

German Unification

- Germany was united by a conservative army, monarch, and the Prime minister of Prussia
- It was NOT united for liberal reasons, though it was the liberals who had tried to unite Germany for two generations.
- The construction of a unified Germany would alter the international balance of Power



1862	Bismarck becomes prime minister of Prussia
1864	Austro-Prussian War
1867	North German Confederation formed
1870	July 13, Bismarck publishes the edited Ems dispatch
1871	January 18, Proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles
1871	May 23, Treaty of Frankfurt ratified between France and Germany

Map of German Unification with dates

Political structure in German-speaking lands was the German Confederation.

- Established at the Congress of Vienna
- Loose federation of 39 states with representatives meeting at a diet in Frankfurt.
- The two strongest states were Austria and Prussia
- The major states continued trade through the *Zollerein*, and their economies were connected through the railways.
- After embarrassing failures in 1848 and 1849 the liberal nationalists could do nothing to help unify Germany
- Frederick William IV gave up the thought of unifying Germany under Prussian leadership.
- William I becomes king in 1861 and seeks to increase the size of the army, however the Prussian Parliament, which was created by the constitution of 1850 and was also majority liberals, refused to pass the taxes necessary to raise the army. This created a deadlock between Parliament and the monarch.

Bismarck

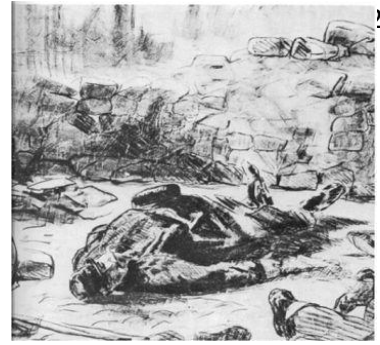
- 1862- William I turned to Bismarck who moved against the liberal parliament and sought support for unifying Germany through a war with the Denmark.
- Bismarck pursued the small German Plan (*kleindeutsch*)

Danish War 1864

- The two German states, Schleswig and Holstein were close proximity to Denmark. In 1863, the Danish Parliament began annexing both. This affront to German nationalism gave Bismarck the perfect chance to initiate his plans of Prussian dominance over the unification of Germany, without Austria.
- Prussia easily defeated the Danes within the year the war broke out in 1864.



- At the Convention of Gastein in 1865, Austria gave the territory of Schleswig solely to Prussia, while Austria kept Holstein.



The Austro-Prussian War:

- On June 1st, 1866, Austria appealed to the German Confederation to stop the Prussian instigation. Bismarck then asserted that this violated their alliance and the terms of the Convention of Gastein.
- This disagreement led to the Seven Weeks' War in the 1866. Prussia won resolutely over Austria at Königgrätz in Bohemia.
- The war was ended with the Treaty of Prague.
- The outcome of this war established Prussia as the sole power throughout the German states.

The North German Confederation:

- After the war with Austria, Prussia gained vast tracts of land through the annexation of Hanover, Hesse Kassel, Nassau, and the city of Frankfurt. Their rulers were deposed and inducted in to the North German Confederation.
- Each member had its own local government but its military forces and political climate were under the domain of the Prussia, and the King of Prussia served as the president.
- The local legislatures were bicameral consisting of an upper house, the Bundesrat, which was made up of appointed government officials and the lower house, the Reichstag, which was made up of members elected by universal male suffrage.
- Bismarck supported universal male suffrage for two reasons: the peasants would most likely vote conservative and the Reichstag held no real power.
- The constitution of the North German Confederation eventually became the constitution of the German Empire in 1871, establishing, in effect, a military monarchy with minimal liberalism.

Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871)

- Bismarck wanted to complete the unification by bringing in the southern states of Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Baden, and Hesse Darmstadt.
- 1868, a coup replaced the queen of Spain with Leopold, the catholic cousin of William I.
- Bismarck hoped that a war with France would complete the unification, so he released an edited telegram which appeared to have William insulting Benedetti.
- The French government declared war on July 19, though Napoleon III did not want war.
- Southern German states joined Prussia against France to honor the treaties of 1866.
- On September 1, the Battle of Sedan gave the Germans a smashing victory and the capture of Napoleon III, and by late September, Paris was besieged and then capitulated on January 28, 1871. Ten days earlier, at the Palace of Versailles, the German Empire was proclaimed.
- Because of German unification, a powerful new state had been created in north central Europe with rich natural resources and more military and economic strength than Prussia had been alone.