

**THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE  
BRANDENBURG ESTATE IN GERMANY  
by Pat Bristley**

In the late 1800s, and again in the early 1900s, Brandenburg descendants tried to obtain an estate in Germany that presumably belonged to Solomon Brandenburg, the father of some or all of the Brandenburg men who emigrated to the United States in the middle of the 1700s. There was a great furor at the time about the *alleged* estate, said by different members of the family to be worth 10, 25, 44 or 80 million dollars.

During the 1880s there was a worldwide depression of great magnitude, which probably led many of the Brandenburgs to dream of the untold wealth that others told them belonged to them. Perhaps that was why some members of the family tried so desperately to obtain the supposed fortune.

Most of the letters and minutes of meetings, of those trying to obtain the fortune, that survived, were collected by Dr. William J. Moore (#599), who probably got most of them from the family of Agnes M. Beasley. The furor finally died down. By 2001, none of the descendants expected to obtain a fortune, but many still thought the Brandenburgs in the United States were descendants of royalty.

In January 2001, the author was sent a genealogy by another researcher, that was obtained from yet a third researcher, supposedly going back to 1061, showing that the descendants of Mathias Brandenburg were the only rightful descendants of the Brandenburg royalty in the United States. It stated Mathias became an Elector (one of the rulers) of Prussia on 12 June 1758, although just below that, was given the birth of Mathias' daughter, Elizabeth, in Frederick County, Maryland in 1744. If those two statements were true (they weren't), how could Mathias be living in Maryland in 1744 (he wasn't) and then become the Elector of Prussia 14 years later, and buy land in Frederick County, Maryland on the 3rd of March, 1767? The trouble with some genealogists is that they do not look at the recorded documents or pay attention to impossible dates (such as a female who supposedly married on a date before that of her birth).

How did the idea of a fortune come about, and in fact the idea that the Brandenburgs in America descended from royalty who owned castles? We can only look at the documents left, and try to figure out what went on. In letters, it was said that Mathias Brandenburg and William Henry Brandenburg told their children and grandchildren about the estate. It is impossible to know what really happened at this late date, but just possibly on cold winter nights, Mathias and William Henry liked to spin yarns to enthrall their amazed audiences.

Since all the Brandenburgs, except the family of John Martin Brandenburg, went to the same counties in the same states at the same time, we know they were related. Even John Anthony Brandenburg who came to the United States earlier than the others

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(1740), was found in German records living in the next parish to William Henry Brandenburg Senior in the Rhineland-Pfaltz. If, as I suspect, most of them were brothers (see the sketch of Solomon Brandenburg, the ancestor of all), the descendants of Alexander Henry Brandenburg would have been the rightful owners of the estate, because with royalty, the rule of progenitor, where the oldest son inherits, would have applied. Alexander Henry must have been born before 1721, since his daughter, Barbary Brandenburg, was born in 1741 (her obituary and tombstone - both extant).

The date of Mathias Brandenburg's birth is said to have been circa 1738, which would have made his only three years older than Barbary, and the youngest not the oldest son, of Solomon. Another curious fact about the whole estate frenzy, is that I have not found any record that stated Alexander Henry's descendants took part in the affair, although known descendants of Mathias, William Henry Senior, John Martin, Jacob/Samuel and Christopher Brandenburg attended the meetings or hired attorneys. It may have been that Alexander Henry's descendants were involved, but the records were never found. On the other hand, most of Alexander Henry's descendants were well-to-do farmers, and may have seen no need to go "chasing after rainbows."

Below are the minutes of the meetings, and the letters that were saved, although I am sure they are only a small percent of those written at the time. First, however, is a letter written by Dr. William J. Moore, because I believe that he thought as I do - that there was no fortune at all. Dr. Moore was a descendant of Joseph and Delilah (Vessor) Brandenburg, and Joseph's father Mathias.

On the other hand, there could have been an estate and the Brandenburgs could have been near relatives of the ruler of Prussia, *if* the family moved to the Rhineland-Pfaltz after they were banished from Prussia. But the fact remains that records for William Henry Brandenburg Senior and John Anthony Brandenburg *were* found in the Palatinate.

**Note:** Some punctuation and paragraphs were added to the letters. Some letters were formatted slightly differently, in order to save space.

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*W. J. Moore Papers* (see #599)

[unknown date]

Dear Mrs. McKinney:

Thanks for your letter of June 7, and the copy of the announcement of the meeting of the heirs of William Henry.

I note that your husband plans to retire soon. It will soon be three years since I retired. I hope that he enjoys it as much as I have. When I retired I had been employed by the Eastern Kentucky University for thirty-seven years, the last twenty years as academic dean, during which I had ample secretarial work. I am, therefore, unaccustomed to typing, employ the hunt and peck system, and make many mistakes as you have already observed.

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Frankly, I do not know what to believe about the much discussed estate in Germany. Was it the real thing, or was it all a hoax hatched up by some slick lawyers to fleece our ancestors out of some of their hard-earned cash?

The heirs of Matthias put out an announcement similar to that of William Henry. I have a copy. It was under date of October 28, 1888. It spoke of a meeting that had been held on August 9, 1888, at which time a contract was made with Jno. C. Keegan, attorney of Denver, to handle the matter. It is of interest to you that Charles D. Bell, Louisville, Kentucky, was elected secretary of the group. You will detect him as being person number 64 on the document of William Henry which you sent me. I have a copy of a letter from Mrs. H. Guis, number 5 on the list of the document of William Henry. It was written to a descendant of Matthias. I am sending you a copy. If her descendants could be located, they might have some of her papers, which would be of great value. This is impossible, I presume. I would send you a copy of the document of Matthias, but the copy I have is a Photostat, and the copiers I have access to will not duplicate it.

Several years ago a Mr. B. A. Deatruck published in the Corydon, Indiana, *Democrat*, a long series of articles relating to the heirs of Matthias. There are errors and of course he did not include --- [cannot read]. He is now deceased. He made the statement that Matthias was a half-brother of Frederick the Great, which, so far as I am concerned, is unverified. He quoted from a newspaper clipping owned by a Mr. C. E. Brandenburg, 605 Wisc, Russell, Kansas. The clipping was from a New York paper and has a Denver headline. The clipping is as follows:

C. D. Bell of Louisville, Ky. arrived in this city a few days ago for the purpose of consulting with his attorney, John C. Keegan, and is perfecting claims of heirs to the Brandenburg estate situated near Berlin, Germany, and valued at \$10,000,000.

Mr. Deatruck stated: "before his death, Matthias told his family of the estate in Germany, and the first confirmation of his words was the appearance of an advertisement in American and German papers in 1862, inquiring the whereabouts of the heirs of Solomon Brandenburg, several years before the Reichstag had passed a bill restoring the estate."

A grandson of Matthias [had] a clipping from a Texas paper with a Charleston, S. C., lead-line, under date of September 20, 1889, to the effect that Colonel W. W. Broker: "...has begun proceedings for the recovery of a fortune in Germany, said to be valued at \$10,000,000. This property is claimed by the heirs of Jacob Brandenburg [sic - John Martin], who fled from Germany a century ago, and settled in Lexington, S. C. [sic - Orangeburg County, S. C.]"

