

On the History of the Citizen Families of Engi and Their Development
[Zur Geschichte der bürgerlichen Geschlechter von Engi und ihre Entwicklung]
Public lectures

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

VI. THE ALTMANN S
[pg. 47-51]

The Altmanns are also a very old Engi citizen family. With the beginning of the church books in the year 1595 we encounter several Altmanns in Engi. Two Hans Altmanns, one of whom can be considered a head of family, then a Peter and Balthasar Altmann. Peter Altmann had three sons, Heinrich, Hans and Fridli; their fate, however, is unknown.

In 1656, on the 14th of April, a Hans Altmann died at 90 years old. It is not now established whether he had two or three wives, and the first church books present a puzzle to us here. For, in 1596, the baptism book reports to us that, on the 28th of March, a little girl, Elsbeth, was baptized to Hans Altmann. This Elsbeth died in August in 1629, probably of the plague, as the wife of Fridli Pfändler from Schwanden, son of Cantonal President Jost Pfändler. In 1600, on the 21st of January, a Hans Altmann celebrated marriage with Verena Jakober. From this marriage came: 1. in December in 1600, Anna, who died in 1685 as the wife of Adam Härzi from Werdenberg [*Canton St. Gallen*], whose father, Fridli Härzi, acquired the Engi *Tagwen*^a right in 1652. (In 1680 he bought out again; see the Introduction, pg. 6 [pg. 5 in the SW translation]). 2. in April 1603, Barbara, who died single on the 27th of October in 1620. 3. in May 1609, Johannes, whose fate is unknown.

Then, in 1613, on the 31st of January, again a Hans Altmann celebrated marriage, with Barbara Hämmerli, daughter of Franz from Engi. From this marriage came seven children; two of them died in 1629, in August, of the plague. A daughter, E l s b e t h (1631-1710), married Hans Rudolf Büsser from Engi, and Maria (1633-1692) married Mathäus Marti from Engi. Two little sons died young, and the youngest became a head of family, namely Hans, 1635-1703, *Tagwen* official and federal councillor.

a *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]

Councillor of States [*Gottfried*] Heer and J. J. Kubli-Müller believe now that they are dealing here with one and the same Hans Altmann, who just married three times and became 90 years old. However, I hold that this must have been two or three different Hans Altmanns, because, in the first place, we have two daughters named Elisabeth who surely could not have had the same father. Furthermore, this Hans Altmann, who died in 1656 at the age of 90, would have been nearly 76 years old at the birth of his youngest son, Federal Councillor Hans Altmann.

In the council minutes of the 16th century, which also form the subject of exhaustive study by Mr. Kubli-Müller, are found a number of Altmanns. However, here also the inexcusable brevity of the cantonal secretaries takes its revenge. It is extremely difficult to separate the Altmanns who were already found in Ennenda and in Engi at that time from one another. In the minutes, in addition to the simple names, they never, or in the most infrequent of cases, added the place of residence or home commune. It can be considered fully proven that, around 1550, two different Hans Altmanns had already existed, of whom the one probably belonged to Engi, but the other to Ennenda. That is, the following appeared before the council:

In 1547, in November, Hans Altmann, as overseer of Andli Stähli, of Giren Frau^b.

In 1549, Captain Hans Altmann from Ennenda.

In 1561, on the 7th of May, a Joss Altmann as Alpine resident at Fessis [*above Ennenda*], who, doubtless, belonged to Engi.

In 1575, on the 1st of February, Jakob and Peter Altmann had appeared before the council on behalf of a Jakob Schneider (apparently from Elm) against Bläsi (Blasius) Zentner from Elm. These two, Jakob and Peter Altmann, may well have been relatives from Engi, to conclude by the names.

N.B.: In 1581, on the 23rd of May, Bläsi Altmann appeared, in addition, in Elm against Jakob Schumacher, and, what is of particular interest, this Bläsi Altmann was granted the proprietorship to the bath in Wichlen at Elm by the council. Incidentally mentioned, the Wichlen bath was filled up with earth in the year 1762, in the year of the great water shortage. Also the bath in Mattlau, from which the wash now takes its name (therefore, in the Badkopf wash), was washed away by the Sernf [*river*].

What still needs to be noted was one of the first slate-tile-cutters on our Plattenberg, the Hans Altmann who became 90 year old and Hilari Büsser from Engi. We have already made the acquaintance of the Büssers in the Introduction [*see pg. 5 (pg. 4 in the SW translation)*] as a very old Engi family.

That is all that I was able to discover about the origins of the Altmann family.

^b *Flurname* - field name. People with identical names were differentiated by adding their occupation or a descriptive term for the area where they lived [SW]

The Altmanns have at present grown neither stronger nor weaker than the Luchsingers, for the statistics show in both, by 1920, 110 families each. With the Altmanns, there were, by 1800, 18 families (the Luchsingers had 12); by 1750, 15 (17); by 1800, 27 (28); by 1850, 48 (57); by 1880, 70 (85); by 1900, 80 (92); and by 1920, 110 (Luchsingers 110).

