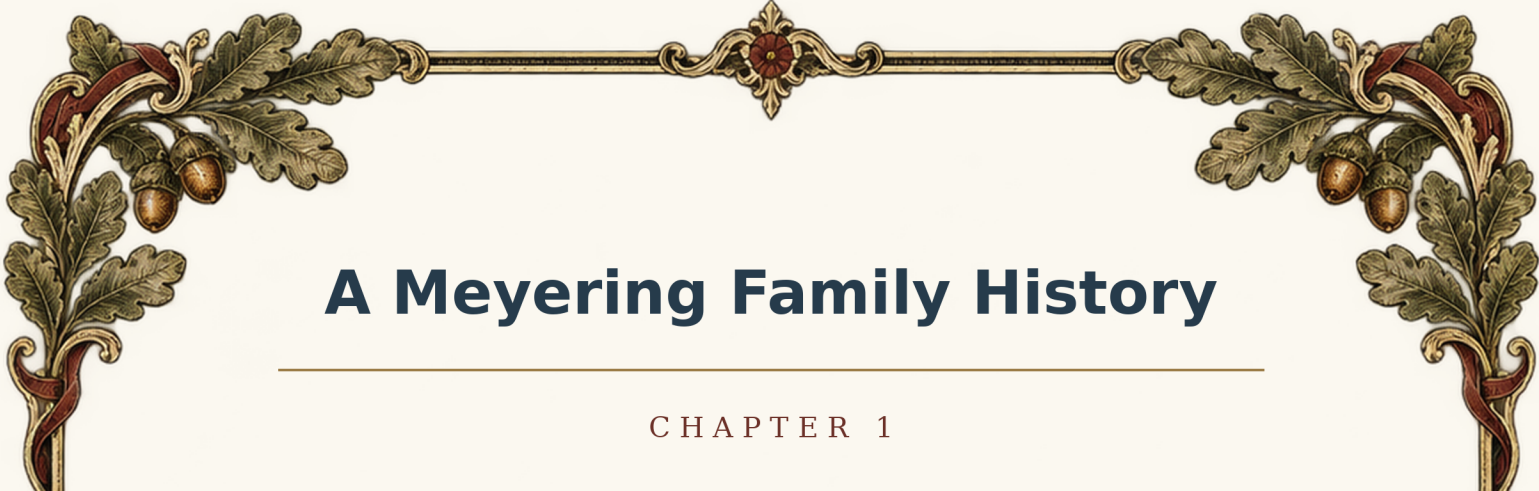




A Meyering Family History

CHAPTER 1

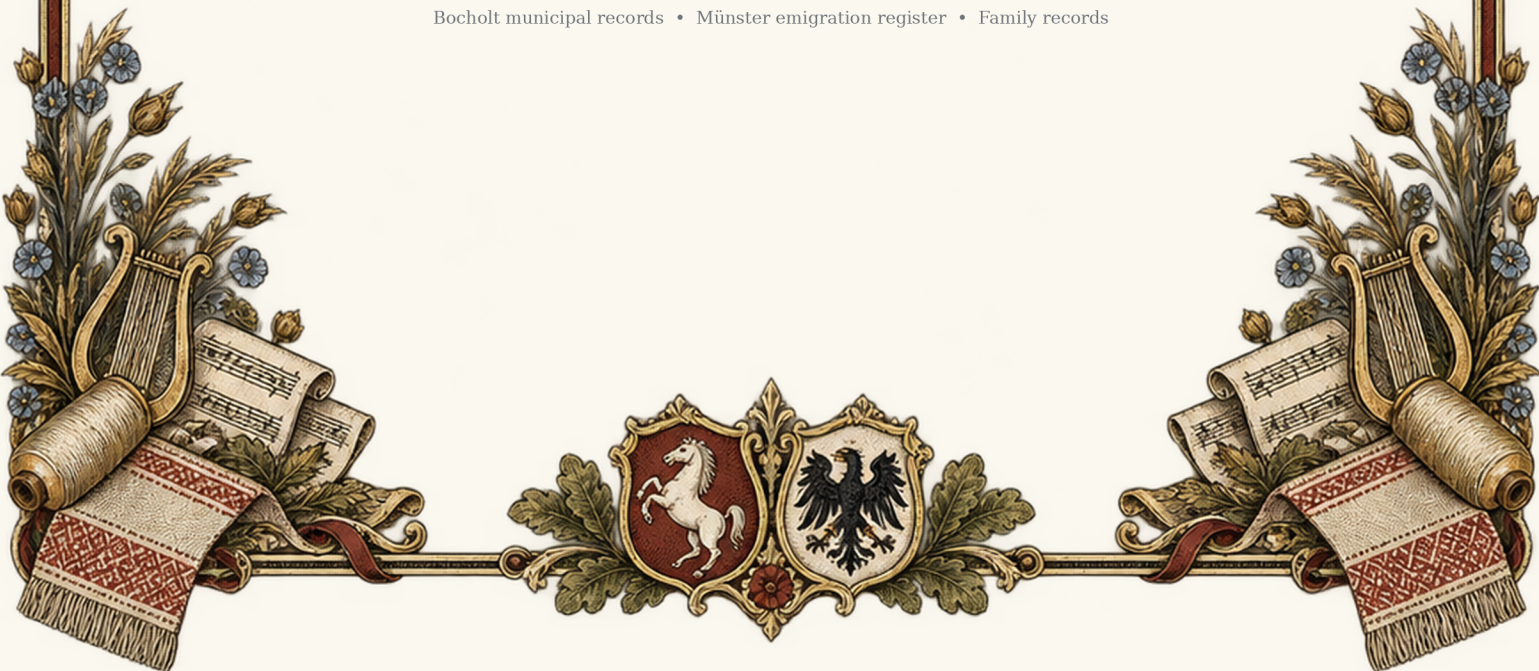
A Journey to America

Henrich Anton Joseph Meyering and the family's departure
from Bocholt, Westphalia, in 1845

BOCHOLT • WESTPHALIA • 1845

Working family-history draft • September 2026

Bocholt municipal records • Münster emigration register • Family records



Our Story Begins in Bocholt

Our story begins in Bocholt, Westphalia, in the westernmost reaches of the Kingdom of Prussia, only a short distance from the Dutch frontier. It was here, in a small Catholic household rooted in the textile economy and in music, that the American story of the Meyering family took its decisive turn.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Bocholt was still a compact town surrounded by the flat, green countryside of the western Münsterland. The Bocholter Aa flowed westward through the district toward the Dutch border. By 1850 the town's population was approximately 4,737 - a fraction of the industrial city it would become later in the century.^[1]

Bocholt was old, but its economy was changing. Textile work had been part of local life for centuries, with cotton weaving documented there from the sixteenth century. Yet the city dates the decisive beginning of its industrial textile era to about 1852. The Meyerings therefore left not an established factory city, but a traditional weaving community standing on the threshold of industrialization.^[2]

BOCHOLT AT A GLANCE	
