfalz, because the family name, at the time, became "Brandenburger" which in German meant "from Brandenburg." (Incidentally, Brandenburg with the "h" on the end, denoted noble birth in German, so there may have been a grain of truth in the persistent tradition that at one time the family was royal. Many early Brandenburgs in America spelled their name "Brandenburgh.") It was in that historical context, that the family found themselves. No wonder that the Brandenburg men took a chance on emigrating to America, where they eventually might own their own land; be safe from becoming conscripts in foreign armies; and find a better life for their children.

The Alexander Henry Brandenburg[h] family came to America, either in 1750 (family tradition in the Franks family) or in 1754 (Barbara's obituary). Of all the Brandenburg branches, Alexander Henry's family is the best documented. Alexander Henry, his wife Anna, sons Conrad and Jacob, and son-in-law Jacob Franks all left wills. There was a long obituary for Barbara (extant) and the men all had land deeds. Of all the Brandenburgs (of all branches) who were born in Germany, the only tombstone I have found, still found in existence, is Barbara's. Barbara lived to be almost 98 years old, as did her great-grandson, David Christopher Franks (my great-grandfather). David Christopher's life spanned Barbara's life and mine, as he was two years old when she died and I was five years old when he died. Barbara's obituary is the earliest record of the Brandenburgs in the U. S. A. other than land deeds, census records, wills and marriages.

Some genealogists insist that the Brandenburgs lived in Rotterdam in the Netherlands for some years, which is incorrect as Barbara's obituary, written in 1839, is extant, stating she was born in Germany. Moreover, hometowns with records for William Henry Senior and John Anthony Brandenburg in the Rheinland-Phalz have been found, further documenting the fact that they came from Germany. They sailed from Rotterdam, the Netherlands, as most Germans did in that period. They took a river boat up the Rhine (or walked) to Rotterdam where they took passage on ships headed for America.

Alexander Henry and his family were "Redemptioners" which meant they sold their services to persons in the United States for a period of time before they left Europe in order to pay for their passage. A Miller family of Frederick County, Maryland, bought Barbara's time (her obituary). There were so many Miller families in Frederick and

Washington Counties, Maryland, that I have not been able to find out which family she was indentured to. I believe that the members of the family were indentured to different persons because Jacob was not born until after their indentures ended. Most adults were indentured for five to seven years (according to their ages and skills), and children until they were twenty-two years old.

A tradition in the Franks family says that Jacob Franks bought the last two years of Barbara's time from the Millers so that he could marry her. Another tradition says that Jacob Franks accidentally killed a man in the Inn where he was indentured as the man became unruly and he tried to evict him. It is believed that the Inn was owned by the Livengood family into which Jacob's brother Michael married.

Other Brandenburg branches found at one time in Frederick or Washington (a part of Frederick County until 1776) Counties; William Henry Brandenburg Senior, Matthias Brandenburg (m. Hester Wolgamot) and Christopher Brandenburg (m. Mary Magdalena Wilhelm). Members of all these families went to the same places, such as Fayette County, Pennsylvania, so we know that they are all connected - the Brandenburg men were brothers or cousins, or uncles and nephews.

The Frederick County, Maryland, History says that Jacob Brandenburg was born in Germany (see his sketch), but this is incorrect as the 1830 census gives his age within ten years so he was born in the United States, probably in Frederick County or what is now Washington County. Therefore Jacob was about twenty years younger than Barbara. If the family were indentured in different families this might also be the reason that Alexander Henry and Anna only had three children while the rest of the Brandenburgs of that period had eight or more children. Another possibility is that some of their children died while crossing the ocean or before Alexander Henry and Anna left Germany.

The ocean voyage was very long - usually two or three months in length. The food and water they served the redemptioners was bad too, and there was not enough of it. Many persons, especially women and children, died during the crossing. Records for both Conrad Senior and Christopher were found in Hagerstown but records for Alexander, Anna, and Jacob were found in Frederick County. Washington County separated from Frederick County just after the Maryland census of 1776 (see #559).

