

family sovereign status within the Empire and a voting seat in the Imperial Diet³⁷.

The joining of Vaduz and Schellenberg by Emperor Charles VI in 1719 is celebrated in Liechtenstein as the foundation of the state. In legal terms there were three subsequent events that led to this tiny nation's current sovereign status. The first was prompted by Napoleon. When he defeated the Austrians at Ulm and Austerlitz in 1805 it led to the Treaty of Pressburg. This Treaty forced the Austrian Emperor to recognize the status of Bavaria and Württemberg as Kingdoms and led to the demise of the Holy Roman Empire. Emperor Francis dissolved the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 and declared himself Emperor of Austria. Meanwhile the Confederation of the Rhine was created by Napoleon to bring together the many small German States and excluding Prussia and Austria. Partly due to personal links to Napoleon the Liechtenstein family and their tiny Principality of Liechtenstein were admitted into the Confederation. This, despite the fact that no member of the Liechtenstein family had yet set foot within the borders of the Principality even though they had owned and drawn legitimacy from it for almost 100 years. When Napoleon fell the Confederation of the Rhine turned into the German Confederation and its membership, including Liechtenstein, was confirmed by the Congress of Vienna. This confederation still had the Habsburg Emperor as its head but the states were notionally sovereign within its bounds³⁸.

The rivalry between Prussia and Austria mounted over the next half a century and culminated in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. This war was a critical time for the evolution of Liechtenstein and its view on military defence. The Liechtensteiners mobilized their full military strength for this war, 80 men. They were sent to hold a key mountain pass on the Austro-Italian frontier, a task they completed without firing a shot or sighting the enemy. At the war's end and with Austria defeated the Liechtenstein Army marched home 81 strong having collected an Italian into their ranks. Austria's defeat led to the demise of the German Confederation and for the first time in its history Liechtenstein was independent and beholden to no higher Lord or Congress. It also meant that the requirement of the Confederation for all members to provide a military contingent commensurate to their size was no longer valid. The Liechtenstein Parliament, the Landtag, in view of being free of this requirement voted to disband the Army on the grounds of cost. The Prince objected on the grounds of the state being defenceless but in the absence of a clear threat and with close relations to a still powerful Austria, the Prince eventually agreed. The Liechtenstein Army was disbanded on 12 February 1868³⁹.

³⁷ Beattie, 14-16.

³⁸ Ibid, 20-22.

³⁹ Ibid, 24-30.