

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

Public lectures by Martin Baumgartner, teacher in Engi.
Self-published by the author, Glarner News print shop, Rud. Tschudy, 1923.

Translated by Sue Wolf

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

IV. The Hämmerli Family

[pg. 33-41]

We have been able to trace the three families we have spoken of up to now, the Martis, Blumers and Baumgartners, back to an ancestor, but that is not possible now with the Hämmerlis from Engi. In the year 1595, when the church books were begun, a goodly number of Hämmerlis were already settled in Engi, since in this year no fewer than 16 baptisms were recorded from the Hämmerli family, more than by most of the present larger families. In 1566 a Lienhard Hämmerli from the Uznachberg [*Canton St. Gallen*] bought himself the Glarner cantonal rights for 40 Gulden. We are not able to establish whether that was the only Hämmerli in Engi and, consequently, the ancestor, or what is more likely, whether more Hämmerlis moved into Engi together from Uznach, of one of the two faiths, between 1530 and 1550. There were, of course, also Hämmerlis in Engi who, until 1834, belonged to the non-cantonal citizens but, nevertheless, acquired the *Tagwen*^a rights of Engi for themselves, that is, the Hämmerlis as well as the Bräms in Engi were all *Tagwen* associates. We will learn later that in the year 1822 these rights were refused to them, that is, to some Hämmerli and Bräm families.

In the old *Tagwen* records only one Hämmerli *Tagwen* rights purchase exists, namely that of Gallus Hämmerli (Nr. 13 in the family tree), born in 1599, died in 1673, who bought, however, only for himself. The extract from the old *Tagwen* book reads as follows:

"On Our Lady's Day in March [*March 8th*] of the year 1651, thus the communal *Tagwen* citizens in Engi had accepted the same Gallus Hämmerli as a *Tagwen* citizen, accordingly and of the kind that he be allowed to use and make use of the *Tagwen* rights in the same situation as any other *Tagwen* citizen, and that his life be long and enduring. When he, however, dies and his wife has survived, so may she herself use and make use of them for her long life, as long as she remain unchanging (a widow). But if she changes [*remarries*], then she gives up these *Tagwen* rights completely and above all. Also that no title to the *Tagwen* rights of their parents shall convey to either their children or descendants, over a brief time or always, because of not yet seeking [*their own rights*], but it [*the title*] shall end with the above-mentioned persons. He had, therefore, given 50 Gulden and 10 measures of wine." (=15 liters; 1 measure = 1 ½ liters.)

This Gallus Hämmerli had married two wives: in 1618, Dorothea Britt from Kerenzen (who died in 1662) and in 1664, Margreth Luchsinger from Schwanden. From the first marriage he had 7 children, but none of them grew older than 10 years. In 1651, on the occasion of his *Tagwen* rights purchase, he possessed no more children. Five of them died in 1629 of the plague, a little girl drowned in the Sernf [*river*], and a little son died at three months old. His second marriage was childless, understandably, since at the time of the marriage the bride was 49 years old and the groom 65.

Although in the year 1595, therefore, several Hämmerli families existed in Engi, nevertheless all of the Hämmerlis from Engi can now be traced back to only 2 ancestors. All other Hämmerlis of

that time (it was 6 families) probably, to some extent, had several children (as, for example, the Gallus Hämmerli who was mentioned), but no head of family who furthered the family tree. That was a primary reason why the Hämmerlis developed slowly and not very well at first, in relation to the families spoken of up to now.

Whether both the ancestors of today's Hämmerlis were first cousins (they were determined to not be brothers), or still more distantly related, that cannot be dealt with. The one was Baschli Hämmerli (Nr. 4), recorded thus instead of as Sebastian, married to Anna Marti. He had 3 children, a daughter, who died in 1629 of the plague at the age of 28, and 2 sons, Jakob and Jost, both heads of families with fairly extensive descendants. (The latter died of the plague in the year 1629, and also his first wife and 4 children). The other head of family was Hans Hämmerli (Nr. 7), who died in 1650, the son of Lienhard who had purchased [*the Glarner cantonal rights*] for himself in 1566. Married to a Dorothea Dietrich, he possessed 6 children, 2 of them heads of families, Leonhard (Nr. 16) and Hans (Nr. 15). However, the family of the latter became extinct already with his grandson, *Tagwen* official Fridolin Hämmerli (Nr. 29), 1648-1710, since his only son, Hans, died unmarried at the age of 20. From Leonhard, on the contrary, were descended, among others, the following families of today: that of old Johannes Hämmerli, proprietor of the Schäfli hotel, and his 2 older brothers, and that of old master weaver Jakob Hämmerli and his 4 older brothers. These were the only families who were descendants of the Leinhard Hämmerli who was admitted into the cantonal rights in 1566.