Place	Bocholt, Kreis Borken, Province of Westphalia, Kingdom of Prussia
Landscape	Flat western Münsterland near the Dutch frontier; the Bocholter Aa crosses the area
Population	About 4,737 in 1850
Economy	Traditional weaving and crafts, agriculture, and the first signs of industrial textile production
Family religion	Roman Catholic
Departure	1845 - destination recorded simply as "North America"

Henrich Anton Joseph Meyering

At the center of the story was **Henrich Anton Joseph Meyering**. The Münster emigration record gives his birth as 7 January 1798. His wife, Louise Glaser - also found in family records as Ludovica/Louise - was born 23 October 1795. Family tradition remembers Henrich as a musician and music teacher; the surviving public records add another occupation that places the family directly inside Bocholt's changing economy: **weaver**.^[3]

In 1840, Bocholt's municipal resident list placed the family at **property 652**. Henrich was recorded as a *Weber* - a weaver. His eldest son, Friedrich Wilhelm, was already a *Weberknecht*, a journeyman or assistant weaver. Every member of the household was recorded as Catholic.^[3]

The Meyering Household, Bocholt, 1840

Household member	Age	Recorded status / occupation
Heinrich Meiering	42	Weber - weaver

Household member	Age	Recorded status / occupation
Louise Glaser	45	Wife
Friedrich Wilhelm	19	Weberknecht - journeyman/assistant weaver
Francisca	16	Daughter
Johann	15	Son - later Johann Wilhelm "John" Meyering
Elisabeth	13	Daughter
Bernard	11	Son
Albert	9	Son
Clementina	6	Daughter
Franz	3	Son

