

depressed town. This in itself is no small achievement given Ludewig’s humble, illegitimate origins. Ludewig owned house number 225 for at least 14 years. His name appears in the surviving records that cover the period from 1826 to 1839 (see chart below).

Value of the House and Land at # 225, Lübbecke				
Year	Property	Reichtalers	Groschens	Pfennigs
1826	Lot		6	3
1832	Lot		8	4
1832	Buildings	6		
1834	Lot		8	4
1834	Buildings	6		
1835	Lot		8	4
1835	Buildings	6		
1836	Lot		8	4
1836	Buildings	6		
1837	Lot		8	4
1837	Buildings	6		
1838	Lot		8	4
1838	Buildings	6		
1839	Lot		8	4
1839	Buildings	6		

Source: Lübbecke City Tax Roll 1826-1839

**Raising the Family**

There is a great deal of discussion and lament today over the number of illegitimate births and pre-marital sex in western society. Yet a brief glance at historical records shows us that such things are not new or even unusual. Perhaps, as we suppose, Ludewig and Louise were in love and this moved them to marry. Then again it may have had something to do with her rapidly growing abdomen. You see Ludewig and Louise’s first child was born just five months after they married each other in November 1817. Ernst Ludewig Aspelmeyer was christened on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1818. Between 1818 and 1833 Louise bore seven children. Caroline (1819) was the next born, followed by Wilhelm (1821), Amalie (1824), Christian (1826) and Friederich (1831). Their last child, a daughter, was born in 1833. Thus far I have not found her first name mentioned in any records.

Ludewig died of cancer on July 10<sup>th</sup> 1839 in Lübbecke. He left a widow and five minor children behind. Church and city records document the family’s presence in Lübbecke from 1817 until 1843. The 1839 city tax record simply lists

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“Aspelmeyer” at house #225. Presumably the first name was dropped because Ludewig was already dead when the list was compiled at the end of the year. So the surname must refer to Louise, his widow. Unfortunately there are no tax records in the city archives for the years after 1839.

The City Residents Roll of 1843 (the first ever compiled for Lübbecke) lists Louise residing at #225. However, she is listed as the wife of Michael Schumacher, a mason ten years her junior. There were two minor children living at home in 1843; Friedrich (age 12) and a daughter (age 10) whose name is not legible on the document. This is supported by Ludewig’s death record that lists a widow and five minor children when he died in 1839. The first two children Ernst (21 years old) and Caroline (20 years old) would already have left home when their father died. Assuming both were indeed already out of the house, we need one more child in order to have five minors in the home. This accounts for the missing daughter of whom we have no previous record. The next City Resident Roll was completed in 1846. The Aspelmeyers/Schumachers no longer lived at house #225. Louise appears in local records once more in 1852 when she gave a statement to the Prussian military officer about her son.

Although at this point we do not know what became of Ludewig’s widow, we do know what happened to some of their children. Caroline Wilhelmine married Heinrich Wilhelm Weddeigfeld at Saint Andreas on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1845. They had three children: Catherine Luise (1845), Dorothee Florentine (1848) and Heinrich Wilhelm (1849).

### **Amerika statt Preussen (America rather than Prussia)**

Two of Ludewig’s sons chose to leave their homeland and move to America rather than stay in Lübbecke. The first to leave was the second son Wilhelm. BZWF, volume 38-39 is a compilation of emigrants derived from court records stored in the state archive in Detmold, Germany. BZWF has W. Ludwig Aspelmeyer, born September 15<sup>th</sup> 1821, listed as an immigrant to America in 1839. So Wilhelm left Lübbecke the same year his father died. He turned 18 years old in 1839. Westphalia had been a Prussian province off and on since the 30 Years War. This obligated draft age young men to serve in the Prussian Army. Service in the army was not very popular as most considered Prussia to be a “foreign” power. Given that service in the Prussian Army was not very attractive, desertion had become an age-old tradition by the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thousands of draft age young men fled Westphalia in those days rather than serve in the army of a distant power. Court records indicate Wilhelm fled to America in 1839 rather than serve in the Prussian Army.

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**Friedrich Wilhem Aspelmeyer** (my 3<sup>rd</sup> Great Grandfather), son of *Christian Ludewig Aspelmeier* and *Sophie Louise Charlotte Fasel (Vasoll)* was born in the old Westfalian city of Lübbecke at 8 a.m. on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1831. Pastor Möller from Saint Andreas Lutheran church baptized Friedrich on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November. Little Friedrich was very fortunate to enter this world safely. The *Mindener Sonntagsblatt* newspaper from November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1831 reported an outbreak of Cholera in Lübbecke that began in October. It appears the Aspelmeyer family was spared this outbreak of the disease as none fell victim to it.

Friedrich appears in the first published Lübbecke city directory when he lived at house number 225 with his mother and stepfather in 1843. The book BZWF<sup>v</sup> lists him as departing for America in 1848. There is a gap in the records of his life from 1843 to 1848. We do not know what happened to him between 1843-1848 because there are no records of the family in Lübbecke. Friedrich is not listed in the 1846 city directory. In 1852 the local Prussian recruiting officer interviewed Louise Schumacher. She told him that Friedrich left Lübbecke in 1848 for Baltimore, Maryland. He took with him the small inheritance he received from his father's estate in July 1842 (18 Reichthalers, 7 groschens). In her statement Louise mentioned that Friedrich departed on a "North American flagged ship."

### **The Decision to Depart**

The absence of opportunity and poor prospects were probably sufficient reason for Friedrich to leave Westphalia in 1848. Yet, he may have had more pressing worries as he made the fateful decision to leave his homeland. 1848 was a turbulent time throughout Central Europe as revolutions against the entrenched political order arose in one country after another. This uncertainty was worrisome and was a causal factor that convinced many a German to move to America rather than become involved in the upheaval at home. Perhaps it was no job prospects or possibly something to do with the political events, we will probably never know. Friedrich would come of age in 1849 and this meant compulsory service in the Prussian Army.

