

# Approach and Methods for the Wiederhold Genealogy

The general motivation for having a Genealogy is common to most such work: finding out where one's direct ancestors came from. For many Americans the puzzle is especially interesting since so many came from other parts of the world.

A relative, Alfred Wiederhold had a broader ambition, namely, to have a comprehensive genealogy for all the Wiederholds in the world. I (Gio Wiederhold) have the same objective. This ambition seemed feasible, since the name Wiederhold is quite unique. The concept that all Wiederholds are related seems indeed validated, since in the Warburger Stammtafeln an official named Volland named one of his three sons Wedderhold (abt.1210-1259), and that name was then used by an ever-increasing number of descendants. No earlier Wiederholds have been found, although there were some earlier similar place names. Volland and his descendants lived at the border of Westfalen and Hessen, defined there by the small river Diemel, which flows into the Weser 32 km north west (taking a much longer path). The Weser enters the North-sea at Bremen, about 200 km north.

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My (Gio) prime objective is to complete, extend and present on the Internet the comprehensive Wiederhold genealogy created by [Alfred Wiederhold](#). Here is part of a page with the entry for me in Alfred's Felsberg Volume 1, page 75. I am shown as being in generation 17 (XVII) of that volume, and the 9<sup>th</sup> entry for that generation in the Da: Erste (first) Helmshäuser line section. Note that there will be other XVII 9's in other volumes.

Da	Wiederhold - Erste Helmshäuser Linie	- 75 -
	Kind:	✓
●	1. <u>Jörg</u> (siehe XVIII ..)	
	* 1966	
●	XVII 9 (von XVI 12)	
	Hans Konrad Melchior gen. <u>Giovanni Yov Yat</u>	✓
	Professor in Palo Alto CA	geb. <u>Jew</u>
	* 24. 6.1936 Varose I	* 20. 8.1936 Canton China
	.	.
	∞	
	Kinder:	
	1. <u>John André</u> (siehe XVIII ..)	* 4.9.1968 Stanford CA
	2. <u>Randy Yat</u> (siehe XVIII ..)	* 18.12.1971 Stanford CA
	XVII 10 (von XVI 13)	
	<u>Jürgen</u>	Ursula
	Jurist und Kaufmann in Offenbach/M.	geb. <u>Kappes</u> u
	* 31. 5.1935 Osterode/Harz	* 29. 3.1936 Offenbach/M.

Scanneable PDF images of all [source data](#) from Alfred's books are on-line. Most of the data has been entered in a searchable tree format using McKiev Ancestry Family Tree software (FTW). A recent [copy of that tree](#) is now accessible on the [Wiederhold.org](#) website.

The entered data can also be exported in a shareable format to requestors. Those files will be named 'Wiederhold.<date>GED'. They are soon out-of-date as I add and make corrections

To validate the Wiederhold genealogy information, augment missing data, and achieve comprehensiveness, I have gathered many additional sources, listed in the [prior, introductory section](#). Access to the Internet, a resource not available to Alfred, has helped greatly.

To help in cross referencing the individual entries include a field, labelled 'Alfred W.', which indicates briefly the source entry, and complements the more general entry of Sources found in

all genealogies. When I determine that some published genealogy data are likely wrong, I enter longish notes, and mark them with the label (error). Notes can also provide assumptions made about entered data. Being comprehensive, I can afford to enter some likely matches among distinct sources. Locality is important. Since many Wiederholds worked for local rulers historical data about their movements helps as well, and the Wiederhold tree includes many such entries.

I also follow matrilineal ancestors. Those data are sparse in many genealogies but greatly help in selecting alternative matches and in narrowing down estimates of dates.

### Fake entries

Because of my objective, this genealogy will have some contents and entries not commonly found in formal genealogies. First of all, I always enter a "About" date-of-birth (DoB), even when I have to estimate it. The rules I use for the estimation are shown below. Having an approximate date is essential for building a comprehensive genealogy. When there is no explanation in an "About" entry it came from someone other source, and I cannot guess how the estimate was arrived at. When I have a set of Wiederhold data, but cannot (yet) determine their linkage to the main tree, I create an artificial ancestor, with a name as "a1863 Wiederhold", using the estimated year of birth for the given name. When I have a likely link between Wiederholds that are more than one generation apart, but without a named person in between I create a hypothetical ancestor named, say, "h3 Wiederhold". My hope is, of course, that sometime better data will be discovered and those fake names will be replaced.

