

Bernard Wiederhold, 1757-1810

and descendants to Portugal, Scotland, Canada, Oregon, and California

Bernard Wilhelm Wiederhold became a mercenary in 1776 when his parents could no longer afford to pay for his studies at Kollegium Kassel of the University of Göttingen. He had an extremely adventurous life, winding up as a general in Portugal. There he was elevated and became Baron Bernard de Wiederhold. I located a report on [Bernard's history](#) in Portuguese by António Pedro da Costa Mesquita Brito. I posted a Google [translation of that history](#), but I'd welcome a better translation.

Fighting the American rebels

Bernard Wiederhold joined as a colonel the von Knyphausen regiment, which was hired by King George III. Shipped to Long Island, he fought for the British in the U.S. war for independence. Records show him in 1776 in White Plains, Rhode Island and wounded during the taking of Fort Washington, which they renamed Fort Mifflin. Being wounded caused him to be absent from the prisoners captured in Trenton [Heckert:80, p.221,245], as [Andreas Wiederhold](#) was. Bernard continued to participate in the battles at Brandywine and Germantown in the spring of 1777. Later he participated in Sullivan's February 1779 expedition to Horse Neck, Connecticut, where they were able to destroy much of the American rebels' military materiel. In June 1780 Bernard was wounded during the failed attack at Connecticut Farms (now Union township in New Jersey), one of the last major battles of the war.

Bernard Wiederhold returned to Europe around 1782.

Defending Frankfurt

From 23 September to 17 October 1790 Bernard Wilhelm Wiederhold led troops defending Frankfurt. Bernard provided a detailed description of the need to protect Frankfurt during the times that a new Emperor of the Holy Roman Reich (HRR) was being elected, also at previous times. The revolution in the U.S., leading to independence from England, encouraged many rabble rousers to demand freedom as well. I received a published copy of his diary, B. W. Wiederhold: *Beschreibung des Lagers bei Bergen*; Weisenhaus Buchdruckerei, Cassel, 1791, from Alfred Wiederhold's Library, donated by Jürgen Wiederhold (*1940), July 2022.

The title and subtitle translate to:

Description of the encampment at Bergen, which was established by the Lord Count Wilhelm IX. of Hessen with a corps of highest rated troops to provide security for the Electoral city Frankfurt am Main, the electoral college assembled there, and the Leader of the empire to be selected between the 23rd of September and the 17th of October 1790; in the form of a diary.



It includes a large detailed colored map. The troops were quartered at what is now Bergen-Enkheim, about 9 km North-East of Frankfurt. No fighting took place, but several exercises were held and watched by nobles and locals. After his election, emperor Leopold II., HRR (1747-1792), visited the encampment.

Bernard's book also includes an appendix with detailed (11page) description of the [Battle of Bergen, 13 April 1759](#) during the 7-years war between the French and allied German forces, based on multiple sources.

Fighting Napoleon



In 1792 he participated in the War of the Coalition (Prussia, Austria, Spain, Portugal, and the kingdom of Naples) against the Napoleonic forces. Bernard and his troops marched West from Prussia, via Maastricht, apparently planning to attack Brussels from the South East. However, in May 1795 a truce was negotiated, the Netherlands became the Batavian Republic and the land south of the Meuse river was ceded to the French. Because of the troops still located there Maastricht itself became part of the Batavian Republic, as still seen in current maps of the Netherlands as an illogical southern extension.

In 1814 the French were finally defeated. The area that is now Belgium was placed under Dutch rule. In 1930, the Belgian revolution, following riots in Brussels, triggered by the nationalistic opera *The Dumb Girl of Portici*, caused the lands to the North-West to become Belgium.

Moving to Portugal

Annoyed at not being promoted, when officers from nobility were, Bernard joined in 1797 the Portuguese army he had worked with during the War of the Coalition. He rapidly advanced to become a general in Portugal, fighting the Spanish around the year 1804, but also authoring many documents on military issues. He was rewarded for his services by being elevated to Baron de Wiederhold. He died and was buried in Lisbon in 1810, where 6 of his 8 children were born between 1799 and 1808. He died in 1810 and his wife, Henrietta Meyer, died there as well, in 1821.

Portugal was allied with England at the time, and Bernard had maintained relationship with his colleagues there. His youngest daughter, Karoline Wiederhold, married a Scottish colonel named John Patrick Carruthers. Both of them died on 6 September 1878 in Rostov, Russia (near the Ukrainian-Russian border), shortly after the end of the [Russo-Turkish War](#). Britain tried to limit Russian expansion towards Constantinople, but I have not been able to find out what John Patrick Carruthers' role might have been. Their son John Thomas used the name John Harvey de Wiederhold Carruthers. He retired in 1893 <check> from the Indian Army, after receiving the Order of the Crown of Siam, 3rd Class.