It may possibly be known to you that, until the year 1836, a portion of the Hämmerlis and the Bräms in Engi were only so-called new cantonal people, that is, they possessed only the *Tagwen* rights from Engi, but belonged to the so-called non-cantonal citizens, since they did not possess the Glarner cantonal rights. For the first time in 1836, owing to the *Landsgemeinde*^b decision of 1834, all these non-cantonal citizens, whose forefathers by this time had lived for centuries in the canton and possessed the *Tagwen* rights of a commune, were granted the cantonal rights immediately, in exchange for a relatively small purchase sum. In total, 54 Hämmerlis and 12 Bräms from Engi belonged then to that group. Among the Hämmerlis are then, quite certainly, all the descendants of the first-named of the 2 heads of families: Baschli Hämmerli. The father of the other heads of families had, of course, as was already noted, acquired the Glarner cantonal rights in the year 1566 for 40 Gulden, and his descendants have always been cantonal citizens, in contrast to those of other families. Then, the following Hämmerli branches belonged to the non-cantonal citizens who were admitted as citizens for the first time in 1836:

1. The family of old Heinrich Hämmerli in Rüti and Johannes Hämmerli in Engi and his brother.
2. The family of weaver Fridolin Hämmerli, 1804-1869 (father of 9 daughters), father-in-law of old Meinrad Marti, cooper, and Jakob Marti, from Knie.
3. The Hämmerli family from Kummenberg.
4. The Josef Hämmerli family, from Höftigen.
5. The Niederurnen Hämmerlis.
6. The family of Jakob Hämmerli, the grandfather of cooper Oswald.
7. The Samuel Hämmerli family, from Kleingädli.
8. The family of old Josef Hämmerli, from Spicher.
9. The family of Sergeant Bernhard Hämmerli, and of his brother Josef.

Then, in the year 1822, even the church rights of these Hämmerlis and Bräms who were not in possession of the cantonal rights were disputed on the part of the church commune, that is, that they had had the use of these rights until then in an unlawful way. For, according to the church's judgement of 1710, on the occasion of a *Tagwen* rights purchase they had to have paid 30 Gulden to the church for the purchase of the church rights. That was never yet done by them.

This matter only came before the bar of the high council in 1822. Appearing in the name of the church commune were Federal councillor Jakob Marti from Engi, Federal councillor Peter Wohlwend from Matt and *Tagwen* official Dietrich Stauffacher from Matt. Coming forward in the name of the Hämmerli and Bräm small farmers, as "rejects", were Jost Hämmerli (grandfather of old Kummenberg Heinrich) and his three sons, Fridolin, Jost and Heinrich. A great number of his descendants live today in the Toggenberg [*Canton St. Gallen*]. They pointed out that the Hämmerli and Bräm families had used and enjoyed the *Tagwen* and church rights unhindered already for more than 200 years, that they all (therefore, the Hämmerlis in question) were descended from Sebastian Hämmerli, who, according to the council's judgement of 1605, was recognized as a *Tagwen* citizen from Engi, and that the those concerned were admitted into the 1763 church alpine register, as well as into the charity and Gulden registers, and, consequently, had carried the burden and weight just like the rest of the church members. Also that the brother of the complainant Jost Hämmerli, the school master Heinrich Hämmerli, was charity master of the Matt-Engi church commune, and so forth.

The council then came to the following decision and judgement: the rejects of the church commune were dismissed in their request, mainly for the reason that even before 1710 the Matt and Engi *Tagwens* were a joint *Tagwen*, and church as well as *Tagwen* must have existed in the same association. So, with a *Tagwen* rights purchase before 1710, the church rights were also included with it. For the first time, after the separation of the *Tagwens* in the year 1710, it was determined that the church rights also must be purchased along with the *Tagwen* rights, for 30 Gulden extra. The so-called small farmers, however, had, of course, as already stressed, been regarded as *Tagwen* citizens already in 1605. (The purchase must, therefore, have occurred previously and was not found even in the *Tagwen* books, since these began for the first time around 1620.)

This council decision exists still in the original in the possession of Captain Hämmerli (who died in 1923).

