

55 Years of
Wiederhold
Family Research

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Lecture by Alfred Wiederhold, Kassel

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I.

1. Dear relatives of name and research friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,
2. I'm happy to greet you in this historical place. The immigrant, from whom most of you descend, found his new home here. I'm very happy, that so many of you, old and young, were able to come ... some of you from a great distance. I'm very pleased to tell you now about the Wiederhold clan.
3. In the year 1930 I was in school. I had gotten a very bad grade in history. In order to improve, I read books from the state library. Once I opened a catalog of our name. There I found the diary of an officer named Wiederhold from the American Revolutionary War. By the way, I now know of three such diaries, of men who were at least related by name, and who took part in this war.
4. This whetted my interest to find out more about people who had the same name as I, and to establish whether we were possibly distant relatives. Actually, there were also two other motives. My father's family was made up of six brothers and sisters, and eight step-brothers and -sisters. Neither side liked the other. I wanted to know the reason, and tried to get them together again. And lastly, there were some illnesses in the family, and I tried to find out if these were hereditary. Incidentally, this was three years before Hitler came to power.
5. My father got to know Justus Wiederhold in Ziegenhain and brought us together. Justus was a judicial officer. He had previously in 1905 put an advertisement in the "Gartenlaube" (a family magazine) and tried to contact people with the same name. I, myself, had contacted the people who were listed in the Kassel phone book. Else, an unmarried clerk in a protestant parish office, was interested. Her job facilitated our getting a look at the church books. Else and I once had a conference together in a restaurant. Afterwards the waiter asked me if I would also be paying for my bride. Moreover, she was 30 years older than I was! Further, I could get Fritz Wiederhold, a teacher, to work with us. Unfortunately, he soon died. Afterwards the protestant theological student (and later minister) Konrad Wiederhold joined us. We five established the "Association of the Wiederhold Clan".
6. Now family reunions took place: 1934 in Ziegenhain, the birthplace of the "Defender of Hohentwiel", 1935 in Werleshausen, you won't believe it, but this village was previously called Wiederholdshausen. 1936 in Borken (the train station innkeeper was a

Wiederhold). 1937 in Noerten-Hardenberg. A brewery with our name was there. Newspaper stories appeared about each meeting, in the regional papers, too. As a result we received letters from practically every Wiederhold family. These people, having the same name, wrote to us what they knew about their ancestors, and asked to be filled in. They hoped to save the expense and work of research. Most of them really thought this, and because of that, we received only a very few completed lists. A short time ago a Wiederhold wrote to me. I was supposed to even supply him with the names of his ancestors from his great-great-grandfather back. For this he would give the names of his grandchildren. I wrote and informed him that I couldn't do that. With this exchange, I'd be trading "a whole set of matched, hand-crafted antique arm-chairs for a smaller number of new, mass-produced, factorymade wooden chairs".

7. The family reunion of 1938 didn't make it. We wanted to meet at Hohentwiel on Lake Constance. This was the castle that Colonel Konrad Wiederhold defended during the Thirty-Years War. However, there weren't enough participants, because people didn't have enough money. 1939 I had to render service and then be a soldier, after which I was a prisoner of war.
8. Fortunately, I was able to continue working on the family research during the war. Justus had continued researching also and had stumbled upon a fruitful and reliable source: the collection of notes of the one-time Marburger archive-director Dr. Knetsch, in which our name appears a hundred times over. Justus also obtained an original letter of Konrad of Hohentwiel with his seal of 1638, and had a reproduction made of it. Furthermore, he was able to get a copy of the last will which "The Defender of Hohentwiel" had set-up before 1666. Justus also had the luck that a copy of the Wiederhold's genealogical registry of 1699 was sent to him. This is our oldest genealogical record, upon which the foundation of the Homberger line is based. Many with the name Wiederhold have tried to get some of the inheritance from Konrad. Still more really believe that they are related to him, and are very proud of it. Unfortunately, I must often inform them that they are not, but they simply won't believe otherwise.
9. The association chairman Justus had died by the end of the war, and had willed to Rev. Konrad his documents, etc. of the Wiederhold clan. Konrad got all of the materials, and out of it figured

out the three Homberger lines. He researched also his branch of the Kasseler line from Homberg. After that we wanted to work together on the materials, and finish all obtainable Wiederhold lines. Unfortunately, this enterprise didn't get past it's beginning, because the task was much larger than first thought, and ended up exclusively with my wife and me.