## **Brandenburg Estate - 4**

On February 15, 1903, C. D. Bell wrote J. L. Beasley, Nortonville, Kentucky, as follows: "I haven't any of the blanks. I sent all the papers I had with the case to my sister, Mrs. Kate M. Weber, 221 6th Street, San Francisco, Cal., and she turned them over to an attorney named Allen, and he claims that he has lost them. I think that he does not want to give them up."

And so it goes.

I shall be communicating with you again from time to time.

Sincerely,

W. J. Moore, Richmond, Ky.

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### **CONCERNING THE ESTATE IN GERMANY**

**by B. A. Deatrick**

**15 Park Row, New York, N. Y.**

From letters to Mr. Deatrick by various members of the Brandenburg family, information was handed down to them, that Mathias Brandenburg abandoned an estate of about \$10 million, when he left Germany. I will site one of these communications: Mr. C. E. Brandenburg of Russell, Kansas, says he has a newspaper clipping that his father had, taken from a New York newspaper, the name of which paper having been cut in two and all that is left is "...ress, New York, We..." The newspaper clipping reads as follows:

Denver, Colo. Aug. 10, ...: C. E. Bell of Louisville, Ky. arrived in this city a few days ago for the purpose of consulting with his attorney, John C. Keegan, and is perfecting claims of heirs to the Brandenburg estate situated near Berlin, Germany, valued at \$10,000,000. Mr. Bell said yesterday that all the heirs of this estate live in America. They number nearly a hundred [sic - thousands], and are confident of their ability to obtain possession of their property, out of their hands for nearly 200 years.

Solomon Brandenburg, about the year 1700, offended one of the Royal Hohenzollerns and had his estate confiscated by the Crown as punishment. Mathias Brandenburg, the only heir of Solomon [sic], came to America and settled with his family in Winchester, Virginia [sic]. They then removed to Meade County, Kentucky [sic], where he was killed by an accident in 1807, leaving a family of 12 [sic] children, one of whom was the grandfather of Mr. Bell. Before his death, Mathias told his family of the estate in Germany and the first confirmation of his words was the appearance of an advertisement in American and German papers in 1862, inquiring the whereabouts of the heirs of Solomon Brandenburg. Several years before, a bill passed the Reichstag restoring the estate. The castle on the estate is said to be one of the handsomest in Europe and is at present tenanted by Count Herbert Von Bismarck.

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**Note:** According to David Brandenburg of Marietta, Georgia (descendant of Matthias and Hester (Wolgamot), the castle that belonged to the Brandenburgs that Bismarck lived in, is now in northwestern Poland because of treaties made after World War II.

**Note:** The following meetings and letters from J. R. Taylor and C. A. Strasburg, are exactly as they appeared in the printed documents.

### MEETING OF THE HEIRS OF MATTHIAS BRANDENBURG

The following are the minutes of the meeting held at the Louisville Hotel, Louisville, Ky., and are self explanatory.

Louisville, Ky.

Oct. 23, 1888

At a meeting held this date at the Louisville Hotel by the heirs of Mathias Brandenburg to devise ways and means to secure the Brandenburg estate, the following heirs were present:

Col. J. R. Taylor, Wichita, Kansas  
Mrs. Jane A. Cole, Chicago, Ill.  
David D. Brandenburg, Nortonsville, KY.  
Thomas Brandenburg, “ “  
R. H. Beasley “ “  
J. W. Kennedy “ “  
Chas. F. Taylor, Louisville, Ky.  
Chas. D. Bell, “ “

On motion, Co. J. R. Taylor was elected Chairman and Chas. D. Bell, Secretary.

On motion the following contract between the heirs of Mathias Brandenburg and Jno. C. Keegan, Attorney, of Denver, Colorado, was agreed to and adopted:

This agreement made this, the 9th day of August, 1888, between the heirs of Mathias Brandenburg of the first part, and Jno. C. Keegan, Attorney, of Denver, Colorado, party of the second part.

**Witnesseth**, That the parties of the first part whose names are signed hereunto, agree to pay to the said party of the second part the sum of One Hundred and Fifty Dollars as retaining fee, and a further sum of Five Hundred Dollars to be used in securing and perfecting records from Germany to perfect the claims of the said parties of the first part, in and to a certain estate claimed to exist here, and known at the Brandenburg Estate.

The parties of the first part further agree to fill up correctly the Heirship Blanks, which has been or may be sent them, and when so filled the parties of the first part agree to send all blanks so filled to the party of the second part at Denver, Colorado, who with

**Brandenburg Estate - 6**

a representative or representatives to be designated by a majority of the heirs, shall proceed to Germany to file said blanks with the proper court, there to secure the said estate for the parties of the first part, and in consideration of the agreement of the parties of the first part being fulfilled, the party of the second part agrees to act as Counsel to secure for the parties of the first part and to secure to them the estate known as the Brandenburg Estate.

The parties of the first part agree to pay the party of the second part for his services the sum of ten per cent of the total amount of all sum or sums of money realized from said estate as soon as the said estate is probated and the proper German officer makes the distribution. Signed:

C. D. Bell	W-- Kingsley
Jay Gavin	J. R. Taylor
Amy A. Hurst	Robt. H. Beasley for Agnes M. Beasley
J. C. Brandenburg	Tho. Brandenburg
Jac-- S. Hurst	-- I. Brandenburg
David B. Bell	J. W. Kennedy
A--- Brandenburg	Chas F. Taylor

On motion Chas. D. Bell was elected Treasurer, and was authorized to pay Jno. C. Keegan the sum of Six Hundred and Fifty Dollars, the amount called for in the contract adopted by this meeting between the said Jno. C. Keegan and the heirs of Mathias Brandenburg, the said sum to be paid as soon as the money is paid by the heirs to the Treasurer. The Treasurer was also authorized to go among the heirs and assist them in filling their blanks, for which services he shall receive a reasonable compensation and his expenses paid. The Treasurer is the only legally authorized person to solicit and receive money paid by the heirs to defray the necessary expenses in the case, and each of the heirs present at this meeting agree to be personally responsible to all the other heirs for a faithful and honest performance of the duties of said C. D. Bell as Treasurer.

On the motion, Chas. F. Taylor and Judge Jno. C. Walker were appointed a committee to prepare a circular letter containing full information to be sent to all the heirs.

On motion the meeting adjourned.

Chas. D. Bell, Secretary  
2613 West Jefferson Street  
Louisville, Ky.

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**TO THE HEIRS OF MATTHIAS BRANDENBURG**

There is now an Estate in Prussia valued at Eleven Million Dollars, the lawful owners of which are the heirs of Mathias Brandenburg, who died in Kentucky in 1807. Attorneys have been employed to recover the estate on a contingent fee, and a small sum from each of the heirs will be necessary to pay the expenses in the case. It will be seen by the contract entered into by the heirs at a meeting held in Louisville, Ky., that we are to pay the attorneys a retainer fee of Six Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$650.00), which is all they can demand or can possibly secure until they succeed in getting possession of the estate for the heirs. That amount and enough to pay the expenses of having the blanks filled properly is all the money we need. The whole success of the case depends upon having the blanks filled correctly, and it is almost impossible for the heirs to fill them without assistance.

It is expected that each heir will contribute at least Ten Dollars (\$10.00), as a less amount will not be sufficient to pay the necessary expenses, and we hope there is enough family pride in the descendants of the House of Brandenburg in this country to induce them to contribute the necessary amount to secure the estate. A great wrong was perpetrated in confiscating this property from our forefathers, but they righted the wrong as far as they could by passing a law restoring it to the legal heirs, and shall we, for the want of a little money, forever let it pass from us? Shame upon us if we do. We will not deserve to be classed among the descendants of the great House of Brandenburg.

