

On the History of the Glarner Families, Particularly Those of the Sernf Valley
A Medley of Pictures from Past Days
(*Zur Geschichte glarnerischer Geschlechter, derjenigen des Sernftales insbesondere
Allerlei Bilder aus vergangenen Tagen*)

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

XV. THE BÄBLERS

[pg. 124-129]

With the 2nd of May in 1595, Pastor Hans Ulrich Engeler of Zurich began the first Elm baptism book. Among the 58 children whom he had recorded during the 4 years of his service as pastor in Elm (1595-99) no fewer than 16¹ are found from the Bähler family, which, thereby, shows them to be the most numerous Elmer family at that time. The Elmers follow with 8, the Zentners with 5, the Solmans and the Gigers with 4, the Dysches with 3, and the Ryners, who today greatly outnumber the Bählers in Elm, the Fläms and the Josses, who have since become extinct, as well as the pastor's family, the Engelers, with 2. Only one baptized infant each descended from the Hausers and the Schniders, as well as from the families of the Baschlis, Buchlis, Eglis, Küntzlis, Mäulis (from Freiburg in the Uechtland [*Canton Fribourg*]), Rächensteiners, Rytzes and Schmids, who have since died out in Elm.

In the church at Matt, during the same time period of 1595-99, 6 were baptized from the Hösli family, 5 each from the Bählers and the Speichs, 4 from the Buchmüllers, 3 each from the Bussers, Kublis and Zopfis, 2 each from the Baumgartners, Gigers, Solmanns, and Ulriches (children of Pastor J. Jakob Ulrich of Zurich), and one each from the Altmanns, Lagers, Luchsingers, Pfiffeners, Schärers, Stauffachers, Thomanns, Wälis and Wolwends. In Matt too, therefore, the Bählers stand almost in the front row among the citizen families which are in Matt today, with the old Matter family of the Speichs in first place. Nonetheless, Elm appears to be the real ancestral home of the Bählers. If, since 1599², the ratio of the Bählers from Matt and Elm had shifted, and today the Bählers are a great deal more numerous in Matt than in Elm, then

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- 1 Two Peters (n o Fridolins), and one each of Bläsi, Caspar, Hans, Meinrad, and an Anna, Anneli, Barbara, Cleophea, Elisabeth, Katharina, Maria, Rosina, Sophie and Wibrand (Kleophea and Wibrand are very rare in the main [*Linth river*] valley).
 - 2 At the end of the 16th century (1595-99), 3 Bähler families were found in Matt: Fridolin Bähler and Anna Heer (with 5 children), Michel Bähler and Maria Solman (4 children), and Jakob Bähler and Magdalena Speich (4 children). D.B. [*Dietrich Bähler*]

the inference from it was, to some extent, that the Bäublers from Elm had made a move downhill³, that is, more Elmer-Bäublers moved to Matt and bought citizenship there⁴. It seems to have been the case, especially in the somewhat better-placed members of the Bäubler family. While the Bäublers from Matt, in 1834, proved their identity as Glarner cantonal citizens without exception, 14 male (11 over 1 year old and 3 under) and 9 female persons were found among the Elmer-Bäublers who first obtained the Glarner cantonal right by the decision of the 1834 *Landsgemeinde*⁵ (above, pg. 114 [in “The Bräms” chapter (pg. 2 in the SW translation)]), who, up to then, like their forefathers, lived only as "patient ones" or small farmers in Elm, and whose descendants today are likewise not "enjoying wealth". Who the ancestor of these new 1834 citizens had been, and where in the Sernf valley he had come from, the Elm communal authorities, when asked, were not able to say even in 1833, and, therefore, he probably will not be known any more today⁵. And even less will be investigated who the ancestor was of the Bäublers who were citizens of Elm and Matt, who were already numerous in 1595, and where he had come from. The allegation which was passed on to me, that, in 1594 or 1595, Mathäus Bäubler from Gams [Canton St. Gallen] had bought into the Glarner cantonal right with his 4 sons, Andreas, Mathäus, Ulrich and Jakob, at any rate does not agree with reality. To be sure, the *Landsgemeinde* of the year 1594⁶ had accepted an unusually large number of new cantonal citizens; but among the newly-named cantonal citizens no Bäublers were found; and only G. Schrepfer and Hans Baumgartner followed in 1595. Undoubtedly, the just-mentioned Andreas, Mathäus, Ulrich and Jakob Bäubler from Elm, like Fridolin, Michel and Jakob Bäubler from Matt, who were mentioned on pg. 124 [in “The Bäublers” chapter (pg. 1 in the SW translation)], were, by 1595, not only already *Tagwen* citizens of Matt and Elm, but also Glarner cantonal citizens. But where in the Sernf valley had their ancestor come from? It's possible that the recollection that he might have come here from Gams, like H. Baumgartner (above, pg. 121 [in “The Baumgartners” chapter (pg. 1 in the SW translation)]), was justified. Others name Tegerfelden (count's domain of Baden [Canton Aargau]) as the original homeland of the Bäublers. Perhaps "both of them are right"; perhaps —.