10. 1937 Justus published a small book with the title "Das Geschlecht Wiederhold" ("The Family Wiederhold"), which really didn't contain much more than a speech by Rev. Konrad about the Colonel Konrad and a memorial to those killed in the First World War. 1961/66 appeared volumn I of "Wiederhold Descendents from Homberg/Efze" (Stammfolgen Wiederhold aus Homberg/Efze"), written by Konrad, typed by my wife, and published by me. The printing was done free of charge by a firm named Wiederhold, and the same promised for the volumns yet to follow. In the hope of Konrad's renewed help after his retirement I next researched my own line "Wiederhold from Felsberg" ("Wiederhold aus Felsberg"), which took two volumns. After that Konrad still didn't have time, he didn't work on our research with me anymore before his death in 1983. I also finished volumn 2 and 3 of the Homberger line with only my wife's help. Then came the biggest disappointment: The firm which had promised free printing reneged, they were no longer interested in my work. I'm so thankful that other Wiederholds helped financially, and so I managed to get both of the large Wiederhold lines into print. Meanwhile, I also had 2 volumns of about 50 shorter genealogical lines printed, that is ... copied, without explanatory text. In a future volumn would be the remaining information concerning disconnected Wiederhold names.
11. All interested libraries, genealogical societies, and research friends have now received the full 8 volumns as free publications. So it's guaranteed that the results of this research will remain preserved for the future. Thus I've fulfilled an inner obligation, because such a collection of good, rich material could hardly ever be again gathered together.

II.

1. And now I will try to explain a few genealogical terms, and cite the most important sources of research.
2. Most well-known is the research of ancestors, "Ahnenforschung". In this system No. 1 designates the first person ... the base. The two parents Nos. 2 and 3, the four grandparents Nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7,

and thus numbered according to a uniform system as research continues. It's an advantage to use forms especially designed for this system.

3. In contrast to that system I have the "Stammtafeln", genealogical lines (with the founder on top), or the "Stammbaeume", family trees, (here the founder is the base). In both systems only the persons appear who carry the family name. Married women in Germany took their husband's name upon marriage (at least until recently). Therefore, their children weren't listed, because such an "all inclusive" genealogical chart would have too many names and be unwieldy. If it's a short line (not many generations), then it's possible to include children with other family names. This system is called "Nachfahrentafel" or descendent genealogy. A genealogical line includes families therefore, who share the same ancestor, and as a rule carry the same name. Unrelated lines with the same name form a clan. In my work the largest lines are given a capital and the place of origin named; the shorter lines with place of origin and, when necessary, with the founder. I've designated the generations with Roman figures, and the people, whose children carry the same name, with Arabian numbers.
4. Besides this, there are the "Sippschaftstafeln", kind of "tribal" charts, upon which, for example, are listed the relatives of a certain couple, from their grandparents to their grandchildren. If you tried to include more relatives on it, it would be difficult to chart.
5. Just how does one get the desired information? Start with the relatives. Women often know more about exact dates than men. Old people have an astoundingly good memory and also like to tell about their youth. In this way, one can go back about 100 years, that is, as far back as the great-grandparents. The following I can say only about the situation in Germany. There one now has to order documents, either from the county clerk's offices, which were started in 1870, or from the church parish' offices. Of course, that costs money. In the church record books, names since 1830 are indexed, or alphabetised, which facilitates the search. In most cases the church books after 1650 still exist. Sometimes one finds even older ones, although many of these were lost during the Thirty-Years War. Reading and searching in such books (the church books) is very demanding of patience. 300 years age paper was very precious. Therefore the writing was very small. The

minister (or priest) wrote in a script not known today, and what's more, with a quill pen. When the ink got low, it would be thinned with water. Because of this, the script would be lighter. With improper storage the paper gets damp and becomes moldy, the leaves of the book become brittle. Because of this the books may only be used in the minister's office and under his supervision. In spite of that I have read many church books from beginning to end, and noted each entry in which the name Wiederhold appeared. In the years after the last war the regulations were not yet so strict. The ministers also honored me with their trust, because I was an elder in the church, and I had brought along the recommendation of my own minister. Thus I was allowed to also read through the financial accounts of the parish, which sometimes were available dating back to the time before the church books. By this means, for example, I found the year of birth for the original forefathers of 5 side lines coming from the Felsberger line. The church books with the baptismal records didn't exist anymore, but the fees paid for the baptism were recorded in the church records as receipts.

6. In Nordhessen, at least, one finds an important source of information in the state archives, such as the list of Hessian troops in America. Pledges of allegiance from 1667 still exist. It pays to check the list of soldiers from 1639 in the Hessian register. Also a list of the so-called "Landes-Rettungssteuern" (state war-taxes) is still there. From even earlier times are, for example, tax rolls from 1584 and 1555, and tax-collector financial accounts from 1496. Then there are the so-called twelve-year-leases which were usually renewed every twelve years and dated back to the thirteenth century. Aside from that, court records about disagreements are available, also court records about many other things. From these hand-written documents only a few were later printed. One needs a lot of time and patience in order to read records in the state archives and to find what you are seeking.

II.

1. I hope that you aren't too tired to hear about some of our experiences.
2. In the records of the Wiederhold clan I found a family tree and the description of a family crest (coat-of-arms). I still don't know who the author was who followed the Wiederhold genealogy all the way back to "Woufried". After thinking about it I tried to find more ancestors in Wanfried (note correct spelling!). I was

lucky. It was possible for me to correct a few mistakes, and to trace the lines through 8 generations through Muenden and back to Homberg/Efze.

