

## FREIBERG CHRONOLOGY IN SILESIA

Districts in Silesia associated with Freibergs and Wehners,  
together with Breslau the capital of Silesia



Excerpt from 1905 Map - Some Districts of Silesia, Kingdom of Prussia  
Freiberg/Wehner Districts in Yellow:  
Waldenburg, Schweidnitz, Bolkenhain, Lowenburg  
German names: Bold; Polish names: Italics  
Qqeirm/Wikimedia Commons -- CC

In the above map, the straight-line distance between the furthest most points West - East was roughly 1,000 miles. The district of Schweidnitz was roughly 190 miles across.

Coal mining has been a major industry in Silesia before and after it became Poland following World War II. Though, so far, though admittedly based on the limited amount of information available on the Freiberg and Wehner families, there is no indication that either family made their living from it.

**1860** [Presumably by this year] **Johann Hermann Freiberg** and wife **Ernstine Henriette Stief** were married. Johann was a weaver. Note: Their son Edward Friederick Freiberg's 1907 IA marriage license referred to them as **August Freiberg** and **Josaphine Stief**, but, I think "Josaphine" was likely a misinterpretation of her name.

Likely they were living this year in DITTMANNSDORF, DISTRICT WALDENBURG, known for its weavers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, Dittmannsdorf is called *Dzieńmorowice* and is located in Poland. Not to be confused with towns of the same names elsewhere.

[http://dziecmorowice.pl/?page\\_id=229](http://dziecmorowice.pl/?page_id=229)

[http://www.citipedia.info/city/general/Poland\\_\\_Lower+Silesian+Voivodeship\\_Dzie%C4%87morowice\\_id\\_3099778](http://www.citipedia.info/city/general/Poland__Lower+Silesian+Voivodeship_Dzie%C4%87morowice_id_3099778)

**1860** [Dec 3] – DITTMANNSDORF, DISTRICT WALDENBURG – Johann and Ernestine Freiberg's child **Mathilde Anna Freiberg** was born.

[??? Who was **Anna Gause**? Her name was mentioned by some family members in 1945 as the mother of Mathilde Anna Freiberg and wife of Johann Hermann Freiberg.]

[??? Also, at least one Freiberg descendant said that Johann Hermann Freiberg's wife was an invalid.]



**1867** [February 17] – ALT-REICHENAU, DISTRICT BOLKENHAIN – **Franz Carl Richard Wehner** was born to **Josef Wehner** and wife **Ernstine Heering**. Josef was a carpenter.

This rural town has been described as "a forested mountain health resort" and is believed to have special waters to bathe in. Alt-Reichenau is known as *Stare Bogaczowice* in Poland today.

[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stare\\_Bogaczowice](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stare_Bogaczowice)

<http://genwiki.genealogy.net/Alt-Reichenau>

<http://mapcarta.com/18515478>

This video gives a view of the countryside and an old mill in Stare Bogaczowice today.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkRhFB8QVpw>

**1871** [June 26] – BREITENHAIN, SCHWEIDNITZ – **Albert Gustav Freiberg** was born

**1874** [February 4] – BREITENHAIN, SCHWEIDNITZ – **Edward Friedrich Freiberg** was born



Breitenhain was and is a small, rural community near forest, mountains, and a stream. Today it is named *Lubachow* in Poland.

[??? Was there another Freiberg brother, name unknown, who was a steeplejack, who remained in Germany and died from a fall off a steeple?]

<http://mapcarta.com/18531764>

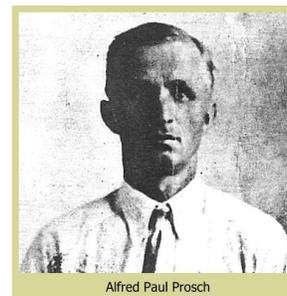


[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Weistritzalbahn\\_Partie\\_in\\_Breitenhain\\_\(postcard\\_1909\).png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Weistritzalbahn_Partie_in_Breitenhain_(postcard_1909).png)

**1884** [Presumably by this year] – Mathilde Anna Freiberg married **Hermann Prosch**.

**1885** [May 2] – POLSNITZ, DISTRICT WALDENBURG – Mathilde and Hermann’s son **Alfred Paul Prosch** was born.

Polsnitz was described in a 1900 Baedeker handbook for travelers to Germany as a “straggling village” which lay on the bank of the Polsnitz river across from the town of Freiburg. It came to be industrialized. Today, Polsnitz is a part of nearby Freiburg.



