

Schultheiss David Friderich Lederer* 1812-1847

It could not happen in these democratic times: David Friderich Lederer was the fifth mayor [Schultheiss] in an unbroken line of town leaders from this family. And at the end of his service, he was succeeded by his son, Christian Friedrich! For almost 200 years the Lederers determined the course of events in the town of Geradstetten. Among the Lederers, David Friderich was the towering figure. Let's look at this line of Lederer mayors:

Term	Mayor	[Birth-Death dates]
1674-1724	Georg L.	
1724-1742	Johannes L.	1656-1742
1742-1772	Johann Simon L.	1699-1775
1772-1812	Johann Friedrich L.	1738-1815
1812-1847	David Friderich L.	1773-1853
1847-1860	Christian Friedrich L.	

[N. B. Simon Lederer (1609- 1658), father of Johannes Lederer (1656- 1742) does not appear on Herr Rilling's list, though he is thought also to have been Schultheiss. We are looking into this.]

Review proceedings [of a visiting committee of higher authorities] reported already about the first Mayor Georg Lederer:

The mayor is a valiant and exemplary man, is highly regarded by the judge, has helped punish evil, and shows mercy as well...

Yes, they were small kings of the village, these peasant-mayors [bauern-Schultheissen]. They lived under the watchful eyes of the town pastor and the authorities in Schorndorf, but Stuttgart was far away, and their word carried great weight in laying out law and order.

And where money is concerned, they were completely in charge. Because the mayor and the town council needed to post security bonds for the town accounts, one can say that they were the responsible parties for all town projects and transactions. People inexperienced in these matters do not have the prospect to take on such an office. It is any wonder that the mayor job remained in one family, as is often the case in old Wuerttemberg?

The mayor did not receive a salary, rather he was paid for individual services. And he was responsible for much, from expelling beggars to fixing boundaries in the vineyards. With the art of writing and filing reports [Formulieren] not widespread, it was possible in this connection for the schoolmaster to earn a few Kreuzer.

His Life

Only the vital data of his life are known:

Born 29 Nov. 1773 in Geradstetten

Married 25 August 1795 to Katherina Magdalena* (nee Beutel)

Named Mayor 1812 [an Martini]

Resigned as Mayor 1847

Died 23 Dec. 1853 at 80 years old

He had five children, three sons and three daughters [sic: 5=3+3? We shall have to talk to Herr Rilling about this arithmetic.] His son Christian Friedrich, born Dec. 1797, was his successor as mayor. Two years before his resignation B he was already 72 B he was again certified by the authorities:

The secular authorities are indeed willing to support the Pastor in church and school matters but because of the advanced age of the town leader, a definitive statement cannot be expected. Without a doubt he will resign shortly. The community projects should soon be finished. The poor, widows, and orphans are well served by support and advice of many kinds, idleness and begging are checked. This community is an example of how much can be accomplished through the cooperation of secular and church leadership.

[Translator's note: Church and schools were inextricably intertwined, but there was a separation between Church and the town council concerning civil matters. In matters of social mores and minor infractions, the church and town council joined in the process of meting out justice or resolving disputes: see our translation of Kirchenkonventsprotokollen, 1707-1847]

His Work in the community

During David's tenure as mayor, Gottlob H. Wittich was pastor in the period 1836-44. He kept a yearbook in which he recorded all important events. He gives us valuable insights into the good works of the town leadership. He tells of the authorities' inspection visit in 1841, when the mayor had the duty to present his work of the past twenty years. These were eventful times for the young Kingdom of Wuerttemberg. [Wuerttemberg, formerly a duchy, became a Kingdom in 1806. In these times of political unrest, Wuerttemberg was still in the late stages of dissolving all property right vestiges of earlier, feudal times.] Relief from the old compulsory labor rules made the town's job the more difficult, and the severely deteriorating forests lay heavily on the mayor's mind.

Thus during 1820B1840, 2349 fl were paid for forest cultivation improvement, and 222 fl. were expended to pay for hunting development, services previously assigned to the people, who were oppressed by that obligation.

For the cultivation of the community forests the sum of 104 fl. was charged. At the same time the community paid 56 fl to be released from another old service obligation [Herrschaftliche Gefaell des sogenannten Aeckerich (Eichelmast fuer die Schweine.)]

[Community forests were an important part of daily life, provided fuel for cooking and heating. They were a limited, renewable, managed resource. See our earlier translation of the Seibold article concerning the firewood lottery.]

The mayor cared as much for the town's real estate as for the forests. So writes Pastor Wittich concerning construction activity:

New School House 1823	1987 fl.
Renovation of Town hall 1825	2046 fl.
Purchase of Wine Press from the State 1826	1350 fl.
Installation of Stone pillars on the Rems Bridge 1828	726 fl.

The 30-year ongoing survey of town lands took the Mayor's entire energies. As chair of the town council, he was responsible for the boundary marker stones of all field parcels. Apart from this he had to arrange for the survey. In this connection, there were more actions:

Defrayal of Mortgage Costs	1405 fl.
Purchase of 1 Morgan, 2 and 2 square meter (about 2.5 acre)	960 fl.
Dissolving of Heuzehent, 218 Morgan pasture	2700 fl.

Heerschaftliche Gefaelle abloesung, embankment building, paving of side streets, improvement of boundary paths	792 fl.
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During his leadership, the property taxes were never changed. In contrast, during a time period of almost 30 years, the town's assets rose from 5,419 fl. to 11,899 fl. For that mayor David Fr. Lederer received commendation from the Kgl. Regierung (King's Ministry) of the Jaxt country.

According to the bound town council minutes, Mayor Lederer freely stepped down in 1847 because of advanced age, and by the same action the town council voted his son Christian as his successor, to the joy and relief of the aged father.