3. Some of the descendents have the name Hederich von Wiederhold. They lived in the Dutch West Indies and today live in the Netherlands and, among other places, in Bradenton, Florida and Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. It was difficult to find out anything about this family. Therefore, I was happy to find the name in the telephone book of Enschede, Holland. I noted the number, and telephoned from Kassel. I tried all day long and also at night. There was never any answer. A question to the German information operator revealed that the number was correct. After an urgent request, the German operator questioned the Dutch information and received the following news: The party had a second telephone, an unlisted number! Therefore, as soon as we had a chance, we drove again to Holland, in order to look up the address in the phonebook, and then to make a visit. A pleasant, elderly woman opened the door. She tried to explain that she really wasn't interested in buying anything. We couldn't speak Dutch. So I showed her our family crest, but her family had a different one, and she wasn't familiar with ours. After showing her our passes, with the name Wiederhold on them she finally let us in. But then she wanted to go right away and get her son-in-law who spoke German. She wanted us to stay in her apartment while she was gone; but we couldn't go along with that. At our suggestion she called her son-in-law. He came right over, and the situation was saved. We had a good visit, got the desired information and an explanation. The woman had often been bothered by nuisance telephone calls and therefore got an unlisted number. Besides that, she had thought that we wanted to sell her soap or something.
4. The grandfather of Ruth de Hollander in Schenectady, New York came from Borcken. She and her husband visited Borcken in 1982. She asked at the county clerk's office if there were possibly any relatives still living there. The county clerk came to me to ask, and I knew about the relatives. Ruth, Myron, and I met in Borcken, were received by the mayor, and had a story about it in the local newspaper. We were in the U.S.A. in 1983, and when we visited Louis und June in Rochester we met many nice American relatives of Ruth. Unfortunately, Myron had quite suddenly and unexpectedly died just before our visit, so we couldn't go to Schenectady.

5. In the Wiederhold genealogical records of 1699 are mostly names of officers and officials, but there are really almost no dates. This fact was taken advantage of by the descendents of Georg who carried the same family name of Wiederhold. Georg went to Konrad, the commander of Hohentwiel, and alleged to be his cousin. That was true in a way, because at that time all distant relatives called themselves cousins or in-laws. Georg was also an officer, and he happened to be the successor to Konrad as commander of Hohentwiel. After he, in addition, married a noble woman, his descendents also wanted to become nobles. In order to become a noble, one needed respected forefather's and relatives who possibly were already nobles. Such were in the genealogical index. Therefore, someone got the idea to enter Georg's name later into the genealogical record. A few generations later the title of "noble" was designated by the ruler. Now at that time no one could possibly think that 300 years later I'd be able to fill-in the missing years in the genealogical records. Through this it became evident that Georg's claimed descendance couldn't be true. Besides that, I was able to find what was a greater possibility of being Georg's real descendency. A parallel to this is the story in America of the highly respected Baron von Steuben.
6. Our aristocratic Wiederhold line has died out in Germany, but around 1880 one of them emigrated to Pennsylvania, and I wanted to find his possible descendents. Because my letters were never answered, I thought it was because my English was not good. So I asked my "international" cousin Fritz for help. He is of German origin, his parents lived in Holland, he had worked in Switzerland, now lives in Austria, and speaks many languages. But he didn't receive any answer either. Therefore my wife and I had to go there ourselves. In the limosine from the airport to the hotel we were the only passengers. The driver was nice enough to make a small detour to the address where we had sent our letters. There we saw a stone house, may be 100 years old, no curtains, broken windows, trash on the terrace, and no one answered. But there was a telephone line, and mail was in the mailbox. Therefore someone must live there. We called from our hotel, I believe it was the Hilton. We reached the answering machine. We gave our name, the name of our hotel, and room number, and asked that he return our call. Without success. In the evening around 11:00 we went again to the house by taxi. There was a light in a room in the back of the

house. I knocked for a long time on the door and on the window. It didn't help. The next morning we found a cheaper hotel, and moved there. But first we had the good idea to call again and this time there was an answer. He gave us his other address, and we planned to went there. During our visit he acted superior and all knowing as if in the roll of the last Baron von Wiederhold. It turned out that he was well-informed, and he proudly showed me his family tree with his ancestors. He had gotten it from cousin Fritz, and could hardly believe, that I was the author of it! Now he is really the last of his line, unmarried and childless. His sister lives in another city, is married to a doctor, and has children. After some hesitation he loaned me a book, which I look upon as the success of this visit: There were several hundred Wiederhold addresses in it, which I copied immediately.