Three years later, in 1843, the same family remained at property 652. Henrich was still identified as a weaver; Friedrich Wilhelm was still working in the trade; and Johann - the future Rochester musician and Civil War bandsman - was now eighteen. This continuity gives us an unusually clear glimpse of the household immediately before emigration.^[4]

A Weaver - and a Musician

The records reveal a particularly important detail. In the 1840 and 1843 city lists Henrich is a weaver. But the official 1845 emigration register describes him as:

“Heinr. Meyering aus Bocholt, Musikus”

In other words: Heinrich Meyering of Bocholt, **musician**. The two occupations are not necessarily contradictory. In a craft economy built around household and small-shop work, a man could weave while also performing, teaching, or earning supplemental income through music. What matters is that the official record establishes both parts of Henrich’s working life.^[5]

That dual identity - textile worker and musician - would become one of the most meaningful threads in the family story. Weaving tied the Meyerings to the older economy they were leaving behind. Music was a portable skill. It required no acreage, loom house, or factory. It could cross the Atlantic with them, and in Rochester it would become a recognizable family profession.

A Town Between Two Economic Worlds

Henrich’s work as a weaver places the family directly inside the economic transformation then reshaping western Germany. The 1840s brought severe pressure to artisans, home workers, and families dependent on traditional textile production. Population growth increased competition for work and resources, while

foreign competition and the beginnings of mechanized production challenged older craft arrangements. Poor harvests and food-price crises in the mid-1840s added to the strain.^[6]

The chronology is striking: **Henrich emigrated in 1845**. We do not possess a letter in which he explains his reasons, so it would be wrong to claim that a particular harvest failure or economic event caused his departure. But these were the conditions surrounding the decision. Henrich was a weaver; his eldest son was already entering the same trade; and several younger children were approaching the age when they too would need a livelihood.

For a father in his late forties, the problem was larger than whether he personally could continue to find work. He had to consider what prospects eight children would have in a town whose traditional craft economy was beginning to change beneath their feet.

Bocholt's later development underscores the scale of the change. The city dates the beginning of its industrial textile era to 1852, only seven years after the family left. Its population would rise from fewer than five thousand people around 1850 to more than twenty-two thousand by 1900. The Meyerings departed just before that transformation accelerated.^[2]

The Political Setting: Prussia Before 1848

The political context also matters, but the chronology must be kept straight. The famous German revolutions occurred in 1848, three years after the Meyerings family left. Henrich therefore was not fleeing the Revolution of 1848, and there is no evidence that he was a political activist or one of the later "Forty-Eighters."

He did, however, live through the *Vormärz* - the restless pre-1848 era in which questions of trade freedom, municipal government, representation, press freedom, and constitutional reform were increasingly debated within Prussia. Westphalian political institutions and economic rules were under pressure to change. The society Henrich knew was not static; it was increasingly uncertain and contested.^[7]

We should not assign Henrich political motives that he never recorded. Yet for a middle-aged father looking toward his children's futures, North America offered something that Prussia could not promise in the same way: greater geographic mobility, fewer inherited occupational constraints, and the possibility of building a new household in a rapidly expanding economy.

Property 652 and the Königsmühle

The resident lists allow us to place the family approximately within old Bocholt. In both 1840 and 1843 the Meyerings were associated with **property 652**. The neighboring sequence in the register includes property 653, the **Königsmühle** - the King's Mill. Old house-number systems do not always correspond neatly to modern parcel maps, so this is not yet proof that the Meyerings home stood immediately beside the mill. It does, however, make the Königsmühle vicinity a strong geographic clue.^{[3][4]}