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- 3 Of the 6 sons of Oswald Bäubler (who died in 1628, in Aug.) and Afra Nigg (who died in 1642), 2 of them, Paulus and Fridolin, moved from Elm to Matt and acquired the *Tagwen** right there. D. and E. Bäubler, both teachers, old Chief Justice Joh. Bäubler, Church Official J. U. Bäubler, Jakob Bäubler, driller, and others live today in Matt as descendants of Fridolin Bäubler. Two other sons of this Oswald Bäubler, Hans and Oswald, went to Mollis. Oswald returned to Elm; Hans remained in Mollis and also acquired the *Tagwen* right there. However, his descendants became extinct. The present Bäublers who live in Mollis stem directly from Matt. D.B.
- * *Tagwen* - an ancient Glarner 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]
- 4 A Bäubler also settled in Engi at that time: Marx Bäubler, who married Anna Luchsinger (who died in 1624) in Jan. 1618. He died, however, in 1639, without male descendants.
- a *Landsgemeinde* - 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]
- 5 In 1621, Pastor Gaudenz W. Tack, reported that "on the 9th of Christmonat [December] I have baptized a son to Jochem Bäubler and Elspet, of T u s i s, who was named Melchior".
- 6 In 1594, the following were also named as new cantonal citizens: M. Norder, along with two sons, R. Steiger, H. Ryss, B. Locher, along with 3 sons, P. Nick, H. Wächter, J. Müller, along with 3 sons, Tob. Hug, G. Sulzer, M. Kaufmann, along with 2 sons, U. Wälli, Chr. Elber, along with 4 sons, Joh. Itt, W. Roffenberger, and H. Freitag.

Likewise, as with the origin of the Bäublers, the meaning of the name Bäubler is also probably unknown. It is remarkable that, side by side with the name Bäubler (and sometimes Bebler), the name Bäbi is also found several times in the Elm baptism book. Thus writes Pastor Wolfgang Bedrosius: "On the 30th day of *Heumonat [July]* (in 1618) I have baptized a little daughter to Hans Bäby and Barbara Huserin, who was named Cathrina"; and: "On the 27th day of August (in 1620) I have baptized a little son to Hans Bäj and Barbara Huserin⁷ and named him Hans." And Pastor Conrad Buol from Davos [*Canton Graubünden*] wrote in the death register: "In the month of *Hornung [February]* (in 1623) Hans Bäbi, who was killed in the Schovfärf in an avalanche of snow." However, whether Bäbi and Bäubler are the same family name, and Bäubler is only an "embellishment" of the original Bäbi⁸, perhaps as Bebie also may have originated from Bäbi, I would not venture to assert. W. Tobler-Meyer is said to have traced the name Bäubler back to *bâb* (= mother); Professor U. Socin, on the other hand, traced it back to a former place of residence (Beblenheim? [*Alsace*]). So the friendly reader has a choice and must decide which of the three explanations seems to him to be the most plausible.

