

# Behaim Family

*The following from Wilbur Hanson Kalb:*

*Besides the Schlüsselfelders, the Neues Deutsches Biographie [ New German Biography ] has articles about four of your other Patrizierfamilien of Nuremberg — Behaim von Schwarzbach, Stromer, Holzschuher, and Pfinzing von Henfenfeld. The Count von Haller's family is also in the book as Haller von Hallerstein. I'm going to start with the Behaims because there are actually two entries for the same family — one for the Patrizier and one for the Bürger. They both came from Bohemia and lived in the same city but they chose different paths — the Patrizier went for the City Council and the Bürger for the arts and crafts. The 1875 edition of the Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie [ Complete German Biography ] went further, claiming that the Behaims came from the area of Pilsen That's now Plzeň in Czechya and it's 56 miles west of Prague. Today the road between Plzeň and Nuremberg would not go through Cheb ( formerly Eger ) but, in the Middle Ages, it would have, which was why the Bavarians and the Bohemians both wanted Eger / Cheb.*

*From the Neues Deutsches Biographie, Zweiter Band : Behaim – Bürkel [ New German Biography, Second Volume : Behaim – Bürkel ] ( Berlin, West Germany : Duncker & Humbolt, 1955 ), pages 1 – 2 :*

*Behaim von Schwarzbach. The Patrician family of Behaims [ von Schwarzbach ] is one of the few families of the municipal nobility of Nuremberg city that sat in the Council almost continuously from the beginning of the 14th Century until 1808 and played a notable role in the political and cultural life of the Imperial City. The history of the Behaims [ von Schwarzbach ] shows in individual personalities the typical development of that upper class of the German bourgeoisie, to whom the German cities owe their rise and their culture, especially in the Late Middle Ages. — The family name suggests a return migration from Bohemia. As with most of the Patrician families of Nuremberg, the first members of the clan appeared out of the blue in their deeds. Thus in 1285 and 1288 a Cunradus Bohemus [ Latin, "Conrad the Bohemian" ] and an Albertus Bohemus [ Latin, "Albert the Bohemian" ] are mentioned as owners of houses and shops as well as Bürger [ citizens ] in Nuremberg. By the beginning of the 14th Century, Albrecht Behaim ( died 1349 ), the verifiable progenitor of the family, already belonged to the families eligible for the City Council ( Schöffe [ Juror ] 1319, Ratsherr [ Councilor ] 1332, died 1349 ). In trade, the Behaims also acquired their fortune, which enabled them to operate in the Council and to commission works of art for the city's churches. Trade relations with Italy were not detected until 1374. Later Behaims can be found as merchants in the Netherlands, in France, in Portugal, in Wroclaw [ then Breslau in Silesia ] and in the East. The family trading company initially had a significant turnover, but was later surpassed*

by other companies. During the Thirty Years' War, the Behaims [ von Schwarzbach ] also retired from economic undertakings. Since then they have operated in the numerous offices of the Imperial City and in the administration **of their respectable properties**, having prepared themselves for their occupations through studies and travels. Numerous members of the clan entered the service of the Emperor, the Imperial estates, but also of France and the Netherlands. Equality with the Imperial and National Nobility was achieved by Christoph Jacob Behaim ( 1642 – 1688 ), Imperial councilor and resident of Nuremberg, with the Imperial privileges of 1677 and 1681 in improving [ his ] coat-of-arms and awarding the dignity of "Baron Behaim von Schwarzbach". In the 19th and 20th Centuries, the Behaims [ von Schwarzbach ] dedicated themselves especially to service in the Army. In 1941 the family that had served Nuremberg died out in the male line.

Werner Schultheiß

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The following from Wilbur Hanson Kalb:

From the Neues Deutsches Biographie, Erster Band : Aachen – Behaim [ *New German Biography, First Volume : Aachen – Behaim* ] ( Berlin, West Germany : Duncker & Humbolt, 1953 ), page 748 :