### Source references

The formal source citations to the book refer mainly to parts of sections of the Alfred Wiederhold books, typically covering two generations, but also to the many other archival sources. Although the FTW format allows a formal detailed identification of source entries, using that format for every of the thousands of Alfred W. genealogy entries is just too tedious. Instead, the file name and page location of the Alfred Wiederhold sources is entered as a special attribute in the genealogical tree: AlfredW. When useful, a generation level assigned by Alfred, as 'XVIII' for me above, is given as well. That attribute field is used for other reference details as well. Major archives cited are the Warburger Stammfafeln (WS), the Indische Regeerings Almanak (RA), the 183 volumes of the Deutsche Geschlechter Bücher (DGB), Churchbooks from Kefferhausen (OFBK) and Dingelstadt (KBD), and Internet files at MyHeritage, Ancestry.com, Geneanet, Geni, Wikitree, and the Wikipedias in multiple languages. Source scans for many German churchbooks are available at [Archion](#), but those entries are very tedious to search, so that I have mostly relied on secondary sources.

## Scope

First of all I do want to enter all known persons with the name 'Wiederhold' or one of its common alternate spellings into the Wiederhold genealogy.

To come to breakpoint in terms of being comprehensive, I set in 2018 a limit of the year 1800 for the Wiederholds to be entered. However, I will often enter all Wiederholds that appear on a specific document. I also try to follow Wiederholds that emigrated as far to the current families as I have data. Publishing recent information is limited by European privacy laws. They mandate that that names of living persons cannot be placed on the Internet. If no death date is known, the software I use assumes that people born more than 120 years ago can safely be

shown. This rule does not restrict use of documents that are a scan from published sources, as [Alfred Wiederhold's volumes](#).

When known, I include the husbands of married daughters, and their children, at least to the first generation. For early Wiederhold I track the husbands' ancestors as well. In the small communities ancestors often match, showing that marriages were among cousins of various degrees of consanguinity.

My working scan of the files from the Alfred Wiederhold books, not on-line, but available on request, are marked by a red line or a yellow marker to indicate sections that were entered into FTW. There are also many additional editing notations, always in red. Especially the material extracted from the charts required many notations to explain the linkages I made.

Please inform [me](#) of any errors and questionable data you find, and of alternate sources that I can use for validation. A collection of that size can never be free of errors. And individuals can easily be mismatched or remain unmatched due to variations in writing, date notations and the like.

## Data presented

The McKiev-Ancestry Family Tree program uses the standard for genealogical data communication GEDCOM (GED). GEDCOM provides over a hundred choices of fields, as well for personal definitions. I limit myself greatly in order to focus in matching entries. The fields routinely entered by me are

1. The **Name** is the principal identifier of a person, often augmented by one or more **Also-Known-As** entries to account for alternate spellings, separated by semicolons (;). I don't use the GED field *Alias*. Common prefixes, as **von** Wiederhold, are included in the names.

Conventions for entering missing names vary widely. In use are 'N', 'N.', 'NN', and 'NoName'. For spouses often the husband's name is used. I use a lower-case 'n' to indicate unknown given or family names. If both are unknown, but useful data are available, I create an artificial surname to limit searching, as 'n ooSpouseName'.

2. The **Date-of-Birth** (DoB) and **Place-of-Birth** (PoB). If only the baptismal date is known, that is entered as the DoB and the Note field will state so. In that case the PoB may be off too, but likely very nearby. I do not use the GED field for the baptismal date. The dates are entered and presented in the format day-MON-year, with the month always shown as letters to avoid misinterpretation. If only the year is shown, it may have been estimated from the age given at another event, as marriage or death, and could be off by a year.

If make an entry with the DoB shown as Abt, I will enter in the Note field how it was estimated (see [estimating birthdates](#)). Other Abt. entries are copied from other sources, in some notation, and I can only guess how it was estimated there. When helpful for matching I will place as a Note the name of a Godparent (Pate), since those were often uncles and aunts.

The background for matching people in the genealogy based on incomplete and estimated birthdates is: For women, births of children can range from 15 to 45, with the mode at age 25. For men, it can range from 15 to 80, still with a mode of 25. First marriages are likely between 15 and 35, again with a mode of 25. First children are likely born within a year of marriage.