Freiburg was described in that same 1900 handbook for travelers as 905 ft. above sea level and “a small town (9200 inhab.) with several linen factories. . . prettily situated on the hillside.” (p. 256). It is possible that Mathilde worked in one of those linen factories. Her 1891 marriage certificate to Franz Carl Richard Wehner identifies her as a factor worker. Also, the 1904 Hamburg passenger list at the time she left Germany lists her occupation as “spinnerin,” a spinner. Note that Freiburg, just across the river from Polsnitz, was in the adjacent District, namely, Schweidnitz. Freiburg is known today as the town of Swiebodzice in Poland. Here is a link to a map showing Freiburg and Polsnitz:

<http://www.schlesierland.de/orte/kreis-schweidnitz/freiburg/karte.html>

Here are links to additional information about Freiburg:

[http://www.swiebodzice.pl/images/turystyka/materialy\\_promocyjne/album\\_swiebodzice\\_2012\\_01.pdf](http://www.swiebodzice.pl/images/turystyka/materialy_promocyjne/album_swiebodzice_2012_01.pdf)

<http://www.schlesierland.de/orte/kreis-schweidnitz/freiburg/prospekt1.html>

<http://www.schlesierland.de/orte/kreis-schweidnitz/freiburg/prospekt2.html>

Though of lesser quality color and sharpness, here is a 1993 video which gives one an overview of modern Swiebodzice and its history, including images of what remains of the old wall built around Freiburg to protect it.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPexJiVHW7k>

Freiburg also became known for its watch/clock factories. Noted among them was the Gustave Becker Clock Company. Though living “next door” in Polsnitz, it seems possible that Herman Prosch worked there. Alfred Prosch’s 1899 school dismissal certificate described Alfred’s father Herman as the “deceased factory worker.” It’s also possible that Mathilde’s second husband, Franz Carl Richard Wehner worked there, as he was living in Freiburg and described as a “clock-factory worker” in the 1893 birth certificate of his and Mathilde’s son, Wilhelm Robert Fritz Wehner.

<http://www.clockguy.com/SiteRelated/SiteReferencePages/GustavBeckerHistory.html>

Here is a video of the mechanisms of one of Becker's clocks:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABQ58oyDxx0>

<http://mapcarta.com/27409612>

**1885 - 1891** [April 1] Alfred Paul Prosch's *School Dismissal Certificate* seems to indicate that he attended schools in the following towns before he entered, on April 1, 1891, eight years of compulsory education at the Protestant school in Polsnitz. But, I wonder. Is that a mis-reading?

Given the fact that Alfred would only have been 5 years old in April 1891, perhaps it makes more sense to say that he attended the following schools during his eight years of education, thus from **1891-1899**:

1. POLSNITZ
2. FRIEBURG IN SCHLESIEIN
3. KUNZENDORF NEAR FREIBURG. This town is known as *Mokrzeszów* today in Poland.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mokrzesz%C3%B3w>

<http://mapcarta.com/18528640>

4. FRIEDEBERG AM QUEIS. This town is known as *Mirsk* today in Poland.

5. [another location, could be: "High School in POLSNITZ"]

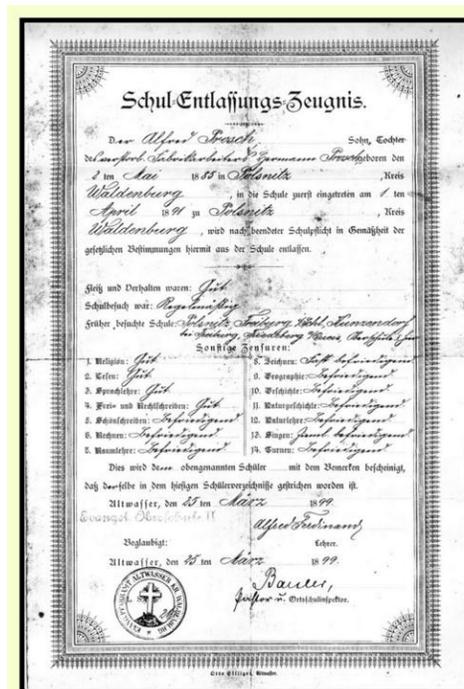
**1891** [Presumably by this year] – Johann Hermann Freiberg and wife Ernstine Henriette Stief were deceased. Before their deaths they had resided in POLSNITZ, DISTRICT WALDENBURG.

Note: Their son Edward Frederick Freiberg's 1907 IA marriage license referred to them as **August Freiberg** and **Josphine Stief**.