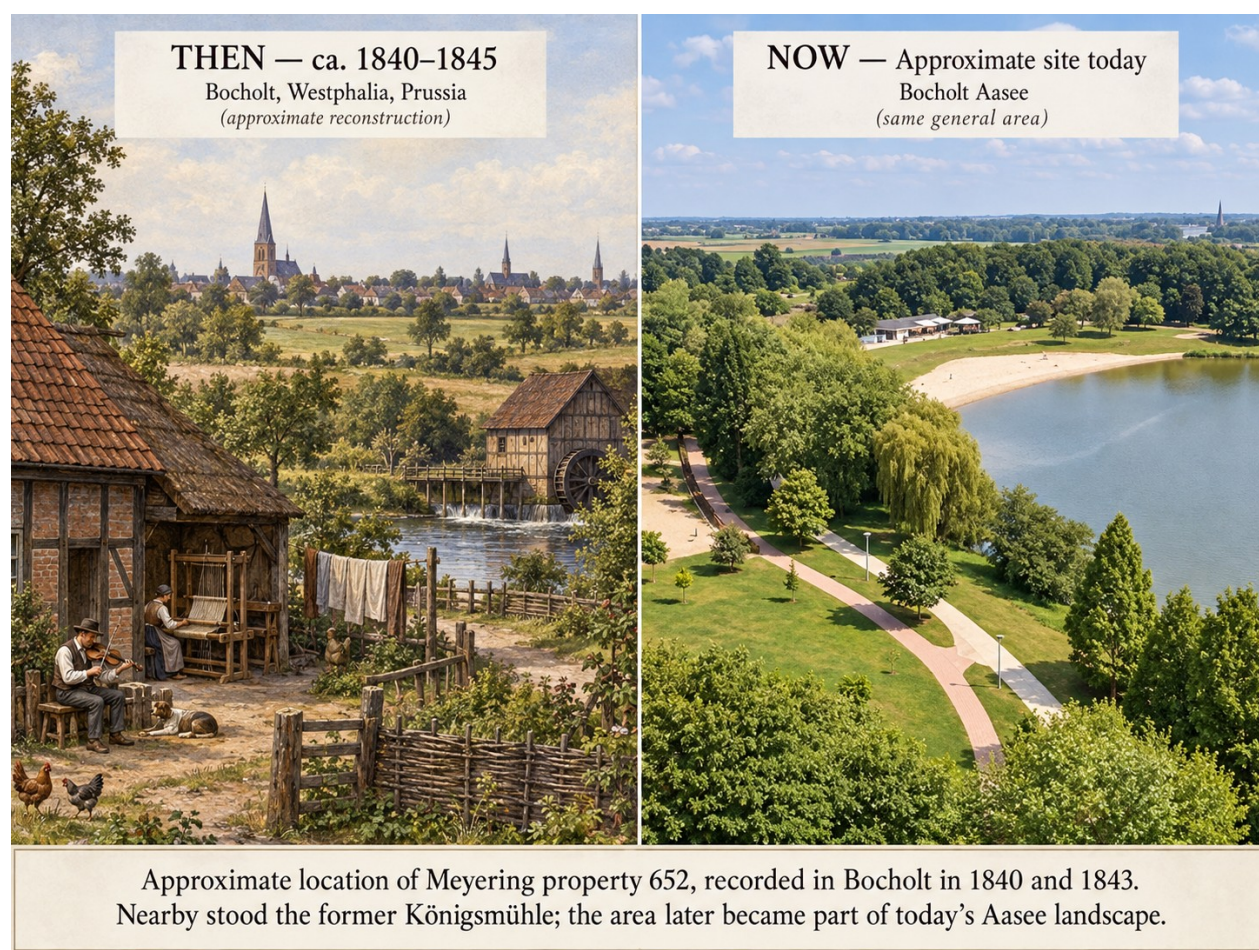


Figure 1. Approximate setting of Meyering property 652, Bocholt, 1840–1843. The left panel is a historically informed reconstruction; the right shows the modern Aasee landscape. The exact parcel and appearance of the Meyering dwelling remain unproven.

The modern landscape is dramatically different. During excavation for the present-day Aasee in 1978, workers encountered wooden piles and heavy timber foundations on the former Königsmühle site. Archaeologists interpreted them as remains of the old mill. The foundation was preserved by re-flooding the site, and the Aasee was opened to the public in 1983.^[8]

Thus the approximate landscape in which the Meyerings lived - river, mill, fields, workshops, and weaving households - was eventually reshaped into one of modern Bocholt's recreation areas. The physical house at property 652 has not yet been identified, but the records bring us close enough to place the family in a real and recognizable part of the city.

Eight Children and a Momentous Decision

The 1845 emigration record is unusually rich. It identifies Henrich, Louise, their eight children, and the destination: **Nordamerika - North America**. The children named in the record were:^[9]

Child	Birth date in emigration register
Friedrich Wilhelm	24 December 1821
Henriette Franziska	13 April 1824

Child	Birth date in emigration register
Johann	22 November 1825
Anna Elisabeth	19 November 1827
Bernhard Heinrich	19 November 1829
Franz Albert	21 November 1831
Clementine Maria Anna	1 April 1834
Johann Franz	14 February 1837

Henrich was about forty-seven years old. Louise was about forty-nine. Their eldest child was twenty-three; the youngest only eight. Johann Wilhelm - the future John Meyering of Rochester - was nineteen. This was not a young bachelor setting off alone. An entire household was leaving.

