

Johannes Wiederhold (1578-1626)

and descendants

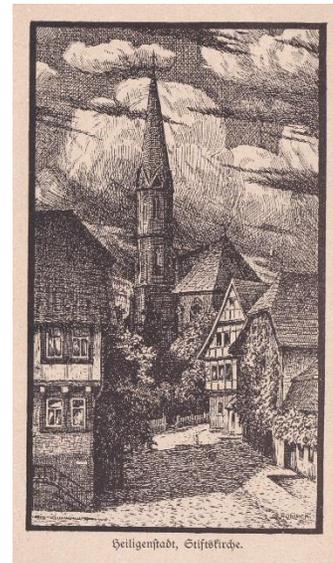
A victim of the thirty-years' war was a prominent protestant preacher, Johannes Wiederhold, born in Homberg an der Efze, near Kassel in Hessen. He studied theology at University of Wittenberg, where Luther had posted his bans in 1517. Wittenberg is about 250km east of Kassel, in those days about 3 days by coach, if you could afford it, or 5 days on foot. After he graduated from the seminary he latinized his name to Joanis Antiphilus Hombergensis, translating Wieder (German for against) as Anti, not being aware of the actual derivation of the name; hold became philus (lovely, as in philosophy – the love of learning). He published widely, supporting the conversion to Lutheran thought and Protestantism. He became a pastor in the same town Bühren (now Bahren), Lower Saxony (check, there is also a Buhren near Kassel) where his wife's father, Henning Mesolt, was a pastor to 1611.

Johannes became a prominent victim of the 30-years war (1618-1648). The church in Bühren was burned in the war. He fled West to Münden near Hannover in what was then Prussia and protestant. On 30 May 1626, after a siege by [General Tilly](#), the field marshal who commanded the Catholic League's forces, Münden was captured. Johannes and he and 7 other protestant preachers were thrown into the Werra river and drowned. Much detail and some ancestor information is found in the [History of the City](#).

My assumption is that his wife fled with their 8 children back east, where she was raised, and wound up in the Eichsfeld region of Thüringen. That region had reverted to Catholicism due to an intervention by the Archbishop of Mainz, who exercised his historic ownership to the area [Duval]. A central town in that region was Heiligenstadt (holy city), a destination for annual pilgrimages.

The loss of records during the 30-years war creates gaps in the genealogy. He and his family would have passed through the Thüringen and its Eichsfeld area on his travels, I am trying to fill in as well as I can based on names and likely locations. There are many [Wiederholds in the Eichsfeld](#) area and I have obtained copies of some churchbooks detailing their local ancestry. Luckily the uniqueness of the name Wiederhold, not being derived from a profession – as Smith --or locality as – van Beethoven (from the beetfields) enables such missing relationships to be hypothesized, although it remains uncertain which brother begat what children. In one instance at least, in Eichsfeld in 1721 a Wiederhold married another Wiederhold without the church-mandated check on consanguinity, that omission indicates that one Wiederhold must have come from out of town.

The Eichsfeld area was a center of clothmaking. With cotton replacing wool and the introduction of mechanical looms, first in England, the population [became quite poor](#). Many emigrated, and I can trace many U.S. families to villages and towns in the Eichsfeld region, as Kefferhausen and Dingelstädt. The map below may identify places where they were born.



C.Duval: *Das Eichsfeld, historisch-romatische Beschreibung*; Alois Mecke 1853, reprinted 1922.

Wilhelm Lotze: *Geschichte der Stadt Münden nebst Umgegend, mit besonderer Hervorhebung der Begebenheiten des Dreißigjährigen und Siebenjährigen Krieges*; W. Kluglist, Münden, 1909.



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