Amalie von Wiederhold

Karoline's older sister, Amalie Luisa Wilhelmina Wiederhold, married in 1821 in Lisbon a Scottish merchant and stockbroker named Henry Jakob Siffken. They had 11 children. A son, August Ernest Siffken, emigrated to Victoria (now in Canada) in 1862, which was then the capital of the Colony of Vancouver Island (This story is presented in detail by John Adams: *Old Square-Toes (James Douglas) and his Lady*; Horsdale&Schubert, 2001). In 1869 August inherited title Baron from his uncle-in-law Bernard Wiederhold and subsequently used the name August Ernest Siffken de Wiederhold.

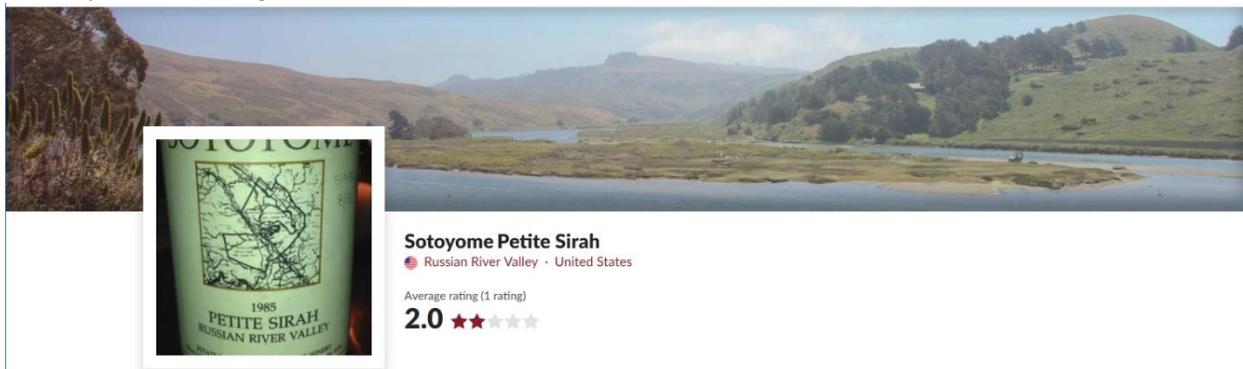
August de Wiederhold married twice, the second time to Alice Douglas, who was a daughter of James Douglas, the principal trader and factor for the Hudson Bay Company within the British Oregon Territory. That area included what is now Washington State and much of Oregon. On the 1846 map here, only the red area was considered a U.S. territory. The capital of the British area, Fort Vancouver, is now a U.S. National Park on the banks of the Columbia River, just North of Portland, Oregon. The father-in-law, James Douglas, in order to promote trade with the Mexican Spanish in California sailed in 1841 from Fort Vancouver to their capital, Monterey. Later that year he had the Hudson Bay Company set up a trading post in San Francisco, naming it Yerba Buena.



After Britain, in the 1846 Oregon treaty, ceded the lands below the 49th parallel to the United States, a disappointed James Douglas moved north to Fort Victoria and became the governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island. In 1866 that Colony was merged with British Columbia, although the town of Victoria became the capital. Soon after, in 1871, British Columbia joined Canada. It seems that his daughter Alice and her husband, August de Wiederhold, stayed behind.

Alice de Wiederhold

James Douglas died in 1877. His daughter, Alice, used her inheritance to purchase the Sotoyome winery on the Russian River in Sonoma county, California. The winery buildings burned down in 1890. The winery still existed in 1985, but its Petite Sirah was not highly rated. It now may be part of the Christopher Creek Winery in Healdsburg.



Alice's husband, the Baron August de Wiederhold is shown as a farmer near Hopland, Mendocino county in an 1895 voter's census. He died in 1907 and Alice died in 1913, both in California. Their daughter, Amelia Siffken de Wiederhold was born sometime after 1878 in Healdsburg, California. Census records show that she married William J. Ross in 1900, and that they lived in 1910 in Los Angeles. In 1912 she married an Ernest Dempsey in Riverside, California. Her name does not show in 1920 California census records. August and Alice de Wiederhold were likely the earliest Wiederholds on the Pacific coast, but I don't know the date when they left what is now Washington and Oregon for California.

California became a state of the U.S. in 1850, shortly after gold was discovered there. Oregon followed in 1859 and Washington in 1889.



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