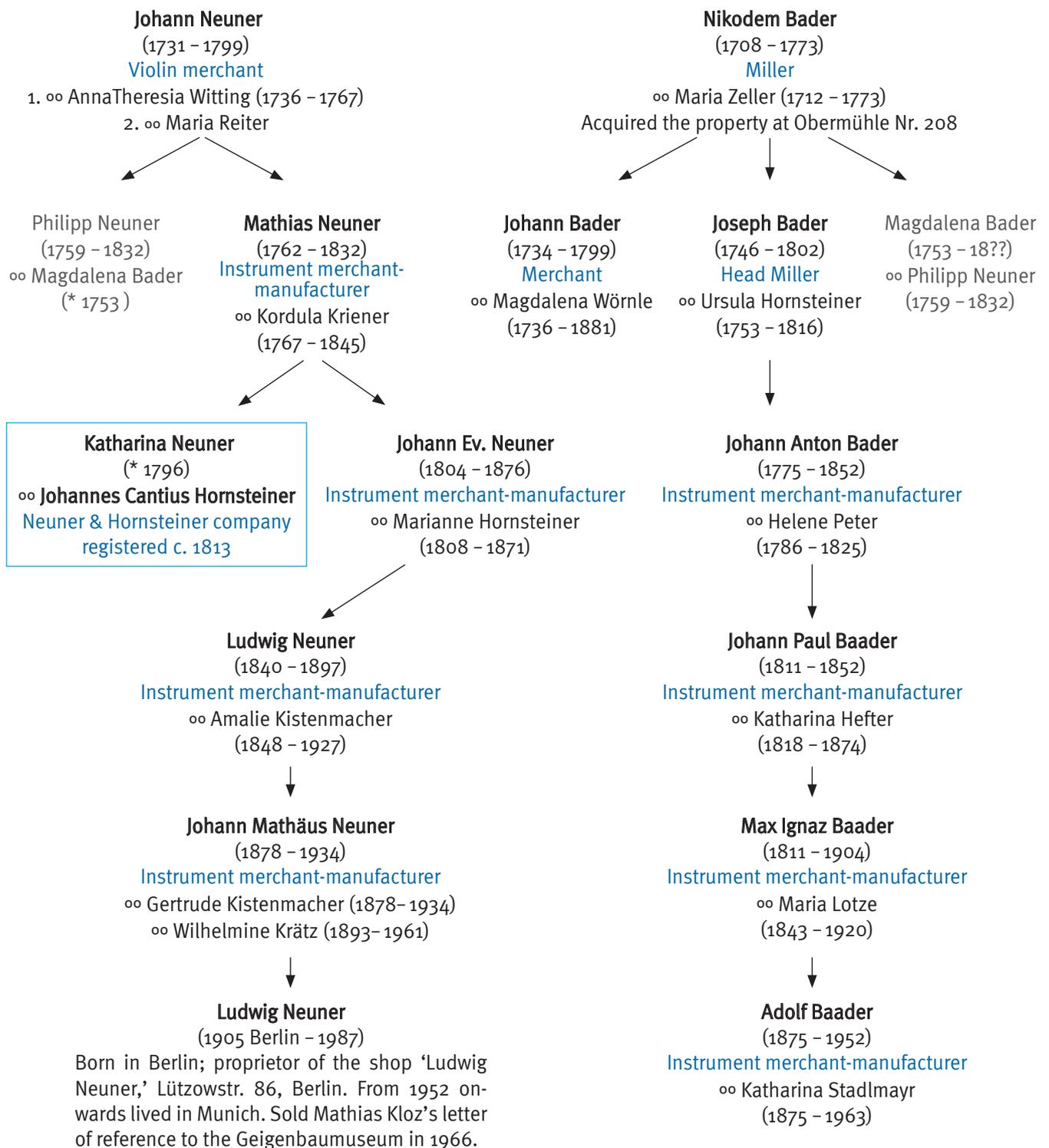


Instrument Merchant-Manufacturers in Mittenwald

In the course of the second half of the 18th century one small company after another was established in Mittenwald – some of which only existed for a short time – trading with the most varied of products. A large number of these firms specialised in the sale of violins. During the 19th century, two families of traders – the Neuners and the Baders – became the most successful and influential merchant-manufacturers for instruments.

The family trees of the Neuner and Bader families underline the close cooperation and family connections they enjoyed.



There is a great difference between a violin merchant or retailer, who simply sold a violin maker's finished instruments in his shop or as a travelling salesman, and a merchant-manufacturer.

The merchant-manufacturer did not merely sell a finished product but was involved in the production process itself. Merchant-manufacturers had their own stores of timber, acquired different types of wood – such as ebony, pernambuco and brazilwood for making bows – from abroad through the overseas trading port of Hamburg, and bought strings from Italy. Violin makers in Mittenwald were provided with the necessary raw materials by a merchant-manufacturer who, in turn, was supplied not only with finished violins but also, and more importantly, with 'white' (unvarnished) instruments and individual parts such as the bodies or necks of instruments. These were then assembled from the individual parts to make complete instruments in workshops owned by the merchant-manufacturers, the finishing touches were added, the instruments varnished and made ready to be played before being sold.

