

Johann Hermann Wiederhold 1635-1683

This story is a bit like a historical novel. It deals with two important Wiederholds, both with inadequate data about their ancestry. One is Johann Hermann Wiederhold (1635-1683), known as a publisher in Switzerland during the reformation; and the other one is Johann Georg Schweitzer de Wiederhold (1682-1770), a major of Frankfurt between 1745-1765. That little is known about their origin is significant in itself, although the thirty-year's war (1618-1648) was also raging at the time.

Johann Herman Wiederhold, born in 1635, without a known place of birth. He was apparently well educated, since we find him in 1664 as a printer in Basel, Switzerland, using the latinized name Joannem Hermannum Widerhold. Soon after worked in Geneva as a translator, publisher, and dictionary author with [Johann Heinrich Ott](#), a Swiss Baptist theologian and author. There are extensive citations of publications from his business in Switzerland.

There are not many candidate parents to assign him to. The primary candidate is

1. [Niklaus Wiederhold \(1581-1643\)](#), who was born in Gießen, a residence of the counts to the north, and he held various position with the count of Hessen. The most senior might have been Marsteller (stablemaster) in Frankfurt. Horses being essential to rulers, that was considered an important appointment. Niklaus moved to Frankfurt before 1615, since that is where his first wife, Maria, died in April 1615, likely during birth of his first son there. Within 6 months he married Katharina Epstein, with whom he had 3 children, but she died in Dec. 1621. In August 1622 Niklaus married his' third wife, Ursula Maria Friederich (abt 1602-1638) and had 5 children with her. Finally Niklaus married for the fourth time, Judith (+1667), but only in 1648 only on his deathbed. Niklaus worked for the counts of Hessen in several roles.

2. [Hans Otto Wiederhold \(~1592\)](#) is another candidate as a father of Johann Herman Wiederhold (1635). Hans Otto married in 1617 in Frankfurt Barbara Heckel, from the nearby town of Offenbach. Hans Otto is both shown as a Keller in the Sauerburg castle, 75km east of Frankfurt and as a printer. He is also a grandson of Kuno Wiederhold (1561-1609) a Schultheiß (sheriff), who married in 1589 Katharina Maria Feyerabend (1564-1613) from Frankfurt.



Katharina Maria Feyerabend was the surviving daughter of 7 children of [Sigmund Feyerabend \(1528-1590\)](#), a cutter of woodplates for printing images, but also one of the most significant publishers in Frankfurt. In 1564 he was imprisoned for 4 days for printing a critique of the Holy Roman emperor. He soon became very wealthy, being ruthless in his business dealings. His life is documented in a book-length story by Heinrich Pallmann, published in the [Archiv fur Frankfurts Geschichte und Kunst, Vol.15-16, 1881](#). Among the many publications of Sigmund Feyerabend are lectures by Martin Luther. He is commemorated by a plaque on the Gutenberg Denkmal (statue) in Frankfurt on the Rossmarkt.

Kuno Wiederhold (1561) had to deal with the complex businesses of Sigmund Feyerabend (1598). Extensive legal proceedings ensued after Sigmund's death, pitting family members against each other. It seems that in the end Kuno wound up being hated by all.

I consider the prime candidate as parents for Johann Herman Wiederhold (1635=1683) the couple of Niklaus Wiederhold (1581-1643) and his fourth wife Judith (+1667), and likely long-time mistress. The birth might well have been registered in Judith's name, but I have not found out what her family name was. A motivation for the late marriage might have been to secure support for Johann Herman Wiederhold (1635), just 10 years old when his presumed father died. Hans Otto Wiederhold (~1592) would then be a cousin 2x removed of Johann Herman Wiederhold (1635).

Johann Hermann Wiederhold, after working in 1664 as a printer in Basel, Switzerland. There he co-published in Basel the comprehensive 2-volume Latin Lexicon of Johann Jakob Hofmann (1635-1706), covering everything from History to Poetry and Philosophy.

