

Droz ancestry (draft)

Frederik Wilhelm I. of Prussia (1668-1740), *der Soldatenkönig* (the soldier king) gained control of much of Northern Germany. In November 1707 he also inherited the Principality of Neuchatel (Fürstentum Neuenburg) in the Swiss Jura area when the prior Orléans-Longueville line became extinct. His son Frederik the Great (1712-1786) encouraged industry and contact. Citizens of Neuchatel were also encouraged to settle in East-Prussia - now split among Poland and Russia, as the king wanted to diminish Slavic influences on his eastern border.

Around 1800 Thomas Wilhelm Wiederhold, having graduated in Theology at Marburg in 1792 moved to East-Prussia under a settlement initiative. His grandson, Karl Wiederhold, who became Gio's great-grandfather married in 1867 a woman of Swiss descent, Anna Maria Louise Droz. Records show that her great-grandfather, Jean-Pierre Droz, who died in East-Prussia in 1793, was born, perhaps as early as 1707, in la-Chaux-de Fonds, Neuchatel. The principality Neuchatel of became a canton of Switzerland in 1815.

I have collected much data, but have not found specifics of the Droz family emigration. Earlier Droz' were Huguenots who had come from France after 1598 to escape persecution. Many became clock and watch makers or suppliers of parts for watches. Staying in their villages, descendants often combined the name Droz with their father's first name or their mother's family name, sometimes they distinguished themselves by where they lived, as *-sur-le-pont* (above the bridge). Inter-marriages were rife, as when in 1711 Abraham Jaquet- Droz married Marie Droz-sur-le-Pont. That kept the watchmaking expertise in the extended family.

Their son, Pierre Jaquet-Droz became famous and rich by making precise and fancy clocks. A report by his colleague Abraham Louis Sandoz describing their trip (1758-1759) to sell several clocks to King of Spain, has been published. The proceeds from the sale allowed him to focus on making automatons that were exhibited widely, advertising his craft <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p019ng2n> .

Three have been restored and can be seen in operation every first Sunday of the month in the Museum in Neuchatel. We were able to arrange a special showing [ref father burial] for the family in 2013. Much has been written about Pierre Jaquet-Droz and his work, now regarded as part of the Swiss national heritage. Videos of the automatons are available on the Internet, as [the writer](#), with some elaboration. The name Droz lives on as a supplier of [luxury watches, taking advantage](#) of documenting the history.

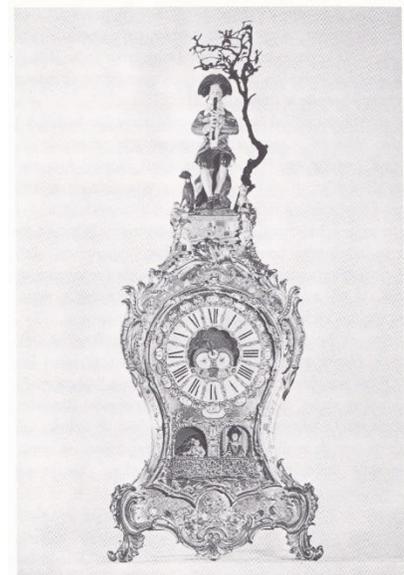
When done with the Wiederhold genealogy from Alfred Wiederhold data, Gio plans to spend some time to establish the most likely Droz linkage.



Back to the [Wiederhold](#) [↑ Ancestor Stories](#) page.



Back [to the Wiederhold T Family Main page.](#)



La pendule du Berger actuellement au Palais royal de Madrid.