

CANAWLERS AT REST

WILLIAM & FRED MEYER

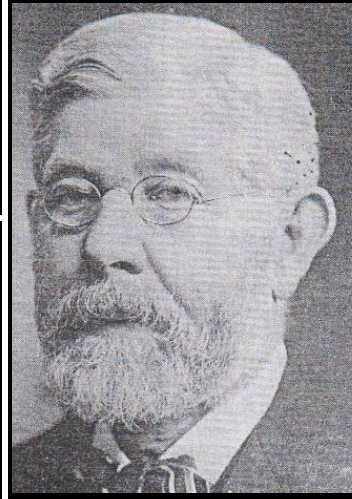
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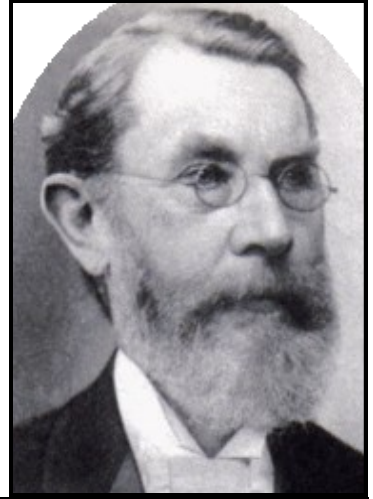
b. Dec. 19, 1824 b. Dec. 9, 1830

d. Sept. 7, 1910 d. Jul. 12, 1905

By Robert F. Schmidt



William
Johann Frederick Wilhelm
Meyer



Fred
Christian Frederick Gottlieb
Meyer

Countless stories have been told about how immigrants, who came to America with very little, achieved success in their lives that never could have happened in their European homeland. The Meyer family of Westphalia, Germany is just another example. William and Fred's father was John Henry Meyer, who was born about December 1779 and lived in Westphalia, Germany. John's first marriage resulted in several children, including a daughter, Agnes Meyer, who was born on January 1, 1805.

Following the death of his first wife, John married a widow lady, Margaretha Louise Hoolt, in 1821. This was a happy marriage. John was a farmer and shepherd. The union produced three children. Johann Frederick Wilhelm (William) Meyer (1824), Margaretha Meyer, and Christian Frederick (Fred) Gottlieb Meyer (1830).

Unfortunately John died in June 1834 at age 54. Margaretha remarried Anton Busse in 1838. She and her three children moved to nearby Stemshorn, Hanover.

Margaretha's step-daughter, Agnes, had years earlier moved to Hanover having married Herman Gerke in 1829, her second marriage. In 1834 Herman's younger brother, Ludwig Gerke, at 19 left for the United States and found his way to Adams County, Indiana south of Fort Wayne. He was joined later by another

brother, Diederich, in 1837. In 1838 Herman Gerke's family decided to emigrate to America as well. Herman, Agnes (Meyer) Gerke and their four young boys arrived in December 1838.

The Gerke's and other family members came by ox team and wagon along muddy trails from Cincinnati to Adams County arriving in February 1839. They initially lived with Diederich Gerke. Then, in the spring, they built a one-room log cabin. They cleared the forest and then grew potatoes and corn and raised pigs. From this cabin in Adams County it was a 7 hour trip to Ft Wayne.

In 1839 in Stemshorn, Hanover, William, now 15, found employment as a shepherd earning \$15 per year and was allowed to herd the family's 10 sheep along with his employer's flock. He was able to sell wool and do some knitting to produce extra income. In 1842, when he became 18, he returned to live with his family and help on the farm.

Agnes Gerke corresponded about America with her half siblings, the Meyers. Back in Germany. In 1845 Margaretha, William and Fred's mother died. Two years later (1847), William and Fred asked their step-father, Anton Busse, for permission to leave the farm and go to America. He granted permission but said they would have to supply their own money.

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William and Fred had saved enough money for passage aboard an English sailing ship, "Swanton," with a Captain Duncan on the 17th of September 1847. The ship, loaded with 350 passengers, landed in New Orleans on November 17th. After a brief stay the brothers took a Mississippi steamer to Cincinnati, Ohio. They stayed there for 2 days and then booked passage on a canal boat on the Miami & Erie Canal.