Some of us have been working on this matter for years and therefore are better posted than those who have lately become interested in it, and when we say we believe the property is there, that we are heirs to it, and can get it, we mean just what we say.

The case has gone just as far as it can go without money, and unless the heirs come to our assistance we will have to abandon it. The attorneys have done all they can do and it remains for the heirs to do their part, and whatever they do must be done speedily, for the property will in a short time revert to the Crown. The bill restoring the property was passed in 1860, our suit was filed in Berlin over a year ago, but unless we prove our claim to it by 1890, it reverts back to the Crown, and the only way to prove our claim is to fill the blanks properly. These blanks were prepared by our attorney in Berlin, and he is perfectly familiar with what the German law requires, and when properly filled will cove the case entirely.

The heirs are requested not to pay any attention to letters that are being sent out by the Secretaries of the American Legation at Berlin, as they are not paid to look up unclaimed estates, and consequently are not in a position to give correct information.

We would advise the heirs to send money in registered letter to Mr. Chas. D. Bell, No. 2613 West Jefferson Street, Louisville, Ky., who will send a receipt to each heir for money contributed and who will answer all letters addressed to him on the subject of the Brandenburg family or estate.

## Brandenburg Estate - 8

Owing to a failure of the committee appointed to prepare a circular to the heirs to agree upon a plan, I as chairman of the meeting make the foregoing appeal to the heirs.

Very respectfully,  
J. R. Taylor  
Wichita, Kansas, Nov. 23, 1888

**Note:** Colonel Jonas R. Taylor was not a descendant of Matthias at all. He was the grandson of Christopher and Mary Magdalena (Wilhelm) Brandenburg.

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**Note:** No date was given on the following letter, but I presume it was after the meeting they held in Dayton, Ohio, on 28 January 1889, when Mr. Strasburg was made the secretary for the association.

### MEETING OF HEIRS OF WILLIAM HENRY BRANDENBURG

A few of the heirs of William H. Brandenburg met January 28, 1889, at the residence of Mr. John Kuncle in Dayton, Ohio. The object of this meeting was to adopt measures that might aid in reclaiming their estate in Germany. Of this meeting Mr. Kuncle was chosen Chairman, and Mr. C. A. Strasburg, Secretary.

On motion of Mr. I. A. Brandenburg, the Secretary was authorized to have 300 blanks printed and to assist the heirs in filling them.

On a motion of I. A. Brandenburg, the meeting adjourned to meet February 12, 1889, at the residence of Mrs. Fauver, No. 10 Cass street, Dayton; and in the meantime the Secretary was to notify all the heirs he knew of, and request them to be present.

In answer to this request, some seventy-five persons met at Mrs. Fauver's at 1 o'clock p. m., February 12th, and the following business was transacted:

An Executive Committee of five was chosen. The duty of this committee shall be to work to the best interests of all the heirs, in whatever business is to be transacted in connection with the estate, and to see that all money properly expended, so as to further the interest of all the heirs; and on no account can any money be paid out except by order signed by the Chairman of the Committee and by the Secretary. The members of the Executive Committee are Mr. I. A. Brandenburg, of Spanker, Ohio; Mr. John Kuncle, of Dayton, Ohio, (No. 111 Herman avenue); Mrs. Fauver, No. 10 Cass street, Dayton, Ohio; Mr. W. W. Hayward, of Oxford, Ohio, and Naomi Shepard, of Sulphur Grove, Ohio.

Letters of inquiry addressed to Naomi Shepard, or to the Secretary will be answered promptly. On motion of Mr. Hayward, Mr. G. Russell Wells, of Dayton, Ohio, was chosen Treasurer.

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On motion of Mr. Byers, the Secretary was asked to receive subscriptions from those present, and the sum of \$128.00 (one hundred and twenty-eight dollars) was subscribed, \$58.00 in cash, & \$70.00 to be paid soon.

On motion of Mr. Charles D. Bell, a meeting of the Executive Committee was called, and finally concluded that it would be best that the heirs of William H. Brandenburg and those of Mathias should act jointly in sending some competent and trustworthy person to Berlin, who, by acting in concert with an authorized attorney there, shall investigate the whole matter fully, and take steps to recover the estate.

It is imperative that each heir should look up all his family dates, that his heir-ship blanks may be promptly filled. It is also deemed advisable that we also take steps to investigate and recover the estate in Baltimore, Md.

Appended is a list of names of persons present at the meeting in Dayton, February 12th, 1889:

1. Moses Brandenburg, Huntington, IN
2. Mrs. Mary Wells, Dayton, OH
3. Eliphalet Brandenburg, Goblesville, IN
4. Mrs. Elizabeth Gilbert, Dayton, OH
5. Mrs. H. Geiss, Muscatine, IA
6. Mrs. Harriet Pottle, Enon, OH
7. I. W. Brandenburg, Jackson Center, OH
8. Mrs. A. R. Brandenburg, Germantown, OH
9. Mrs. Sarah C. Brandenburg Seibert, Johnsville, OH
10. Mrs. Mary A. Brandenburg, Germantown, OH
11. Mrs. Susan Brandenburg Wiles, Dayton
12. Mrs. Catharine Brandenburg Brumbaugh, Greenville, OH
13. Mrs. Frank Brookley, Dayton, OH
14. Mrs. George McDargh, Dayton, OH
15. Mrs. Abigail Brandenburg, Dayton, OH
16. Mrs. W. W. Smith, Clyde, OH
17. David C. Brandenburg, Dayton, OH
18. Mrs. Lucinda C. Marker, Elerton, OH
19. Peter Brandenburg, Military Home Dayton, OH
20. Mrs. Anna Maria Kellogg, Troy, OH
21. Mrs. Sarah F. Stickel, West Milton, OH
22. E. P. Kellogg, Troy, OH
23. B. F. Stickel, West Milton, OH
24. Miss May Forrer, Dayton, OH
38. Dr. Samuel Henry Siebert, Fryburg, OH
39. Samuel Heckman, Union, OH
40. Samuel Shank, Johnsville, OH
41. Frank Wiles, Dayton, OH
42. Mrs. C. M. Shew, Dayton, OH
43. Charles M. Shew, Dayton, OH
44. Mrs. Tabitha Christian, Center, OH
45. David G. Brandenburg, Covington, OH
46. S. B. Christian, Center, OH
47. G. Russell Wells, Dayton, OH
48. Mrs. Laura Long, Dayton, OH
49. Mrs. Emma C. Wilson, Dayton, OH
50. S. K. Brandenburg, Brinley, OH
51. Mrs. Levina Patterson, Liberty, Ind.
52. Mrs. M. E. Butler, Dodds, OH
53. Mrs. Anna Christian-Swan, Oxford, OH
54. Wilmer H. Brandenburg, Dayton, OH
55. Mrs. R. Sorlman, Dayton, OH
56. Mrs. Kate M. Forrer, Dayton, OH
57. Mrs. Mary Brandenburg, Dayton, OH
58. W. W. Hayward, Oxford, OH
60. Henry Brandenburg, Oxford, OH
61. Miss Hortence Kephart, Fairfield, OH
62. William Byers, Denver, CO