3. The **Date-of-Death** (DoD) and **Place-of-Death** (PoD) is entered when known. If the person was short-lived that is entered, and in that case the PoD is typically omitted when identical to the PoB. Entering “short-lived” helps to avoid spending time looking for matches. If the cause of death is known, and other than old-age, I may note that as well. Pestilence, famine, and wars are often the reason for multiple deaths occurring close together. At times the PoD information is based on burial data, so that the death may have occurred in another place, but typically nearby. When the place of burial is far away from the PoD, I may enter it in a note.
4. I enter **Occupation** when known. Besides being of interest it helps in matching family members, since the type of work they did was often similar. There may multiple occupations listed for a person. If those occurred on multiple places, I enter multiple **Place-of-Occupation** (PoO)s, separated by semicolons (;).
5. I enter **Location** when useful, as when there was an unusual event, as a battle, or when there is no or no matching PoB, PoD, PoO. Records of where a person was a godfather (Pate) can help establish connections. For godmothers (Patin) I have used the **Occupation** field.
6. I use the **Citizen** field for records only where relevant. In older records that may indicate land ownership. I don't use the GED field *Citizen-of-Town*.
7. I use the **Confirmation** field only when relevant. It means that the person had reached an age of about 16, and that they were not short-lived, even if no Date-of-Death is known. Having only a confirmation data makes it more likely that they moved to another town.
8. I use the **Emigration** field only when there are relevant data, as for grouping families. I also the field in older records for individual changes of residence that more than a day's walk, because that was unusual. It often means that church data from one town has to be matched to church data from another town. I may enter the distance between towns as Distance: in km . I don't use the GED *Immigration* field.
9. I have added a field for rapid referencing to sources: **AlfredW**. It leads to a single or few specific pages in the books published by Alfred Wiederhold, but is also used to cite volume and pages in the Deutsche Geschlechter Bücher (DGB) and other extensive sources. The GED reference capability is reserved to identify major sections or entire books, and would be overwhelmed by all the detail.
10. The field **Marriage** is used for all marriage related information. GED fields as *divorce* are not used, instead a range is given. When a branch is not further followed the number of children may be given and the reference would then point to the source of information for such children.

## Links and Gaps

Most of the Wiederholds shown in the genealogy are reliably connected to this ancestry. I try to enter all ancestors, as far back as I can find them, and also their spouse's ancestors. I enter all spouses and children of Wiederhold daughters, although they would not have the name Wiederhold, but cannot enter all their descendants. Where known, I may enter say '2 sons and 3 daughters' with their marriage data and a source reference for others to follow up. I do enter multiple spouses, to avoid creating later linkage errors. I also enter known unmarried partners if they had children. Extramarital children of Wiederhold daughters typically continue the name Wiederhold, although a gene-based genealogy would differ.

There are some gaps that I am still trying to fill in. Many gaps exist during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), when the protestant movement, largely initiated by [Martin Luther](#) (1483–1546) caused conflicts throughout Europe, with some of the most violent ones in the areas around Hessen. Combatants involved parties as far north as Sweden, under king [Gustavus Adolphus](#) (1594-1632), and south, as Spain, ruled by the broadly-based Habsburg family, as [Charles V.](#) (1500-1558), at that time also ruler of the Netherlands, archduke of Austria, and crowned by the pope as Holy Roman Emperor in 1530.

The thirty-years-war is estimated to have caused about 8 million casualties, massive dislocations, and destruction of religious property, including church records. About half-a-million soldiers died, most of them mercenaries. Most Wiederholds at the time would have been affected. Becoming a mercenary was often the only option for sons when all property was lost. The genealogy includes many rulers at the time, since those records help in constructing the fates of Wiederholds and also elucidate some remote familial relationships, as documented in the [Ancestor Stories](#) on these pages.

## Estimating Birthdates

Often dates are missing. For all entries I enter either the documented date of birth or a likely 'Abt' year of birth (DoB). Since I need birthdates throughout for matching, any missing ones are estimated and marked as 'About'. If only a baptismal date is given, I use that as the date of birth and note that in the comment line. Some years-of-birth are estimated from an age inscribed on gravestones and can easily be off by a year. Birthdays of children should fall between age 16 and 46 of their mothers'. Typically spouses have their birthdays estimated as equal to their partner. When that makes a wife too old relatively to her children I estimate a gap of 25 years, unless other information can narrow that gap. Siblings without birthdays are estimated being born close to a sibling (2 years). Other DoB estimates use '25 year prior to marriage', 'soon after parents' marriage', or 'interpolated between parent and child dates'.