According to a Neuner & Hornsteiner sales catalogue of about 1910 which includes a history of the business, the merchant-manufacturing company was established around 1750. However, this source only states that the merchant Johann Neuner (1731–1799) founded a 'trading partnership' in 1783 with his sons Mathias and Philipp.¹

The first mention that Johann Neuner had specialised in violins is in a letter written by him in Lübeck to his second wife, Maria, dated 1790.² He addressed this letter to himself: 'Mr. Johann Neuner Violin merchant Mittenwald an der Isar'. Apart from private news, he also writes about his sales representatives, Schorn and Johann Bader (1734–1799) in Riga. It would seem, therefore, that Johann Neuner already considered himself a violin merchant in the last third of the 18th century and dealt with large numbers of violins from Mittenwald. There is, however, no indication that he was a merchant-manufacturer. As a consequence, it is safe to assume that it was his son, Mathias Neuner (1762–1832), who founded the first merchant-manufacturing business for instruments in Mittenwald.

On closer examination, the commonly-held notion that Mathias Neuner was a violin maker himself can also be disproven. This assumption was solely based on the fact that a number of violins still exist which bear his labels. Several are illustrated in the standard work *Geigenbauer der deutschen Schule (Violin Makers of the German School)*³ with the dates 1790, 1803 and 1812. However, when compared with one another, it is evident that the instruments were the work of different violin makers.

It can be assumed that Mathias Neuner was not a violin maker but much more a very well-trained merchant who, as a young man, accompanied his father on business trips and, in this way, acquired a detailed knowledge of the market.

1 Helmut Klinner, *300 Jahre Mittenwalder Geigenbau*, Mittenwald 1983, p. 19

2 Letter written by Johann Neuner in Lübeck to Maria Bader in Mittenwald, GARm, copy held by the Geigenbaumuseum Mittenwald.

3 Walter Hamma, *Geigenbauer der deutschen Schule*, 1989, vol. II, p. 81 ff

He specialised in the sale of violins and established a merchant-manufacturing business in Mittenwald. He was also the first to paste his own labels as a merchant, instead of those of the different violin makers, inside the instruments he sold. Such labelling by a merchant instead of the producer is indicative of the new and far-reaching aspirations of the Mittenwald merchant-manufacturer and his self-image.



Label no. 1
'Mathias Neiner, Geigenmacher in Mittenwald. 1793'



Label no. 2
'Mathias Neuner, Geigenmacher in Mittenwald an der Isar 1804'



Label no. 3
Over a period of several decades the label types nos. 3 and 4 were pasted inside.
'Mathias Neuner/ Geigenmacher in Mittenwald. 1819 Nro. 138.'



Label no. 4
'Mathias Neuner, Geigenmacher in Mittenwald. 1839 Nro. 94.'



Label no. 5
'Neuner u. Hornsteiner Mittenwald (Oberbayern) 1914'



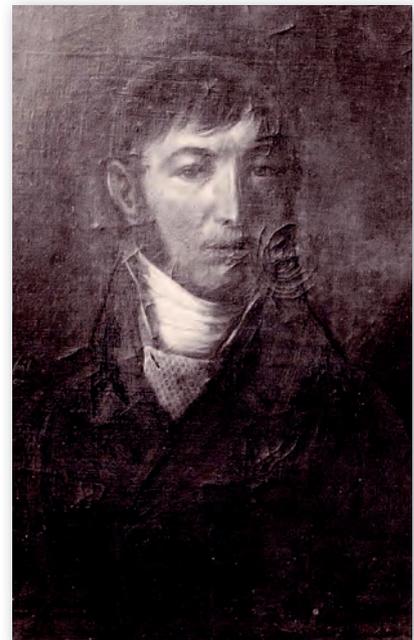
Label no. 6
'Neuner u. Hornsteiner Mittenwald (Baiern) 1920'

Two of his books of accounts from 1804 have survived.⁴ Both list bills with the supply of goods to St. Petersburg. From these it is clear that Mathias Neuner had been running a flourishing business as an instrument merchant-manufacturer from this time onwards, at the latest. Furthermore, his business representative there was Johann Anton Bader (1778–1836) who was later to found the instrument merchant-manufacturing business ‘J. A. Bader’.

Von 1804 dem 5^{ten} November was Joh. Kuder in A. Petersburg
 verkauft instrumenten und inofficiellen Instrumenten

		Stück	Coßg.
2	Viol. fine Bogner von St.	N ^o 3 u a	6 u
2	Viol. Amind. Saiten Rom.	" 4 u a	8 u
2	Viol. dito	" 2 u a	6 u
2	Viol. fine Violinen N ^o 10	10 u a	20 u
1	Viol. Secund. Saiten		5 u
1	Viol. Quabner Violin Saiten Bogner		2 u
2	Viol. fine Violinen N ^o 11	12 u a	36 u
2	Viol. Amind. Saiten	150 u	9 u
2	Viol. fine J. Bogner	2 u a	6 u
1	Viol. Amind. Saiten Rom.		4 u
1	Viol. fine Violin N ^o 12		10 u
1	Viol. Sec. Saiten N. B.		6 u
1	Viol. Secund. - dito		5 u
1	Viol. Amind. - dito		4 u 50
1	Viol. Amind. - Rom.		4 u
10	H. Messing Draht		
10	H. Stahl - dito	2 u a	10 u
1	Viol. alt. Coßgen aus ein. Violinen gemacht		25 u
2	Viol. alt. Violinen von der Ordnung		20 u
1	Viol. - N ^o 6		5 u
1	Viol. - dito - " 8		6 u
1	Viol. Saiten Amind. Rom.		4 u
2	Viol. - Secund. -		2 u 50
2	Viol. - Sec. -		3 u
2	Viol. fine Bogner	3 u a	6 u
1	Viol. Violin - N ^o 8		8 u
1	Viol. Saiten spanisch		25 u
	Geigenfallbes. Coßgen. Nobel		186 u

