

# OUR VON PRESSENTIN ANCESTORS IN GERMANY

## Where did they live?

To follow the paths of our von Pressentin ancestors after they left the "home" estate of Prestin requires a considerable number of maps. Before getting into the specific places where our forefathers lived, it is helpful to see the general area in which these ancestors lived.



### Germany - Today

The northeastern state of **Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania**

is where most of our direct ancestors lived.

But the last two generations to live in Germany lived east of the present Germany-Poland ("PL" on map) border. And, their last home before leaving for the United States was in **Berlin**.

**Prestin**, where the family chapel and former estate is located, is in Mecklenburg, about 20 miles east of **Schwerin**, shown on this map.

Map courtesy of [www.theodora.com/maps](http://www.theodora.com/maps)  
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# PRESTIN

## **The Early History of the von Pressentin Family from the *von Pressentin Family History Book I, Part I***

The von Pressentins are among the oldest families of Mecklenburg, since they appear in documents for over 6 centuries. Whether the family is indigenous, that is of Wendish descent, or belongs to one of the German clans that immigrated during the colonisation of Mecklenburg in the 12th century, cannot be determined with certainty from the documents. However, probability speaks for native Wendish descent.....From the local situation, old records and family tradition, it can be concluded that on the site of the present residences and farmsteads of Prestin, where the medieval castle stood, a Wendish fortress had been located. In front of it (around the hill of the present churchyard) would have been the outerworks of the fortress, with farms around a heathen sacred place. The church and parsonage are said to have been founded by an obviously baptized Herr von Prestin (around 1170) for his two estates of Prestin and Runow (the latter in Pressentin ownership until 1353). The church was built in the popular style on the site of the Wendish sanctuary; .....the first Pressentin, who reportedly lived around 1270 or 1290, was named Petrus.

As early as 1270 A.D. one of our ancestors, **Petrus von Pressentin**, was named in an official document as "Lord of the manor Pressentin." The family name probably derives from the word "Prestin," which is the name of the estate owned by the von Pressentin family from at least 1270 to 1872. When the widow of the last owner, Adolph von Pressentin, had to sell the property, she retained the family chapel which has been the final resting place for generations of von Pressentins since 1808. Before that, family members were buried in the crypt beneath the church which still stands beside the chapel.

### **Von Pressentin Chapel and Church, in Prestin (the church was built in 1270)**

*Photo courtesy of Friedrich-Franz von Pressentin*



## Acknowledgments

Before we get underway, I want to acknowledge the sources I have used to compile this information. My main source has been the English translation of the three von Pressentin family histories, *The History of the Family von Pressentin*:

**Book I.** Written by Wilhelm von Pressentin. Published in Schwerin in 1899.

**Book II.** Written by Klaus Gerd v. Pressentin, Lüneburg, 1935.

**Book III.** Written by Klaus Gerd v. Pressentin, Hannover 1962.

This translation was a "labor of love" by my daughter, Karen Halliday. Where Karen was uncertain about the English translation, her comments are in brackets.

Direct quotes from the *The History of the Family von Pressentin* are in italics.

Additional information was generously given by the current von Pressentin family historian, Friedrich-Franz von Pressentin and Christopher Wallis, who has assisted in the restoration of the Prestin family chapel. Friedrich-Franz also maintains a von Pressentin web page, with much valuable information.

The five brothers who started the USA branch of the family were all born in a small village once called "Hoelkewiese," in what was Pomerania--now western Poland. It takes a very detailed map to even show this village, so I was amazed to find that there is a wonderful web site devoted to Hoelkewiese. The web site owner, Dr. Bodo Koglin, has given me permission to quote from his web site and his book, *Hölkewiese in Pommern, Eine Chronik* which he published in 2005.

And, credit should be given to "Google" the Internet search engine, which provided background information on a multitude of subjects and "Mapquest" for the many maps showing where our ancestors lived.

For a better understanding of the world our von Pressentin ancestors lived in, I highly recommend reading *The Vanished Kingdom; Travels Through the History of Prussia*, by James Charles Roy, published by the Westview Press in 1999.

# Here We Go!

## PRESTIN

To identify our direct von Presentin ancestors, their names will appear in green.

Our starting point will be the village of Prestin, (red star on map) where **Nicolaus Otto** was born to Bernd von Presentin and Anna Dorothea von Presentin in 1671.

Many of the other estates that were once in the hands of family members are within an easy drive of Prestin.

