

This file is an excerpt from

*Falkenburg, Donald R., The Falkenburgs, a Colonial American Family,
Willow Glen Publishing, San Jose, 2016.*

This multitouch book is available as a free download on the iBooks Store. Individual chapters of this manuscript are currently available at:

<http://falkenburg-genealogy.com>

Please note this is copyrighted material. If you directly quote this book, please cite. Any direct quotations from my manuscript should be quoted and properly documented. I have been careful to do this with the material contained in this work, and I ask that you respect my intellectual property as well as those I have cited.

If you have questions or comments please feel free to contact me at:

drfalken@comcast.net



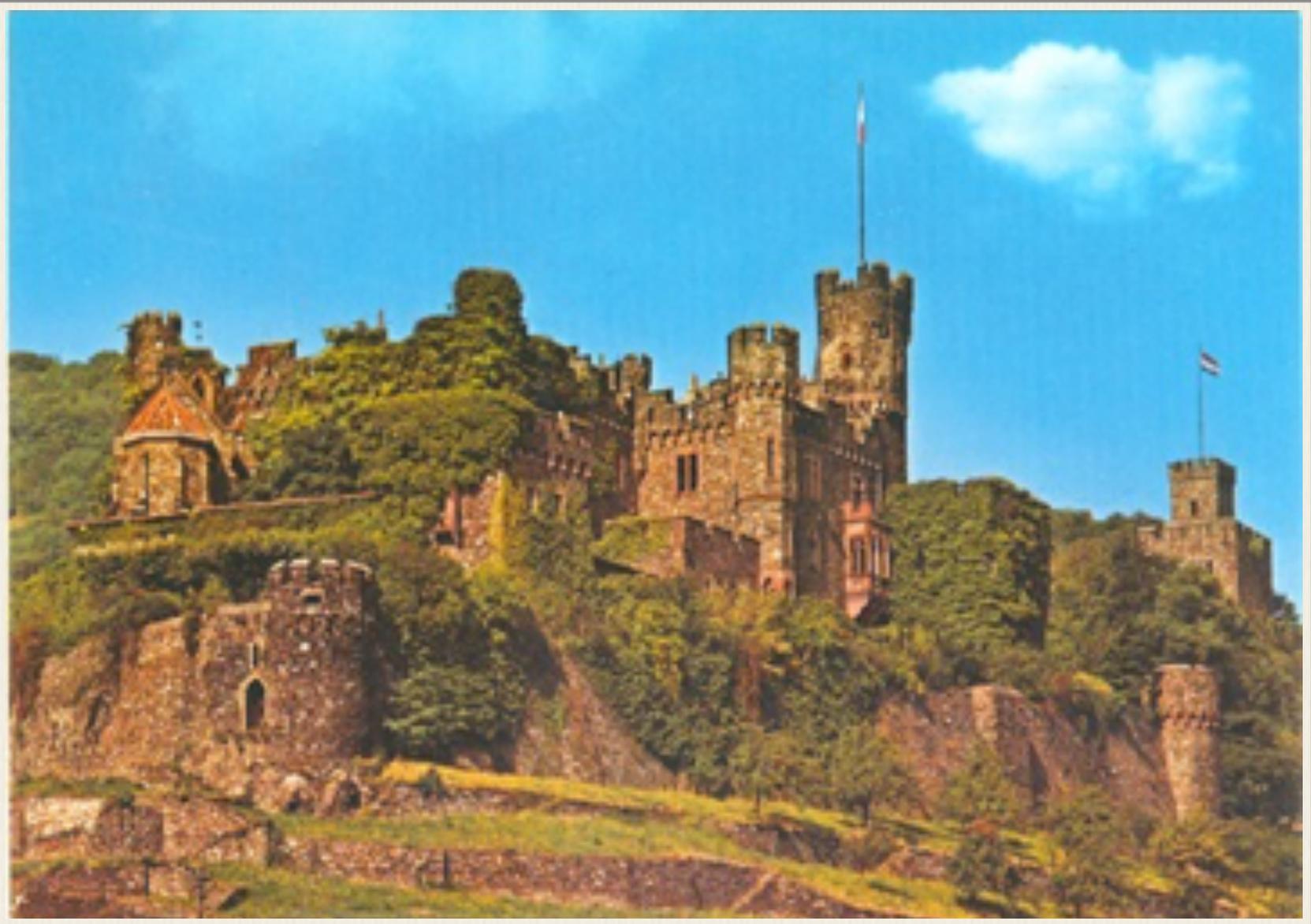
All Rights Reserved

© 2016 Donald R. Falkenburg

Willow Glen Publishing



Legends, Myths and Castles



***Legends, Myths and Castles** sets the stage for the story of the Falkenburg family. Our family name is steeped in history. It has roots in teutonic legends and stories of knights. Throughout the modern country of Germany there are a number of castles which have the name Falkenburg. Perhaps, the family had its origins in one of these castles. Records do not reveal this, but it is fun to speculate. The Falkenburg story I have found is every bit as interesting as if we were descended from one of these royal castles.*