List of goods and instruments sent to St. Petersburg⁵



Johann Anton Bader (1778–1836)
 Representative of the Neuner
 company, later himself a
 merchant-manufacturer

4 Geigenbaumuseum Mittenwald, Baader estate.

5 GARm A VIII 32-1 1804, p. 2

As can be seen from the documents, Mathias Neuner did not only trade with instruments from Mittenwald. In 1807, for example, he sold ‘ten dozen’ violins made in Saxony to St. Petersburg.

1807 vom 12 ^{ten} Junij in St Petersburg Verkauf	
an Ruffischen Kaufman	
10. Duzent Sachsen violen No 18.	180.-
5. Duto - Duto Cogen	15.-
12. Paß violin Argen	36.-
an vorfichem ganz u. barck verkauft	85.-
Soghnig bezalt worden	316.-
1807 vom 28 ^{ten} Junij an obigen Kaufman Verkauf	
30. Paß violin mit Lebrnselgen gnuß	180.-
15. Duzent Junie violin Cogen	270.-
30. Paß halb violin Cord.	60.-
5. " Englische guttamen	40.-
Ein Tisch und 6 Stühle und Soghnig	30.-
Soghnig bezalt worden	550.-

Sales list, 1807⁶

10 | dozen Saxon violins at 18.- | 180.-

Mathias Neuner expanded and invested, acquiring the veneer sawmill on the Mühlbach in Mittenwald on 16.04.1811.⁷ The name of his new merchant-manufacturing business ‘Mathias Neuner & Hornsteiner’ ultimately appears in a business letter of January 1815.

Capua Mittenwald den 26^{ten} Januar 1815

Mr. Bartel in Moskau 1815

Mit gegenseitigen Einverständnisse sind Ihnen das Sie an Leberbringend
 die, als Joh. Baeder den Namen bei Ihnen eingekauft 3200 Rth
 von der Herrn Reiser & Hornsteiner, wie auf 200 Rth den Herrn
 Herrmann Kaufmann fünften Theil, so wolle das das Raubt
 Summa als auf die Ihnen aufzulegen Lassen, oder nach Ihrer
 Dispensation damit vorzugehen.

zu welcher Beschäftigung wir unser Sitz bei Ihnen
 Mathias Neuner & Hornsteiner

so abzufahren St. Petersburg bei Herrn Ernst
 Daniszowich, den Jahr: Georg Neuner 2000 Rth so wolle
 Summa als fünfzig den Kaufmann fünften Theil Joh:
 Baeder zu bezahlen sein.

Den 12^{ten} Sept. 1815
 2 Original an obigen Kaufman
 abgeschrieben und manum 1/2 an obigen Kaufman

Mathias Neuner & Hornsteiner

‘Mathias Neuner & Hornsteiner’ as the name of the merchant-manufacturing business, 1815⁸

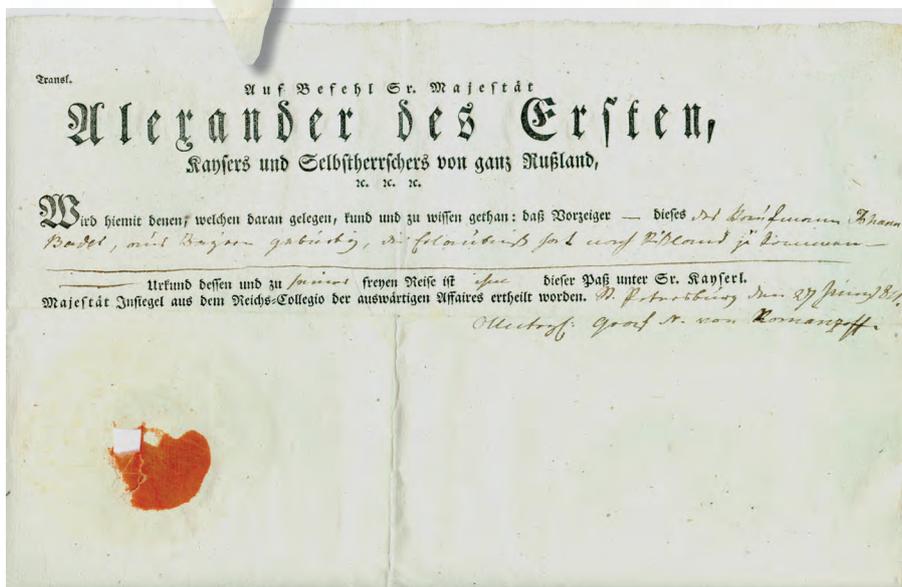
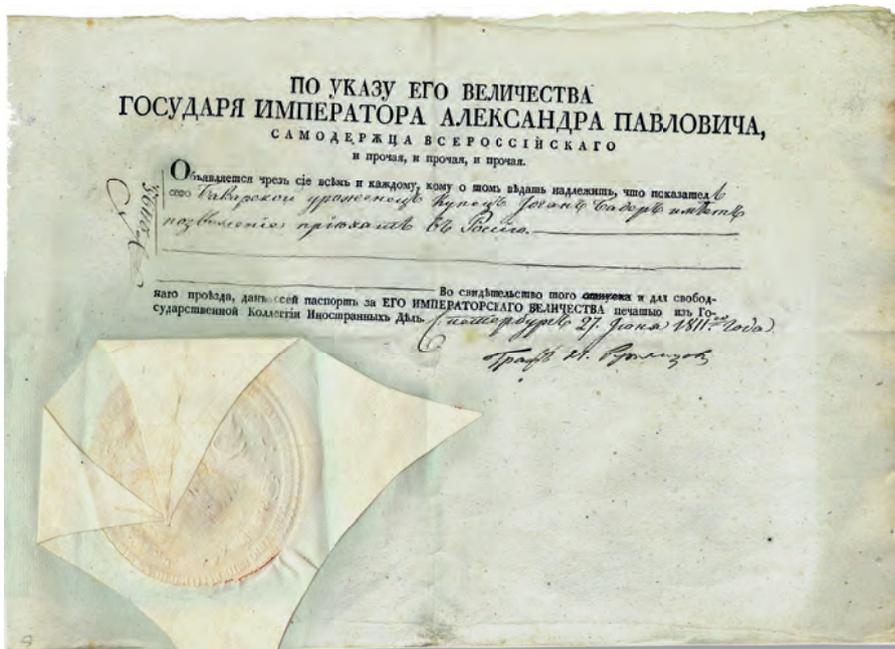
6 GARm A VIII 32-1 1807, p. 46