7. I've told about the Dutch family Hederich von Wiederhold, and about the German aristocrats von Wiederhold. The genealogical records name two more brothers, Georg Reinhard and Hans David, who were officers and carried the name Wiederhold von Weidenhofen. In the 17th century their children and grandchildren lived all the way from Holland to Austria, most of all in Vienna. However, it has not been proved that these Wiederholds really were brought into nobility as the genealogical records show. An existing letter documenting nobility from 1730 with the title "Edler Schweitzer von Wiederhold" belongs to the family Schweitzer and not Wiederhold.
8. Sometimes I know that a child has grown up, for example by the confirmation records in the church books or, from registration at a university. When I find no entry in the church books, either of marriage or of burial, the person usually had moved from their hometown. The reason for it could be a marriage in a different place or emigration. The trail is then lost. On the other hand, it sometimes happens that a family follows its forefathers back, and somehow can't go any further because they can't find the original place of their ancestor. In such cases I'm especially happy, if I can show a connection. At present a family with other name had traced their ancestors back to Wilhelm Ludwig Wiederhold, who emigrated to South Africa, and died in 1667 in Kapstadt. However, I found the father of this emigrant. He is the previously mentioned Georg Reinhard Wiederhold von Weidenhofen, and I also have four generations before him.

9. Konrad Wiederhold, the protector of Hohentwiel during the Thirty-Years War, is certainly the most famous of the Wiederholds. Streets and buildings in southern Germany are named after him, and there is a 2 page list of over 50 books which have been written about him. I also have written about him in the genealogy. Now I'd like to add something here.
10. In 1941 a teacher, Paul Frieber from Schwerte in the Ruhr, wrote to us. His mother's stepmother was born a Wiederhold. He had inherited books from her, even pictures of people he didn't know. Among the books was the customary printed eulogy of that time of 1667 for the Hohentwieler Konrad. Mr. Frieber thought the book was very valuable, and was prepared to sell it. He demanded, however, much too high a price. In 1961 I was able to visit him. He was already quite old and lay sick in bed. I wasn't able to buy it from him because his daughter wanted to keep it. I was allowed to quickly take a few photos, which unfortunately didn't turn out, and I copied off a few dates. The book was familiar to me. It's available in a library, and the contents don't have much to offer. In this copy, however, were entered handwritten, important dates from the Muendener line, of which I, fortunately, made notes.
11. Konrad (of Hohentwiel) lived in Kirchheim after 1650 and died there in 1667. For the 300th anniversary of Konrad's death the city gave a memorial festival. Invited were the owner of a factory, Dr. Ellen Wiederhold, the minister Konrad Wiederhold, and I, the businessman Alfred Wiederhold, as representatives of the clan. Ellen received the city's newly created Konrad Wiederhold commemorative medal as the first person receiving the medal. She had given a large gift of money. Reverend Konrad and I were honored for our genealogical writings and studies. Orchestras, choirs, and soloists gave a program. We sat in the front row, and I was very proud.
12. Through a register "Wer sucht Wen" (Who is Searching for Whom) in the genealogical wing of the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., Dottie Wiederhold-Momany got my name in 1979 and later made contact with me. Her father was born in a German colony on the Volga River in Russia in 1902, and he came to the U.S.A. in 1911 with his father. The family had lived for several generations in the German colony of Paulskoje. This village on the Volga River in Russia was founded in 1767 by German colonists. One year earlier more than 300 couples were married in the small village of Buedingen in Hessen, before they went to Russia as colonists. Among the

marriage entries was also listed Johann Henrich Wiederhold from Niedergruendau who married Elisabeth Heil from Unternaubel. These were certainly Dottie's relatives ancestors. I wanted to find more forefathers. That seemed a bit difficult. There are three Gruendaus; namely, Nieder-, Mittel-, and Haingruendau. It's just that there were no Wiederholds who had lived in any of them, and the listed village of Unternaubel (for Elisabeth Heil) doesn't even exist! But I found the forefathers.

13. I knew that several hundred couples were married in 1766 in Buedingen before they emigrated to Russia as colonists. It can be assumed that the people involved would have their marriage noted on a piece of paper, and afterwards entered into the church books. It certainly could be that the abbreviation "Niedergr." was written on the paper, and then ended up as "Niedergruendau" (a nearby village) when entered in the church book. Now, however, "Niedergr." could also be an abbreviation for "Niedergrenzebach". A search of the records in Niedergrenzebach revealed Wiederholds, and the "searched-for-ones" were found.
14. The wife was said to have originated in Unternaubel. In opinion this a mistake. I found a list of the emigrants in the "Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Familienkunde" from 1927 in which the similarly written Niederaula is named as her hometown. I must say further, that Unter- and Nieder- have the same meaning and are used interchangeably. In Niederaula is a so-called "Familienbuch" (family book), in which are the chronological entries of the church ... births, marriages, etc., all listed according to families. In this was the name Heil, but not of this particular Elisabeth. It was also evident that the family came from Uetzhausen. This village, with others, belongs to the church community "Kreuzersgrund". In one of the other villages, namely Niederstoll, I found the correct Elisabeth and also four generations of her forefathers.
15. Reverend Konrad Wiederhold had once told me, that his wife had been to a doctor, and the doctor's assistant had the name of Wiederhold. It was not until many years later that I thought about this again. Konrad's wife still knew the name of the doctor, and he still had his practice, but no longer the assistant named Dorothea Wiederhold. A different assistant could tell us that Dorothea had once written her from a different town, and in this other town I found Dorothea. It was then discovered, that she was the granddaughter of Dr. Moritz Wiederhold, the sanitarium director. Her

grandfather was a famous medical doctor who managed a sanitarium and owned a farm in Kassel. The Wiederhold street is named after him, and he's burried in castle cemetery at Wilhelmshoehe.