In the 1763 cantonal tax roll, a single Bäubler is found outside the Sernf valley (reported on in Mollis with a property of 800 Fl.). In 1876, 14 Bäublers were found in Elm (with 27,000 Fr. of taxable property), 26 in Matt (49,000 Fr.), 1 in Engi (5,000 Fr.), 8 in the capital city of Glarus, 2 each in Ennenda and Niederurnen and one each in Haslen, Nidfurn, Mitlödi and Mollis. Total - 57 taxpayers (81,000 Fr. of property). In the higher cantonal positions (gentlemen of the *Schranken*^b, *Landvögte*^c, etc.) I encountered no Bäublers, and just as few among the clergymen of the canton. They devoted their energies, so far as occupation and family permitted it, to their home commune. So, according to Teacher D. Bäubler's information, the Bäublers from Matt⁹ (1595-1920) contributed 7 church commune presidents, 2 *Tagwen* officials, 3 sergeants, 5 sacristans, 2 federal councillors, 2 presidents and 2 choir leaders. In the last hundred years, above all a preference for the teaching profession seems to have asserted itself with the Bäublers. So today no fewer than 5 Bäublers from Matt serve as teachers: 2 as teachers¹⁰ in their home

7 Oddly enough, in the year 1620, in which a daughter, Catharina, was baptized to Hans B ä b i, in the same Elm church a Hans B ä b l e r and Barbara Huserin also baptized twin sisters, Barbara and Catharina.

8 That women's names were also permitted as family names substantiates the family names of Anna, Anneli, Linggi, Rösli, etc. Also we have further knowledge of surnames which referred back to a vigorous grandmother.

b *Schranken* – the chairmen [*Cantonal President, Cantonal Treasurer, etc.*] who occupy the seats of honor in the council chamber [SW]

c *Landvogt* – an administrative and judicial official of a cantonal government in a vassal territory [SW]

9 As counterpart to them, what President Zentner communicates to us from Elm in his *Chronicle* might have value: "1706. To know superficially here by this writing that the entire commune and *Tagwen* of Elm had recognized Charity Official H a n s B ä b l e r as their church president 3 years ago, took it away again on Martinmas [*feast of St. Martin of Tours (11 Nov)*] for 3 years, put it straight, etc.; however he, Bäubler, rejected everything and would not accept in any manner or way. Also the same Elm commune itself had offered to stop all taxing of him, like others stop for their old church president, and the time to serve should be only 2 years, when he wanted to serve willingly again. And, meanwhile, this disorder lasted a rather long time and the aforesaid Bäubler himself had not wanted to obediently surrender, so the same entire Elm commune and *Tagwen* had added that Hans Bäubler should be deprived of the common land and other *Tagwen* benefits. However, if, in the future, more disobedient individuals would be produced, then they should be constrained in the same way." The authorities seemed to have repealed the decision of the Elm commune; nevertheless, the Elmers took revenge on Bäubler, in that they decided unanimously that neither he nor either of his sons would ever be selected for an office, as church steward or *Tagwen* official, until he granted them satisfaction.

10 Of their predecessors, teachers Joderich Bäubler, who was born in 1824, died in 1894, and served as teacher from Matt from 1850 until a few days before his death, and Heinrich Bäubler, who was born in 1871, a teacher since 1889, and died in 1894, were mentioned.

commune (Emil, who was born in 1854, and a teacher since 1873, and Dietrich, who was born in 1875, and a teacher since 1895); and 2 as teachers in the Glarner secondary schools (Christof in Niederurnen and Heinrich in Hätzingen); as the fifth one, the following serves in the Zürich cantonal school: Dr. Emil Bähler.

Secondary school teacher J o h. J a k o b B ä b l e r, who was born in 1806 and died in 1874, exercised prominent influence on our Glarner educational system. At the age of 24 (in 1830) he took charge of the Schwanden secondary school, which was elevated at the time to a communal institution (having been a private academy up to then); in 1843 he came to the Glarus secondary school, at which he served as teacher a full quarter of a century (1843-68). Through word and writing, in newspaper articles and in separate pamphlets, he sought to contribute to the promotion of the educational system. Already in the 1840's he championed the evening school; though, for the time being — the time was not yet ripe — without noticeable success¹¹. In 1860 from his feather [*pen*] appeared: *Seven Chapters about the Most Important Concerns of our Canton*; in 1864 followed: *Conference Pages of the Glarner Teachers* (they were supposed to be the official publication and forum of the Glarner teachers' association; however, they remained without sequel); in 1871, after his resignation, which was caused by increasing deafness, he further published: *Twelve Chapters about the Most Important Concerns of our Canton: History of the Glarner Educational System* (pg. 47-101: "The Response of the Glarner Schoolmaster to Swiss Minister Stapfer") and "Prospects and Suggestions for the Future"; in the 12th chapter he presented the 181-paragraph complete outline for a new education statute. Likewise, he willingly intervened in the public discussion on other political questions; in addition, he could, on occasion, handle a very sharp sword as well. Also, he published his works about various events of the fatherland's history¹². Thus, in 1836, appeared: *The History and Meaning of the Old Agreements between the Calvinists and Catholics in Canton Glarus*; in 1848, *The Old Swiss Confederacy, the Confederate Agreement [1815], and the Confederate Revision [1833]*; and in 1852, *The Admission of Canton Glarus into the Old Swiss Confederacy, Memorial to the Jubilee*^d. — A few of his patriotic melodies also live on even today, sung gladly on occasion, particularly by the older singers: "Do you know the land where mountains proud and bold?" and "Free mind and free heart become the Swiss man well".