At this time the canal was open from Cincinnati to Junction, Ohio. They could have taken a canal boat as far as Junction and then onto Fort Wayne, but they were out of money and, since it was December 1, the canal might have been frozen. Instead they took the canal boat as far as New Bremen, Ohio and then decided to walk the 60 some miles to Adams County, Indiana.

William, age 23, and Fred, age 17, walked 30 miles the first day until they found a tavern in which to spend the night. They were out of money so they borrowed four dollars to cover their expenses. The next 30 miles they had little to eat except the hardtack they had brought from the canal boat. They saw only 6 cabins as they walked through the native forest, the trail being blazed on the trees. By nightfall on the second day they reached another tavern and inquired about the Herman Gerke farm. Given some directions they proceeded to another cabin and luckily the family there spoke Low German. They were fed and then led by torch light to the cabin of Herman Gerke. They had finally arrived on December 3, 1847. The next day William and Fred went to work helping their nephews clear trees on the Gerke land.

After a couple of months Fred, the younger, traveled to Fort Wayne with Herman Gerke. Fred found a job with a family there doing chores to earn his meals and lodging, plus he was able to obtain some schooling. Fred became a good scholar.

In the meantime William, being older, obtained employment as a hoggee, the man who drove the horses or mules, on the Wabash & Erie Canal. He worked on a line boat from March 1848 until the 4th of July. He then went back to the Gerke farm, but after being overcome with heat exhaustion one day, he decided to

go back to canal work. He again obtained work but this time it was on a Packet or passenger boat. He earned \$18 per month. While working on this job, he contracted malaria and again returned to work on the Gerke farm.

In December 1848 William was able to purchase 80 acres of wooded land for \$205. He borrowed \$100 and paid the rest with the \$105 that he had saved.

Meanwhile in May 1848, Fred had obtained employment with Mr. Hugh B. Reed, who operated a drug store. After 6 weeks of routine work making fires and washing bottles he was ready to move on, but Mr. Reed and the other employees encouraged him to stay. His pay was raised to \$15 per month. With Fred's promotion in the business he was able to get William a job in the drugstore performing the tasks that Fred had initially performed. Now both boys now were learning the drug business. By 1852 Fred had become the chief clerk in the establishment.

On May 22, 1851, William had married Carolina Schroeder and they had a daughter, Louise Wilhelmine in June 1852. The farm that William had purchased was sold to his brother-in-law, Herman Gerke. Mr. Reed had raised William's pay to \$25 per month.

A major turning point for the brothers came in August 1852 when Fred decided to become a partner with Watson Wall in a competing drug business. They called it Wall & Meyer. One of the first acts of the new business was for Fred to go by canal boat to Toledo, then by steamer across Lake Erie to Buffalo and then by rail to New York city. Here he was to obtain goods for the new business.

Mr. Reed, being very disappointed in the turn of events, also let William resign. William then went into his brother's business at Wall & Meyer. Later, when Mr. Wall retired in 1857, William became a partner with Fred in their new business of "Meyer & Brother."

In July 1854 Fred married Francesca Schmidt, who had come to Fort Wayne from France in 1850. They had a very happy marriage.

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By 1858 the drug business was doing very well. However, in August of 1859 William's wife, Carolina, died of typhoid, shortly after the birth of their son, Heinrich. William, who now had a full time job with the business, needed a wife to care for his three small children.

William was probably well acquainted with Julia Gerke, the daughter of Diederich Gerke of Adams County, since his half-sister Agnes had married Herman Gerke, Diederich's brother and the Meyer brothers had lived some time in Adams County. When Diederich died in 1852 his widow, Elizabeth, then married Christian Schaper. Julia Gerke, age 19, and her siblings then lived with Elizabeth and Christian Schaper. Both of the parents had no objections to the marriage, so William married Julia Gerke on May 22, 1860.

Julia met the challenge of caring for the 3 small children. Then in November 1862 William and Julia had a daughter of their own, Emilie. Other children soon followed.

