The Weÿand, Weÿgand family in Germany

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According to Wikipedia:

Wiegand is a German surname. It originated from the Old High German verb wîgan, meaning to fight, through the past participle form wîgant, meaning the fighter. The word comes from wîg (battle/war). The name was in use by the Middle Ages, also as a first name.

By the seventeenth century, at least, there was a group of Weÿand/Weÿgand (the spelling seems interchangeable) families in the area around Odernheim, a town on the Glan River, 100k east of Trier on the Mosel, and 90k south of Koblenz on the Rhein, in the wine-growing area of southwest Germany, an area known as the Rheinpfalz or Palatinate. This area was much fought over (even into the second world war), for reasons both political and religious. In the Nine Years War (1688-1697) the French troops conducted a “scorched earth” policy in the area (burning Odernheim in 1689), placing tremendous hardship and long-reaching effects on the citizenry. As it began to recover, the area was again the object of attacks by the French in the war of Austrian Succession (1740-1747). All these factors heavily affected the mortality rate, both infant and adult. For instance, of some thirty children baptized annually at the Odernheim Lutheran church in the 1740s less than half lived long enough to be confirmed.

It was in this troubled time that church records list baptisms for children of Johann Heinrich, Johan Nickel, Johannes, and Johan Georg Weyand (I will use this spelling except when quoting a record.)

The oldest was J. Nikol. The reformed church records begin in 1661 where the first mention of the family is for the birth of Anna Catharina 22 Dec 1691(R) (conf.1706) (m.1714) There follows after a gap of 16 years then two more daughters:

Maria Catharina 4 Feb 1708 (died) (R)
Anna Margretha Dec 1710 (R)

This suggests that the parents were affiliated with both the reformed and lutheran congregations, with the sons being baptized at the latter. Unfortunately, the lutheran records do not begin until 1710.

Likely sons are, Johannes born 1694, J. Nicholas b 1701, J. Henrich b 1704, J. Georg b1708.

J. Nicholas Sr’s wife Magdalena Catharina died 8 Oct. 1749 aged 82/6, so born 1667. No birth record has been found for Nicholas, but a reasonable year would be about 1662. The marriage would have been about 1690 when he would have been about 28 and she about 23.

His death was recorded in the lutheran register: Johann Nikol Weÿgand died 9 Feb. 1718. Based on the above estimate he would have been about 60.

Second generation

Their son Johannes Weÿgand died in Odernheim 20th December, 1757, aged 63 (or born 1694).
Records of the Odernheim reformed church show that:
Johannes Weyand and Elizabeth Catharina Schick(in) were married 29 Nov, 1718. (She was
born 18 May, 1698 to Leonard and Anna Margaretha Schick (R))

They had Maria Magdalena in 1719, Phillips Henrich in 1720, Susanna Margaretha in 1722,
then, as Weygand, J. Henrich in 1724, Maria Catharina in 1725, J. Jörg in 1727, J. Cord in
1728, J. Jacob in 1730, and M. Catharina in 1733. (Of these children only Jacob is known to
have reached maturity - his death being recorded in 1765.)

Following the death of his wife 26 March 1741, aged 42/5

Johannes Weýgand, a citizen and widower of Odernheim, married Helena Margaretha,
doughter of Georg Seýtz, in Abtweiler on 1 January 1742. (Abtweiler is 4 miles from
Odernheim.)

Johann Georg Seýss of Abtweiler was the youngest son of Bernhardt Seýss of Boos (west of
Koblenz). He married Maria Sarah Baumann 8 February 1706. She was the oldest daughter of
Johann Nicol Baumann. The birth of their first two children, Anna Maria and Anna Elizabeth,
was recorded in Boos in 1707 and 1710. Further known children from baptismal and marriage records in Abtweiler were Magdalena Margaretha 1713 (baptized 6 August - surely Helena Margaretha, second wife of Johann Weyand),

J Michael 1718, J Christian 1720 (died young), Philip Jacob c 1725, Johann Nicol 1727, Cord 1728. 
Philip Jacob’s baptism was not recorded in Abtweiler, so it seems reasonable that there were other children.