The Flying Dutchman

The Flying Dutchman is a folk tale about a ghost ship doomed to roam the seas forever, unable to return home. The story is as old as the classic Greek tragedies and it appears in many cultural settings. The work at the right by American artist Albert Pinkham Ryder captures the allegory. The tale of the Flying Dutchman is a popular theme in Germanic mythology. It derives from the fact that Nordic chiefs were often buried with their



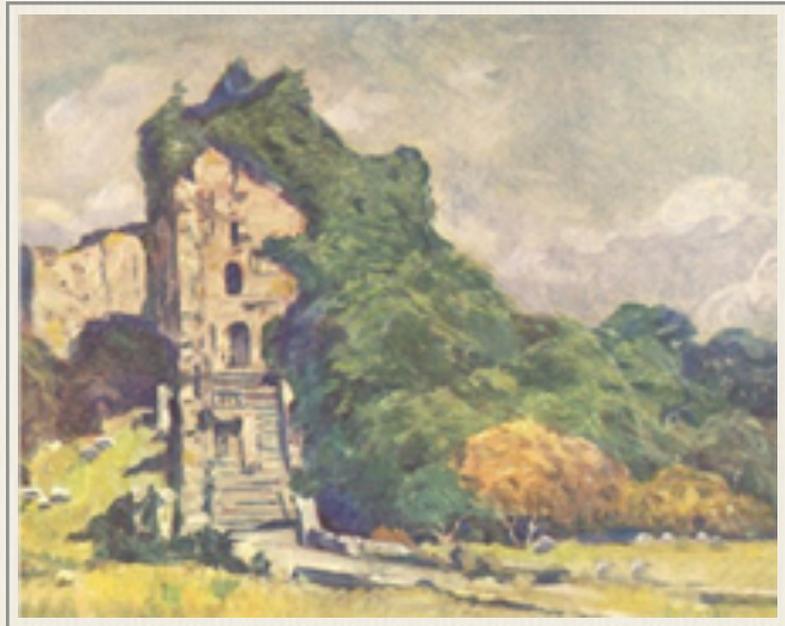
ships. At times the ship was taken out to sea and set adrift to be tossed by wind and wave. The Germans had their own Flying Dutchman named Herr von Falkenberg, who after playing dice with the devil for his soul, is condemned to drift about the waves until the day of judgment. [1.1] Richard Wagner wrote the opera Der Fliegende Holländer telling the tale musically.



*Click on the image of the ipod to listen to
Overture from the Flying Dutchman*

The Legend of Falkenburg, The Forest Keep

The Lord of Falkenburg fought in the First Crusade and died on the plains of Phrygia. His widow and only child Dietlinde lived in the family stronghold of the Castle of Falkenburg on the Rhine River. Many came to woo this beautiful maiden attempting to win her hand in matrimony. Among those who sought the fair maiden was a knight named Guntram who descended from an important and



ancient family. The knight won the heart of the fair Dietlinde. With the blessing of the widow Falkenburg, the two planned to marry. On the eve of the wedding, Guntram received a summons from his overlord tasking him to accompany the Duke of Burgundy on a mission. Deeply grieved, Guntram obeyed the command, and bid farewell to his weeping bride to be, and set out on his journey to Burgundy.

Having accomplished his mission, Guntram hastened home to his beloved Dietlinde. On the way back to his intended bride, the young knight got lost in a forest. After wandering with little success of finding his way, Guntram saw a bright light. Approaching the light he was welcomed by the sight of a kindly old knight who invited him to his fortified tower in the forest, and provided for him a sumptuous feast. Exhausted after his journey Guntram fell asleep. As he entered his dream state, the young knight became aware of a sweet, enchanting love song. He arose and in the adjoining chamber he found a lovely young maiden. Captivated by her beauty and the spell of her song, the young knight took her hand and kissed the lips of the enchantress. At midnight the spell was broken and the young maiden disappeared leaving a ring in Guntram's hand that was engraved with the words "Thou art mine". Realizing his unfaithfulness to his true love Dietlinde, Guntram was overcome with sadness and remorse.

In the Castle Falkenburg the faithful Dietlinde waited patiently for her lover's return. On Guntram's return, overcome by the guilt the knight requested that the marriage take place on the following day. In the beautifully decorated chapel Guntram and the fair Dietlinde stood before the altar. When the lovers joined hands at the request of the priest, the enchantress of the forest keep appeared in the chapel and laid her ice-cold hand on the young knight. Guntram sank unconscious on the floor of the chapel. The apparition fulfilled a curse placed on unfaithful lovers. With tender care the bride watched over her beloved, and when he came to himself he sorrowfully confessed to her his experience. So deep was Dietlinde's love that she pardoned her repentant lover. The priest was again summoned, and the marriage ceremony completed. After twenty seven days of calm happiness Count Guntram fell peacefully asleep and died in the arms of his faithful wife.

