

CANAWLERS AT REST

FREDERICK JOHANN MEYER

b. November 21, 1813
d. July 4, 1897

By Carolyn I. Schmidt

Frederick Meyer was born in Scheie Amt Buckebourg, Deutschland to Christian and Christina Meyer on November 21, 1813. In 1839 he married Christina Dinkes in Germany. He emigrated to America in 1840 and came directly to Fort Wayne, Indiana to work on the Wabash & Erie Canal. Christina stayed behind and gave birth to their first son, Frederick A. Meyer in Prussia on April 14, 1840.

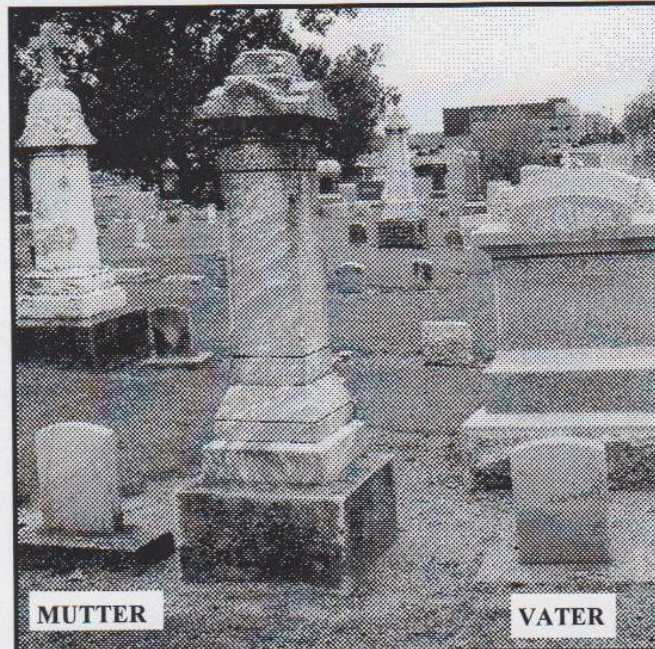
Frederick, our subject, lived frugally on his wages as a canal laborer and bought a little wooded farm of forty acres. He sent for his wife and son in 1843. They built a round-pole cabin and began farming. Over the years they were able to purchase good farm land in St. Joseph township until they owned 120 acres of well improved land.

Frederick and Christina had seven children of which six survived. They were Frederick, Henry, John, Mary, Charles and William.

Frederick's wife, Christina (b. 2-6-1811), died on August 22, 1887. She was 76 years 6 months and 16 days old. Both she and Frederick were members of the Lutheran Church.

Frederick died on July 4, 1897 at the age of 83 years, 7 months and 13 days. His obituary in the *Fort Wayne Morning Journal* on Tuesday, July 6, 1897 simply states:

"Frederick Meyer, of St. Joe township, who was 84 years of age, died at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, of old age. He had been afflicted to some extent with dropsy. His wife died seven years ago, and he made his home with



Frederick and Christina Meyer's tombstone in St. Peter Lutheran Cemetery in Ft. Wayne, IN. Photo by Bob Schmidt

his son. The funeral will be held Wednesday from St. Michael's church at Goeglein." The Goeglein group of farmhouses on the Maysville route was almost a village at that time and had a post office, which was later abolished.

Frederick Sr. was laid to rest in the old St. Peter Lutheran Cemetery, which is located in Section 34, on the south side of East State Street on the west side of the church in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The church is on the corner of East State Street and Maysville Road. His gravestone is very difficult to read. It is located in the first full row of stones beside the church on lot 8S between the stones of Henry Thiele and Dietrick Lampe Sr. One side of the stone gives his birth and death dates and the other side gives those of his wife. This information is all in German. His name is spelled Friedrich and her maiden name is spelled Dinkers or Dinkess. A smaller stone to the north says "Vater," father, and a smaller stone to the south says "Mutter," mother.

We know that two of Frederick's sons eventually became farmers:

Frederick Jr. (b. 4-14-1840, d. 8-26-1913) came to Indiana in 1843 and grew up on the family farm. He had no formal education. He started out on his own at age twenty hiring out as a farm hand. By 1863 he had accumulated enough money to buy eighty acres of land that was covered with dense forest. He toiled every day and many nights to carve out a fertile farm. In 1869 he married Caroline Mengensen (b. 10-18-1846, d. 3-55-

1929). They had six children of whom four survived: Charles, Christina, Sophia and Caroline. He increased his farm to 100 acres and improved it with substantial buildings. Both he and Caroline are buried in lot 84S of the old St. Peter Lutheran Cemetery.

John was born in St. Joseph township on March 26, 1847. In 1864 he enlisted in Company F, One Hundred and Forty-second Indiana infantry, under Capt. Robert Swan, serving until the Civil War was over. In then traveled extensively through the west for about eight years, going twice to California. In 1877 he married Sophia Bullerman (b. 1853). They had five children of which two, Anna A. and Louisa, survived. They had a good farm of 100 acres.

Sources:

Ft. Wayne Morning Journal. July 6, 1887.
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 Robertson, Robert S. *Valley of the Upper Maumee*. Madison, WI; Brandt & Fuller. 1889.
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Sincere thanks go to Willard Meyer, custodian of St. Peter's Cemetery, for taking the time to come to the cemetery with the lot listings and helping locate the gravestone.

1891 RESERVOIR BANK BREAKS

The *Fort Wayne Journal* of June 24, 1891 ran the following article, which shows how the St. Joseph Feeder Canal to the Wabash & Erie Canal was used after it was closed to transportation:

A BANK BREAKS.

The Water Power Reservoir Floods Many Homes.

Ten Residences Surrounded by Water,
 The Cellars Under Water and
 First Floors Threatened.

At considerable expense, an outlay of nearly \$50,000, the Fort Wayne Power company constructed a reservoir covering five acres of ground on Spy Run avenue adjacent to the Electric Power station and adjoining the feeder canal. For the past six months this reservoir, with its large volume of water, has afforded power for the turbine wheel which runs the Fort Wayne Electric Power station. Yesterday afternoon at 4 o'clock the north bank of the reservoir sprung a leak near the canal bank. The break was only a slight one and workmen were sent to the spot at once to repair the damage. The erosive power of the water which flowed through the small fissure in the break was extremely great and before paraphernalia could be procured the fissure expanded and the water washed the bank away in enormous chunks. All residences on Randolph Street for two blocks north of the reservoir were surrounded by four feet of water and the floods crept up to within 50 feet of Spy Run avenue in a very few minutes.

The water poured over the flooded districts in torrents, and many families were unable to leave their homes. When the impending danger was discovered the flood gates of the reservoir were opened wide, and the supply in the feeder dam locks shut off. The water flow did not cease, however, til 8 o'clock last night. A sheet of water - one half mile in diameter and four feet deep

surrounded the residences of Jacob Weibert, Frank Jolly, Mrs. Knight, a widow; Andrew Eichel, Louis