7 Woodstore towards Raineck.

8 Letter of 26.01.1815 from Mathias Neuner to Mr. Bartels in Moscow, Geigenbaumuseum Mittenwald, Baader estate.

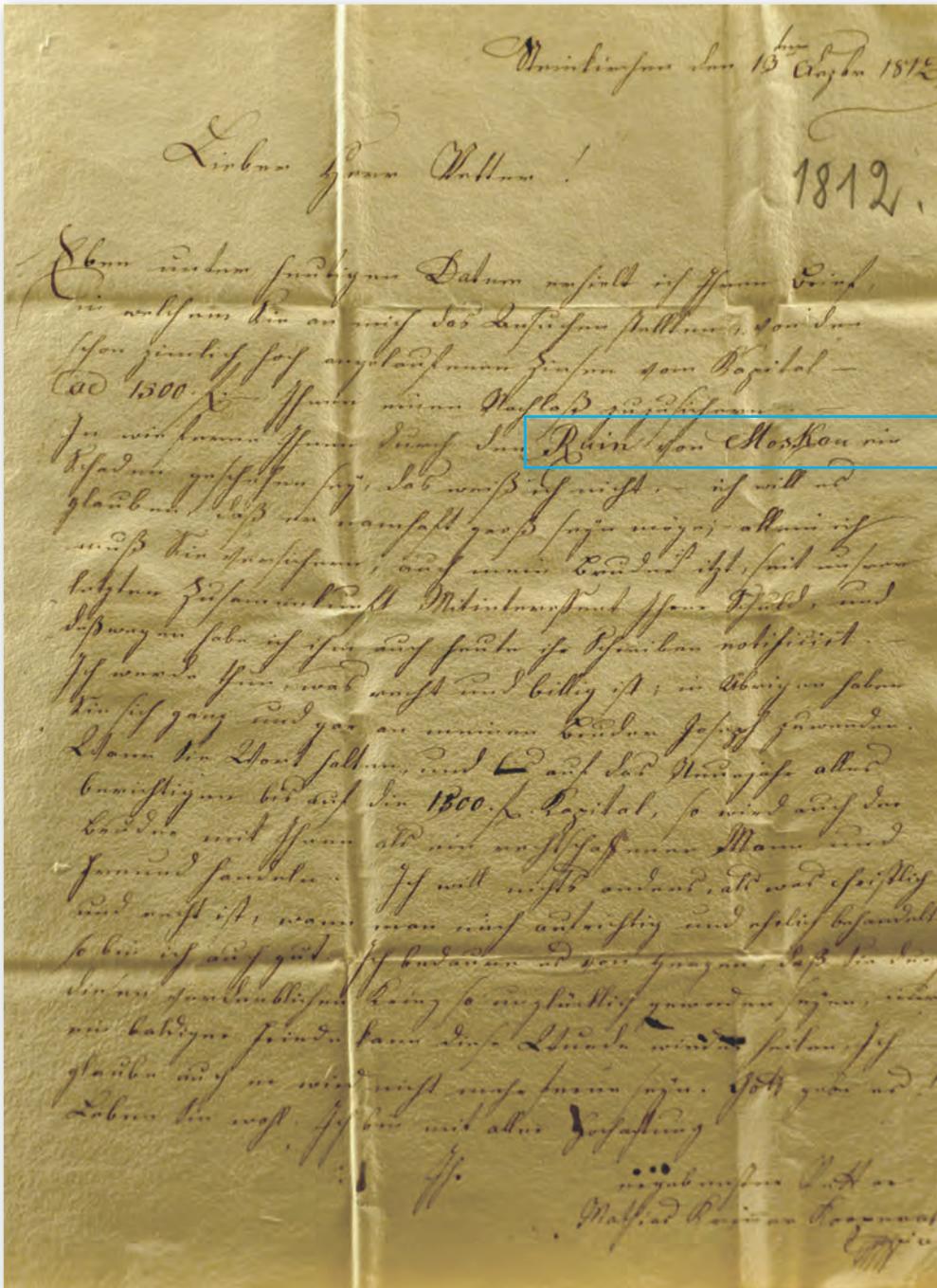
When exactly the name was registered cannot be ascertained from the source material. It would, however, appear that Joseph Anton Hornsteiner (1777–1837) of Mittenwald was in partnership with Mathias Neuner before 1815. This connection was additionally strengthened through the marriage of the latter's daughter Katharina Neuner with Hornsteiner's son, Johann Cantius Hornsteiner on 18.02.1830 who was consequently mentioned as a partner in the 'Neuner & Hornsteiner Instrumentenhandlung' and as a tradesman. Katharina and Cantius Hornsteiner had no children. This meant that there was no necessity to change the registered name of the company at any other time.