16. The Wilhelmshoehe castle was the summer residence of the last German Kaiser. In 1918 General von Hindenburg had his headquarters there. At that time he was the Highest Command and later "Reichspraesident". The sanitarium director, Dr. Moritz Wiederhold lived in the area. He was, one might say, a neighbor. His daughter Anna sent a bouquet of flowers to the general, and he thanked her with a short note, which he signed by hand. Well, now comes strange part of the story. Toward the end of the 2nd World War an American was stationed in Tann in the Rhoen. In Tann was also a German family from Hainchen near Buedingen. A young man from the German family was given General von Hindenburg's thank-you letter by the American. Now it happened that the parents of this young man knew a family Huehn in their hometown of Hainchen. The mother of this Huehn family was born a Wiederhold. The letter was given to the Huehn family, because it was addressed to "Fraeulein Wiederhold", and in 1968 I got a copy of it from the Huehn family and with it heard this story about it. One wonders where the letter was from 1918 until 1944, how the American got hold of it, who the American was, and just why he gave it to this particular young man.
17. In the Kasseler phonebook the Wiederhold name is listed about 30 times. Now when a Mr. Mills from Bradenton, Florida addressed a letter "To the daughter of Dr. Moritz Wiederhold in Kassel" in 1979, it was given to me by the postoffice. They knew that I was doing family research, and that the daughter of the sanitarium director was no longer living. Mrs. Mills was born a Wiederhold. Her grandfather Henry, a brother of Dr. Moritz Wiederhold, had emigrated to America. Also another brother of this sanitarium director and a son, Hans, went to the U.S.A.
18. We got 325 addresses of Wiederholds through a book owned by the last Baron von Wiederhold. Dottie was so kind as to do the work and pay the cost of mailing of a newsletter to these people in the U.S.A. with the name of Wiederhold. About 10 % of these were interested in their forefathers, and have called or written. Among them was a Mrs. Myrtle Wiederhold. She extended the contact further to Jean in Roberts, Illinois, a relative who would be greatly interested in it. Jean knew what her great-grandfather's first name was, and where he came from. He was thus one, according to my

findings, who was born and confirmed, and then seemed to disappear ... because he emigrated. We could give Jean 12 generations of Wiederholds previous to her great-grandfather, and she invited us for a visit, had us meet Myrtle, and took us further.

19. In 1675 Henrich Wiederhold got married in Seckenheim near Mannheim. He is the founder of the Mannheimer line. A professor cited Henrich's father as "Widderholt Johann aus Niedertzwehren Ziegenhain" in a publication. But really, this couldn't be true. I talked with the man on the phone, corresponded with him, visited him, and looked through his documents, but there was no record to be found to verify his dates. In 1963 I wrote to the pastor in Seckenheim, and received the report, that there seemed to be no record of Henrich's origin included in the wedding-record entry. Twenty years later I myself was in Seckenheim, and the following was figured out. In the church office one puts information on cards in a card file. This is made up from entries and information in the church books. There was also no "place of origin" to be found in this card file, it was probably forgotten. I searched and found it, however, in the original church book, which is preserved in the archives in Karlsruhe. The professor had gotten his information from here, but somehow Niedergrenzebach then mistakenly became Niedertzwehren. Now it was clear, that Henrich came from Niedergrenzebach, just like his brother Konrad, the pastor in Schriesheim and Ladenburg, had. While no descendents of Konrad's fifteen children are known, Henrich has a large number descended from him. Now to the Mannheimer line.
20. To this line belongs Ed, whom we visited in Caro, Michigan in 1983 with Dottie, and who is still active as a court bailiff at the age of 76.
21. Aside from him, the lawyer Karl Wiederhold in Walzbachtal by Karlsruhe belongs to this line. As I was working on the Mannheimer line in about 1960, he was still a student in school. At that time he rode with me on a motor scooter, and showed me the way to the relatives, and to the church offices, and now he will hopefully be my successor.
22. Now, about the remarkable Wiederhold line from Lanertshausen. Like the one referred to before, this line also goes back to Homberg/Efze. It is the longest, because there is already a baby who belongs to the XIX. generation. The people of this Wiederhold line had always maintained the tradition from generation to generation

that they were related to the famous Konrad of Hohentwiel, and that an ancestor had "met his end" as he was on his way to get permission to marry. Both are true in a way. A distant relationship to the famous Konrad actually exists, and I found in the church book, that a grandchild of the founding father of this line had died in the snow. Indeed, he was still too young to be thinking about the possibility of marriage, but one sees how tradition often has a kernel of truth. In the last case it has resulted in the life of the genealogical father Adam from the X. generation to be seen in a somewhat better light. Adam was a "dragoon", or a soldier on horseback. First of all, one knew of him only a son John, born 1754, and of his large number of descendents. Then I found out that Adam already had a son with another woman in 1752. This son was likewise named John, and there are also a lot of descendents from him. A grandson of the 1752 John, also named John and born in 1809, had gone to Canada and then went to the U.S.A. Again, there is such a lot of descendents, apparently so many, that nobody has been able to write down all the relatives.