The cost and difficulty of such a move make the decision all the more remarkable. The family had to leave its local network, reach a European port, pay passage for a large household, endure an Atlantic crossing that could take weeks, and then establish itself in a foreign country. Henrich's age makes the journey especially revealing: it looks less like adventure than a calculated investment in the future of his children.

They Were Not the Only Ones

The Münster emigration register also places the Meyering departure within a broader movement. Other residents of Bocholt - including tradesmen and weavers - were likewise recorded as leaving for North America in the same period. That does not prove that they traveled together, but it shows that Henrich's decision was part of a wider migration pattern rather than an isolated act.^[5]

German migration often worked through chains of relatives, neighbors, parish contacts, and letters from people already abroad. A successful emigrant could tell those at home where work could be found, what passage cost, and where a newcomer might stay on arrival. This possibility will matter as the story moves forward, because one of the unanswered questions is why the Meyerings ultimately chose Rochester, New York.

Why Leave? Why America?

No surviving statement has yet been found in Henrich's own words. The safest historical conclusion is therefore not that one event "caused" the move, but that several pressures and opportunities converged:

- **Economic pressure:** A household tied to traditional weaving faced competition, changing production methods, and the insecurity of the mid-1840s.
- **A large family:** Eight children meant eight futures to consider. Several sons were already entering or approaching working age.
- **A portable profession:** Henrich's music could be performed or taught wherever a market existed. Unlike land or a loom house, musical skill traveled with the family.
- **Opportunity abroad:** North America offered growing cities, occupational mobility, and the possibility of establishing the next generation in a less constrained economy.

- Migration networks: Other Westphalians and Bocholt residents were leaving during the same period, making information, contacts, and shared travel more likely.

Leaving Bocholt

Henrich left behind a small Westphalian weaving town just as economic and social change was accelerating. He carried two skills that had helped sustain his household: weaving and music. One would largely fade from the family's American story. The other would flourish.

Within sixteen years, several Meyering men would appear in Rochester records as professional musicians. And Henrich's nineteen-year-old son Johann Wilhelm - the young man who left property 652 in Bocholt - would become John Meyering, a professional musician in Rochester and, in 1861, a musician in the 13th New York Infantry.

His journey was only beginning.

Sources and Research Notes

This chapter distinguishes documented facts from historical context and inference. The exact location and appearance of property 652, Henrich's personal reasons for emigrating, and the family's precise 1845 travel route remain subjects for further research. Name spellings vary in nineteenth-century records, including Meyering/Meiring and Henrich/Heinrich; Louise also appears in family material as Ludovica.

- [1] City of Bocholt, city history / city encyclopedia. Population, geography, and general municipal context. [Open source](#)
- [2] City of Bocholt, "Bocholt 800" historical material. Textile history and the beginning of industrialization in the early 1850s. [Open source](#)
- [3] Stadtarchiv Bocholt, Einwohnerliste der Stadt Bocholt, 1840. Meyering/Meiring household at property 652; occupation and ages. [Open source](#)
- [4] Stadtarchiv Bocholt, Einwohnerliste der Stadt Bocholt, 1843. Continued residence of the household at property 652. [Open source](#)
- [5] Westfälische Gesellschaft für Genealogie und Familienforschung, emigration index for Regierungsbezirk Münster, entry for Heinrich Meyering of Bocholt, occupation "Musikus," destination North America, 1845. [Open source](#)
- [6] LWL / Westfälische Geschichte, regional economic history of the 1840s, including craft and textile pressures, harvest crises, and working-class conditions. [Open source](#)
- [7] LWL / Westfälische Geschichte, political context of Westphalia in the Vormärz period and provincial debates immediately before 1848. [Open source](#)
- [8] City of Bocholt, Stadtlexikon: Aasee and former Königsmühle site. Archaeological discovery of timber foundations during Aasee excavation in 1978. [Open source](#)

Editing note: This is a working chapter. Future revisions can add the ship/passenger list, the exact European departure port, an original image or map locating property 652, and any records that clarify Henrich's work as a music teacher.