

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]

II. THE BLUMERS [pg. 17-26]

The history of the other families can now be discussed substantially more briefly than with the Martis, since the local historical remarks that were necessary with them, to explain various topics, such as emigration, offices, military, etc., no longer need to be repeated.

The Blumers from Engi stemmed from Luchsingen, where, today, of course, no representatives of this family are found anymore. It has not yet been possible to prove whether the Blumers from Schwanden, Thon and Nidfurn also stem from Luchsingen; but it is very probable. — In Engi, the Blumers have now developed extraordinarily. Nevertheless, their family tree stands in second place, with regard to size, among the civic families of Engi. However, since 41.5% of all Blumers emigrated, they stand, as citizens settled in Engi, in third place, since, in this respect, not only the Martis, but also the Baumgartners, are ahead of them.

About the ancestor and his closest descendants, I would like to be rather thorough and detailed. Wolfgang Blumer, c.1540-1610, son of Church Steward Othmar Blumer of Luchsingen, is considered to be the ancestor of the Engeler Blumers. He was *Landvogt*^a in Werdenburg [*Canton St. Gallen*], in 1580. There is no documentary evidence of his purchase into Engi, but it must have taken place around 1585. The oldest *Tagwen*^b minutes only just go back to 1600. From the marriage of this *Landvogt* Wolfgang Blumer to Ursula Becker came seven children, five sons and two daughters. Of the sons, only one, Paulus, the second youngest, comes into consideration for the Engeler Blumers. Of the oldest, Fridolin, born in 1566, we know nothing, in all likelihood, he is presumed dead in foreign military services. The second son, Samuel, died in 1612, single, likewise the third, Andreas, born in 1584, died single in 1654. The youngest, Jakob, settled in Schwanden and got married; but, since his father, *Landvogt* Blumer, also acquired the *Tagwen* right in Schwanden, he then built a branch of the Blumer family tree there from Schwanden.

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

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]

Of the two daughters, the older was called Barbara, and died in 1599 while the first wife of *Landvogt* Hilarius Gensig in Matt. The latter was *Landvogt*, in 1573, in the Freiamt [*Canton Aargau*] and died as early as 1600, on the 7th of September, after he married again. His second wife, Katharina Müller, had obviously not taken his death very seriously, since she already got married again a month later, namely, to Lieutenant, Federal Councillor and *Neunerrichter*^c Hans Elmer from Matt. — In the year 1576, on the 25th of June, *Landvogt* Gensig's residence, the Old Sun, or the “white house” in Matt, burned down in his absence, and, with it, three children were burned, to which event the well-known graveyard story is linked.¹ A daughter of *Landvogt* Gensig, died in 1627, on the 1st of July, single. His only son, Hilarius, moved to Mitlödi, where he became a citizen and *Tagwen* official. In 1632, on the 28th of October, he married Sibilla Baumgartner, a granddaughter of Federal Councillor Hans, the ancestor of our Baumgartners. He is considered to be the ancestor of today's Ginsigs in Mitlödi.

The other daughter of the Blumer ancestor, Ursula, died in 1636, on the 4th of January, and had married twice, in 1615, to Jakob Stiger, and, in 1634, to Paulus Bähler, both from Matt.

Then the only son of the ancestor who carried on the family line in Engi, Paulus Blumer, Nr. 2 of the family tree, produced, in his marriage to Elsbeth Zeller, six children, five sons and one daughter: Peter, Wolfgang, Meinrad, Maria, Fridolin, and Paulus. The youngest two sons both died between one and two years old. The oldest, Peter, was a master glazier. He settled in Glarus, in the so-called “upper *Tagwen*”, and purchased the citizen right of the Glarus commune in 1623. He was the first Blumer who became a Glarner citizen, yet he cannot be considered as the ancestor of the Glarner Blumers, since, in the 17th and 18th centuries, still other Blumers from Schwanden and Nidfurn bought their citizen right, and so constitute several family lines of the Glarner Blumers.

The other two sons of Paulus Blumer, Nr. 2, Wolfgang (Nr. 3) and Meinrad (Nr. 4), remained in Engi, and both had large families, with 16 children altogether, from which four heads of family resulted. Wolfgang Blumer, Nr. 3 of the family tree, fell in the Mühlebach in 1652 and died as a result. His wife, Margaretha Hämmerli from Engi, as a widow with ten children still, then married *Fünfer*^d and *Neunerrichter*, *Tagwen* Official and Federal Councillor on the Schranken^e Samuel Steinmann from Niederurnen,

Meinrad Blumer, Nr. 4 of the family tree, married to Elsbeth Knobel from Betschwanden, was a charity official, and died in 1680, on the 2nd of Febr. Thanks to Josef Blumer, Nr. 5,² son of **Paulus** [*Wolfgang*], Nr. 3, who was a church steward and *Tagwen* official, the Blumer family tree was greatly benefitted, since he, with his wife, Ursula Norder from Engi, produced 16 children, of whom seven sons carried on the family line, so that, by the year 1700, the family tree

c *Neunerrichter* - one of nine judges on a court. [SW]