Dietlinde thenceforth lived quietly with her mother in the Castle Falkenburg. She mourned deeply the loss of her husband, and prayed fervently for the eternal welfare of his soul. She named her little son Guntram, and imbued him with love for the father he had never seen. [1.2]

Falkenburg Castles

When I was in my pre-teens I remember my grandparents telling me that we were descended from German royalty and that our name was originally von Falkenburg. There were stories about a castle on the Rhine River that piqued a young boy's imagination. As I started to explore my roots, however, it seemed that if this were to be true, it was a distant connection. I tried to find the Castle Falkenburg (this was before the internet) and came up with no clues. Perhaps this story passed down through the generations was a family myth.

In 1985 as I was planning for a trip to Germany, I came across the Castle Reichenstein which was formally named Falkenburg. My family and I visited the castle that summer. I was taken aback by the fact that the owner of the castle in the 1800's was a sea captain who had sailed up the Rhine River, to the coast and on to America. I knew that my Great-Grandfather was a sea captain, so I thought that there might be a connection. But my genealogical exploration proved otherwise.

The Falkenburg story I did discover was, however, as interesting as any that might have included kings, dukes, and knights.

In this chapter, I describe four castles which have names related to our family name. Unfortunately, there is no documentation to connect us to any of these royal addresses.



Castle Falkenburg, Schloss Reichenstein perched above the Rhine

Schloss Reichenstein

Above the west bank of the Rhine River at the village of Trechtingshausen sits one of the oldest castles in the region. It is believed that Reichenstein dates back to the eleventh century; nearly one thousand years old! In its early days, The colorful history of Reichenstein includes its use as den of robber knights who terrorized the area. The castle was alternately known as Falkenburg named for nesting tower falcons in the walls. A description of the castle can be found on the web [\[1.3\]](#). This is a combination of history lesson and travel diary. Incidentally, there is a hotel and restaurant at Reichenstein [\[1.4\]](#). My family and I visited Falkenburg in

1985. There is reason to believe that the Legend of Falkenburg, The Forest Keep is set in this ancient fortress.

GALLERY 1.1 *The Castle Falkenburg*



Location of the Castle Falkenburg on the west shore of the Rhine River



Falkenburg Castle near Wilgartswiesen

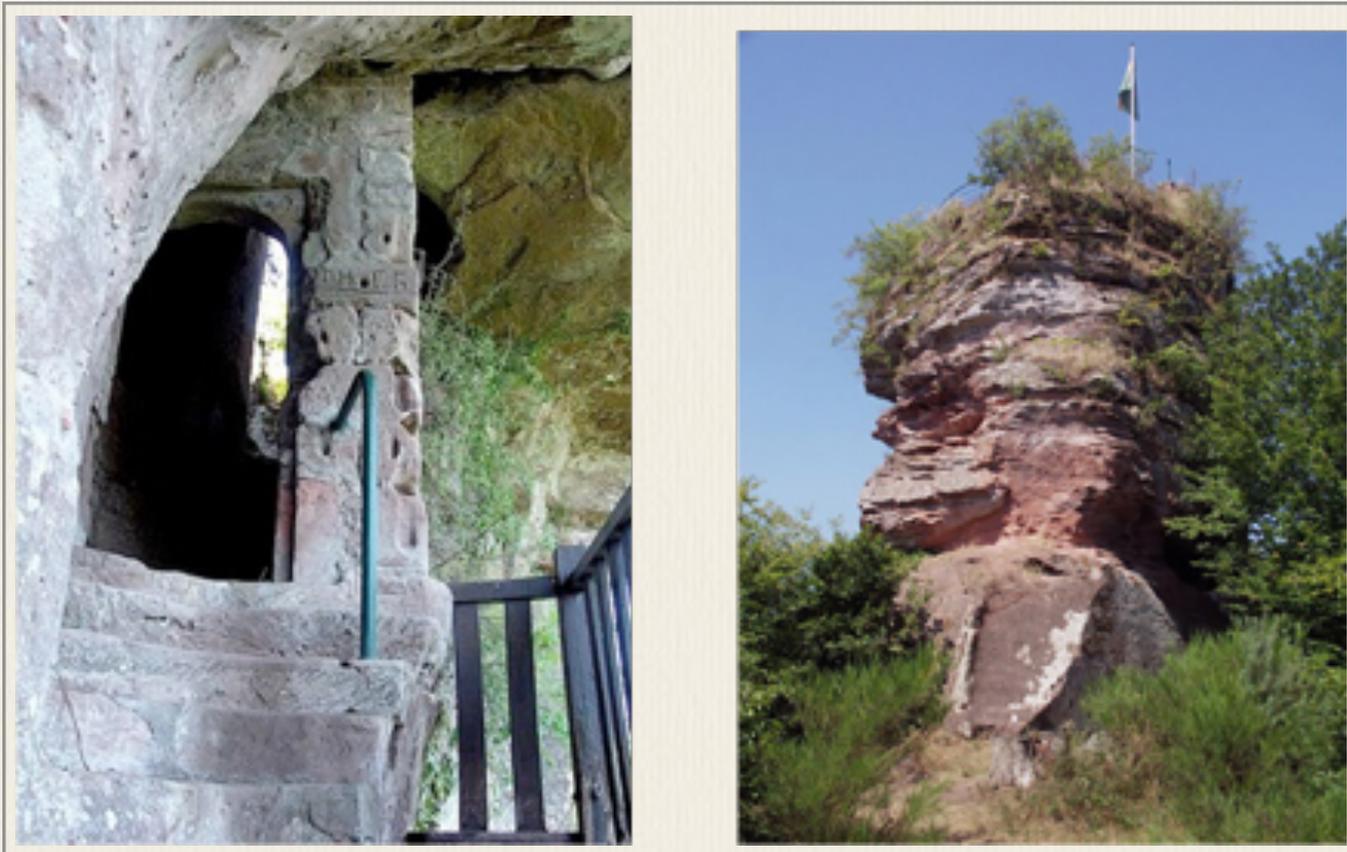
There is an interesting personal story regarding the Falkenburg Castle near Wilgartswiesen. When I studied French at the university, my teacher was a German who was from this region near the border of France and Germany. She described a castle ruin in that she used to play in as a child. This is a true ruin that has not been restored.