Many more estimation rules occur less frequently. Often I depend on estimates made by others; in those cases there won't be a further note. When there is no death or burial date, I will enter a date of confirmation if known, to show that that they were not short-lived, a frequent occurrence in past centuries. For children that died early I enter 'short-lived' in the notes for their death, so I won't try to match them to descendants.

## Spelling variations

Differences in spellings of names in records from various sources are common. In some church books spellings even changed when a new priest took over. Wiederhold, not a familiar name, is

often spelled differently, but most alternative spellings remain recognizable. Non-systematic spelling variations of Wiederhold family names are still shown as 'Wiederhold' allowing broader search and matching. I enter most other spellings found in the 'Also-Known-As' (AKA) field.

Names may change when families move to far away areas and to countries with different languages. There are several systematic changes of the family name. For the earliest entries (1250-1450) the documents consistently used the name 'Wedderold'. There are some major and consistent later lines that use the name 'Widerhold' (Baden, around 1640), 'Wetterhold' (Lorraine, around 1690, and descendants in Virginia and Pennsylvania, and by 1865 'Weatherholz' in Kentucky and by 1900 'Wetterold'. A Dutch branch started using the spelling 'Wiederholdt' after 1806. After emigrating to Wisconsin a branch switched to 'Wiederholt'. Some name spellings may have been so drastic that a branch of descendants cannot be found.

There are also some formal name changes. In 1890 Johan Edward Wiederhold (1843-1919) changed his name legally to Johan Edward Wiederhold Hedrich 'von' Wiederhold to keep the name of his mother's family alive. Presumably for patriotic reasons Philip Edward Wiederhold (1883-1967) changed the family name around 1914 to 'Woodrow'. I have not tracked that branch.

The common given name [Johannes](#) may be abbreviated in sources Jo'es, Johann, Joannes, Hans, Hänsel, Hannes, or even omitted if there is also a less common middle name. A common abbreviation in church books: Jo'es has been entered by me as Johannes to simplify search. That name, when there are multiple middle names, may disappear in later citations – the term derives from a term 'God willing' and was not always used after baptism. Then other given names may become the primary name. Common alternatives, as Johann, Joannes, and Hans are kept as given. Emigration often led to changes in spellings, as to John, Jean, or Juan.

Umlauts as the letter ü were often entered as ue, ö as oe, ä as ae, and the German double-s, ß as ss. Those spellings are being corrected as encountered. The sources are inconsistent as well.

## Finding relationships that are not directly documented

When relationships are not documented in the sources, I try to match individuals and parents to children found in different sources. Linkages from church books were often lost when the person married out of town or moved for other reason. In that case there would be no Date-of-Marriage or Date-of-Death given. Such a person may then appear without a birth record in another locality.

Many of the charts provided by Alfred do not provide a reference for the earliest ancestor. I make a careful analysis, considering many factors when making a new linkage. I add notes indicating the degree of confidence I have, if at all uncertain. If new information becomes available any tentative linkage I made may be validated or be changed.

Complementary documentation becomes important. Searches were made through the DGB, Internet files, and collected citations primarily from Geneanet and MyHeritage. The reasons for a linkage made are briefly explained in the Date-of-Birth description field. Longer explanations, when needed, are found in markups on my filed copies of the source documents. Many linkages had to be made for the [charts in the 4 Verschiedene Orte books](#). The charts cover various

localities where there many Wiederholds, but many were not linked to prior ancestors by Alfred Wiederhold. They also refer to notes made by Alfred. My cousin in Germany made some effort to locate their whereabouts, but did not succeed. They may well be lost.

Family names and birth-dates are the prime means for matching. But there are often uncertain matches. Some names are so common that there are multiple candidates with a likely range of birth dates. Having wives, names, even without family names helps, and dates of death can be checked against birthdays of presumed children. That match has to allow for posthumous births, not that uncommon in those days, especially for knights and soldiers.

Given names are often spelled differently at different times. In addition to simple misspellings other types of name changes occur. A first name given at baptism to please the godfather or mother may be omitted later. Parents often name their children after themselves, godparents or other close relatives. When there are uncertainties and place names are not helpful, similar given names over generations increase the likelihood of a match.

When I find instances in published genealogies where a generation was skipped when many used the same name. Analyzing birthdates for likely ranges becomes essential. In times and countries where patronyms are common those provide good linkage information. Obvious patronyms, often optional, are entered as lower case.

Patronymic names used as given names in early days, as 'johnson', are often optional. They were common in the Netherlands and Nordic countries, less so in Germany. They can be helpful in identifying a parent. I enter them as lower case.