**Behaim** ( *Peha(i)m, Pehem, Beheimb, Beham* ), Nuremberger family of *Bürger* [ citizens ].

At about the same time with the noble family of the City the Behaims von Schwarzbach ( 14th Century ), carriers of the same name arrived in Nuremberg, believed to be on a return migration from Bohemia, but [ unlike their noble cousins ] they founded a family of artisans. One such wealthy and respected branch, which had likely dedicated itself for generations since then to the arts of the stone mason and the processing of the metals, produced the *Baumeister* [ master builder ] *Hans Behaim the Elder* ( see No. 1 ), and his sons, active in the same occupation, *Hans Behaim the Younger* and *Paulus Behaim* ( see No. 3 ), as well as the elder brother's sons, *Georg Behaim*, the Provost of the City's parish church of St. Lorenz in Nuremberg, the humanist *Lorenz Behaim* ( see No. 2 ), and the *Bronzegießer* [ bronze caster ] *Sebald Behaim the Elder* ( died 1534 ). Known as *Kleinmeister* [ "Little Masters", a group of engravers of small and portable illustrations for the printing presses ], the brothers *Hans Sebald* and *Barthel Behaim* perhaps came from one of other numerous Nuremberger families of craftsmen with the same surname. Also originating in Nuremberg, the *Kunstschreiner* [ master woodcarver ] *Hans Wilhelm Behaim* is demonstrably not related to the other Behaims mentioned above. A Swabian family, which is not related to the Nuremberger Behaims, bore the Meistersinger *Michel Behaim* [ the son of a weaver, whose ancestors came from Bohemia ].

The following from Wilbur Hanson Kalb:

Source : Alexander Flegler, "Behaim", in: Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie. Zweiter Band. Balde – Bode. [ Complete German Biography. Second Volume. Balde – Bode. ] ( Leipzig, Saxony : Duncker & Humblot, 1875), pages 273–274 :

Behaim. It is very probable that the Behaim family originally came from Bohemia, and indeed from the vicinity of Pilsen [ now Plzeň, Czechya ] ; but this assumption rests at first only on the traditions preserved by the family itself. It is mentioned in Nuremberger records for the first time at the beginning of the fourteenth Century, by which time it already belonged to the honorable and respectable families of the City. Albrecht Behaim held there from 1332 to 1342 the dignity of a Bürgermeister [ mayor ]. At the same time he was the director of a major trading house, as the wholesale trade, which was based on the import and export of raw and artificially processed materials from and to foreign countries, remained the family's principal occupation for several centuries. As a result, their relatives were taken to the most remote parts of Europe. Later they took part in larger commercial undertakings, such as the mining industry. The family almost always held their own in one and the same line, as the emerging collateral branches were soon extinguished. [ 274 ] Such a younger line was founded in the course of the fifteenth Century by Martin, the son of Michael Behaim, while his older brother Lionhard continued the main line. Son of this Martin was the famous sailor of the same name. This younger line was completely extinct by the end of the 16th Century. By the decree of [ Emperor ] Leopold I on 13 May 1681, the family was raised, with the epithet of Schwarzbach, to the rank of the Reichsfreiherrn [ Imperial Barons ]. Apart from the famous sailor, the most important personalities are :

— Michael Behaim VII, son of the aforementioned Lionhard, b. 9 July 1459 and d. 24 Oct. 1511, respected merchant, later member of the [ City ] Council and master builder, that is, the Board of Directors of the Bauamt [ Building Authority ]. Under his administration, Hans Behaim ( see below ) was Anschicker in der Prunt [ foreman of the construction yard ].

— Paulus Behaim I, grandson of the preceding, b. 25 January 1519, d. 22 August 1568. He was a member of the [ City ] Council and the Board of Directors of the Kriegstube [ War Room ]. In 1561 he was sent by Nuremberg as its Diplomatic Minister to the Naumburger Tage [ known in English as "Naumburg Convention", held in Naumburg an der Saale, Electorate of Saxony, between 20 January and 8 February by Protestant princes and theologians in an attempt to

standardize and reaffirm the Augsburg Confession but the Calvinists fell out with the Lutherans ]].

— Paulus Behaim II, son of the previous, b. 8 Oct. 1557, d. 13 Decbr. 1621. Formed at the University of Leipzig, he first entered the service of Maximilian Freiherr von Ilsung, the Landvogt [ Provincial Governor ] of Swabia, in Augsburg, later prepared himself under the direction of the Emperor's Reichshofrathsherr [ Imperial Court Councilor ] Dr. Andreas Gail to Prague for the public affairs, and became in his native city member of the Senior Privy Council, Vorderster Losungsherr [ Chief Tax Collector ] and Reichsschultheiß [ Imperial Mayor ]. At the same time he owned and operated the Kitzbühel mines in the Tyrol, Schladming and Öblarn on the Ens River in Styria and Greßla in Bohemia [ now Kraslice, Czechya, across the border from Saxony ].

— Lukas Friedrich Behaim, son of the previous, b. 17 July 1587, d. 22 June 1648. He attended Gymnasium [ high school = now Melanchthon-Gymnasium ] in Altdorf [ bei Nürnberg ], then went on to further education and especially to learn the French language in Poitiers and Angers, and undertook in 1611 and 1612 a trip to Italy and Jerusalem. Barely returned, he accompanied the Imperial insignia for the coronation of Emperor Mathias to Frankfurt am Main. Still in the same year he took over the administration of the Kitzbühel mines. Later he became a member of the Senior Privy Council and Kirchenpfleger [ church caretaker ], took the liveliest interest in the diplomatic affairs of the Imperial City and therefore, since 1636, was in the liveliest correspondence with Ludwig Camerarius, the Swedish envoy in the Hague.