Falkenburg Castle near Wilgartswiesen is mentioned in one of the documents of the Archbishop Erkinbalds in 1019. This cliff named Falkenstein was near the northern border of the Kaiserslauterer Empire. There is evidence to support the

belief that the castle was built around 1125. [1.5]. Beatrix von Falkenburg was born in 1253 at Falkenburg Castle in Rhineland-Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz), likely this castle at Wilgartswiesen. She was the daughter of Dirk II von Falkenburg, Count of Falkenburg. On 16 JUN 1269 Beatrix married Richard of Cornwall (Earl of Cornwall) son of King of England John I 'Lackland' and Isabella d'Angoulême, on 16 June 1269 at Kaiserslautern [1.6].



*Falkenburg Castle near
Wilgartswiesen*



Ruins of the Castle Falkenburg near Wilgartswiesen

Burg Falkenberg

This is the quintessential German castle. It is built on a solid rock outcropping in the center of the town of Falkenberg (from Old High German, berg means mountain and burg means fortress or castle). First built in 1154, the castle sits on a granite rock and is accessed by a wooden bridge resting on stone pillars over a deep ditch. [1.7]



Burg Falkenberg in the village Falkenberg, Bavaria, Germany

Castle Valkenburg

During a business trip to Aachen, Germany a number of years ago, I was told by my hosts that I should go to see the Falkenburg castle in the province of Limburg, Netherlands. This castle is located just seven miles from the German border and twelve miles from the center of Aachen. My German hosts did not see any difference in the spelling—in their minds Valkenburg and Falkenburg were the same.

Recently, there has been DNA evidence linking one line descending from an early Falkenburg ancestor to the family van Valkenburg. The town of Valkenburg grew up around the Valkenburg Castle. The castle was built in 1115 by Gosewijn I Heinsberg. The castle was besieged many times during the Middle Ages, and was occupied by the French in 1672. Clearly, Falkenburgs or Valkenburgs from this area were not part of a royal family who built this fortification. The Dutch family van Valkenburg literally means from Valkenburg.



Valkenburg Castle in Limburg, Netherlands, near the German border.



Location of Falkenburg castles

Chapter 1: References

- [1.1] < <http://www.musicwithease.com/flying-dutchman-source.html> >
- [1.2] Ruland, Wilhelm, Legends of the Rhine an on-line book at:
< <http://www.kellscraft.com/LegendsRhine/legendsrhinecontents.html> >
- [1.3] < <http://www.calim.com/reichenstein/> >
- [1.4] < <http://www.burg-reichenstein.com> (in German) >
- [1.5] < <http://cms.burg-lemberg.de/index.php/en/falkenburg-en> >
- [1.6] The Peerage, A genealogical survey of the peerage of Britain as well as the royal families of Europe < <http://thepeerage.com/p10223.htm> >
- [1.7] < <http://www.burgenseite.de/html/falkenberg.html> >