

Topic Page: [Bonn](#)

Definition: **Bonn** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

City and capital of former West Germany on the River Rhine, North Rhine-Westphalia, W Germany. Founded in the 1st century ad as a Roman military establishment, it later became the seat of the electors of Cologne (1238-1797) and was awarded to Prussia by the Congress of Vienna (1815). Bonn was capital of West Germany from 1949 until German reunification in 1990. Sights include a Romanesque cathedral and the Poppelsdorf Palace. Beethoven was born here. Industries: engineering, laboratory equipment. Pop. (1999) 304,100.

Summary Article: **Bonn**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Industrial city in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, 18 km/15 mi southeast of Cologne, on the left bank of the Rhine; population (2003 est) 307,500. Industries include the manufacture of light-metal products, ceramics, office equipment, textiles, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals. Bonn was the seat of government of West Germany 1949–90 and of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1990. In 1991 the Bundestag (lower house) voted to move the capital to Berlin. This has taken place in phases, with the major phase in 1998.

Once a Roman outpost (**Castra Bonnensia**), founded in the 1st century AD), it was devastated by the Normans in the 9th century, and later became the residence (1238–1794) of the electors of Cologne. Bonn was occupied by the French in 1794, annexed in 1801, and passed to Prussia in 1815. Before the 20th century it was important as the residence of the electors and archbishops of Cologne. The Friedrich-Wilhelms University was founded in 1818 (site of an academy founded in 1777) and contains the former palace of the electors (built 1697–1725). Ludwig van Beethoven was born here and the concert hall is named after him. There is an 18th-century Rathaus (town hall), the Munzer Basilica, and the 15th-century Remigiuskirche. There are three new museums, including the Museum of the History of the Federal Republic of Germany (opened in 1994). Since the early 1960s there has been an annual Beethoven Festival.

History The city was chosen as the capital of West Germany in 1949, defeating Frankfurt, Kassel, and Stuttgart. In 1969 it was merged with Bad Godesburg, Beuel, Duisdorf, Ippendorf, and Oberkassel to form an enlarged urban area. However, Bonn was given the nickname 'capital village' (Bundesdorf) on account of its size. As the seat of government for both houses of parliament in the Bundeshaus, Bonn acquired many of the functions of a capital, and became the site of the chancellor's home (Palais Schaumburg), the president's residence (Villa Hammerschmidt), and over 90 embassies.

Transfer of capital to Berlin The 1991 vote to transfer parliament and government to Berlin was by 337 votes to 320. The Bundesrat (upper house) voted to remain in Bonn along with eight federal ministries. To replace the lost employment and functions, Bonn is to expand its service functions in areas such as research and development, as well as in cultural and tourist attractions. International agencies have also been encouraged to establish their offices in Bonn rather than Berlin, owing to Bonn's proximity to the Brussels–Luxembourg–Strasbourg axis of the European Union.

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