The founder of the second important instrument merchant-manufacturing business 'J.A. Bader', Johann Anton Bader (1778–1836), had very close business and family ties to the Neuner company of merchant-manufacturers. As already mentioned above, the Neuner company accounting ledgers show that he was working as its business representative in St. Petersburg at the beginning of the 19th century.



Passport (front and back) of the Bavarian-born merchant Johann Bader, issued in St. Petersburg on 27 January 1811

In this case, too, no precise date for the founding of the company has been found; this must have been before 1813 as, in a letter dated 13.12.1812 that has survived, he reports of his 'ruin in Moscow'.⁹



Letter from Johann Anton Bader to a creditor, 1812¹⁰

⁹ The supposed year of the company's founding, 1790, that is to be read on several violin labels, was either altered or has nothing to do with the instrument merchant-manufacturing company itself. .

¹⁰ Letter from Johann Anton Bader to a creditor, 1812, Geigenbaumuseum Mittenwald, Baader estate.

The first purchase ledger after the 'ruin of Moscow' of 1813 survived in the ownership of the Baader family ¹¹ and is now in the Geigenbaumuseum Mittenwald.

Gott Segne alle meine Geschäften
Johann Baader.
Einkauf der Warren.

1813	25 februar	1/2 Cartte Pello Seide in Fußboden gekauft	f x
		von Joseph Berger See. Wittw.	12. —
"	16 März	1 Conisr quinqu son gängel Distel	1 12
"	8 april	1 Linné Contin Napol	2 30
"	"	1 Dto Secund "	3 —
"	"	2 March Vilbne Draht Nr 17	2 48
"	29 Maj	6 March Vilbne Draht Nr 12 " 1/2 2x	} 23.28
"	"	8 Dto " " 15 " 1 " 8x	
"	"	6 Dto " " 18 " 1 " 22x	
"	"	an Krafft für den Draht zahlen	1 15
"	17 Juni	2 Linné Contin veronen	4 30
"	"	2 Dto " Napol	5 —
"	"	1 " Secund "	3 —
"	"	1 " Fraz "	4 30
"	"	1 " Fraz veronna	3 —
"	24 Juli	1 Linné Contin veronen	} 5. —
"	"	1/2 " Secund Dto	
"	"	1/2 " Fraz "	
"	12 August	26 March quinqu Palf	— 24
"	13 August	4 1/2 lb Kempfoly son offhandlro gekauft	43. —
			f 114.37

It starts on 25.02.1813 and lists all sales in great detail. The quality, purchase price and name of the violin or bow maker are recorded for all instruments, bodies, scrolls, bows, tailpieces and pegs. An extremely detailed record of violin and bow makers, the numbers of instruments and the prices is the result. The names of those recorded are in keeping with the house names in Mittenwald used at that time.

In one accounts ledger in which it can be seen that the residents of Mittenwald were also able to buy grain and lard from him, the price of the violins or bows given to him was offset and the customer given the difference in cash. In this register, the house names are recorded next to the family names.

¹¹ In the course of the 19th century an extra 'a' was added to the family name 'Baader' – presumably it was thought that 'Baader' had a more superior ring to it.

In the list of businesses in the Markt of Mittenwald of 1810¹² 85 violin makers and 10 bow makers are mentioned by name who worked primarily for the two merchant-manufacturers Neuner and Bader.

1818 Transport				
2m	Dezemb: 11 grign	v. Wenzel	-	3.36
3 ^d	12 grign	Ymin v. Jais	2/20	27.00
"	5 ^d	" v. Gidibroz	1.40	8.20
"	6 "	" v. Rofel	1.12	7.12
"	2 "	" v. näzi	-54	1.48
6	6 "	" v. Jais	1/15	7.30
"	3 "	" v. Anton	5	3.45
"	80 grign	Jalfr	-	2.40
"	40 grign	Sparben	beurkundete ang. Flug	1.20
"	8	Kraft	6x	48
10	6 grign	v. Gid: manta	1/24x	8.24
"	3 ^d	" v. näzi	-	2.42
"	12 ^d	" v. Goni lipol	-	22.00
"	1 Duzt:	falbfm ord. v. Fikhalsonia	-	3.12
"	1 1/2 ^d	ord: -	gr	3.36
14	4 Duzt:	ord v. Johann u. d. alip	-	10.00
"	6 grign	v. Darg-juanzel	-	7.30
"	6 wiser grign	v. Gid: jagrel	-	10.48
"	6 grign	de v. Gid: Janab p. u. b	"	7.12
"	2 Duzt:	labita falbfm Lozi Carl	"	10.00
"	2 "	de " "	"	8.00
				<u>3690.46</u>