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| 25. John S. Brandenburg, Dayton, OH         | 63. Charles Theis, Dayton, OH            |
| 26. Henry Brandenburg, Mummaville, OH       | 64. Charles D. Bell, Louisville, KY      |
| 27. Isaac A. Brandenburg, Spanker, OH       | 65. Mrs. Fauver, Dayton, OH              |
| 28. S. H. Everett, West Milton, OH          | 66. J. W. Shepard, Sulphur Grove, OH     |
| 29. Mrs. Sarah Sortman, Dayton, OH          | 67. Charles Strasburg, Sulphur Grove, OH |
| 30. Miss Lavina C. Brandenburg, Jamtown, OH |  |
| 31. David J. Brandenburg, Vandalia, OH      | 68. Mrs. Naomi Shepard, Sulphur Grove, O |
| 32. E. H. Brandenburg, Vandalia, OH         | 69. John H. Brandenburg, Springfield, OH |
| 33. Henry Theis, Dayton, OH                 | 70. Nathan Roberts, Sulphur Grove, OH    |
| 34. Oliver Wiles, Dayton, OH                | 71. John Hart, Troy, OH                  |
| 35. Joel Brandenburg, Sweador ?, OH         |  |
| 36. Mrs. C. A. White, Dayton, OH            |  |
| 37. Will Theis, Dayton, OH                  |  |

**Note:** Written in hand-writing on the bottom of the page was: "Sept. 10, 1950. W. D. J. Everett told me to write that no one received a cent of this estate."

Roma Everett Falkner

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**TO THE HEIRS OF WILLIAM HENRY BRANDENBURG**

About the year 1700 the estate of Solomon Brandenburg, of Prussia, valued at present value of 80 millions of dollars, was confiscated on account of the religious opinions held by its owner. The said property remained for many years in the possession of the Prussian Crown, but was finally released and is now awaiting distribution, providing the heirs thereto can be found. Three of Solomon Brandenburg's sons, or more, came to America at an early date, and their descendants are now residing in various sections of the United States. The three sons who came to American were William H; Jacob [sic] and Mathias Brandenburg, and their descendant are the lawful heirs to this estate in Prussia.

The heirs of Mathias have already organized, and it is thought best that we, the heirs of William H., join with them, so that our efforts may be a united one.

The reclamation of the estate will necessarily entail much expense. To meet this, it is hoped that each heir will contribute ten dollars, as there are attorneys' fees to be paid and blanks to be filled out. These blanks were prepared by our attorney at Berlin, Prussia, according to the requirements of the German law, and when properly filled will prove our heir-ship. As few of the heirs could fill these blanks properly, it is thought best some competent person well versed in the history of the family, be appointed to assist them in filling them.

Contributions can be safely sent to the Secretary by registered mail, and receipts will be given for all money received by him.

Owing to the necessity of having funds, and that each heir is entitled to a share both in the estate and the expense, we make the foregoing appeal to you and all the heirs.

Very respectfully,  
C. A. Strasburg, Secretary  
Sulphur Grove, Ohio

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*Clyde Enterprise*, Thursday, 7 February, 1889, p. 3, c. 4, Hayes Presidential Center Library, Fremont, Ohio, on microfilm.

### **An Heir to Millions**

Mrs. W. W. Smith was in Dayton this week attending a meeting of the Brandenburg heirs, called to take some definite action concerning two valuable estates in Germany which by law belong to the heirs of the House of Brandenburg. Mrs. Smith's great-great-great-grandfather was the owner of these estates, which are now valued at twenty-five million dollars. These estates must be redeemed in 1889, or they will revert to the Crown. Most of them are now occupied by Bismarck. The heirs have had a prominent Berlin lawyer at work on the case for a year, and he reports everything favorable for them. At the Dayton meeting the heirs decided to send an attorney, one of their own number, to Germany, and he will start next week. They felt quite confident of securing the estates. Complete records of the family have been kept from the time of this remote ancestor.

There is also an estate in Baltimore estimated to be worth thirty million dollars, belonging to the heirs of this Brandenburg's son - Mrs. Smith's great-great-grandfather. This estate was leased for ninety-nine years by the owner, and the lease is about to expire, which causes the heirs to exercise a great deal of energy. In the meantime the city of Baltimore has been built on this estate. Usually these fabulous estates are chimerical, but from the nature of the evidence offered it looks as though these Brandenburg heirs may come into possession of millions. Mrs. Smith's friends will at least sincerely hope so.

**Note:** Mrs. Smith was the daughter of Henry and Charlotte (Langwell) Brandenburg; Henry was the son of William Brandenburg III; William was the son of William Brandenburg Junior; and William Junior was the son of Wilhelm Heinrich/William Henry Brandenburg Senior - the one who supposedly had the estate in Baltimore, Maryland.

**News item from *The New York Times* (see #960):**

**TO RECOVER A BIG FORTUNE**

**CHARLESTON, S. C.**, April 27. Col. W. W. Brooker of the Edgefield Bar has begun proceedings for the recovery of a fortune in Germany, said to be valued at \$10,000,000. This property is claimed by the heirs of Jacob [sic] Brandenburg [sic], who fled from Germany over a century ago, and settled in Lexington County [sic], S. C. He was accused of treason and fled to escape conviction. As a result of his flight, his property was forfeited to the Crown. His heirs now claim that they have discovered evidence that clears him of the charge of treason. They have found the real estate and the record of all the securities. Col. Booker will consult with the German Minister at Washington about the case, and will then proceed to Berlin to begin formal proceedings for the recovery of the property.

**Note:** Lexington County, S. C., is near the state capitol at Columbia. From the Family Bible, his military record, and his land deed, it is proven that his name was not Jacob, but John Martin Brandenburg. It is yet to be determined who Col. W. W. Booker was. Sarah 'Sallie' Brandenburg, the daughter of Morgan and Caroline (Stack) Brandenburg, married a Price Brooker, but his connection to Col. Booker is not yet established.

As for the estate in Germany, I believe it was a fabrication started by one of Matthew (m. Hester Wolgamot) Brandenburg's descendants, C. D. Bell, to get money from other members of the family to pursue the claim. The money disappeared - Surprise! Surprise! - and nothing ever became of the claim.

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**Letter about Estate in Germany from Mrs. Joe T. (Barbara) Brandenburg (#961)**, I added paragraphs and punctuation to make the letter easier to read:

Ft. Motte, S. C.  
Sept. 30th, 1888

Mr. Rufus K. Brandenburg  
Haralson, GA.

Dear Sir and Cousin:

Yours of the 24th inst. received with enclosed record. I had previously received a similar record from Morgan Garick. My father had an old German Bible in the German language with the family record, and as well as my memory serves me, they correspond with the record that you and Morgan Garick has [sic] sent to me. The Bible that I refer to may reach a little farther back. My mother, when she gave up housekeeping, gave the Bible to my youngest sister, Adella, who married William Barksdale of Laurens. She

lived a short while and died. I am fearful that Barksdale looked upon it as an old worthless relic, and did not take any care of it. I wrote to my youngest brother, William, to get it for me. I shall write to him again that he must by all means get it for me.

My father told me repeatedly that three brothers came to America together, and that two stopped north and one came south, which was [John] Martin Brandenburg, which was our great-grandfather. And I agree with you that Martin, Matthias and another, name unknown, was [sic] the three sons, and were sons of Soloman Brandenburg, and that we are as near heirs as Col. Taylor and C. D. Bell.