We have attributed the poor development of the Luchsingers to their high rate of emigration (41%), thus, it is, with the Altmanns, the comparatively extremely small number of children! Of all our citizen families, we find, with the Altmanns, the fewest children per family, only 3.85, and, with the Baumgartners, the most (5.4). Of course, with the Altmanns, still other factors also played a part, about which the statistics [*at the end of the book*] can give more specific information.

In the latest *Tagwen* accounting, the Altmanns are also only reported on with 12 enjoying the benefits of *Tagwen* rights, nevertheless, still one more than the Luchsingers.

The emigration with the Altmanns, percentage-wise, is not called strong. We have calculated 41% with the Luchsingers, then, with the Altmanns, it was only 30.5% = 165 persons. Of them, 37 = 23% went to North America; 10 = 6.2% to Brazil; 67 = 41% to other cantons; 33 = 20.5% to other Glarner communes; and 14 = 8.5% to whereabouts unknown.

Of the 119 wives of the Altmanns, 51 = 43% originated from Engi, and the marriages to our families are distributed with them as follows: to the Martis 14 = 29.5%; to the Blumers and Hämmerlis 8 each = 15.4%; to the Baumgartners 7 = 13.5%; to the Bräms and Wintelers 3 each = 5.8%; to the Luchsingers, Wysses and Gigers 2 each = 3.8%; to the Altmanns and Norders 1 each.

The inheritance of first names with the Altmanns produced the following picture: 20 = 18% of all heads of family are [*named*] Fridolin; 16 = 14.5% Jost; 13 = 11.7% Jakob; 11 = 9.9% Hans and Johannes; and 10 = 9% Samuel. These are the most frequent Altmann first names.

In the communal and church offices, the Altmanns are also represented only sparsely. They produced: one each of a federal councillor, a *Tagwen* official, a church steward and a chief charity official. In the old military, they provided one each of a lieutenant and a sergeant.

The federal councillor and *Tagwen* official occurred in the same person, Hans Altmann (Nr. 5 of the family tree), 1635-1703, to whom, in fact, all of today's Altmanns from Engi can be traced back and who, therefore, can be considered their ancestor. He had married two wives, in 1661, Verena Marti, of *Tagwen* official Jost from Engi, who died on the 13th of February in 1670, and, on the 8th of November in 1670, Rosina Becker from Ennenda, who died in 1711. From the two marriages, eleven children resulted, among them four heads of family.

The church steward and charity official also occurred in the same person, Lieutenant Hans Altmann (Nr. 13 of the family tree), 1707-1771, a grandson of the above. From him, no more descendants exist.

In the foreign service, four Altmanns lost their lives:

In 1714, on the 23rd of January, Hans Altmann, single, born in 1689, namely, by wounds received at the siege of the city of Freiburg im Breisgau [*Duchy of Baden*], in the Kaiser's service, under Company Captain Fridolin Zwicky.

In 1740, in November, the brother of the preceding, Fridolin Altmann, single, born in 1702, died in the Neapolitan service under Regimental Colonel Tschudy. Both were grandsons of Federal Councillor and *Tagwen* Official Hans Altmann. Their brother, Leonhard, was a great-grandfather of Wald-Paulus and Höfli-Jost, as well as Wald-Leonhard and tile-scraper-Leonhard, besides also of Spicher-Christof and Geiser-Samuel and their brothers and sisters. I have mentioned these in order to show how multi-branched the descendants of an individual can be. These Altmann families, that is to say, occupy almost half of the entire Altmann family tree.

In 1736, on the 9th of March, Hilarius Altmann, single, born in 1715, died in the French service under Company Cantonal President Zwicky. His two brothers, Fridli and Kaspar, are ancestors of the late Fridolin Altmann, on the Allmeind, or of the late Fridolin Altmann, Hoschet Altstafel, as the case may be.

In 1810, on the 8th of May, Mathäus Altmann, born in 1783, husband of Anna Wyss, left as an enlisted soldier and remains missing, like, in addition, many a one who, in those times, let himself be recruited as a soldier or were forced into the service. Presumably he also was killed in Russia under Napoleon I. — From his marriage no more descendants exist.

With the Altmanns, there are very few accidents with a fatal result to report in the period until about 1860:

In 1852, on the 24th of June, Fridolin Altmann, 14 years old, froze to death on his father's back, while crossing Segnes Pass [*east of Elm, into Canton Graubünden*]. His father, Heinrich, moved to Brazil in about 1855 with his other son, Kaspar, after his second wife, Barbara Giger, died in childbirth. He was a brother of Wald-Leonhard Altmann.

In 1853, on the 11th of November, Anna Altmann, single, born in 1833, a sister of tile-scraper-Leonhard im Boden, fell to her death at the straw gathering.

In 1863, on the 14th of November, Sara, the 5-year-old daughter of old Jost Altmann im Höfli, drowned in the Sernf [*river*]. The corpse was first found in the following year, on the 10th of March.