

# *Henrich Reinhard Wiederhold (1631-1673)*

## ***and relatives around Frankfurt involved in book binding and publishing***

A number of Wiederholds were bookbinders in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. After the inventor of printing from movable type, Johann Gutenberg, had brought in August 1454 his first quires (printed pages) for the bible from Mainz to Frankfurt, to be sold at the annual fair and then bound, bookbinding became a thriving business in Frankfurt. The background is told in a historical novel [Alex Christie: Gutenberg's Apprentice; Harper. 2015]. In that book a bookbinder in Frankfurt is referred to as old man Widder [Revelation, chapter 5], but I cannot link him to any specific Wiederhold. Since books at the time were bound in leather, the experience of their ancestors in tanning leather helped in this rapidly growing profession.

[Hans Otto Wiederhold](#) Gen.V12 (\*abt 1592) lists in his 1617 marriage announcement that he is a member of the Buchdrucker Stube (printer's guild) in Sauerburg. A castle by that name is 42 km west of Mainz, where Gutenberg invented printing and his patron Fust continued the business. A note stated no children in Frankfurt, which implies that he might have lived there as well.

[Henrich Reinhard Wiederhold](#) Gen.VI2 (1631-1673) is the first Wiederhold shown explicitly as a bookbinder in Frankfurt, leading to several later entries. His father, Nikolaus (1581-1648), had travelled for duke of Hessen and finally settled in Frankfurt and married there his third wife at age 39. Nikolaus in turn was the son of a leather tanner in Homberg an der Efze. Nikolaus may also be the father of Johann Hermann Wiederhold (1635) who lived from 1664-1683 in Basel, and was a well-known publisher, translator, and editor there, both of French and German books. He is also referred to as Joannem Hermannum Widerhold and Jean Hermann Widerhold. In 1680 JHW dedicated a book to Prince August Wilhelm and his father Duke Anton Ulrich of Braunschweig-Lüneburg. His son may have returned to Frankfurt as Johann Georg Schweitzer (the Swiss) de Wiederhold (1682-1770) who became the mayor of Frankfurt between 1744-1752.

Henrich Reinhard's uncle, Kuno Wiederhold (1561-1602), is the earliest Wiederhold explicitly shown in Frankfurt. Kuno died in Frankfurt in 1609, so that there is still a big gap. Kuno is the son of a Fürstlicher Schultheiß (sherrif appointed by the count) working in Niederbrechen for the count of Hessen, based in Limburg.

Several earlier Wiederhold relatives, as Daniel Neuber (1603) and Valentin Neuber (1630) in Homberg, Stoltzenbach (1668), Grunewald (1788), and Ostermeyer (1675), are listed specifically as being *Weißgerbers*, tanners making the white leather referred to as vellum (calfskin), used for writing and binding books. When books were created by monks copying texts by hand such expensive materials were used. Gutenberg used vellum for about a fifth of his books. Now vellum is used only for binding fancy books. There are some relevant marriages as well. A granddaughter of Henrich (Anna Maria, born 1716) married Johann Tobias Pabst, the son of a tanner in Landau, south-west of Heidelberg. Johann Pabst moved to Frankfurt and became a master bookbinder there.

This is a fun topic on which I'd like to spend more time.



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