

Topic Page: [Lower Saxony](#)

Definition: **Lower Saxony** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

(Niedersachsen) Region of N Germany, formed in 1946 by the merging of the provinces of Hanover, Brunswick, Oldenburg, and Schaumberg-Lippe; the capital is Hanover. Agriculture focuses on cereal crops. Industries: machine construction, electrical engineering. Area: 47,606sq km (18,376sq mi). Pop. (1999) 7,898,760.

Summary Article: **Lower Saxony**

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

Administrative region (German *Land*) in northern Germany, bordered to the north by Schleswig-Holstein and the city-state of Hamburg, to the northeast by Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, to the south by North Rhine-Westphalia and Hesse, on the east and southeast by Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia respectively, and on the west by the Netherlands; area 47,613 sq km/18,383 sq mi; population (2003 est) 7,959,800. The capital is Hannover, and other major towns include Braunschweig (Brunswick), Osnabrück, Oldenburg, Göttingen, Wolfsburg, Salzgitter, and Hildesheim. The region includes the Lüneburg Heath, the Harz and Weser Mountains, and the Elbe, Weser, Aller, Leine, and Ems rivers.

Economy Industries include cars (the Volkswagen plant at Wolfsburg is in the east of the state), machinery, electrical engineering, and iron and steel production. There are oil wells in the Emsland, large iron-ore deposits at Watenstedt-Salzgitter, and lignite mines near Helmstedt. Agriculture includes cereals, oats, potatoes, and livestock farming. Emden, Wilhelmschaven, and Cuxhaven are the chief North Sea ports.

History The early history of Lower Saxony is identical to that of Saxony as a whole; the region began to develop separately after the break-up of the Duchy of Saxony in 1180 following the death of Henry the Lion. During the Reformation Lower Saxony came strongly under the influence of the new ideas of the reformer Martin Luther. From the late 17th century until the mid-19th century, the area was largely under the control of the electors (later kings) of Hannover. From 1714 the Hanoverians became, through marriage, the ruling dynasty in Great Britain, until the death of William IV in 1837.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries the area was invaded and occupied during the Seven Years' War, the Revolutionary Wars, and the Napoleonic campaigns. Hannover supported Austria against its increasingly powerful neighbour Prussia in the Seven Weeks' War (1866), and with the defeat of Austria the majority of Lower Saxony was ceded to Prussian control. When Germany capitulated at the end of World War II, the country's unconditional surrender was signed on Lüneburg Heath in May 1945, and the region fell within the British zone of occupation. In 1946 the present *Land* was formed from the former Prussian province of Hannover and the former states of Oldenburg, Braunschweig, and Schaumburg-Lippe.

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