The Civil war brought hard times to the drug business as prices escalated. During the middle of the war a tremendous fire overtook their store producing a total loss for their drug business. Although they were able to rebuild the business, in 1865, at the end of the war, times were very difficult with money being tight.

Jesse Lynch Williams, Chief Engineer of Indiana's canals, asked the Meyer brothers to consider taking his son, Edward Williams, into their business, which they did. The brothers decided to expand into the wholesale drug business in St. Louis, Missouri and Edward Williams went there. Later Fred felt they should also expand into the chemical business in St. Louis. Fred moved to St. Louis and William stayed in Fort Wayne.

The St. Louis wholesale drug business expanded into Kansas City, Missouri in 1879 and Dallas, Texas in 1887. The demands of their time in the business grew rapidly. Fred became President of the National Wholesale Druggist Association in 1884. The St. Louis business was separated from the Fort Wayne operation

in 1889 under the name Meyer Brothers & Co. The Fort Wayne operation continued under the leadership of William as Meyers Drug, a retail drug operation.

Fred became exhausted from business stress, so he and Francesca found it necessary to take a rest in Europe from the spring of 1889 to May 1890. Fred returned refreshed and continued with the business until his death at age 74 in July 1905. Francesca lived on until 1927. Both are buried in the Concordia Cemetery in St Louis.

After Fred's death in 1905 Theodore F. Meyer, his son, took over as president of Meyer Brothers and led the firm into bankruptcy. Carl F.G. Meyer II, another younger son, succeeded Theodore and brought the firm back to prosperity. His son Carl F.G. Meyer III became president of Meyer Brothers Drug Company in 1952 and remained president until the Meyer Brothers Drug Company merged with Fox-Vliet to become FoxMeyer in 1981. By 1995 they had become the 5th largest drug distributor in the United States, McKesson being # 1.

Wholesalers like FoxMeyer act as intermediaries between manufacturers and retailers (dispensers). They provide fast and cost effective means for the purchase and sales of prescription drugs. Wholesalers also have a broad range of value added services such as storage facilities and large varieties of drugs that they can provide to their dispensers and other customers. In 1996 FoxMeyer was forced into bankruptcy as it underestimated the cost of implementing a new comprehensive computerized drug distribution system.

William, who was President of Meyers Drugs, had other stockholders in the firm that operated four retail drug outlets in Fort Wayne. He and Julia celebrated 50 years of marriage in May 1910 shortly before he died on September 7, 1910. Julia lived in Fort Wayne until 1917 when she died. Both she and William are buried in Concordia Lutheran Cemetery in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

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John Frederick William Meyer