23. Of the descendents of Adam in Lanertshausen in Germany I'd like to mention the teacher Fritz Wiederhold, who belongs to the founders of the "Association of the Wiederholds". Then we should also mention the archivist by profession, Anneliese Wiederhold. We knew each other already a long time ago as school children. As I looked her up again 50 years later, she was suffering from cancer. She died just a short time later, and left me books and a donation for the family research.
24. Anneliese had also forwarded a letter to me from the teacher Joergensen of Denmark. The teacher couldn't get any further with his family research, because the minister in (or by) Schwarzenborn couldn't decipher an entry in the church book. I managed it. The "thank-you" letter from Skibby is the nicest that I have ever received.
25. The brothers Henne and Hans Wiederhold in Rhuenda belong to the Felsberger III. generation. Hans had killed the miller in the neighboring village of Woelfershausen, and because of that had to be a long time in the count's jail. In 1523 he was pardoned, after which he swore that he would not carry on the disagreement with the miller's family. Besides Hans had to name guarantors, that is, people who would go bail for him. His brother Henne was one of those named by Hans as a guarantor. The document concerning this

agreement, it's called "Urfehdevertrag" ... an oath of truce, still exists and is in the state archives in Marburg.

26. Now I want to relate how I was once praised by mistake. The director of the state archives in Marburg, Dr. Knetsch, left a memorandum in his papers. It referred to the so-called testament designating Henne as guarantor of his brother Hans. This testament from the year 1526 was written on parchment and was said to be in the von Buttler archives. I really wanted a chance to see it. Through an intercessor I obtained the permission of Mr. von Buttler to go with him to visit the old castle tower, where the archives were kept. Mr. von Buttler wanted to start searching. To his astonishment, however, I went immediately to the correct cabinet, opened the correct box, and found the searched-for document. He praised me ... I knew my way around his archives better than he did! Then I had to tell him, that I had read the catalog number on the memorandum from Marburg.
27. In the church cemetery in Gensungen is a weathered tombstone, upon which are carved pictures of 22 people. According to legend, children are said to be buried there. These children were said to have been murdered by foreign soldiers during a war. That certainly couldn't have been the case. We cleaned the tombstone with brushes and examined it at different times of day and in various types of light using binoculars. What we were able to make out, we sketched off, and we wrote the distinguishable script with capitals. The illegible places we filled in with lower case letters. It showed that in 1697 a "Martha" was buried here. On the cross was her picture with her first husband Johannes Wiederhold, her second husband Johannes Weideling and her nineteen children. Both men were "Greben" or mayors. Of the children only six sons and three daughters reached adulthood. Ten died young. A copy of our sketches was given to the church office from there a researcher of the history of this village got it, and then a newspaper. There, among other things, was written that I was supposed to have deciphered a gravestone, whose inscription was to have been written indiscriminately with some upper and some lower case letters.
28. A few weeks ago, sample copies of the Wiederhold genealogy were sent to archives and to the genealogical societies. There upon the retired archive director Dr. Gensicke from Wiesbaden informed me that there really had been a true titled Wiederhold. He was the Portugese general Baron Bernhard Wilhelm Held von Wiederhold, for

- whom a patent of nobility existed. This man, Held von Wiederhold, was buried in Lisbon in 1810. The line seems to have died out.
29. In Enschede are a great number of Wiederholds, whose forefather Nikolaus comes from the Felsberger line and went to the Netherlands in about 1815. We were there and wrote down the names of the Wiederholds. When we thought we were finished, we were wrong. We were told that the other half of the family carried the name Weterhold. Thus we started over again.
 30. Another line in Holland was started by Johann Georg around 1835. Here, again, the descendents supplied us with names, dates, and other information all the way back to the emigrant. Then we found that he was born in Rhuenda and also belonged to the Felsberger line.
 31. Now, we should also mention Kurt, Frank, and Henrich Wiederhold (grandfather, father and son) in Bochum. Frank is a graphic-designer. For the birthday of his son, Frank gave an exquisite, hand-made, colored family-tree. Moreover, he drew in 29 Wiederhold family crests into a genealogical chart.
 32. Irene, whom I had known from my childhood, the same as Anneliese, had a sad ending. She kept the books, and managed the money for a young man, a grocery retailer. The young man loved gambling. One time when she wouldn't give him any more money because of that, he stabbed her with a knife. That was in 1982, and you could say, in my neighborhood. The murderer had been voted the "friendliest salesman" of the region before.
 33. You might wonder why I present my experiences in this exact order. Well, I've reviewed the genealogy of the Wiederholds from Homberg and Felsberg in this order, and the memories have come back to me also in this order. Because both lines are very extensive, and also since the research is finished, I have a lot to tell. Besides Homberg and Felsberg I count in addition to date 51 Wiederhold lines from 41 places. Of them, unfortunately, only a few have been researched, but that also gives the advantage that my lecture is soon ended.
 34. In Offenbach near Frankfurt am Main I found the name Wetterhold. The family originated from Alsace, an area which sometimes belonged to Germany, and sometimes to France. In a churchbook, I believe in Lorenzen, the forefathers had their names actually spelled Wiederhold.
 35. On this trip we saw in Selestat or Schlettstadt an antique store