I commence working in the U. S. Senate in January through the advice of James Lowndes, Atty., at Washington, as the cheapest and best course to pursue. He was to write to the U. S. Consul Genl. at Berlin. I did so, but he gave me very little satisfaction. Hon. Wm. Elliott advised to write to Richard M. Bruno, 49 Broadway, New York, as he was the attorney at the German consulate in New York. I wrote to Bruno and in his reply he proposes to give me the name of a German lawyer to look into it for us.

We must go together and work this to all it is worth. I will employ a lawyer to press our claim to the utmost extent, and you must do likewise. Have you a good lawyer [illegible] if we should be successful, as it will benefit all of us. I do not think it would be advisable to let Col. Taylor or C. D. Bell have all the facts, they may use every effort to defeat us. On the other hand, they may agree to take us in with them and avoid a litigation, and perhaps all parties would be defeated. I shall put in a claim for the heirs of Martin Brandenburg and you and the Georgia relations must do the same. I am of the opinion that our claim is as [illegible] as Messrs. Taylor and Bell, and by getting one or two lawyers here and one in Germany, our lineage can be traced back to Solomon Brandenburg.

We must stand together and keep each other posted as to details that is [sic] of any importance to us. I favor giving the others all the trouble and make them accept us as legal heirs with them. And let me hear from you soon.

Yours truly,  
T. Perry Brandenburg

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Robt. Beasley  
Nortonville, Ky.

March 6th, 1889

Dear Cousin Robert,

Your very kind and welcome letter received. Everything is at a standstill as it were. The Attys. have refused to give us any further information or go on with the case unless they are paid for their information, or go on with the case, unless they are paid \$650.00. And as I do not like the way they have been doing, I have refused to pay it, and instead am going to use the money to pay the expenses of some heir to go to Berlin to investigate the whole matter. We cannot possibly go ahead with this matter intelligently until this investigation is made.

**Brandenburg Estate - 14**

We find there were 5 of the old Brandenburg who came to this country. They were named William [Henry], Mathias, [Alexander] Henry, Christopher and Jacob [sic - John Martin]. We think they were brothers, but cannot tell positively until this investigation is made, so you see how necessary it is that we begin over there and work this way. I don't think it advisable to spend any more money in filling blanks until this investigation is made. Let's not work on uncertainties any longer. We have the money to make this investigation, and by all means let's make it. If we find the property is there and the records there, which we need, can be had, we can get all the money. Then all that will be necessary [is] to push the case. If, on the other hand, we should find there is nothing there, we need not spend any more money, as you said at our meeting. I would like to have your opinion on this question.

I have had letters from Mr. March. He has contributed. Knapp is all right - I know his brothers. I have heard of this Mrs. Burk, but don't know just who she is. But she is some of our folks. I think this money had been put into my hands to be used for the best interest of the heirs, and I think the best thing to be done is to make this investigation. Let me hear from you. Give my kindest regards to all. Would like to have cousin Thos. and David's opinions on the matter.

Very Respt. Yours  
C. D. Bell  
Louisville, Ky.

Dear Cousin Robert,

April 6, 1889

Yours of Mch. 18th, received. Delayed answering until my return from Baltimore, where I went to complete details to send an Atty. from there to Berlin, which I did. All Arrangements are made. I paid his fee, and he said by the 15th of this month. His name is Geo. F. Gephart. He is a fine German scholar, well-acquainted in Berlin, very smart, and comes from one of the best families in all Maryland. We can trust him, so you see I have finally got matters in shape.

I will give you a little news. Dr. Wm. Vissman of this city is in Berlin completing his education as a physician. He was written to on this matter. He answers that there is such an estate there, and that Prince Bismarck lives in the old Castle, which belongs to it. He is perfectly reliable. He comes of one of the best and wealthiest German families in this city. I think that about settles the matter of the estate being there.

It's strange that Jonathan Summers of Crow River P. O. knows so little of his family. His mother was Amanda Brandenburg, the daughter of Jonathan, the son of Mathias. He had an Uncle David, but not James. His uncle died in Knox County, Ind.

**Brandenburg Estate - 15**

I know all about the Carr family. They descend from Christopher Brandenburg. Their grandmother was Susannah, the daughter of Christopher, and was born June 17th, 1776. There are five branches of the Brandenburg family in this country, descending from Mathias, Wm. H., [Alexander] Henry, Christopher and Jacob [ sic - John Martin].

I was on Jacob's old homestead in Maryland. Saw where he was buried. He has a son living yet in his 93rd year. I made quite a visit among the Brandenburs in Maryland. They are exceedingly nice people. I have a letter from Mrs. Burk's husband. They are all right. Remember me kindly to all the folks.

I remain your cousin,  
C. D. Bell

**Note:** The homestead that he saw in Maryland, that belonged to Jacob before his death, was the homestead of his father, Alexander Henry Brandenburg. At a Brandenburg Family Reunion in Kemptown, Maryland, in September, 1991, I was shown where the graveyard had been on Jacob's farm, but the tombstones were missing, and it was a corn field.

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Mrs. Agnes M. Beasley  
My Dear Madam:

Mayor's Office  
Baltimore, MD.  
July 1st, 1889

There are two Attorneys at law in Baltimore by the name of Gephert. I find no such name in our directory as Gephart. I do not know whether or not either of the Mr. Gepherts are in Europe. I can give you their Baltimore addresses.

Very truly yours,  
--- Kidenard Z--untnks, Mayor

George F. Gephert, Atty. at law  
206 Coastland St., Baltimore, Md.

William S. Gephert, Atty. at law  
206 Capstland St., Baltimore, Md.

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**Brandenburg Estate - 16**

Mrs. Agnes M. Morton  
Nortonville, Ky.

Sept. 8, 1889

Dear Lady,

...We have an attorney from Weisbaden employed to look after the supposed estate in Germany, and this is the fourth month they have been working. I am convinced when our men get through, we will know just how things stand. I am well posted in regard to Mr. Gephart's investigation, and am sorry for you people, as your money was simply thrown away. Mr. Bell has lately given me all joints in the Matthias Branch, and I am strong in the belief that the estate is coming to the Mathias heirs.

And if there is a Will belonging to Matthias B. and his wife, made to them by two maid sisters of Mathias' wife, and the will is in the Brandenburg name, they will (that is our attorney) find this will. But if the will is in the name of (Vuljaman) if I remember it right, there will have to be an extra search of this will.

Now I know nothing of this supposed fortune, only from what I have gained from others. I met Mr. Bell in Dayton, Ohio, last Feb. 12th, where the heirs of Mr. H. B. held a meeting, and since that day I have devoted all my time on the case, and have been in communication with each branch of the family; as with Carl Guiss of Germany, who has the power-of-attorney in hand, to attend to the search in that country.

I have been in Chicago to see Mrs. Jane Cole, who belongs to the Matthias branch, and is an aunt of C. D. Bell. I have also been in communication with Col. Brooker of S. Carolina, who represents the heirs of John Martin Brandenburg. also from the descendants of Christopher, Jacob [sic - this refers to the son of Alexander Henry, whom early genealogists thought was the immigrant in that line], Wm. H. and Matthias heirs.

My mother belongs to the Henry branch of the Brandenburgs. Now each family remembers hearing of their ancestors speaking of the fortune. My mother has an aunt who is nearly ninety (90) years old. She has often heard the grandfather (who was a son, it seems, of Solomon) talk of the fortune left back in Germany. So it seems there has been grounds for all of this rumor.

