

The History of the Citizen Families of Engi and their Development
[Zur Geschichte der bürgerlichen Geschlechter von Engi und ihre Entwicklung]

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[All lettered footnotes and information in brackets were added by the translator]

VII. The Bräm Family
[pg. 51-54]

About the Bräms there is not much to report. Although they were found in Engi still earlier, as were most of our more important families of today, from 1595 until today we have been able to make a list of only 50 families.

In the council minutes, in the year 1548 (June), we already come across a Bräm from Engi, whose first name, however, is unfortunately not noted; he is called there simply, "Säumen Bräm [*Bräm who crosses the mountain passes with a beast of burden, carrying goods*]". Whether this Bräm is identical to the ancestor, Mathias Bräm from Splügen [*Canton Graubünden*], who possibly, probably, owing to the borders of that time, came from Valtellina [*Canton Graubünden*] into Canton Glarus, we can only conjecture, but a proof does not exist.

In 1566 ancestor Mathias Bräm from Splügen then purchased himself the Glarner cantonal citizenship for 40 florins and, consequently, became a citizen of Engi. Not, however, also his descendants, otherwise the total cost ought to have amounted to at least 100 Gulden (see the Baumgartners' purchase). All of Mathias Bräm's descendants remained small farmers, or "patient ones", in Engi from that time forward until 1836 (see page 35 [*in the Hämmerli chapter*] for the dispute regarding the church rights of the Hämmerlis and Bräms). In the year 1836, thru admission into cantonal citizenship, for the first time the Bräms, 12 in number, became full-fledged citizens of Engi. These 12 Bräms who received cantonal citizenship are as follows:

1. Samuel Bräm, born in 1800, died in 1874. Brother of Herrenerg [*mountain ridge above the Herren*] Heinrich. His marriage to Anna Hämmerli (1790-1853) remained childless.
- 2., 3., 4. Mathias Bräm, born in 1804, died ?, a brother of Samuel, and his young sons, Jakob (1831) and Heinrich (1835). This family moved to North America, with 5 sons and a daughter. Further details about them are not known, except that the daughter, Anna Katharina, was married to a Meinrad Zentner from Elm in 1855 in New Elm [*state unknown*] (America).
5. Heinrich Bräm, Herrenerg (1810-1881). His 9 children from his marriage with Barbara Luchsinger (1811-1885) were not born until after his admission into cantonal citizenship.
6. Burkhard Bräm (1772-1837) and 7. his son, Burkhard (1805-1848), and 8. and 9. his sons, Burkhard (1829-1884) and Peter Bräm (1834-1894). Their brother, Heinrich Bräm of Linden, was not born until 1841.

10. Fridolin Bräm (1802-?) and 11. his son, Fridolin, born in 1829, died in 1854, unmarried. The father, Fridolin Bräm, moved to Brazil after the death of his wife, Katharina Zentner (1805-1855), with his daughter, Ursula, born in 1839, and, of his 7 children, the only daughter still living. No information about his further fate was submitted from there.

12. Jakob Friedrich Bräm, born in 1820, died unmarried in 1855 in Basel of cholera. He was the only son of Samuel Bräm (1784-1831), who lived in Basel, whose father, Mathias, already died in 1816 in Basel. Of this family no more descendants exist. A sister of this Samuel Bräm, Elsbeth, 1785-1828, was an ill-famed person and openly condemned. In Basel she supported herself as a prostitute and, as such, was transported back to Engi. In 1809 she gave birth to a child out of wedlock. She was imprisoned more than once. Eventually she was married, nevertheless (1822). Another sister, Barbara, 1791-1837, was mute. In 1817 she gave birth to a dead child out of wedlock and could specify no father.

Around 1550 Bräms must also have existed in Kerenzen [*Canton Glarus district*]; therefore, a Lienhard Bräm, who had a little farm near Filzbach proper. This person appears several times in the council minutes of 1547-1563 (J. J. Kubli-Müller). Thus, in 1547 he had gone to war over a prohibition and produced his mother as consolation. Wine was also forbidden to him on 11 September 1547, after he had previously again been permitted it. On 11 April 1548 he was before the council on account of a breach of peace and striking the peacekeepers who had offered him peace. For that he got 4 days and nights in the "bad" prison, the worst of the prisons at the time. These prisons were of three types, namely 1. the "little closet", 2. the "companion prison", and 3. the "bad prison". (Cultural history contribution.) - Today the so-called Bräm-land still exists above Filzbach as proof of the existence of the Bräms in Kerenzen.

The only son of ancestor Mathias who carried on the family tree was Gorius (Gregorius) Bräm, who died on Feb. 18, 1607. In 1584, he also bought the Schwanden [*Canton Glarus Tagwen*^a citizenship rights (it would have been more advantageous if, instead of this, he had obtained the cantonal citizenship rights!). He married Regula Zopfi, and 3 children of his were baptized: Mathias, Margaretha and Hans. The latter moved to Glarus and became established there, but he left behind no descendants. For the family tree only the first son, Mathias, who died in 1650, is of importance, from whose marriage to Maria Tschudy, who died in 1677, 9 children resulted, 6 daughters and 3 sons. Of these, again, only the youngest, Samuel Bräm, became a head of family. The oldest son, Hans, died unmarried in 1643 in the foreign service, and the fate of the second, Gorius, born in 1633, is unknown. A daughter, Regula, who was born in 1619, died in 1629 of the plague, and the youngest, Verena, born in 1630, was married to Fridli Härtzi from Werdenberg [*Canton St. Gallen*], who was mentioned in the Introduction. He obtained the *Tagwen* citizenship rights from Engi, and then, however, in 1680, bought out again. From this marriage with Härtzi 10 children were baptized in the years 1652-1673 (see page 9 of the Introduction).