with our name. It belonged to Gerard's wife. We introduced ourselves and quickly became friends. The research of the ancestors and relatives made further trips necessary. I was able to trace the family back to Oberbronn in the Alsace. The relatives are distributed from Lourdes in the Pyrenees, on the French-Spanish border, to Vienna in Austria. Among them I also found my name of Alfred for the first time. Up to this time I believed that I was the only Alfred Wiederhold.

36. My earlier business trips lead me through all of West Germany. Because I didn't earn a lot of money I often slept in the car in a camping place. Once when I was in the neighborhood of Karlsruhe, I gave my name at registration, and the groundsman understood Wiederholl, that is, with double "l" at the end. As it turned out, he knew a family in the neighborhood who had the name of Wiederholl. The next day I made a visit, and a correspondence began. The ancestors of this "relative-by-name" had emigrated from Germany to Solymar in Hungary, and after the last war, the family had returned home to Germany.
37. Back to America. The Hessian troops which were sent to America about 200 years ago also brought their clergymen with them. Among their official duties was the keeping of records, and as the baby daughter of Maria Elisabeth Wiederholtin from Udenborn was baptised in 1776, the minister made the following notation: The woman had followed her intended bridegroom, who, after promising marriage, I don't know why, had left her stranded. She came with our second fleet, searched for her bridegroom, and then as she stepped into his tent, she was delivered of a baby girl.
38. Jack from Giddings, Texas had also responded to the form-letter of 1983 (October), which was sent to people in the U.S.A. who carried the name Wiederhold. He wrote that his ancestors went back to a Samuel Wiederhold, who was born in 1817 in Udenhausen, which is really close to Kassel. I was astonished, because I didn't know any Wiederholds there, and I tried to find out which other place this Samuel could have come from. However, as I examined the church books for two hours after great difficulty, I knew it was true. Because accessibility to the church books was so difficult, such as I had never before experienced, I could only learn about the older generations from them. The younger ones were ascertained through questioning the residents. Many visits were necessary for that, also to other places, and a lot of phone calls. Then I had a

four-paged genealogical chart together with eleven generations, and about seventy addresses, well noted, of the Wiederhold descendents from Udenhausen who live in Germany. The one emigrant to the U.S.A. had two sons and two daughters. From one of the sons, George, are known: eleven children, sixty-five grandchildren, 149 great-grandchildren, and 123 great-great-grandchildren. That makes 348, of course, including female descendents, who carried another name after marriage. Take this number (348) times four, because Samuel had four children, then you come up with about 1400 descendents in five generations ... a number to be proud of. Thus Texas is then the state in the U.S.A. in which the most Wiederholds live. That is more Wiederholds than live in Germany from the entire clan! There were about 70 family numbers who got together for a "spur-of-the-moment" announced family reunion in Dime Box, Texas on the occasion of our visit in May, '84 and listened to the complete presentation, wholly unprepared, which I gave for them. I'm sorry that the descendents of the second son, Martin, and of Samuel's daughters are not yet known. A commenced correspondence with some of this family was, for unknown reasons, stopped.

39. We also have a third line in the U.S.A. which has a lot of relatives. Gary in Crystal, Minnesota is trying to research this line. He has also come in contact with me through the form letter. He traveled to Dime Box, Texas in order to see me. I was able to help him find the correct place of origin of the emigrant Christian, and to lengthen his line in Kefferhausen to four generations. Gary, however, also took the initiative to sketch a chart of descendents, to ask relatives for information, to learn German, and to send letters to the appropriate minister, and all with considerable success. Perhaps he was motivated by his fifth cousin Karen Reese in Dickeyville, Wisconsin. She had, together with her mother Louanna Richardson, put together the names of the Ginter family descendents. Among them are a lot of Wiederholds. There are about 2400 names entered in Karen's work. It is noteworthy that she gives only a first name for each person, instead of the two which are otherwise customary in America. Gary had also written, after his questioning of the Wiederholds, the descendents of an emigrant Nikolaus Wiederhold. Now it's become evident that Nikolaus also originated in Kefferhausen. Gary and his friends are still trying to establish how Nikolaus and Christian are related.
40. Gary and Karen have made the arrangements so that we could meet

here today. People related by name, who had previously not known about each other, have met each other today. I think that we should thank Gary and Karen.