Page from the Bader purchase ledger 1813¹³

12 GAR M AVIII 38 p. 29

13 Bader purchase ledger 1813, p. 117, Geigenbaumuseum Mittenwald, Baader estate.

In addition, the business statistic of 1811 provides information on the number of violins and bows produced in workshops in Mittenwald. The 85 violin makers mentioned made a total of 180 violins a week, of which 90 were of lower quality, 40 of the middle and 50 of good quality. That makes some 6,500 to 7,000 violins a year. During the summer the people of Mittenwald worked on their farms so that, on average, no instruments were made for the merchant-manufacturers for three months of the year.¹⁴ The 10 bow makers listed produced 24 dozen bows a week, of which 16 dozen were of the lower or middle category and 8 dozen of high quality. This makes some 11,000 bows a year.¹⁵

Verrechnung Hornsteiner Geßlung

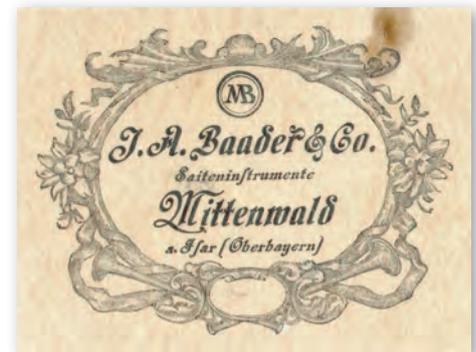
1825	9. 10	Dozente abo Anrechnung	Arbeitslohn	2. 52
		de an gut gelb		5. —
	12	Dozente 1 magen wagen		2. 24
	14	de 24 boden 24 ganze gelb	8	3. 12
		de 2 H. d. d. d.		18
	21	de 2 H. d. d. d.		36
	24	de 2 ganze v. d. d. d. d.	2. 24	
		de 2 ganze v. d. d. d. d.	1. 10	
		de an gut gelb		1. 39
	28	de an gut gelb		1. 30
1826	Jan 16	Januar 2 H. d. d. d.		36
	19	de 4 ganze v. d. d. d.	11. 48	
		de 2 de v. d. d. d.	1. 10	
		de 1 magen wagen		2. 24
		de an gut gelb		1. 30
	26	de 5 ganze v. d. d. d.	6	
		de 2 de v. d. d. d.	1. 10	22 f - 1
			18 f 12	18. 42
1826	Jan 26	Januar 2 H. d. d. d.		3. 48
		de 4 ganze v. d. d. d.	6	36
		de 1 H. d. d. d.	54	2. 30
				6 f 54
		de 2 H. d. d. d.		36
	6	de 1 magen wagen	2. 21 f 8	2. 20
		de 1 Bod. d. d. d.		1. 24
	8	de 12 Bod. 12 ganze		1. 30
	11	de 2 H. d. d. d.	7 f 8	36
	18	de 2 H. d. d. d.	1. 18	36
			8 f 26	

Page 292 from the Bader purchase ledger 1813

14 Joseph Baader, Chronik des Marktes Mittenwald, Mittenwald 1880, p. 201.

15 GAR M All 4.

Johann Bader also invested soundly in his business and acquired the blacksmith's forge near the upper bridge over the Isar on 04.02.1817 which he converted into a veneer saw-mill. This remained in the ownership of his family for the next 116 years.



The development and expansion of violin making in Mittenwald was greatly helped by the merchant-manufacturing business at the beginning of the 19th century. No individual violin maker needed to store supplies of wood for his own use any longer. In addition, he could supply unvarnished violins or parts, such as violin bodies or scrolls, and no longer needed to deal with the sale of the instruments himself. As a result the violin makers in Mittenwald became increasingly dependent on the merchant-manufacturers who ultimately dictated what items were purchased, in what quality and at what price. Financially, they profitted most from the supply of individual parts or violins that were not finished. Such instruments were assembled in the workshops, painted and/or completed ready for playing.

Twenty or thirty years later, there was hardly a single violin maker in Mittenwald who was able to construct an instrument single handedly, let alone sell it.

Thorough training was increasingly necessary to be successful as a merchant-manufacturer

The most important countries that purchased instruments from Mittenwald merchant-manufacturers were Russia and England. However, following the outbreak of the Crimean War on the Black Sea in 1853, the Russian export market collapsed completely. The sales problem that ensued meant that the merchant-manufacturers bought considerably fewer instruments and parts from violin makers. In Mittenwald this led in some instances to dire financial straits that endangered people's existence. It soon became obvious that, only through an intensive training in the art of violin making, could quality be safeguarded in the long term and, with that, the income of each individual violin maker. Under King Maximilian II the Bavarian government recognised that, on the one hand, further training possibilities should be given to those violin makers already working in Mittenwald and, on the other hand, the training of apprentices should be brought up-to-date, standardised and improved in order to solve this problem in the long term.