I have spent time and money on this, and I don't think I will rest until I get to the bottom. It is useless to send an attorney to Germany from this country as no American-German lawyer can have access to the records in Germany. They would have to employ an attorney there, and simply sit back and look on, as no one but those holding license and powers, are admitted to the Courts of Records. Carl Guiss holds a high position, and is a man of high honor, and will do all in his power to make a thorough search, and I do not think it will be long until we get a final answer....

With kind wishes from all the dear ones I hear from, I remain,

Mrs. H. Guis

109 Locust St., Muscatine, Iowa

Mrs. Agnes M. Morton  
Nortonville, Ky.

July 8th, 1891

Dear Cousin Agnes,

Your letter received some time ago. Glad to hear from you. This leaves me well, hope this will find all of you the same. I have all the blanks that were made up, at my house in Louisville, Ky. The estate is there beyond a question. The property lies in the Province of Saxony in Prussia, 30 miles North East of Madgeburg near a little town called Gardalegen, and the castle is known as Friedericksure, and is occupied by Bismarck as a residence. Also a part of the estate lies in the City of Brandenburg, Prussia, upon which there is a large sugar refinery, but there are no court records of the property because it always belonged in the Royal family.

Solomon belonged to the elder branch of the family, and the present ruler of Prussia and German belonged to the younger, or Franconian line. In this old Castle are all the relics of the elder line. This castle was built in the year 924, and from that date has always belonged in the Royal Family. They owned at one time 42 thousand square miles of Prussian territory. We are Prussians, not Germans. I could give you the history of the family from the beginning of the 8th century down. Solomon's father was Prince William, and Friedrich the First took this property away from him, and in 1862 old King William reinstated this property to the heirs. And the descendants of Matthias are the only heirs in the world to deserve this property. Solomon had four sons and one daughter; his sons were named Emanuel, Jacob, Matthias [sic] and one son who died very young and one daughter named Hester. All of his children lived and died in Prussia except Matthias, who came to this country. None of the others left any heirs.

The man Mrs. Cole sent over there has returned. he said the property could be received if some of the heirs would go over there and employ an Atty. there, but I don't suppose that it will ever be done, because we haven't the money to do that. If I had the money, I would not give it up, but would go over there. Those that have the money will not put it up, and those that would do anything, haven't the money to push the thing.

The weather here is very cold and disagreeable. It's sunny today and has been some of the time for the last month. I think I shall return to Louisville in the spring. This city is going down very much. Nothing like it was a year ago. Give my kindest regards to all the folks, and I ever remain your cousin.

C. D. Bell  
1448 Stout St., Denver, Col.

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**Brandenburg Estate - 18**

Mrs. Jane A. Cole  
Chicago, Ill.

July 28, 1890

Dear Friend:

As I wrote you a letter some few months ago, and not receiving a reply as I thought that you had gone to Germany. I now take the opportunity to address you again to find if you have any new information to impart in regard to the estate, also what success you had in Germany. I believe this letter leaves myself and family in as good health as usual, although there has been quite a lot of sickness in this county this season, on account of this being such a mild winter. This letter will find you and yours enjoying the best of health. So hoping that you will reply to this as soon as convenient and that you may have some very encouraging news to report. I will close by saying, believe me to be as ever.

Your friend,  
Agnes M. Beasley

To Mrs. Agnes Morton

Chicago, Ill.

Dear Friend,

April 3rd, 1890

Yours of the 27th at hand, and am glad to hear that you are still in the land. I am all ready to go with the exception of funds to pay my expenses. All that I have as yet used is from you and your son and Mr. March. Mr. Bell has a small amount 10 or 15 dollars. Bell has all the papers ready, except Joseph and Samuel, which will soon be completed.

I think the heirs are acting very negligent, we have written to many and have received no reply. Is there any way you can stir any of them up? I would like to get off by the 15th of the month or the first of May sure, and I don't feel able to bear so much of the expense myself.

I think there is no doubt but this matter can be settled up in a short time providing we can get the remain to push it. The Atty. is employed and his retainer fee paid. I have never heard anything from Joseph B. of Winchester, but I do think it a shame that none of them can't open their hearts and pocketbooks just now. It doesn't require so much, not enough to hurt any of them, should they all respond a little.

I am going if I have to furnish the means myself. I believe you are doing what you can. Suppose you urge them again. Under the existing state of affairs in Germany, I believe now is the time to strike and that we shall succeed. There is nothing especially new. Only I am satisfied that the estate can be ours now, if we make the effort and the effort must be made.

Bismark has gone back to the Castle to live. It's located at Fredrickshire. Answer soon again. Mrs. Geiss is going with me. I hope this finds you well and that they will respond at once. The whole amount rec'd. including bills is \$48.00 - rather light of a trip to Germany and for other expenses. The amt. of the estate is 44 million, enough for all.

Write soon,  
Mrs. L. E. Hyer

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**Brandenburg Estate - 19**

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D. L. Thornton  
Atty. at Law  
Versailles, Ky.  
Dear sir

Jan. 16, 1903

In reply to your note received, I will say I have contributed to the heirs and with their means we had ford.[warded] to Berlin to an atty. to push our claims, and I don't know of any real information I could give but will refer you to W. R. Taylor, 5911 Eggleston Ave., Chicago, Ill., as I am in correspondence with him, and he is really going ahead and doing our work. But will say in conclusion that I will kindly give any information. But I think Mr. Taylor could give you more information than I.

Yours very truly,  
Mrs. L. E. Hyer  
5001 E. 9th St., Kansas City, Mo.

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Mr. D. L. Thornton  
Versailles, Ky.  
Dear Sir:

Feb 4, 1903

Please find herewith a letter from Mr. J. R. Taylor to Geo. W. Brandenburg. Please read same, and return to me, as I want to return same to Geo. W. Brandenburg. Have you any news of importance lately?

J. L. Beasley  
Nortonville, Ky.

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George W. Brandenburg  
Pilot view, Ky.  
Dear Sir:

Jan 15th, 1903

Your letter under date of the 12th inst. at hand, and in reply will say, this plan I am working on, is the only way we can ever recover that estate. As I told you in a former letter, that I am working according to instructions from one of the best-versed lawyers in that line of work, in this country. He said the reason why we never got that claim settled, was by employing lawyers here and sending them to Berlin, instead of making arrangements with a good one there, as no others will be permitted to examine the records, which are not in the Common Court. That decree restoring the property is in the High Court, to which no foreigner, or common lawyer has access to. The Attorney whom

**Brandenburg Estate - 20**

I have turned the case over to, is one of the best in his profession. practicing only in the High Courts. After learning the nature of our claim, admitted it had never properly handled, and feeling confident of success, agreed to close it up for us, on a fee of two hundred dollars, which I agreed to pay, which you know is very reasonable, and the sooner we have it turned over to this country for division.

Regards to Mrs. Jane Cole, I have lost all trace of her after she left this city. Mrs. Nall, who is now in Berlin, Germany, is an heir too, on Nathan's side. As for C. D. Bell, I know nothing of him, since he was working on the case in 1888. My father also put up a lot of money for that purpose, and never heard of it afterwards. My grandmother on my father's side was Hannah Brandenburg and a daughter of Christopher and Mary Brandenburg.