In his notes, President Zentner unfortunately also had to mention a murder in which a Bähler from Elm was the major offender. He reported on it: "According to tradition, a Caspar Bähler had put poison in the food of a man who lived on the Wahlenberg near Elm, in agreement with the man's wife, and, in that way, had killed him, so they would be able to live with each other.

11 In the Oct. 1842 assembly, the school board, at the suggestion of Teacher Bähler, had decided on the evening school question as the subject of discussion for the next session. However, in this next session only 4 men appeared to hear the report received from Bähler, and, likewise, only 6 members besides the president jointly showed up for a second appointed session, on the 4th of Oct. in 1843, for the same report, so that the reading of the Bähler report was postponed a second time. However, this time "postponed" was, in fact, "cancelled". The apparent lack of interest was looked upon as rejection of the report's recommended plans. Not even Bähler could deceive himself about that.

12 Also his son, Dr. J. J. Bähler (who was born in 1831 and died in 1900), at first district teacher in Brugg [*Canton Aargau*], then Prof. of the Aarau cantonal school, concerned himself with a preference for historical (Swiss historical) works (in 1862, *On the Older History of the City of Brugg*; in 1867, *Thomas von Falkenstein*; in 1879, *Samuel Henzi*; in 1884, *Heinrich Zschokke*; and in 1889, *Field Names in the Schenkenberg District*.

d *Glarus joined the Swiss Confederacy in 1352, so it would have been celebrating its 500th anniversary in 1852.*
[SW]

However, the crime was discovered and Bähler was taken captive¹³. To be sure, he managed to escape from imprisonment, but returned voluntarily, prompted by his pangs of conscience, confessed his crime, and awaited the death penalty imposed on him with remorse and resignation¹⁴. He was executed in September 1661, at the age of 29, by the sword."

13 Since the *Chronicles* of J. H. Tschudi and Ch. Trümpi do not mention the deed, I assumed that the story was only a legend, or perhaps only imagination. However, the minutes of the communal council prove its authenticity. The minutes under the 10th of January in 1660 report thusly: "The arrested individuals, therefore, have themselves recognized, my gracious lords, that Treasurer Stüssi, as well as Second Lieutenant Jänni and Shipmaster Freuler, and together with Cantonal Secretary Marti, will undertake the inquiry on the upcoming Saturday. Also the inquiry of the love affair and, hence, of the fatal blow shall, therefore, be carried out as well. — We shall put the man in the small writing room and secure him with an armband, together with a watchman, but we shall put the woman in the Caspar Heitzen house and also guard her with a diligent guard, and we shall not let anyone converse with either person." And under the 16th of January in 1660: "On behalf of the late Jakob Rhiner, his wife, Anna Zentner, and Caspar Bähler shall once more be held by the authorities, as a result of the inquiry, and moreover, the case shall be brought again before my gracious lords."

14 President Zentner had recorded a long poem which Caspar Bähler was said to have composed in his imprisonment. We have singled out 5 of the 37 verses of his:

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| 1. O woe, the great pains
I carry in my heart | and woe the sorrow
and woe the festering time. |
| 2. Into sin I have fallen,
Confess will I all that, | oh, alas! then fester more,
especially to you, O Lord. |
| 3. The conscience of my soul
This so great failing of mine | accuses and nearly sinks into death,
it does crush against me. |
| 35. The children, O you ancient ones!
Keep them in rigorous emptiness, | hold them in virtuous discipline,
I do tell this to you. |
| 37. God bless you every hour,
O, God, take into your hands | God protect you all from harm,
my soul and happiness! |