— Sigmund Friedrich Behaim, a great-grandson of Christoph Behaim, brother of Paulus II, b. 22 Sept. 1686, d. 14 March 1746. He became a member of the Senior Privy Council and Kriegsherr [ War Commander ] and, as the Ambassador for Nuremberg, attended the coronations of Karl VII and Franz I in the years 1742 and 1745.

[ Alexander ] Flegler. [ 1804 – 1892, died in Herr Euler's Hessian hometown, Bensheim ]

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#### Behaim in Nürnberg 1250-1550

Auswahl

Siehe Biedermann, Tafeln 1-16. (Tafeln 1-5 sind vollständig berücksichtigt.)

[Albrecht Behaim](#), \*?1150, †1207

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[Albrecht Behaim](#), \*?1175

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[Albrecht Behaim](#), \*?1200

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Beh-21/a

[Friedrich Behaim](#)

\*?1225, †1295

Nürnberg

∞1) **Pilgram v. Eyb**

Conrad

\*?1230

†1252

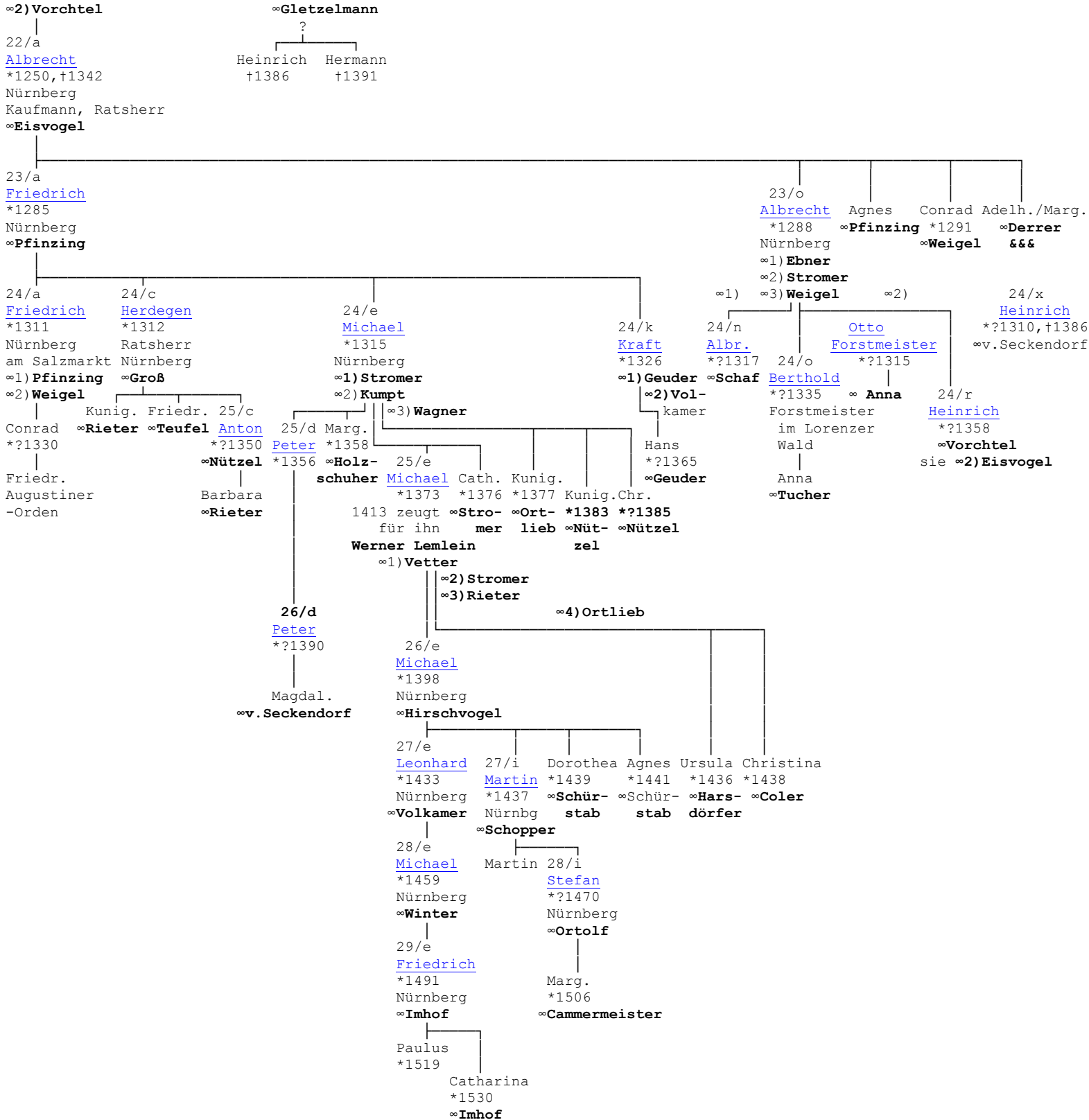
**Sizilien**

:

:

Albrecht

**\*1248**



> Another family **Behaim**, who made redsmiths and bell founders in Nuremberg, see  
Christa Schaper: The Behaim, a gun and bell foundry family in Nuremberg 1350-1600, MVGN 51 (1962) ..

> A daughter Behaim from Weissenburg \*? 1340 ∞ [Rummel](#)  
> Coat of arms of the [Behaim in Weissenburg](#): 2 crossed bishoprics on a red background.

According to: [https://www.svu2000.org/conferences/2003\\_Iowa/01.pdf](https://www.svu2000.org/conferences/2003_Iowa/01.pdf) the Behaims left Bohemia after the death of Duke Vratislaus I in 921.

Discovery of New World - As surprising as it may sound to most of you, according to some scholars, Czechs could actually claim some credit for the discovery of the New World. I am referring to German author Franz Loehner (1) who made the claim that Martin Behaim, rather than Columbus, or for that matter Amerigo Vespucci was the true discoverer of America. Loehner celebrates Behaim, whom he considers to be a German, not only as the first European to view the coast of America off Brazil in the year 1483 but also as the instructor in western navigation of both of the putative later discoverers and explorers, Columbus and Magellan. Although Loehner's claim was later disputed, and even ridiculed, Behaim was known to take part in the expedition of Diego Cap (1485-1486) that followed the coast of Africa to Cape Cross. His most important work, which places him among the greatest geographers of the Renaissance, was his terrestrial globe, the earliest extant known, that has been preserved in Nuremberg. What role this globe played in the actual discovery of the New World is not known. As the name