Lexicon Universale Historico-Geographico-Chronologico-Poetico-Philologicum: Continens Historiam Omnis Aevi, Geographiam omnium Locorum, Genealogiam principum Familiarum, addita ubique Chronologia tum veteri tum recentiore, Mythologiam insuper omnium Fabularum, Discussionem Philologicam illustriam circa haec occurrentium Difficultatum; Aliaque plurima scitu dignissima; Cum Indicibus variis, Rerum imprimis locupletissimo, memorabilia huius Lexici per Locorum Communium titulos Lectori illico spectanda exhibente. Genevae, Basileae: Widerhold, Bertschius, 1677)

They also prepared the 3-volume 1683 successor lexicons, printed shortly after his death

Soon after the publication of the lexicon, he was working in Geneva as a translator, publisher, and dictionary author with [Johann Heinrich Ott](#), a Swiss Baptist theologian and author. There are extensive citations of publications from his business in Switzerland.

In February 1677, Jean-Hermann Wiederhold delivered the edited version of the bible in French to Paris.

[Jean-Hermann Wiederhold (1635-1683) était un imprimeur-libraire de Genève qui avait apporté les feuilles de la révision de la Bible projetée à Genève. François LAPLANCHE, *L'Écriture, le Sacré et l'Histoire. Erudits et politiques protestants devant la Bible en France au XVII^e siècle, op. cit.*, p. 566.]

One of his books wound up in the Index Librorum Prohibitorum, the list of forbidden books by the Catholic Church

Shortly before his death, in 1680, Johann Hermann Wiederhold dedicated a book to Prince August Wilhelm and his father Duke Anton Ulrich of Braunschweig-Lüneburg. That might have been intended to smooth the way for his son and grandson to get positions in Germany. I want to investigate what the Duke's relationship is to Hesse.

Much less is known about his personal life. He might have gotten married -- or at least have fathered a son -- quite young (1648?) in Württemberg (half-way between Frankfurt and Basel). I found no records of what happened with his wife or child. But his presumed mother, Judith, might have taken care of them in Frankfurt, since she lived to 1667.

I found no personal records about him in Switzerland

Johann Georg Schweitzer de Wiederhold (1682-1770).

Now I make a big jump, which deserves much further research. Johann Hermann Wiederhold might well be an ancestor of Johann Georg Schweitzer de Wiederhold (1682-1770). His fancy memorial gravestone in the Frankfurt Petershof is shown above with the Latin words translated below.



D.T.O.T.Q.M.S.

Monumentum Sepulchrale = Sepulchral monument

A Viro = dedicated to

Ionne Georgio Schweitzer = Johann Georg the Swiss

Noebili Domino de Wiederhold = noble lord of Wiederhold

SRI Eqvite = knight of the Sacrum Romanum Imperium (Holy Roman Empire)

Sacra Caesareae Majestatis Consiliario = Counselor to the Holy Imperial Majesty

actualis = currently

Reipublicae Moeno Francofurtensis Senatore = Senator of the Republic of Frankfurt on the Main

et = and

Scabino Gravissimo = head sheriff

nec non = as well as

diversis vicibus = at diverse times

Console Juniore et Seniore = junior and senior counselor

Meritissimo = as deserved

Sibi = by himself

Splendioissimae Familiae = magnificent family

Erectum = erected

1, Septemb. c|o |o cc = 1 September DCDCC 1920

I could find no record of where this Johann Georg was born nor of any likely ancestor named Schweitzer. The term Schweitzer translates as coming from Switzerland. The name Schweitzer de Wiederhold indicates a French-speaking ancestry. This Johann Georg Schweitzer became a Ratsherr (city council member) and Bürgermeister (mayor, for 3 sessions) in Frankfurt between 1745-1765. That means he must have owned property in the city, likely inherited from his ancestor, Niklaus – who had been the stablemaster for the count; an important role in those days. The renown of his presumed grandfather may

also make a difference in a city where [book-binding](#) was an important industry, involving other Wiederholds. A step uncle, born 1592 in Gießen, was also named Georg. I have no further record of him. Many of his 16 other uncles and aunts died shortly after birth, and their names would not have been used. The last uncle, Phillip Wiederhold , born 1603 in Gießen, served at the court of the count in Friedberg, and also had a son Johann Georg Wiederhold, but he is recorded as Dominus (owner) in Lanzenhain, about 50 km north-west of Friedberg; living there with his family. Note that after the thirty-years' war many farms were abandoned, and could be given by the counts, the nominal owners, to others, as their servants, able to pay the tithing.

This connection is only a hypothesis, but its ok to use for now, pending further investigation. Did the erectors of the memorial tablet have more information?



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