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Find Grave #</u>
Meyer, John Henry	Dec 1779	Westphalia	1 Jun 1834	Westphalia	?	Westphalia	Germany
m. 1st Marriage - Unknown					?	" " "	" " "
Meyer, Agnes	1 Jan 1805	Westphalia	31 Jul 1881	Allen Co, IN	1829	Stemshorn	FG # 158931961
Gerke, Herman H	15 Sep 1802	Hanover GM	2 Oct 1864	Adams Co IN	" " "	" " "	FG # 58963960
m. Margaretha Louise Hooft	?	Germany	1845	Stemshorn	1821	" " "	Germany
Meyer, J F William	19 Dec 1824	Westphalia	7 Sep 1910	Allen Co, IN	23 May 1851	Allen Co, IN	FG # 19298497
m. Schroeder, Caroline	16 Apr 1823	Germany	28 Aug 1859	" " "	" " "	" " "	FG # 35283972
Meyer, Louise Wilhelmine	15 Jun 1852	Allen Co, IN	14 Jun 1943	Mass.			FG # 137794771
m. Burkhardt, Gottlieb Fred	10 Oct 1853	?	27 Jan 1910	Mass.			FG # 137794760
Meyer, Frederick Gottlieb	15 Aug 1854	Allen Co, IN	1908	New York			FG # 82774694
m. Langlois, Susilda	1857	?	1928	New York			FG # 82774725
Meyer, Christian Frederick	26 Jun 1856	Allen Co, IN	4 Jun 1858	Allen Co, IN			FG # 35284083
Meyer, William Ludwig	23 Jun 1858	" " "	21 Sep 1925	" " "			FG # 35298947
m. Gerke, Juliana	13 Jan 1841	" " "	3 Jun 1917	Allen Co, IN	22 May 1860	Allen Co, IN	FG # 19234861
Meyer, Emilie Francesca	20 Nov 1862	" " "	24 Feb 1947	" " "			FG # 63560074
m. Landenberger, John M.	28 Sep 1863	" " "	21 Mar 1952	" " "			FG # 63560082
Meyer, Pauline	17 Aug 1864	" " "	9 May 1941	" " "			FG # 35297941
m . Paul, William Jr	12 Nov 1865	" " "	2 May 1902	" " "			FG # 35298581
Meyer, Anna Louise	24 May 1866	" " "	8 Dec 1879	" " "	N/A		FG # 22596222
Meyer, Wolfgang Geroge T	10 Jan 1868	" " "	?				
m. ?, Sallie May	Mar 1873	?	?				
Meyer, Eda Anna Helene	7 Mar 1874	Allen Co, IN	1966	Allen Co, IN	1897	Allen Co, IN	FG # 128702931
m. Streider, C Gottlieb	20 May 1874	" " "	23 Feb 1935	" " "	" " "	" " "	FG # 128702916
Trier, Ann Elizabeth	4 Oct 1820	Germany	12 Nov 1885	Allen Co, IN			FG # 19297318
m. Gerke, Johann Diederich	11 Feb 1808	" " "	7 May 1852	" " "			FG # 19234387
Gerke, Juliana	2nd wife of William Meyer / Herman Gerke is her uncle /						
m. Schaper, Friedrich Christian	3 Jun 1828	Germany	3 Feb 1901	Allen Co, IN			Other siblings at = FG # 19234861 FG # 19235401

Christian Frederick Gottlieb Meyer

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Find Grave #</u>
1* Meyer, Christian Fred G.	9 Dec 1830	Westphalia	12 Jul 1905	St Louis MO	Jul 1854	Allen Co, IN	FG # 75772918
m. Schmidt, Francesa	1 Nov 1834	France	4 Jul 1927	St Louis MO	" " "	" " "	FG # 75773643
Meyer, George	1854	Allen Co, IN	BF 1860				
2 * Meyer, Theodore F	4 Jun 1857	" " "	13 Jun 1924	California			FG # 54274784
m. ?, Edna K	1856	Texas					
Meyer, Charles	1858	Allen Co, IN	BF 1860				
Meyer, Henry Jules	5 Sep 1859	" " "	11 Dec 1919	S Africa			
Meyer, Augusta	18 Sep 1861	" " "	12 Dec 1889	Allen Co, IN			FG # 51598178
m. Siemon, Dr Otto	25 May 1856	" " "	23 Nov 1902	" " "			FG # 51598340
Meyer, Mathilda	1864	" " "					
Meyer, Fredrich	1866	" " "					
Meyer, Otto Paul	28 Feb 1870	Missouri	1934	Missouri			FG # 105762497
m. McGowan, Alice M	12 Mar 1873	?	14 Nov 1947	" " "			FG # 105762564
Meyer, Heinrich Gustave							
Meyer, Adolph C	22 Aug 1872	Missouri	1 Aug 1961	Missouri			FG # 115528426
m. Douglas, Leola Mae	30 Jul 1875	" " "	24 Jan 1947	" " "			FG # 115528416
3 * Meyer, Karl Frederick Gottlieb	7 Mar 1880	" " "	1945	Patterson, NJ			FG # 105935704
m. Newell, Elenora	1882	" " "	1966	" " "			FG # 105935731

* 3 Presidents - Meyer Brothers Drug St Louis Mo Inc Mar 29 1889



WILLIAM MEYER

J. F. W. MEYER
DEC. 19, 1824
SEPT. 7, 1910

Concordia Lutheran Cemetery
Fort Wayne
Allen County
Indiana



FRED MEYER

C.F.G. MEYER
BORN DEC. 9, 1830
DIED JULY 12, 1905

Concordia Cemetery
St. Louis
Missouri