**1891** [Presumably by this year] Hermann Prosch was deceased.

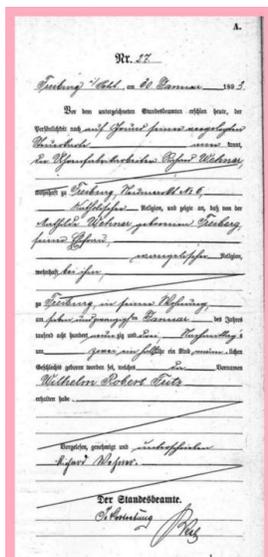
**1891** [April 1] **Alfred Paul Prosch** entered a Protestant school in Polsnitz. See comment under 1885-1891.

**1891** [November 23] – FREIBURG, DISTRICT SCHWEIDNITZ -- Mathilde Anna (Freiberg) Prosch married **Franz Carl Richard Wehner**.



Protestant School Dismissal Certificate  
Alfred Prosch - Polsnitz, Waldenburg, Silesia  
April 1, 1891 - March 25, 1899

In their marriage record, Mathilde is described as a “widowed Factory worker.” Franz is described as a “factory worker.” The couple resided in Freiburg at Neumarkt No. 6. At the same time, Franz’s parents were living across the river in Polsnitz.



Wilhelm Robert Fritz Wehner  
Birth Record - January 27, 1893  
Freiburg, Silesia

**1893** [December 27] – FREIBURG, DISTRICT SCHWEIDNITZ – **Wilhelm Robert Fritz Wehner** was born to Mathilde and husband Franz Carl Richard Wehner.

In Wilhelm’s birth record, father Franz is described as a “clock factory worker.” The couple continues to reside in Freiburg at Neumarkt No. 6, which may be described there as an apartment.

**1895?** – HOHENFRIEDEBERG, DISTRICT BOLKENHAIN – **Wilhelm Robert Fritz Wehner** appears in a photo as a very young child. The back of the photo indicates that the photographer was Paul Güssler in Hohenfriedeberg, Bolkenhain.

Hohenfriedeberg is known as *Dobromierz, Lower Silesia Voivodeship* today in Poland. It is northwest of Sweibodzice/Freiburg. A famous battle took place in this town in 1745, in which the Prussian army of Frederick the Great defeated an Austrian army.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Hohenfriedberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Hohenfriedberg)

<http://mapcarta.com/18546342>

**About 1899** – FRIEDEBERG AM QUEIS, DISTRICT LÖWENBERG – **Wilhelm Robert Fritz Wehner** appears in a photo wearing a hat. The photo was taken by Leonhard Niepel of Friedeberg “Qu.”

Friedeberg [am Queis] is known as *Mirsk* in Poland today. The “straight-line distance between Friedeberg am Queis and Freiburg was about 45 miles. Here is a video on *Mirsk* and its history.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4W98TwINP\\_g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4W98TwINP_g)

<http://mapcarta.com/18529050>



Wilhelm Robert Fritz Wehner  
About 1899, Age 6  
Friedeberg am Queis, Silesia

**1901** [Jan 2] – New York City – **Edward “Fritz” Friederich Freiberg** (26) arrived in New York City on the S.S. Praetoria, having sailed from Hamburg, Germany on December 16, 1900. His last place of residence is listed as Lichtenberg, a village which is now a borough of *Berlin*. Fritz’s occupation was listed as baker. Fritz paid for his own passage on the ship and he had \$25 on him. He was headed to Marshalltown, IA, apparently to join a friend, [likely a] Niederhauser.

Elina (35) Niederhauser and Elsa (8) Niederhauser were on board the same ship, listed close to Fritz. And, they were bound for Marshalltown too. Their last residence was listed as Freiburg. But, they also were listed as citizens of the U.S.A.

*[Year: 1901; Arrival: New York, New York; Microfilm Serial: T715, 1897-1957; Microfilm Roll: Roll 0167; Line: 18; Page Number: 17.]*

Also, a descendant told me that when Fritz married Helen Jesse in 1907, he “married at Elsie Niederhauser’s family’s house.”

The 1910 U.S. census shows Jacob (43) and Selma (42) Niederhauser living in Timber Creek, Marshall Co., IA with other family members: William H. (16), Elsie E. (18), Godfrey (38-brother), and Ura Spereieen (71- hired man). Jacob was a dairy farmer and born in Switzerland. His wife was born in Germany. They immigrated in 1886.

*[Year: 1910; Census Place: Timber Creek, Marshall, Iowa; Roll: T624\_413; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 0147; FHL microfilm: 1374426]*

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lichtenberg>

<http://mapcarta.com/18101882>

1902 [Feb 24] – NEW YORK CITY – **Gustav Freiberg** (31) , wife **Anna** (26), and children Fritz (8), Martha (3), and Elsie (4 months) arrived in New York on the S.S. Kronprinz Wilhelm, having sailed from Bremen, Germany on February 15. Their last place of residence is listed as Alt Libichau, Schlesien, which was in the Waldenburg district and is known as *Szczawienko* in Poland today. Gustav’s occupation was listed as wheelwright. Gustav paid for the passage of himself and his family. He had more than \$30 on him. He and his family were joining his brother-in-law and his wife’s sister in Marshalltown, IA.