The following were the laws of Maryland concerning indentured servants:

An Act of 1715 of the Maryland Assembly fixed the maximum terms of service as five years above 25 years of age; 6 years for those aged 18-25; 7 years for those aged 15 to 18; and those below age 15 until the age of 22 years. In addition to their responsibilities to their masters as set forth both in law and in the contracts of indenture the males had an obligation to perform military service, particularly in defending themselves and others from the Indians....In the case of young persons both schooling and apprenticeship in a trade, broadly defined, were common provisions in the agreement. (see #19)

Most of the indentures I have seen for that period in Frederick County, Maryland, for girls stated that they were to be given some schooling along with learning useful household tasks. That would account for the tradition that Barbara could read and write.

Alexander Henry signed his signature to his will so he could read and write, but Anna, Jacob, Conrad Senior and Jacob Franks signed their wills with "x" so they were illiterate.

It was tradition in German families of that period that all sons learned not only to farm but they also learned a trade. Conrad's may have been milling as two of his sons ran a mill in Columbiana County, Ohio, for some time. It is unknown what Alexander Henry's trade was, but between approximately 1760 (when his bond service was probably done) and 1779, when he bought the farm *Chance*, he earned enough to pay 270 pounds (a large amount of money for that period) for the farm.

Another tradition was that German men left their farms to the **youngest son**, not the oldest. This was because it was thought that just about the time the father was ready to retire the youngest son would be ready to take over the farm. This is why the farm was left to Jacob. It was also expected that the youngest son would take care of the parents in their old age. That tradition still is in force in the small Swiss community where my daughter lived for several years (in the German-speaking part of Switzerland).

I believe that Alexander Henry Brandenburg went by his second name, "Henry", because that was how he signed his will. Most Germans of that period used their second given names in everyday life. Their first given names were usually baptismal names only, and were Bible names. I estimated Alexander Henry and Anna's births as being before 1721 and 1723, because in that period most German men married between 22 and 30 years of age and most women married between 18 and 22 years of age. No records, so far, have been found telling when they were actually born.

Alexander Brandenbiger [sic] Will, Will Book G.M.-2, pp. 479-480, Orphans Court, Frederick County Courthouse, Patrick and Court Streets, Frederick, Maryland.

IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN: This fifteenth day of May 1780. I Alexander Brandenburger of Frederick County and State of Maryland, being in proper health of body and perfect mind and memory, thanks be to God therefore calling to mind the mortality of my body and knowing that it is appointed for all men once to die -

I do make and ordain this my last will and Testament as touching God to what worldly goods it has blessed God to bless me with in this life. I do give and bequeath and dispose of in this manner and form following -

First and principally I give and recommend to the earth from whence it was taken to be buried in a Christian-like, decent burial at the discretion of my executor, nothing doubting but in general resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mighty power of God.

Item: I do give and bequeath unto my beloved daughter Barbara Frank [sic - Franks], the wife of Jacob Frank, one cow and calf [sic]. I bequeath unto my son Koonrad Brandebiger [sic] one cow and calf [sic]. I do give and bequeath unto my younger son Jacob Brandenbiger [sic] the rest of my estate both real and personal also I make, ordain my said younger son Jacob Brandenbiger the whole and sole executor of this my last will and Testament. In witness I have hereunto set my hand and seal this day and year above written.

Henry Brandenburg (Seal)

In presents [sic] of: Thomas Graver

George Fred. (X) Kindley
John Kindley

Frederick County, Aug. 2, 1793

Then came Jacob Brandebiger and made Oath that the foregoing Instrument of writing is the true and whole will and Testament of Alexander Brandenburger late of Frederick County deceased that hath come to his hands and possession -

Before George Murdock, Reg'r

Frederick County, 2 Aug. 1793

Then came George Frederick Kindley one of the subscribing to the foregoing last Will and Testament of Alexander Brandingbiger [sic] late of Frederick County deceased and made Oath on the Holy evangel of Almighty God, that he did see the Testator therein named sign and seal this Will, that he heard him publish, pronounce and declare the same to be his last Will and Testament, that the time of his so doing he was to the best of his Apprehension of a sound and disposing mind memory and Understanding, that he signed his name as a Witness of This Will in the presence & at the request of the Testator, and that he did also see Thomas Graver and John Kindly the other subscribing Witnesses sign their names as Witnesses, to this Will in the presence and request of the Testator and all in the presence of each other.