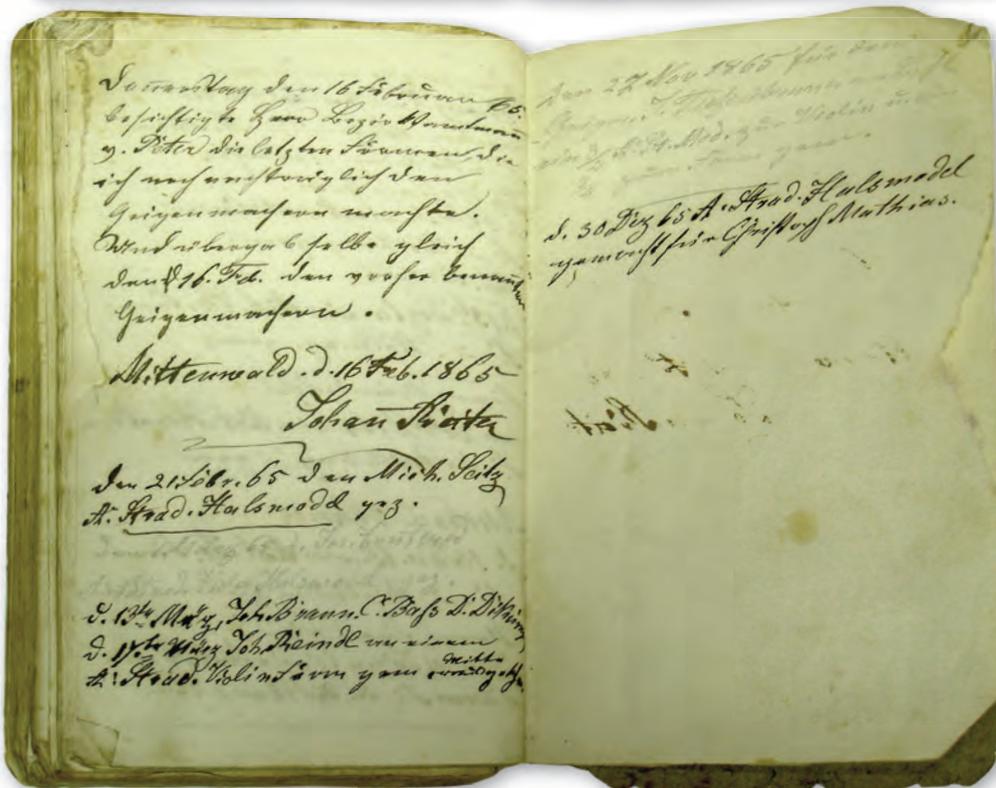
Maximilian II Joseph (1811–1864) was a patron of the arts and sciences. Numerous schools were founded at his instigation.



The Violin Making School on Partenkirchner Strasse in 1893, built in 1891/92

The first measure, instigated and financed by the Royal Bavarian Administrative Council, was that two young violin makers from Mittenwald, Johann Baptist Reiter and Johann Kriner, were sent to well-known violin makers in larger cities for further training.

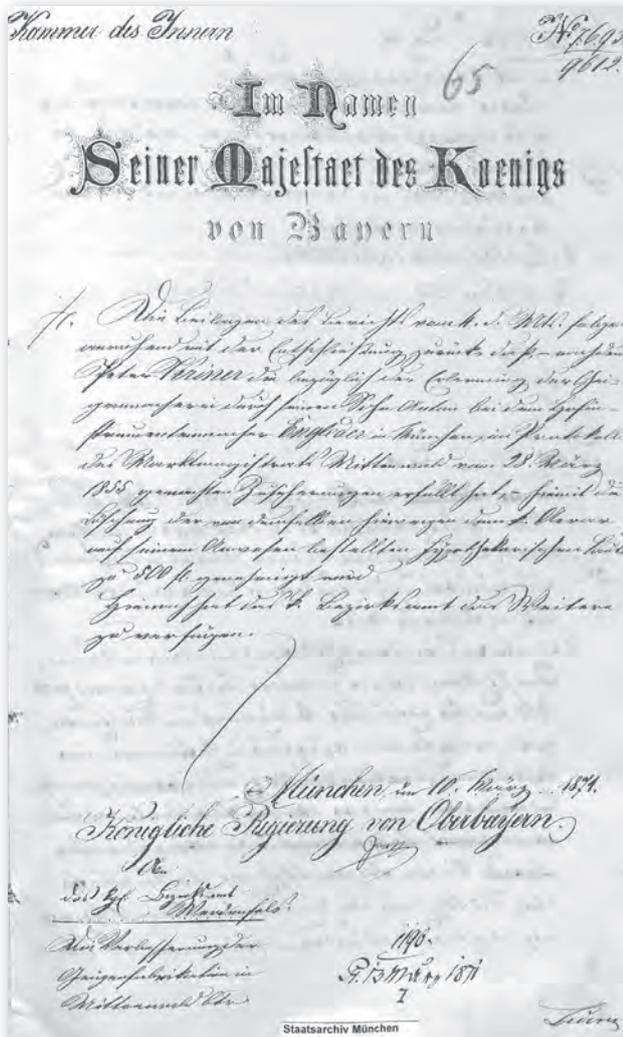
Following his apprenticeship in Mittenwald under Alois Jais, Johann Baptist Reiter (1834–1899) went to Würzburg and trained under Jean Vauchel (1782–1856) from 1851 onwards. After the death of his teacher he continued working for another one and a half years for Vauchel's widow. When he returned to Mittenwald he taught different violin makers the use of new templates and new violin models in his own workshop. Between 1860 and 1865 Reiter recorded the names of the violin makers as well as various steps in the production process in a small notebook that has survived in private ownership titled 'Wanderschule'. Between 1860 and 1865 Reiter recorded the names of violin makers and the individual stages in the production process in this notebook.