How the Bräm family increased, in relation to the others:

| Families: | Bräm | Luchsinger | Altmann | Wyss | Giger | Norder |
|------------|------|------------|---------|------|-------|--------|
| until 1750 | 10 | 17 | 15 | 16 | 7 | 6 |
| until 1800 | 15 | 28 | 27 | 20 | 13 | 9 |
| until 1850 | 24 | 57 | 48 | 31 | 25 | 12 |
| until 1880 | 36 | 85 | 70 | 40 | 32 | 15 |
| until 1900 | 38 | 92 | 80 | 44 | 34 | 19 |
| until 1920 | 48 | 110 | 110 | 46 | 40 | 20 |

We see, therefore, that the Bräms from the very first showed an extremely sparse development. An important reason for this is the fact that the individual family units of this family which are found in the period from 1675-1830 possessed very small numbers of children, with almost no heads of families. Only with the families of old Burkhard Bräm, 1805-1848 (Nr. 22), and of Herrenegg Heinrich Bräm, 1810-1881 (Nr. 23), did it improve in this respect, since from both of the named families, three and four, even seven, heads of family came forth. All four heads of family of the latter Bräm family remained on the Herrenegg, but not in Engi. The first, Heinrich Bräm, 1836-1909, baker and proprietor of "The Ox" in Glarus, even became a citizen in Glarus. From him are descended the Bräm in Davos [*Canton Graubünden*]. The second, Mathäus Bräm, 1837-1895, moved into the Toggenberg [*Canton St. Gallen*], where two married sons live, but without male descendants (7 girls altogether). The third, Mathias Bräm, 1840-1913, became a baker and proprietor of "The Linthof" in Schwanden and died at his daughter's in Winterthur [*Canton Zürich*]. The only head of family from him, Heinrich Bräm, emigrated to Brazil, where he died as a bookkeeper in Rio Negro in 1891. About his two children, Pio Henrique, born in 1889, and Henriquihina, born in 1891, I know nothing further. - The fourth was Samuel Bräm, 1849-1922, baker and proprietor for the People's Garden in Glarus. Of his three heads of family, two (Heinrich, pastor in Brooklyn, [*New York*] North America, and Abraham) possessed childless families. - A striking example of how a family can disperse and even die out.

In the number of those enjoying the benefit of *Tagwen* citizenship rights, the Bräms place only seventh. That this number increases itself is a poor expectation for the present, since, even proportionally, a great many of this family moved away, in total 104 people. In the list of emigrations the Bräms show 36%, more than the Martis, Baumgartners, Hämmerlis, Altmanns, Wysses, and Gigers. Of them, 20 = 19.28% moved to North America; 5 = 4.83% to Brazil; 35 = 33.65% to other cantons; 42 = 40.32% to other Glarner communes; and 2 = 1.92% to unknown places.

Forty-three percent of all the wives of the Bräm heads of families were born in Engi, which is distributed among the various families as follows: 9 = 18.75% for the Martis; 5 = 10.4% for the Blumers; 4 = 8.72% for the Hämmerlis; 2 = 4.36% for the Baumgartners; and 1 each = 2.18% for the Altmanns, Luchsingers, Wysses and Gigers.

In the case of the first names of the Bräms who were heads of family, and their heirs, Heinrich, with 10 = 22.5%, stands in first place; then Samuel, with 9 = 18.75%; Burkhard and Mathias, each with 6 = 12.5%; Johannes, with 5 = 10.4%; and Gregorius, Fridolin and Peter, each with 3 = 6.25%.

Since the Bräms were regarded until 1836 only as "patient ones", up to this point in time they also had no right to *Tagwen* or church offices. They were, no doubt, allowed to enjoy the benefit of the communal profits as *Tagwen* associates, but as non-cantonal citizens they had no voting rights, as certainly a portion of the Hämmerlis had also. So it is understandable that we don't come across a single dignitary of any *Tagwen* or church office in the whole Bräm family tree.

Three Bräms lost their lives in the foreign services:

Hans Bräm, born in 1625, "had let go of his life altogether valiantly" (Book of the Dead) in 1643 in France, in the battle near Rocroy. He was the son of Mathias Bräm and Maria Tschudy, and a great-grandson of the ancestor, Mathias from Splügen.

Meinrad Bräm, born in 1759, died unmarried on 1 June 1786 in Lothringen [*Lorraine*] under the Swiss regiment Castella. He was the son of Samuel Bräm and Elizabeth Blumer, and a brother of the father of Herrenegg Heinrich Bräm.

Gregorius Bräm, born in 1781, set out as an enlisted soldier on 15 March 1807 (according to the list of the enlisted soldiers in the Glarus public-record office) and remains missing (he very probably died in Russia). He was the son of Gregorius Bräm and Anna Dorothea Elmer, and a brother of the oldest Burkhard Bräm, whose name stems from his grandfather on his mother's side, Burkhard Elmer from Elm.

We find few accidents recorded with the Bräms.

On 24 April 1687, on a Sunday, Regula Bräm, the nine-year-old daughter of Samuel Bräm (Nr. 3), drowned in the Sernf river. Her corpse was found 13 days afterwards on the "Herren" and she was buried in Schwanden.

^a Tagwen – an ancient term, from at least the 6th century A.D., which is still used today in Canton Glarus to denote the commune of the citizens, i.e. those who have inherited or purchased the Tagwen rights (this may only partially coincide with the political commune). It is derived from Tage Wann, meaning the work someone could perform in one day in the commonly-held fields, pastures and forests. Over the years the number of Tagwen in the canton has varied considerably, with the present-day number being 29. Also its duties have changed – from jointly working on and enjoying the benefits of its common property, to administering all the commune's public interests, to (today) administering and enjoying the benefits of its common property. [SW]