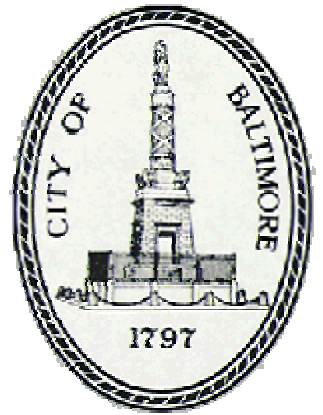
As his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday rapidly approached young Friedrich contemplated what he should do. He would have to report for duty in the Prussian Army in the spring. This was a prospect that did not appeal to him. Life in the Army was harsh and could easily lead to a premature death in one of the Empire's many wars. He decided to follow his older brother Wilhelm's lead and head for America. The letters Wilhelm must have sent back to the family in Lübbecke since he departed nearly nine years earlier made America sound like a wonderful place full of opportunity for a hard working, industrious young man.

Compulsory military service was most likely what in the end convinced him that his prospects for a better life lay in North America rather than Northern Germany. Seeing the handwriting on the wall and the political and economic problems in his homeland, Friedrich departed for the coast. He boarded a North American flagged vessel bound for Baltimore and brought the Aspelmeyer name to Maryland.

As the summer of 1848 came to an end, Friedrich set off for Hamburg where he boarded a North American ship. Most likely he signed on as a deckhand to pay for his passage. This would account for why there is no record of his arrival in either the Baltimore City or Federal immigration records for Baltimore. He arrived in a thriving, yet still small port city with less than 100,000 residents. Things were about to change rapidly as Baltimore became a major arrival point for immigrants over the next 50 years and experienced dramatic population growth.

### **Making A Fresh Start in America**

Friedrich quickly settled into the vibrant and rapidly growing German community of Baltimore. He became an apprentice of the German born tailor Henry Ehlers. Friedrich moved into the Ehlers home, where he appears in the 1850 U.S. Census. The next ten years would turn out to be very eventful in his life.



Many questions remain unanswered about Friedrich's relationship to the Ehlers family. Did he meet Henry Ehlers on the journey across the Atlantic or did he meet Henry after his arrival in Baltimore? It is not clear how close he remained to the Ehlers family, but there are tantalizing clues to be found in the records of the Trinity German Lutheran Church of Baltimore. Baptism records from 1859-1866 for three Ehlers children mention Aspelmeyers. Most interesting is the Baptism of Anna Katharina, the daughter of Heinrich Ehlers, in 1862. Anna K. Aspelmeier is listed as the witness for the ceremony.

Friedrich married Anna K. Diering and they had two children (Fredrick (1856), Elizabeth (1859)). Anna was born in Darmstadt-Hesse in Central Germany and later immigrated to America. Friedrich put his apprenticeship experience with Henry Ehlers to good use when he opened his own tailor shop. In 1860 the shop and real estate were valued at \$450 and his personal property at \$150 (1860 U.S. Census).

Friedrich left the tailoring business shortly after 1860. He then worked as a liquor dealer at Christian Diering and Company Liquor Distributors in Fells

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Point (Christian was most likely his brother-in-law). He and Anna had three more children: Christopher (1863), Louis (1866) and John (1868). The value of his real estate holdings rose to \$3,850 and his personal property was valued at \$800 (1870 Census). Friedrich worked in Fells Point as a liquor dealer until his untimely death in 1872.

Tragedy struck the Aspelmeyer family twice in 1872. Anna died January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1872. Heartbroken and left with small children, Friedrich himself died on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1872. Christopher Diering was the executor of Anna's will. In October 1872 the Baltimore City Orphans Court awarded custody of Elizabeth, Christopher and Louis to their uncle Christopher Diering. Anna's inventory included only a lot with two structures. This property was valued at \$2,000, not a great sum even in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Sketchy records document the lives of their children after their premature deaths in 1872. Fred followed his father into the liquor business. By 1880, when he was 24, Fred worked in a saloon and was married with two children. His wife Catherine, also 24 years old, was born in Prussia. Their first son Frederick was born in 1877. Their second son George H. was born in May 1879. Elizabeth married Andrew Krumholtz. They had at least one son, Frederick C. Krumholtz who died prematurely in 1914. Christopher and Louis eventually moved to nearby Westport on the western shore of Middle Branch where they were farmers. This area has long been an industrial zone, so it is difficult today to imagine men farming in the area as late as the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. At this point we do not know what became of the youngest child John.

Christopher Aspelmeyer married Louisa Woehler in Saint Luke's Church at Henrietta and Eutaw Streets on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1885. Louisa, born October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1855, was the daughter of Heinrich and Louisa (Berriman) Woehler. Christopher and Louisa had two sons: Harry (1886) and William Edward (1888). From this point we know very little about what happened to Christopher Aspelmeyer. He is listed as a farmer living in Westport in the 1895 Baltimore City Directory. It has been difficult to find any further evidence of his life in Baltimore after 1895. To date we have found no death record in Baltimore City or County. Family legend has it that Christopher returned to Germany. Language would certainly have been no barrier. The Aspelmeyers continued to speak German as late as the 1920's. Aspelmeyer and Woehler tombstones in Western and Loudan Park cemeteries in Baltimore are inscribed in German (in whole or part) as late as the 1930's. Perhaps he did return to Germany, however, this is rather unlikely. There is no indication his father ever returned to Westphalia and it is somewhat difficult to believe family ties to Lübbecke remained so strong after nearly 50 years.