Excerpt from Joh. Baptist Reiter's small notebook, 1860–65¹⁶

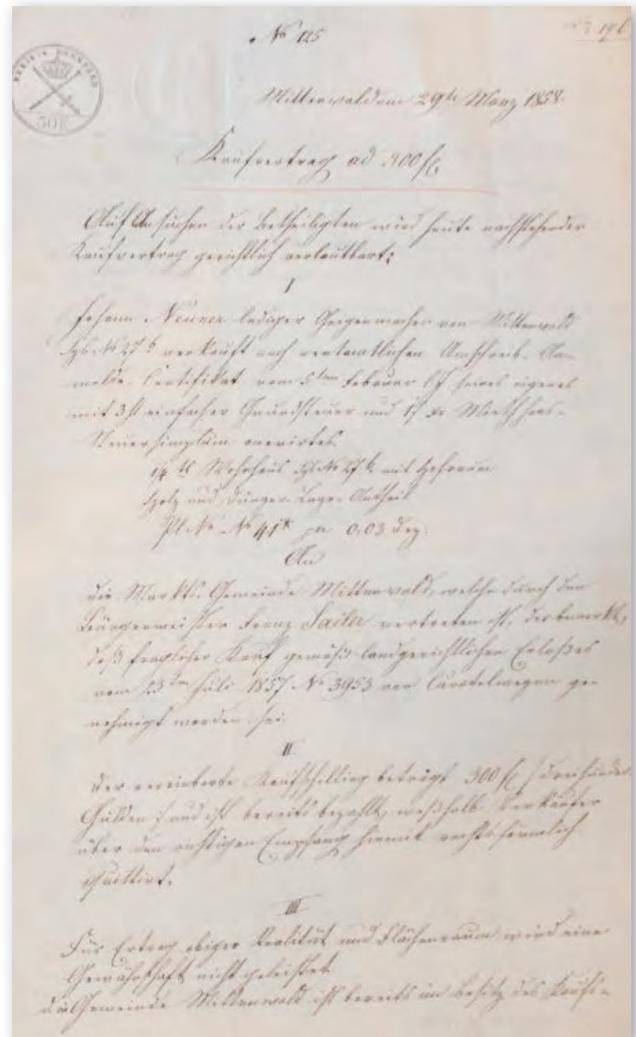
16 'Verzeichnis der Geigenmacher Wanderschule betreff', copy in Geigenbaumuseum Mittewald.

The second young violin maker, Johann Kriner (1834–1883), completed his advance training from around 1851 until May 1855 under Andreas Engleder (1802–1872) in Munich. Afterwards, he became the first teacher at the Geigenbauschule in Mittenwald that had been founded in 1858.



Document from the Royal District Authority of Werdenfels, 1855¹⁷

Cancellation of the loan taken out by Peter Kriner on his property to pay for his son Johann Anton Kriner's advance training as a violin maker under Andreas Engleder in Munich. The subject line reads: 'The improvement of violin making in Mittenwald'.



Purchase agreement between Johann Neuner and the Markt of Mittenwald, 29 March 1858

At the instigation of the Royal Bavarian Administrative Council, the Markt of Mittenwald bought part of the second floor of the building at Obermarkt 8 on 29 March 1858 where it established a violin making school.¹⁸ The first independent school building was erected in 1892 in Partenkirchner Strasse and inaugurated in 1893.

17 Johann Kriner, Staatsarchiv München LRA 106341.

18 Purchase of Obermarkt 8 GARm AVIII 78 p. 249.

However, through the dominance and influence of the merchant-manufacturers Neuner & Hornsteiner and Baader & Co, the violin making school's well-founded, seminal training concept was increasingly undermined. This ultimately resulted in quick training being given largely for specific stages in a violin's production. It was only with the construction of the school's own wood storage facility in 1914 that the *Geigenbauschule* was able to free itself from its dependence on the merchant-manufacturers. The period between 1880 and 1914 was the most successful in the history of Mittenwald's merchant-manufacturers. At that time some 150 people were working for them from their own homes. On top of this number there were ten permanently employed workers at Neuner & Hornsteiner and eight at Baader & Co.¹⁹



Instrument stockroom at Neuner & Hornsteiner, advertisement



Instrument stockroom at Neuner & Hornsteiner



Instrument stockroom at Baader (photo c. 1920)

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914 the export business came to a complete standstill. After the war, competition from instrument makers from the Saxony/Bohemia region was so great that it led to the insolvency of Neuner & Hornsteiner in 1929. The company Baader & Co. was dissolved in 1933.²⁰

Wolfgang Zunterer 2018

¹⁹ GArM AXI 43/2, GArM AVIII 84/2.

²⁰ Klinner, see footnote 1, p. 27