indicates, Behaim was not a German at all but rather a Bohemian. The name Behaim is the old German equivalent of the **later used term Boebme (i.e. Bohemian) which, prior to the usage of family surnames, was commonly used** to designate individuals coming from Bohemia or the Czech Lands. According to the family tradition the Behaim family moved to Nuremberg from Bohemia after the death of the Czech Duke Vratislav I(2).

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2. Ottuv Slovník Naučný, Praha: I. Otto, 1890. vol. 3, pp. 618-619.

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From Wilbur Hason Kalb:  
11 May 2019

When I read that your Behaims left Bohemia after the death of Duke Vratislav I in 921, I thought, "I know that story!" I had read it a few years ago in my research of my mother's medieval Bohemian ancestors. She's the 30th great grandmother of Vratislav I and my father is his 32nd great grandfather so I knew the story.

When Vratislav I was the Duke of Bohemia, one of his allies was Arnulf, the Duke of Bavaria, because they had something in common — they both hated Henry "The Fowler", the Duke of Saxony. Now, when Vratislav died in February 921, his two sons were still children so there had to be a regent. That regent became their grandmother, Ludmilla of Psova, the Dowager Duchess, because of her age and experience. She was also a Christian and she wanted to keep

Bohemia Christian so she took over the education of the new Duke, Vaclav, so that she could turn him into a Christian. But there was a problem. The new Duke's mother, Drahomira, was a pagan. She didn't like the size of the influence Ludmilla was having over Vaclav so she arranged to have her killed. After Ludmilla's assassination, she became the new regent. She immediately went to war against the Christians. When Vaclav turned 18 five years later ( in 926 ), the surviving Christians revolted. Drahomira was ousted and exiled, ending the regency, and Vaclav became "Good King Wenceslas". The 920s must have been when your Behaims moved to Bavaria. Remember, the Duke of Bavaria was friendly with the late Duke so they knew that they would be welcome in Bavaria and free to worship as Christians.

But, of course, Bohemia was still home for the Behaims. It might have taken them a while, bouncing back and forth between the two duchies, before they finally decided that Nuremberg was it for them. Until then, their Bohemian friends and neighbors would have referred to them in their own language, Czech, as "*Bavorsky*" ( The Bavarian ) or "*Noimbersky*" ( of Nuremberg )! So your Behaims would have had two different surnames or maybe three for a few generations!