41. Just briefly something worth mentioning, and first of all a bit unpleasant. There was a detective show on TV in which the criminal had our name. In the U.S.A. there is said to even have been a bank-robber named Wiederhold, and in the D.D.R. an officer who treated the prisoners badly. On the other side, a rodeorider named Wiederhold is well-known from American TV. But did you already know that the poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had Wiederhold relatives, and that the grandmother of the poet and painter Wilhelm Busch was a Wiederhold? Besides that, there's a brewery and a paint factory in Germany which still carry our name, but don't belong to the family any longer. Then we have a steel-pipe factory which produces V-W garden decorations. V-W is an abbreviation for Vincenz Wiederhold and has nothing to do with VW = Volkswagen. We are, however, connected with the Volkswagen factory in another way. The sister of the long-time VW director, Dr. Nordhoff, is married to Dr. Wilhelm Wiederholt. In addition, I'd like to refer to the many Wiederhold officials, officers, and theologians, who had worked and lived mostly in Hessen, and whose lines, on the whole, have died out.

IV.

1. I do my research as in a detective story. There one doesn't find the criminal until the end, and at the end I first come to the question in which you and I are most interested: Well then, are all Wiederholds related? The answer first of all: No, but many are. With work and luck we've been able to trace two genealogical lines back about 600 years. We should succeed to lengthen and connect the up-to-no 51 shorter lines, so that dating back 600 years, perhaps only 10 or 20 would still remain. Our written sources reach back only 600 to ... no further than 800 years. Through the missing records the bringing together of remaining lines is impossible. Really, aside from that, even if records were available, you can't start the whole clan from one founding father. The people earlier had only one name. Someone, for example, had the name of Wedderolt, that is an old form of Wiederhold, just as others are named Otto or Albrecht. In the middle age the people hold a second name for better differentiation, for example, according to their profession. Therefore, there was then a Wedderolt Scheffer (Schaefer) and a Wedderolt Mueller. When then Wedderolt Scheffer had a

son and he was named Heinz, then his son's name is Heinz Wedderolt Scheffer. That was too long, and one said only Heinz Wedderolt. Thus 600 to 800 years ago the first name Wedderolt became Wiederhold, which today most families write as a family name. This occurrence may have happened parallel in several cases, so that a number of genealogical fathers may be considered.

2. I thank you for your patience.

Wiederhold-Researchers and their areas of specialization

Eva Hausknecht Rosenstr. 22 D-3380 Goslar-Oker	(Konrad's daughter) Homberg/E. +from other villages	Werner Wiederhold Am Kirschrain 18 D-3500 Kassel	(Alfred's son) Felsberg +solitary appearances
Karl Wiederhold Wiesenweg 2 D-7519 Walzbachtal2 Momany	First mentioned +names +coat-of- armes	Gary Wiederhold 5519 Maryland Ave. Crystal, MN 55428 USA	Kefferhausen +Eichsfeld +from other villages of East Germany
Dottie Wiederhold- 3811 Woodlawn St. Midland, MI 48640 USA	German Wiederholds from Russia	Jack Wiederhold 976 E Industry Giddings, TX 78942 USA	Udenhausen Kreis Hofgeismar

Wiederhold Historical Sites

The cathedral in Strassburg, Alsace, France. The Bishop Widerold (991-999) worked here. He inspired the reconstruction of the Eschau monastery, 12 km to the south.

In the church in Patersberg near St. Goarshausen, on the Rhine, is a gravestone for Reinhard Wiederhold (1549-1590), Keller zu Reichenberg. This stone has the Homberg coat-of-armes.

The Hohe Twiel near Singen, on Lake Constance, was defended successfully against the imperial troops during the 30-Years-War by Commander Konrad Wiederhold (1598-1667).

The ancestral castle of Wiederhold von Weidenhofen (1680-1912) in Rietheim Kreis Tuttlingen. Today it has been passed on down from the Wiederholds to the von Varnbueler and then to the von Clausbruch.

Konrad Wiederhold is buried in Kirchheim unter Teck. In 1967 representatives of the Wiederhold Families were invited to a commemorative honoring the 300th anniversary of Konrad Wiederhold's death. One also finds a remarkable local museum here.

At the church St. Blasien in Hannovers Munden is the gravestone for Henrich Wiederhold (1620-1680) and his wife. Also for his daughter Benigna Elisabeth (1699-1729) ∞ Hillgard.

To the right of the church entrance in Gensungen, area of Kassel, is a gravestone for Martha, nee N. (1642-1697), who was married first to Johannes Wiederhold, and later to Johannes Weideling. Carved on this stone are the figures of the wife, her two husbands, and the all together 19 children. An even older gravestone is the one for the former Grebe Kaspar Wiederhold (1610-1690) and his wife Elisabeth.

In Volkmarsen, area of Kassel, a Wedderold (first name) Wiederhold (last name) is documented 1420-1434. He lived in a stone house which at this time was quite unusual. Some old stone houses are still preserved there.

Werleshausen near Witzenhausen was earlier called Uuideroldeshausen. Hoefe Weiden is situated close by. Is this Weidenhofen?

Because of health reasons we bring this work to a conclusion.

Farewell and God bless! Alfred and Ilse Wiederhold.