Geo. Murdock, Reg'r

4 & 1/2 shillings [fee for the service]

Note: Notice that Alexander Henry made his Will the year after he bought the farm "Chance" At this time Barbara and Conrad Senior were already living in Fayette County, Pennsylvania.

Anna Brandenburg Will, Will Book R.B.-1, p. 3, Orphans' Court, Frederick County Courthouse, Frederick, Maryland.

In the Name of God, Amen. The last will and Testament of Anna Brandingburgh [sic] of Frederick County in the State of Maryland made in sound disposing mind and memory this twenty-ninth day of January in the year of our Lord seventeen hundred and ninety four.

In the first place I recommend my spirit to the hands of God that gave it and my Body to my Executor hereinafter to be named, to be by him decently buried and as to my worldly goods I dispose of them in the following manner to wit:

I Give and bequeath to my son Conrad ten Shillings for his full part out of my Estate and no more -- I give and bequeath to my beloved daughter Barbary my bed and covering likewise all my Whereing [sic] apparel and ten Shillings for her full part and no more -- I Give and bequeath all the remaining part of my Estate to my son Jacob his heirs or Assigns to be possest [sic] by him his heirs or Assignes [sic] and none Other. Lastly I appoint my son Jacob my hole [sic] and sole Executor of this my last Will and Testament and none other. --

her

Anna (X) Brandenburgh (Seal)
mark

Signed Sealed Acknowledged & Delivered in the presence of us:

Philemon Griffith
Jacob Kinley
William Kinley

Frederick County to wit: on the 7th day of February, 1809. Then came Jacob Brandenburg and made Oath on the holy Evangels of Almighty God that the foregoing Instrument of writing is the true whole will and Testament of Anna Brandenburg late of Frederick County deceased that has come to his hands and possession and that he Doth not know of any others.

Richard Butter, Reg'r

Note: The following part told how Philemon Griffith and William Kindley on the 7th of February, 1809, took Oath that it was the will of Anna Brandenburg, that she was of sound mind, and that they saw Jacob Kindley, the other witness, subscribe his name to the will.

1790 Frederick County, Maryland, Census, p. 61 (see #6)

Jacob Brandenburg: males over 16 - 2
 males under 16 - 2
 females - 2

Note: Alexander Henry and Jacob would have been the two males over sixteen, Jacob's two sons, John and Jacob Junior would be the two males under 16, and Anna and Elizabeth (Rine) would be the two females.

Deed for the farm "Chance", Deed Book W.R.-2, p.101, Frederick County, Maryland, Courthouse, Frederick, Maryland.

This indenture made the 22 July 1779 between Christopher Edelin and Alexander Brandenburg, both of Frederick County for 270 pounds from Alexander Brandenburg, that parcel of land called "Chance" lying in Frederick County, beginning at a bounded White Oak standing on the north side of the east fork of Bennetts Creek and near a piece of land called "Solomon's Flower" surveyed for Solomon Turner and thence north 26 degrees less 6 perches, then south 85 degrees, west 26 perches, then south 3 degrees less 40 perches, then 36 degrees east 48 perches, south 77 degrees, east 2 perches, then north 27 degrees east 28 perches, then north fully 6 degrees east 54 degrees west 46 perches, then west 25 perches, then south 29 degrees west 100 perches, then to the beginning tree, containing 123 acres of land with all the buildings, improvements and appurtenances.

Note: A perch equals 16 & 1/2 feet.

Barbary (Brandenburgh) Franks Obituary, Maryland Gazette, (the original of this newspaper is at the Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, Maryland).

Died at her home in German Township, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, on Sabbath morning, the 12th day of October, 1839, Mrs. Barbara Franks in the 98th year of her age. The deceased was born in Germany, A. D. 1741, and came to America in 1754 in

company with her father, Conrad Brandbery [sic] and family, who were in indigent circumstances. She was sold as a servant to pay the passage, to a Mr. Miller of Maryland, who treated his servants about as he did his slaves, with a great deal of severity. At length the days of her jubilee arrived and she married Jacob Franks. Then they emigrated to western Pennsylvania and settled on the waters of Browns Run in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. In the forest with no other covering save the arch blue sky, adorned in the evening with the twinkling stars, such place by care and industry afterwards became their asylum. Few women ever crossed the Allegheny Mountains with a more firm constitution. Until the day of her death, there was never an emetic entered her lips nor a lancet her veins.