A reason for the very moderate development of the Hämmerlis is also the fact that the plague in the year 1629 affected the Hämmerlis especially hard. There were no fewer than 14 persons, mostly children, from this family who fell victim to it, of them 5 sons who could also have become heads of families. So there were 28 families to report in their family tree until 1700, 44 until 1750, and, for the first time, 64 in 1800 (the Baumgartners had 12 in 1700, and 77 in 1800). They numbered 104 until 1850 (the Baumgartners had 154), 150 in 1880 (the Baumgartners had 220), 178 in 1900, and 210 now. With the same, more vigorous, development as the 3 families already dealt with, they would have numbered at least twice as many families. As we can see from the statistics, the fact might also have contributed besides that only 49% of the Hämmerli children were sons, but with the Baumgartners, for example, there were 54% (the Gigers had the least, with 47%), and generally, on the average, a small number of children was produced, as there were 4.6 children per family, but with the Baumgartners 5.4, as we have emphasized before.

Of the Hämmerlis only 340 persons = 29% have emigrated; of them, 23% emigrated to North America, 4% to Brazil, 26% to other cantons (mainly into the Toggenberg) and 34% to other communes (above all, Niederurnen and Glarus). The Hämmerlis thus, concluding from the statistics, have remained the most faithful to our commune, next to the Giger family. Hence, it explains also that today the Hämmerlis are reported on with 45 enjoying the benefits of the *Tagwen* rights, whereas the much larger family of the Blumers has only 38.

Their relatively modest emigration is also a reason that, of all their wives, 52% stemmed from Engi. Consequently, the most numerous marriages in our citizen families were produced. They

were distributed among these as follows: the Martis 32 = 25%, the Blumers 21 = 17%, the Baumgartners and Hämmerlis each 19 = 15%, the Luchsingers 13 = 10%, the Altmanns 6 = 4.9%, the Wysses and Bräms each 5 = 4%, and the Gigers and Norders each 1.

The inheritance of forenames with the Hämmerlis stands out significantly and distinctly. Above all, 29 = 14% of their heads of families carry the name Leonhard, 28 = 13.5% Fridolin, 23 = 11% Hans or Johannes, 18 = 8% Jakob and Heinrich, 14 = 6.7% Jost, and 12 = 5.75% Josef and Samuel. Those are the most frequent Hämmerli names.

The offices they have held present an insignificant topic with the Hämmerlis, because, since even a greater portion of them were small farmers, they remained unconsidered at the filling of offices, and for the first time, since the 30's of the last century, with their final purchase into the Glarner cantonal rights, they are increasing considerably in their reputation.

Of federal councillors, the Hämmerlis provided only one, and that one was living in Matt besides. That referred to Federal Councillor and *Tagwen* official Fridolin, born ?, died in 1646 (Nr. 3). We can almost definitely admit that he was a son of the Lienhard who received the cantonal rights in 1566, since of his 2 sons he called the older one Leonhard, born in 1603, and the other one Jakob, born in 1610. The fate of both sons is unknown; they very probably fell victim to the plague in the year 1629, in the time when no pastor served in Matt and, therefore, also no entries were made in the church books. Of *Tagwen* officials of older significance, the Hämmerlis provided 4, then a church steward, an inspector of weights and measures and a charity official. In the old military they were represented by a lieutenant and 3 sergeants.

The first 2 Engi schoolmasters were Hämmerlis. We have, indeed, already mentioned that Engi possessed its own school just since 1779, and, to be sure, only as a very primitive schoolroom, as it reports in a 1780 statement: "our local school is only a room attached to another building." We are, indeed, most familiar with where to find this former school; it is the residence of Jost Altmann on the little Rigi alley which served as schoolroom from 1779 until 1832. - There then served the first schoolmaster, Heinrich Hämmerli, born in 1741, died in 1815, from 1779-1805 with a year's salary of 20-25 Gulden. Of course, he held only 18 weeks of school every year. He was a brother of the aforementioned Jost Hämmerli who appeared before the council in 1822 in the name of the small farmers. Besides, he also occupied the office of a charity official and directed the so-called singing school. Married to Anna Wyss from Engi (1739-1813), his marriage remained childless. His personal accomplishments in reading, writing and arithmetic must, however, still have been pretty modest. Around the year 1800, in the time of the Helvetic Republic, as the high-minded minister Stapfer was endeavoring to lead the educational system towards better methods, the schoolmasters at the time of all the communes composed a report about the condition of their schools and replied to a questionnaire. This work was rather hard for Mr. Hämmerli, just as it was, after all, for most of the schoolteachers at the time. He asked the pastor in Matt first of all for advice. His comments in this report read as follows:

"The village of Engi is so very scattered that it would be very difficult to answer the questions exactly as they are asked, since it is, therefore, impossible to tell, thus I will answer the above questions as much as possible in brief. "And at the end: "Since I am also allowed weaknesses to make some comments, thus will I, nevertheless, take the occasion to be of use. Our village is very populated, so that hardly the half part attend the local school. The reasons are from this, however, because it is a very poor and needy commune."¹

His successor was again a Hämmerli, but from the other branch, which possessed the cantonal rights. This one was Leonhard Hämmerli, born in 1770, died in 1835 (Nr. 65). Married to Eufemia Marti, daughter of Federal Councillor Johannes Marti from Engi, he possessed only a

daughter, Anna, who married *Tagwen* official Josef Blumer and migrated into the Toggenberg with him and his whole family. Schoolmaster Leonhard Hämmerli was, in addition to church steward, also a lieutenant, and, of course, he served as such in the foreign regiment of Salis-Marschlin from 1798-1801, and thus occupied an respected military position.

From 1805-1833 he then worked in our commune as teacher. Naturally also without any broader basic education, he, however, must have produced far better results than his predecessor, in spite of it. In a report of his activities by Pastor Johann Melchior Schuler, the noted history writer who also worked as school inspector, it said: "To me Engi is an admitted example of how, owing to a imaginative, effective schoolmaster and by means of administrators who promotes the better way, the morale of a commune improves, and, where there was previously antipathy towards improvement, now a disposition for it is planted. - The pastor and, equally, the administrators visit the school diligently; also the administrators are very much in favor of improvement in the school conduct and expect guidance from the education council. - It is also reported that, in contrast to his predecessor, who held school only 18 weeks of the year but also only received 25 Gulden salary for it, he now held school the whole year through and for it had hopes of "42 Gulden and an undetermined donation". - He also already followed the Pestalozzi method, especially in the aim of building the intellect".

The new, yet today old, schoolhouse was built, in addition, with his same efficiency, that is, in the year 1832 for around 1350 Gulden. The free supply of wood by the *Tagwen* and the joyful work of the citizens were not computed into that. This building being erected was of importance relative to the poor communal people of that time, and compared with the old, confining local school, an achievement as well as a credit to the *Tagwen*. It was really the work of Pastor Jakob Heer, who collected no less than 950 Gulden for the building by begging and untiringly risked his entire energy.

The dignitaries in offices since 1850 from the Hämmerli family show the following numbers: a church president, an orphan official, a communal councillor, a church councillor, 2 school administrators, 2 school councillors, 3 mediators and a communal secretary.

Seven Hämmerlis perished in foreign military services, that is, the following:

In February, 1638, in the French service, Hans Hämmerli, born in 1607, single, grandson of the Sebastian who was an ancestor.

On 22 December 1743, Hans Hämmerli, born in 1716, single, at Mons [*Belgium*] in the Dutch service under company captain Marti, in the Salis Regiment. He was a brother of the above-mentioned schoolmaster, Leonhard Hämmerli.

In 1745, in Brabant [*Netherlands*], Jost Hämmerli, born in 1706, single, and

In 1746, his brother, Jakob Hämmerli, born in 1706, single, as a prisoner of war in the Dutch service under the Planta Army Regiment. They belonged to the small farmers' branch.

On 31 October 1781, Josef Hämmerli, born in 1752, single, at Leiden [*Netherlands*] in the Dutch service under First Lieutenant Weiss from Glarus. Descendants from the family of his father no longer exist.

On 9 August 1809, Johann Jakob Hämmerli, born in 1782, single, in the military hospital in Naples on the Fieber. He was a soldier in the 1st Swiss Regiment. From his father, likewise, male descendants no longer exist.

On 20 April 1810, Joachim Hämmerli, born in 1789, a brother of the father of old Johannes, who was proprietor of "The Schäfli", and his brothers and sisters, set out as an enlisted soldier and remains missing. He died presumably under Napoleon in Russia in the year 1812. His brother, Fridolin Hämmerli, had also enlisted, but he probably was able to get away in some manner. He died in 1848, single, in Engi.

Something more about accidents and events which affected the Hämmerli family.