The main thing to do is to have this claim allowed, and after that is done we will have to prove up our heir-ship. I wish you would kindly send me what dates and names you have and the chain of the family, as I want to send them to the attorneys. I have them in an old family Bible, and some of them are faded out. As for sending money, you can send it by express order, or New York or Chicago draft, and the sooner we get the money there, the better.

Hoping, sir, that this will explain all your questions satisfactorily and I may hear from you at an early day, I remain,

Very respectfully,  
W. R. Taylor  
5911 Eggleston Ave., Chicago, Ills.

Mr. D. L. Thornton  
Versailles, Ky.

San Francisco, Cal.  
Jan. 27, 1903

Dear Sir:

Yours of Jan. 14th is at hand and [I] will say Mrs. Amy A. Hurst of 1250 E. 27th St., Los Angeles, and myself have been gathering all information we can, and Mrs. Hurst sent the history to W. R. Taylor of 5911 Eggleston Ave., Chicago. I did not retain a copy, yet of all the history as my grandson does the typewriting and he hasn't mine complete. But if you will write to Taylor, he will send you a copy. I am sorry I cannot give you anything that would be of any benefit. After Mrs. Hurst sends me my copy of the history, I am willing to send you a copy of it, if you cannot get one from Mr. Taylor. And with all respects I am your humble servant.

Mrs. Kate M. Weber

P. S. My mother was Jane Brandenburg. She married Phenton Bell; her father's name was Jonathan Brandenburg [who] lived in Mauckport, Ind., and is buried there. My

**Brandenburg Estate - 21**

brother's name is Charley D. Bell, 1506 W. Market St., Louisville, Ky. My uncle, Philip Brandenburg, lived and died at Corydon, Ind. His sons, Joseph and Amos, still live at the old home place. Uncle Jehu Brandenburg lived and died at Mauckport, Ind., also Uncle Joseph Brandenburg. I have all my mother's and [her] brother's and sister's names, and when they lived and died.

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Mr. D. L. Thornton

Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:

March 20th, 1903

I am in receipt of a letter from Mrs. Weber of Calif. saying you had written her that you had some valuable information in your possession regarding the Brandenburg estate in Germany, sent me your address, and requested me to write you for same, if you are one of the heirs, you know several fruitless trips have been made by Attorneys whom the heirs sent to Berlin, at a great expense, and not receiving any encouragement, the heirs became disgusted and the case was dropped until a few months ago.

I took the matter up, not feeling satisfied to see that vast fortune revert back to the Crown without an effort to save it. I turned the case over to one of the best posted Lawyers in this country, regarding foreign claims, linking up the validity of our case. [He] told me he could not handle it. That the estate was confiscated by the Crown, afterwards restored by King William. The case is in the High Courts and no Lawyer from this country would be permitted to examine the records, or recognized in that court, and the only way we could get at it, would be to employ an Atty. there who is licensed to practice in that court, and we would only be throwing money away by tampering with it in any other way.

I obtained the name of one of the best lawyers in Berlin, and turned the case over to him. Since then, I called on an Atty. who had returned from Germany, where he was successful in settling an estate. He also said the laws were very queer there, and I had gone at the case in the proper manner, that all an Atty. could do would be to have the claim allowed, and it would be turned over on proof of heir-ship.

The lawyer whom the heirs sent there in 1888, filed the claim in the common court. The heirs might as well have saved that expense of sending him, there, and filed it in one of our Justice Courts. I wrote to a Mrs. Beasley of your city some time ago, whose name was among the list of heirs, but received no reply, probably you may know of her. Trusting you will send me what dates of interest you have, relative to the case, so I can forward them to Germany. Thanking you in advance, I am very resp.

W. R. Taylor

5911 Eggleston, Chicago, Ill.

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**Brandenburg Estate - 22**

Mrs. Mattie D. Beasley  
Nortonville, Ky.

Nov. 6, 1902

Dear Madam:

Your letter to my sister (Mrs. Burch) received and requested me to answer same. In the first place, we have fully substantiated our claim to the estate referred to. Our identify has been thoroughly recognized and approved, and those claiming to be descendants to the original family, will have to do likewise in order to get their portion, if any. In the first place you will have to say who left this estate, the nature of the estate, the year of his death, and when and where buried, names of the children and what relation Mathias was to the original Brandenburg. If you will answer these questions, as we were compelled to do, we will place your claim with those who did likewise, and have it filed in proper order.

We are constantly receiving letters from parties who claim to belong to this family, without any knowledge of the records of the family, and also from others who try to obtain information to link themselves with us, when they do not belong to the family at all, and as we have fully proven our identity to the proper authorities, it is not our place to give the records of the family to those who are not interested. We have several claims with ours, and if you can prove your connections by answering the above questions, as all others are compelled to do, and send them to me, I will turn it over to the Attorney who has charge of the business and he will send them to the proper authorities in Europe for his [sic] consideration, all of which must be attended to at an early date.

Very Respectfully,

W. R. Taylor

5911 Eggleston Ave., Chicago, Ill.

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W. R. Taylor  
Chicago, Ill.

Dec. 6, 1902

Dear Sir:

Your letter of Nov. 6, to Mattie D. Beasley has been handed to me by her for attention. She has placed in my hands, or placed at my disposal, a mass of correspondence she has had in connection with the claim of the mother of her husband, Mrs. Agnes M. Beasley, to a share in the Brandenburg estate. From the papers, I am certain that Mrs. Beasley was represented by her son, Robert H. Beasley at the meeting of the heirs held at Louisville, Ky. in the Louisville Hotel, Oct. 23rd, 1888, over which Mr. J. R. Taylor presided as chairman, and of which Chas. D. Bell, then of Louisville, Ky. was secretary.

I also find in the papers, an affidavit filled out but not sworn to, showing Mrs. Agnes M. Beasley's descent from Mathias Brandenburg thru her father, Solomon Brandenburg, who seems to have been a son of David Brandenburg, who was a son of Mathias Brandenburg. This paper is marked Memorandum No. 55, and has on it the stamp of the law office of John C. Keegan, Denver, Col. I don't know whether this paper is a copy of a memorandum which was actually filed thru Keegan, or not. I understand from Mr. Beasley, that his mother or her family contributed to the fund which was made up to prosecute this claim.

I have noticed the tenor of your letter to Mrs. Beasley, and devise to say that she does not wish to take advantage of any labor or expense performed or incurred by you or your sister, in establishing your claims, but see no reason why she should not, or rather I should not for her, ask you to advise me of the name and address of the attorney in the United States or Germany who has charge of the Matter of ascertaining the real heirs of Mathias Brandenburg in the United States, or of prosecuting their claims to the estate in Germany. I would be glad to have this information for the purpose of first ascertaining where the heir-ship has not already been shown in the proceedings which followed the meeting of the heirs at Louisville in 1888, above referred to. And if not, to arrange for submitting now, proof of the heir-ship.

I presume that you are closely connected with the J. R. Taylor who presided over the Louisville meeting of the heirs, and that you are conversant with the results of the proceedings put on foot by that meeting. If I am correct in this surmise, I should be very greatly obliged if you will give me such general information in regard to what was done after that meeting, and who is now actually representing the heirs who participated in that meeting, as you have and are willing to impart in this way. In short, I would be glad to know whether there is anything to the claims asserted by Mrs. Beasley's children to this estate, and where and with whom I can take up the matter, so as to get the fullest information in regards to it.