She was the mother of four sons and three daughters. These obeyed the first commandment and married wives and husbands and their children will follow the example of their parents. There were added 303 children, these in part follow the same order. Up to the time of her death, there were 93 of the fourth generation making in all a posterity of 491. She was enrolled a member of the German Presbyterian Church and continued upwards of 60 years. She was an affectionate mother, a good neighbor, kind and benevolent to all, until nature gradually gave way and we trust she quietly reposes in rest.

Note: The obituary was incorrect, because Conrad Brandeberry Senior was Barbara's brother, not her father, which her parents' Wills (given above) prove. Also, the ages of Barbara and Conrad Senior's children prove they were of the same generation. Wills are primary sources because they happened at the time the event happened. On the other hand, a newspaper article that was written long after-the-fact of the incidents it related, is called a secondary source by genealogists. Because her parents remained in Maryland and her brother, Conrad, went to Fayette County, Pennsylvania with her the story became garbled. Since Barbara died at such an ancient age, the obituary may have been written by one of her grandchildren.

MORE ABOUT BARBARA (BRANDENBURG) FRANKS AND THE CHURCH WHERE THE FAMILY WORSHIPPED FOR SO MANY YEARS

From copies of official records found in the Uniontown Library, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, it was related that Jacob Franks I's father, Michael Franks I (from Frederick County, Maryland) was a wagoneer with the forces of General Braddock and Colonel George Washington on their expedition against the French at Fort Duequene (now Pittsburg, Pennsylvania). It was probably at that time that Michael Franks I found the land which he later "took up." The small group of Germans who first went to German Township marked the areas they intended to own by "tomahawk right," which meant they blazed the trees along the edges of their boundary lines with their special marks. They only received formal title to their lands, from the government, many years later. Those records are in the Bedford County, Pennsylvania, Courthouse, which Fayette County was a part of at the time.

A church bulletin at one of the Franks' Family Reunions held between 1850 and 1980 at St. Jacob Lutheran Church in German Township, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, said that the church was the first Lutheran church built west of the Allegheny Mountains.

The original church records, written in long-hand by their first pastor, are in German, and those records are extant at Theil College Library in Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

Barbara was called "The Sweet Singer of the Wilderness." People came from miles around to hear her sing at Saint Jacob Combined Lutheran and Reformed Presbyterian Church. The church was named in honor of Barbara's husband, because he donated the land on which the church and glebe (graveyard) were situated. Many of her descendants have inherited her musical ability, and many are buried in that glebe.

At the front of the glebe, west of the church, is the "Memorial Church" a small log building constructed from hand-hued, square logs, used by the Riffles, Franks and Conrad Brandeberry Senior to build Riffle's Fort, which the small community used when they first went to Fayette County, when there was danger of Indian attacks. After the fort was no longer needed, it was left to rot, but fortunately someone decided to save the remaining logs and build the small building. Barbara and her faithful husband, Jacob (died in 1804), are buried near the back (southeastern) corner of the memorial church.

There is an historical plaque beside the memorial church that stated that one of the Riffle children was the first one buried in the glebe, and Barbara Franks carried the child's casket in her arms, surrounded by stout German men carrying their long rifles to protect the mourners from Indian attack.

There is also a persistent tradition that Barbara could read and write, and taught the children of the parish. Moreover, tradition said she even read "book sermons" to the congregation before they had a permanent pastor. Barbara and Conrad were Reformed Presbyterians and Barbara's husband, Jacob Franks I, was a Lutheran. (See also the Jacob Franks sketch for more about this remarkable woman.)

In all branches of the Brandenburgs there are twins, and more boys born than girls (my son had six boys but no girls). Many descendants live to very vigorous old ages. Furthermore, many descendants of all branches became teachers, musicians or artists, which implies artistic genes in the Brandenburg family.