



## Brandberg Community History & Origins

The name of the municipality features as “Pramberg” in ancient records dating from around 1350, the spelling of which persevered until the 18th century. The municipal coat of arms for Brandberg therefore features a blackberry, as linguists concluded that the old form of the name was originally based on the word “Pram” or “Bram”, from “Brombeere”, German for blackberry.

In 1984, Brandberg was awarded with its own municipal coat of arms depicting a golden peak against a green background, with a green blackberry stalk with leaves and black fruit in the centre.

In earlier times, numerous alpine pasturelands belonged to Ahrntal farmers, which in turn indicates that the area was probably settled from the Ahrntal valley.

In the 12th century, the Archbishop of Salzburg, as sovereign ruler, gave the order to cultivate Brandberg in an extensive woodland clearing operation. The “Schwaighöfe” dairy farms established at that time remained in possession of the Salzburg rulers for 700 years.

The farmers were obliged to pay taxes in kind, and later also monetary interest. They had to deliver cheese, oats, lambs, rams, even a cow every three years, as well as rough cloth, and later money to the responsible office in Schwendau. In some cases, the landlord also demanded delivery of certain “Lageln” (barrels) of wine, which the farmers in South Tyrol exchanged for products derived from cattle breeding. The exchange of goods with South Tyrol via the relatively low-lying mountain passes continued until even after the time of feudal rule and boosted the income of many a Zillertal smuggler, right up to the 20th century.

Brandberg was a separate tax and administrative district until 1801, to which Mayrhofen also belonged.

Brandberg experienced particularly fateful times around 1837, when the faithful Zillertal Protestants were expelled from their homeland. From the thence 319 Brandberg residents, 87 Protestants made the difficult choice to emigrate.

The government soon made every effort to prevent similar “aberrations of faith” from occurring in future and, in 1842, financed construction of a schoolhouse including a teacher’s apartment from the school fund. Better education was then introduced to protect the community from “ignorance and superstition”.