Can you give me the present address of Mr. Chas. D. Bell? Trusting that you will be kind enough to give me an early response to this matter, I am yours very truly.

D. L. Thornton, Attorney at Law  
Versailles, Ky.

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**Brandenburg Estate - 24**

D. L. Thornton  
Versailles, Ky.  
Dear Sir:

Dec. 19th, 1902  
Re: Brandenburg Estate

Your letter of the 16th inst. to hand and noted. I do not remember your client, Mrs. Beasley. I was some years ago in correspondence with a number of persons who claimed to be the heirs and descendants of the late Mathias Brandenburg.

I have had done a large amount of work on the matter and spent considerable money in investigating the status of the estate, and was not repaid, nor were my London and Berlin correspondents, and we were all very sore at how we were treated.

What we spent time and money on investigating, other parties were bleeding the heirs for money, and we were cheated chiefly through a liar and a fraud whose name is C. D. Bell, Louisville, Ky., who claimed to be an heir, and who came out here to see me.

I do not care to have anything further to do in the matter, unless I am paid in advance. I will not connect myself with some of the alleged heirs. A Chicago attorney sent on a party here to see me and look over the papers, etc. sent on to me to have the heirs to sign, so as to establish their kinship. I allowed him to examine same, but would not allow him to take a copy, nor did I give him any of the blanks or a copy of the same.

I am disgusted with the whole affair, even though a good sum should be realized as a fee, when the matter was wound up. I do not care to touch it again. I hope you appreciate my position in this matter under the circumstances.

I am your truly,  
John C. Keegan, Atty. and Counselor at law  
1529 Lawrence St., Denver, Col.

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Mr. D. L. Thornton  
Versailles, Ky.

Dec. 21st, 1902

Yours of the 16th received. Mrs. Beasley is one of the heirs to this property. The matter is being taken up again by some of the heirs in California, especially Mrs. Kate Weber, 221 6th St., San Francisco.

I worked upon the case for 12 months. If we had known about the property then, what we know now, we might have been successful at that time. We did not know just where the property was located. Did not know why it was confiscated. All these things we now know, and if we had money to employ an Attorney in Berlin to look for certain records which we need there, we might be successful yet.

There is nothing that can be done now until we know if certain records can be found over there. If we could get money to employ an Atty. over there, we could forever settle the matter, whether the property could be recovered.

C. D. Bell

Mr. D. L. Thornton  
Versailles, Ky.

March 5th, 1903

Your letter of Feb. 6th was received and contents noted, and I cannot understand why you ask me which Brandenburg was my father. I told you in my letter that my mother was Jane Brandenburg, daughter of Jonathan Brandenburg, and that my mother married Phenton Bell. I also told you Mr. C. D. Bell of 1506 W. Market St., Louisville, Ky., was my brother. The Brandenburs and Mrs. Beasley and Mrs. Kennedy are relatives of ours. Mathias Brandenburg, that was killed at Cincinnati, Ohio, was my great-grandfather. My own grandfather's name was Jonathan Brandenburg, who lived and died at Mauckport, Ind., and if you wish the full family history, you can obtain it by writing my brother, who has the family history by heart.

The oldest son of Mathias Brandenburg was Henry, [who] lived in Ky., buried at Mauckport, Ind. [sic]. The oldest child of Jonathan Brandenburg was Jahue [sic - Jehu], died at Mauckport, Ind., Green C., Philip married ? Brandenburg, Manda B. married a Mr. Summers, died in Minn., Elizabeth B. married a Mr. Beard, Ruth married a Mr. Faith.

Those are my [mother's] direct brothers and sisters. Oh! I forgot Uncle Joseph B. He was my mother's youngest brother. I think this will be sufficient to prove [to] you who I am, and with respect I remain.

Mrs. Kate M. Weber  
San Francisco, Cal.

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Mr. D. L. Thornton  
Versailles, Ky.

March 30, 1903

Dear Sir,

Please find, enclosed, letter which I received from Mr. C. D. Bell. Thought you would like to see it. If there is anything you would want to know of me, address me at 200 West Maxwell St., Lexington, Ky.

Yours respectfully,  
J. L. Beasley  
200 W. Maxwell St.,  
Lexington, Ky.

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Mr. J. L. Beasley  
Nortonville, Ky.

Feb. 15, 1903

Dear sir,

Yours of the 7th addressed to me at Louisville, Ky., reached me here this A. M. I am not doing much in regard to the Brandenburg Estate as I have been employed here since the 1st of Jan. by the Santa Fe Railroad. I am a material man and concrete inspector on the bridge they are building across the South Canadian River. Will take until sometime in May to complete job. I may then return to Louisville, unless the Santa Fe has other work for me. My mother's father was Jonathan Brandenburg, son of Mathias, son of Solomon of Prussia, son of Prince William. I haven't any of the blanks. I sent all the papers I had with the case to my sister, Mrs. Kate M. Weber, 221 6th St., San Francisco, Cal., and she turned them over to an attorney named Allen, and he claims that he has lost them. I think that he does not want to give them up.

Mr. W. R. Taylor of 5011 Eggelston Ave., Chicago, has taken the matter up, and claims he has an atty. employed in Berlin to take the matter up there. He claims there is a Mrs. Nall in Berlin, one of the heirs, assisting the atty. there. Perhaps you had best write to him in regards to the matter. I have not written to him.

I know all about his family. He descends from Christopher Brandenburg. We could never trace who was Christopher's father. We know he was not a son of Matthias. Who was he, that's the question? There is no use doing anything in this country until we know how things are in Berlin. When we worked on this thing before, we did not know enough about it then to begin right. Now we know where to begin and how to begin. I am willing to do all I can, when the time comes.

Very Respt.  
C. D. Bell  
Johnson Indian Territory

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**The Following Letter was Written in 1952 by Sam Baxley to E. C. Brandenburg, of Louisville, Kentucky:**

About the Brandenburg family, I do not remember any of the names, only what you mentioned. When I was about 15 years old I went to the clerk's office at Corydon and filled out some papers of ancestors of the Brandenburg family, five generations of Brandenburg, Germany, as a half heir of the Brandenburg estate. They might have something on record there, that was along about 1885 or 1886. The only one I know of that probably would know of, that kept family records was Clark Frank. He kept a complete record of Grandfather David Brandenburg, but he is dead now. He has a son who is a teacher in the University of Chicago. You might get in touch with him through the University. I don't know his given name. That estate was supposed to be \$80 million. I read the history of the Chancellor of the First World War. Von Bethens Holwer said he came from the old Brandenburg family, a rich set of bankers of Brandenburg, Germany. So I thought we all came from the same place. I have often wished I had kept a copy of that [paper] I filled out at Corydon.

We are feeling pretty good considering everything. I don't work anymore, only my garden and yard. Glad you and your dad O.K. Ollie Brandenburg is in the Vincennes Hospital, major operation. Haven't heard how he is getting along lately. They live in Oaktown. This is the first time I have been trying to write for so long, probably you can make it out - some of it.

Good Wishes, Sam Baxley, Linton, Indiana

**Note Written by C. E. Brandenburg:**

Talked to Ollie Brandenburg in Arkansas City, KS, a few years back. He had the same story on the Brandenburg Estate. He said that they told his father that the only way one could claim it was to live in Germany. That is the reason no one wants to claim it.