*[Year: 1902; Arrival: New York, New York; Microfilm Serial: T715, 1897-1957; Microfilm Roll: Roll 0254; Line: 26; Page Number: 172.]*

<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Szczawienko>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSIdTXfv-Bw>

<http://mapcarta.com/18513370>

**1903** – FRIEDEBERG AM QUEIS, DISTRICT LÖWENBERG – **Wilhelm Robert Fritz Wehner** appears in a photo with classmates. The back of the photo indicates it was taken by J. Harbig, Hirshberg I. Schl. [in Schlesien], 1903. However, the photo itself shows a placard in front of the children which appears to me to say “Friedeberg 1903, Schl. II a.”

**1904** [June 16] NEW YORK CITY – **Mathilde Wehner** (43, listed as widow) and sons **Wilhelm Robert Fritz Wehner** (11) and **Alfred Paul Prosch** (19) arrived in NYC on the ship S.S. Pennsylvania, sailing from Hamburg, Germany.

In the ship's passenger list it was indicated that they had last resided in Friedeberg [am Queis]. Their passage was paid for by a brother and they were going to join **Fritz Freiberg** in Vinton, Benton County, IA. They possessed \$8. The following website estimated that in simple purchasing power, that amount of money might be the equivalent of \$216 in 2013:

<http://www.measuringworth.com/ppowerus/>

Below is an image of the passenger list from their June 16, 1904 arrival in New York City from Hamburg on the S. S. Pennsylvania.

[Year: 1904; Arrival: New York, New York; Microfilm Serial: T715, 1897-1957; Microfilm Roll: Roll 0468; Line: 4; Page Number: 102.]

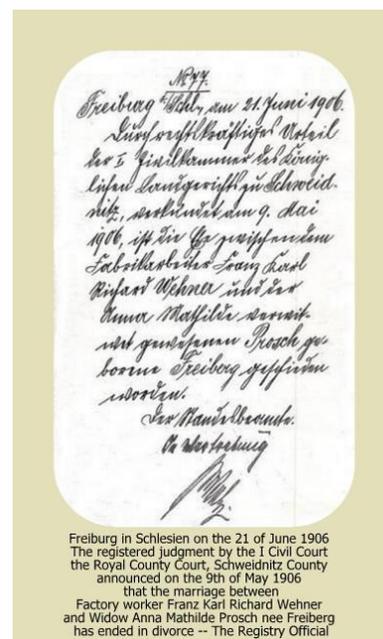
Here's a web page with a picture and more information on the S. S. Pennsylvania.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS\\_Pennsylvania\\_\(1896\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Pennsylvania_(1896))

**1906** [June 21] – **FREIBURG, DISTRICT SCHWEIDNITZ** –It was announced that the verdict of the 1st civil court of the royal district court at Schweidnitz was that **Mathilde and Franz Carl Richard Wehner** were divorced.

**1906/1907** – **Mathilde Anna [Freiberg] [Prosche] Wehner** married **Samuel Clifton Showalter**, whom she met in Iowa. At this point, her marriage record has not been located, but it was noted in the 1910 U.S. census for Timber Creek Township [near Marshalltown] in Marshall Co., IA, taken on April 26, 1910, that she and Cliff had then been married for three years.

**1910-1921**– Sometime in this period, Mathilde's son **Wilhelm Robert Fritz Wehner** changed his name to **Edward William Showalter**. [See the picture on the following page.]



Freiburg in Schlesien on the 21 of June 1906  
The registered judgment by the 1 Civil Court  
the Royal County Court, Schweidnitz County  
announced on the 9th of May 1906  
that the marriage between  
Factory worker Franz Carl Richard Wehner  
and Widow Anna Mathilde Prosche nee Freiberg  
has ended in divorce -- The Registry Official



**1925** [Sept 16] **Matilda [Mathilde] Showalter** died in Marshalltown, IA. Her husband **Cliff** died in Marshalltown in 1959.

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My Line:

G-G Grandparents: **Johann Hermann Freiberg** and **Ernstine Henriette Stief**  
**Josef Wehner** and **Ernstine Heering**

G Grandparents: **Mathilde Anna Freiberg** and **Franz Carl Richard Wehner**

Grandfather: **Edward William Showalter Sr.** [**Wilhelm Robert Fritz Wehner**] deceased 1976

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