On 28 January 1751, Sofia Hämmerli, born in 1702, daughter of young Jakob Hämmerli in Schlatt, from whom no more descendants exist, was found dead in bed in the morning, along with her unmarried son, Jakob Wild. They suffocated on the smoke of the stove. This Sofia Hämmerli had two unmarried children:

1. Jakob Wild, born in 1734, who suffocated with her. His father was Jost Wild from Schwanden, who had run away.

2. Maria Katharina Tschudi and Oertli, a little girl, born in 1738 and died in 1740. This child was acknowledged by two fathers: 1. the titled landowner, Hans Peter Tschudi from Glarus, and 2. Josua Oertli from Ennetbühl.

On 6 September 1807, Sergeant and *Tagwen* official Johannes Hämmerli, born in 1768 (Nr. 62), husband of Anna Baumgartner, fell to his death in the wild hay. He was the grandfather of old proprietor of "The Schäfli" Johannes and his brothers and sisters, and also great-grandfather on the mother's side of teacher Hösli from Haslen and his brothers and sisters.

On 29 April 1801, Christina Hämmerli, the 10 year old little daughter of *Tagwen* official Johannes, fell into the Sernf river at the Badkopf bridge and drowned. Her dead body was never found. Pastor Kaspar Freuler wrote: "On 29 April 1801 Christina Hämmerli, an unmarried daughter of *Tagwen* official Johannes Hämmerli from Engi, died as she wanted to cross an inferior bridge at the Badkopf clearing. She had fallen down on the bridge and drowned, and as yet had still not been found, and there exists little hope that such a child, who in the 10th year of her life was taken to everlasting life, will be found again."

"While such a sorrowful fate like this is terrible for everyone, though particularly the fatherly and motherly heart must be transposed into sadness, so the wise providence protects us in the future from such and similar afflictions." (Extract from the Book of Death)

On 24 September 1825 Mathias Hämmerli, born in 1782 (Nr. 67), husband of Ursula Blumer from Engi, grandfather of sergeant and forester Fridolin Hämmerli and his brothers and sisters, and also of wagoner Joseph Hämmerli and his brothers and sisters, fell to his death in the wild hay, up above in the Pulstern runs.

On 17 June 1830, Jakob Hämmerli, born in 1796, husband of Elisabeth Luchsinger from Engi, fell to his death at the logging site on top of the Uebli valley summit. He was the father of master joiner Leonhard in Hinterbach and grandfather of cooper Oswald Hämmerli in Rigi, as well as, on his mother's side, of carpenter Leonhard Wyss and his brothers and sisters.

On 6 October 1850, Johann Heinrich Hämmerli, born in 1797 (Nr. 92), a son of *Tagwen* official Johannes, who had been killed, was killed in Zizers, [*Canton*] Graubünden. He was grandfather of teacher Hösli in Haslen and his brothers and sisters. He lived in Zizers, where he was married to his third wife, Anna Margreth Pantli.

On 7 June 1851, Leonhard Hämmerli, born in 1825 (Nr. 101), husband of Maria Zwicki from Mollis, drowned in the Linth [*river*]. A brother of Johannes Ulrich Hämmerli in Niederurnen. His dead body was never found.

On 10 December 1855, Jakob Hämmerli, single, born in 1836, a brother of old Kummberg Heinrich, met with a fatal accident in which he was buried alive by a collapsing heap of dirt and rock at the road-construction on the Altstafel runs. He had both legs broken.

On 27 October 1864, Blasius Hämmerli, single, born in 1840, a brother of Joseph Hämmerli of Höftigen, was buried alive on the Plattenberg [*mountain*] and was first brought forth seriously mutilated after digging for 2 days.

Since the 1850's and 60's many more accidents occurred which affected the Hämmerli family, which are, however, probably still familiar to most people. For example, in 1857 Leonhard Hämmerli, father of mediator Johannes Heinrich, Lower House [*councillor*] Leonhard and old proprietor of "The Schäfli" Johannes and the other brothers and sisters.

In 1869 Dietrich Hämmerli, father of captain Hämmerli and communal secretary Salomon Hämmerli. (Killed in the straw on the Eggenberg [*mountain*].)

In 1870 Joseph Hämmerli, father of old wagoner Joseph, who was found dead in the Linth at Bilten.

In 1893 Joseph Hämmerli, of Höftigen, and so forth.

These were all serious blows of fate which affected most large families.

^a *Tagwen* is a now-obsolete Glarner term meaning "full citizenship" in the commune. Citizens with *Tagwen* rights had the right to vote on all issues concerning the commune, they could use the common lands, and they were supported if in poverty. [SW]

^b The Popular Assembly, which is the Glarus cantonal legislative body. It is made up of all the citizens of the communes who have full citizenship rights. [SW]

¹ G. Heer. School History.