Third generation

The first child of Johannes and Helena Weÿgand was Anna Margaretha born 16 Dec, 1741 (recorded at the Odernheim Lutheran church). (d 16 sep1748 aged 6/9)
Then, at the Reformed church, Philipp Adam, born 14 May 1743, was baptised. The witnesses were Philip Jacob Seiz and Anna Elizabeth, wife of Michael Seytz of Abtweiler (probably brothers of Helena).
And finally, Johann Georg Weÿgand was born 24 June 1745 and baptized at the Odernheim Reformed church 27 June. The witnesses were Gëorg Seÿtz of Abtweiler and Maria Catharina Hagerin of Odernheim.
These are the only children* recorded to this couple though no death record has been found for Helena Margaretha.
It would follow the pattern of sons at the reformed church and daughter(s) at the lutheran.

(*Another possible child was Johann Heinrich b 12 Oct 1747 (R) (d 16 apr, 1748) to Johannes and Anna Magdalena Weÿgand)

It can be difficult to prove that a person born in one place is the same person who appears in another. So one must look for clues that lead in that direction.
Our Pennsylvania ancestor **Georg Weiand** was born between 1745 and 1750, as near as census returns can suggest. His wife was born 1748, and it would be normal for him to be older. So a 1745 year of birth is quite compatible.
No other German birth records for a Georg have been found within this time frame (except where such a person has been proved to marry and have children there).
There is no record of Georg being born in America, not is there any record indicating his existence there prior to his marriage in 1770.
He signed his name in gothic script, which points to his being born in Germany. (It can be mentioned that the early Odernheim records use Weÿand. It is quite possible that a new person recording the baptisms changed the spelling but that the family itself did not.)
No record has been found of Georg's arrival in America, but the records are not believed to be complete.
It can be noted also that German naming tradition of the time was for the first-born son to be named after the father's father – hence the Johannes of our ancestor (b 1771) is a strengthening clue.

There is no record in Odernheim of J. Georg Weÿgand dying. There is no record of his confirmation, but of the thirty-some children born there in 1745 only one was confirmed in 1759 according to the church record – despite high mortality rates clearly not accurate. There is also no record of him being married there, nor of appearing as a witness for the children of his brother. This all does point to emigration.
There were no civil records for Odernheim at the time. If Georg emigrated he could have applied for the required permission. But it seems that this law was ignored by many of those choosing to leave. Quite often a single young person emigrating would do so with an older relative.
Another possible way to connect our Georg to the German one would be proximity to a relative in Pennsylvania.
The Joseph Seitz who immigrated to Philadelphia in 1749 could have been the person in Manor Township where he was listed in the first extant tax list of 1769. It is possible that he was an uncle of Georg Weiand, through Georg would have been only 3 when Joseph emigrated.
A Jacob Seitz immigrated in 1764. It is possible that this too was an uncle whom Georg travelled with as a family member and was not recorded separately. Georg would have been 19 at the time and his parents (certainly his father) were dead. However a Manor tax list shows the Jacob there was a single freeman so he was more likely a contemporary of Georg, perhaps a son of Joseph.
There was also a John Seitz in the Reading area of Berks county – a possible explanation for why Georg Weiand traveled there after his marriage.
None of these three names have shown up as brothers of Helena Margaretha Weygand, but it does seem that Georg Seÿss had further children.
It seems unlikely that it will ever be proved that the Odernheim Georg was our ancestor. Though much research has been done, Europe suffered many wars that may have destroyed
the records of alternative possibilities. Perhaps another generation of genealogists will make yDNA connections to strengthen or disprove the Odernheim connection. And perhaps that family bible will appear, stating clearly where our ancestor came from.