For names recorded in multiple records, the native spelling is chosen, as 'Willem van Oranje' for Dutch princes, rather than 'Wilhelm von Oranien' or 'William of Orange'. When noble or royal names are used in the literature without family names, as 'Prins Willem', family names are appended and titles are omitted. For royals the name typically identifies the country, as Henry VIII. of England. Following the German Wikipedia I use HRR for an [emperor of the Holy Roman Reich](#) (empire), since those emperors covered many language areas. For some countries where the name is hard to manage, as Poland, the German spelling was chosen, as 'von Polen' for Polish kings. For nobles and royalty that used only first names, and perhaps a generation code, the country is added, so that the entry 'George V.' becomes George V. of England, to distinguish him from other Georges.

Roman numerals used to identify noble generations are always entered with a decimal point. They are properly part of the name, although at times omitted when the context is clear or when a honorific is available, as 'IV.' in 'Hermann der Friedsame von Hessen' (1450-1508, Hermann the peaceful). I use roman numerals as 'I.' for French entries as 'Louis 1er le Pieux'. Some genealogies use roman or bracketed numerals to distinguish family members where insufficient data exist to distinguish them, I use roman numerals, without a point, as well, when needed. Those are not a part of the name.

Titles of nobility, as count, king etc., appear in the Occupation category. An explanation of [what titles meant in earlier times](#) is given on the pages describing the rulers of Hessen.

## Places

Until the 1900's people moved little – unless they were rich or in the military, they had to walk. Being in the same location is a significant input for matching people. Landowners stayed put, and partners were found within a few hours walking distance. For those ancestors place names provide much evidence for matching. For a Hessian soldier or mercenary and for a tradesman a location change is more likely. Some amazing travels are described in the [stories about well-known Wiederholds](#). In one case the documentation simply stated that they were 'verstreut' (scattered). I was able to link some of them.

Major movements occurred during major pestilences, as in 1495 and during the religious strife of the 30-years war (1618-1648), during the 7 Napoleonic wars in Europe (1792-1815), after the failure of the attempted democratization of Germany (~ 1848), and subsequent to the two world wars, 1918 and 1945.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century public transport became available to most people, many had employment other than farming, and place names play less of a role. Still, when a child is born where the parents got married or worked is sufficient evidence for a likely match. Without explicit parental records in some location similarities of name lead to linkage problems that are hard to resolve. For instance, children of brothers may be assigned to an uncle instead of the actual father. But then the relationship to a grandparent will still be correct.

I try to use consistent spellings for place names, although they vary widely in the sources. My preferred format is: town, county, state, country. The spelling and designation is intended to follow spelling and political boundaries at that time of the events. For instances, Netherlands East Indies refers to the area that became Indonesia after 1947. That keeps linkages of Wiederholds to their history more meaningful. German states are especially messy in that respect and edits are ongoing, and the references will never be perfect.

## Making Assumptions

The comprehensive coverage of the genealogy allows me to make linkages even if they are not explicitly documented. For instance, when a person has only a birth record in the church book of one community, and there is a person with a similar name who has a marriage and death record in a nearby community, and there are no alternatives, I will link them, and enter a note documenting the decision.

Early documents often omit the maiden names of wives and give only their married names. Rather than using their married names I use 'n' to indicate unknown family names. If I then find records of a family that shows husbands – more likely to be shown – and there is a match, I can fill in the name.

Where church officials checked possible consanguinity (being related) prior to marriage, very useful records were created. That will identify marriages among cousins, which were relatively frequent in small communities. Such marriages also allowed land ownership to be preserved. When no consanguinity check is shown although the family name is identical, it is used as a hint that one of the couple came from another place. For instance, I use that to make a link for Heinrich Wiederhold, born 1694, local in Kefferhausen, and Anna Katherina Wiederhold, born there in 1696, but likely a daughter of refugees from Hannoversch Münden, Niedersachsen, where her ancestor would be the preacher, Johannes Wiederhold, born about 1578, who was drowned in the 30-years war.

As I find more cross-references I will correct and matching errors and [gaps](#)  [that](#) I find.

For my mother's family, Tuybens, I got a good start by merging the data from a cousin, Loes van-Beuge-Davis, who had become a Mormon, and collected data for their records. Later, on two vacations we spent several days at the Royal Dutch Archives (CBG) in The Hague. The records of the Dutch East Indies Company are detailed and well preserved, but also very difficult to read and search.

Gio Wiederhold, February 2019

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