1 In the *Chronicle* of Joh. Heinrich Tschudi, in 1714, it says, “on the 25th of June in 1576, in the Sernf valley, the house of Hilario Gensig, who was the *Landvogt* in the Freyen Aemtern, went up in flames and miserably burned up all 3 of his children.”

d *Fünfer*richter - one of five judges on a court [SW]

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

2 This Church Steward Josef Blumer, also purchased the *Tagwen* right in Matt, according to the *Tagwen* minutes from Matt! The same thing was repeated by his descendants three times. The father of Cantonal Rifleman Josef, was also a citizen of Matt!

grew to 20 families, by 1750, to 50 families, and, by 1800, to 90 families. In 1850, there were already 175, and, in 1880, 250 families, and, in 1900, 320, and, in 1920, 370 families.

As mentioned already, of the civic families from Engi, the highest percentage emigrated from the Blumers, namely, for the most part, to other Glarner communes (312) and other cantons (353). For this reason, we find Engeler Blumers dispersed into the whole canton and into Switzerland as a whole. Of the Glarner communes, it was, above all, Niederurnen and Glarus that exerted a special pull on the Blumers from Engi.

In Niederurnen, there was a Joh. Jacob Blumer, who settled, about 1790, in the Niederurner mountains, on the so-called “Stockberg”. In 1809, on the 27th of November, he renewed his *Tagwen* right in Engi. He had a large number of descendants, that, in 1850, already stood at over 20 families, and all remained in Niederurnen. Today, Kaspar Blumer, a descendant of his, sits on the communal council of Niederurnen. — Then, today, there are, in St. Gallen and in the Toggenburg [*Canton St. Gallen*], a considerable number of descendants of Communal Councillor Josef Blumer, 1804-1858 (a son of old Meinrad in der “Engi”^f), and of *Tagwen* Official Josef Blumer, 1800-1869 (son of Federal Councillor Johannes). Thus we find, in almost all the larger Swiss towns, Blumer families who stem from Engi.

Offices: In the communal offices, the Blumers, before 1850, are represented far less than the Martis and Baumgartners. Had the Martis produced nine federal councillors, then the Blumers are only represented with three such. As the first Blumer federal councillor, we have mentioned Johannes Blumer (Nr. 89), 1739-1814, who first got married, in the year 1800, at the age of 61 years, to Anna Maria Sigrist from Luchsingen, the widow of Sergeant Bernhard Blumer (Nr. 70), (father of old Führli-Michael and Stöckenburg-Paulus). His only son, the above-mentioned *Tagwen* Official Josef Blumer, moved with his family into the Toggenburg, where a few of his descendants still live today. The second federal councillor from the Blumer family was President Fridolin Blumer, 1817-1882, Nr. 158 of the family tree, father of Councillor of States Leonhard Blumer, and his brothers and sisters.

The third was his son, Chief Justice Fridolin Blumer, 1840-1899, Nr. 217, father of old President Frid. Blumer-Wichser. He had held the office of school official and communal president at the same time, in addition. Moreover, the Blumers also produced few representatives in the rest of the offices before 1850. Besides the ancestor, whom we became acquainted with as a *Landvogt*, they produced seven *Tagwen* officials, four church stewards, two charity officials, and two *Tagwen* secretaries. In the old military system, they are represented by no captains or lieutenants. On the other hand, they produced one standard-bearer, four sergeants, and two master riflemen. In the military of today, various representatives of the Blumers have now advanced to officer-grade.

We must still commemorate a man as a praiseworthy member of the Blumer family tree from the time before 1850. This concerns *Tagwen* Official and Schoolmaster Samuel Blumer, 1804-1849 (Nr. 134), grandfather of Cantonal Engineer Alfr. Blumer, in Glarus. He

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

served at the side of Schoolmaster Joachim Baumgartner, from 1835 until his unfortunately all-too-early death in 1849, as the exemplary senior teacher of the school in Engi. At the age of 32 already, and after he served the commune as *Tagwen* official, which was known to be of as much importance as *Tagwen* president, already married to Anna Baumgartner, he left wife and child to go to the Küssnacht [*Canton Schwyz*] teacher-training institute. After one year, he returned to Engi, provided with good testimonials. The well-known teacher-training institute director, [*Ignaz Thomas*] Scherr, testified for him:³ “He has worked on his further education with the most excellent diligence and has become very well versed in all real and formal subjects of the primary school. Moreover, he has exhibited such a pure easy-going disposition and such a holy zeal for the position of primary school teacher, that he [*Scherr*] could release him [*Blumer*] from the institution with the conviction that he would work for the true prosperity of mankind in the teaching profession.” In Engi, he then wanted to apply his acquired knowledge, and, in addition to the reading and writing, he also introduced arithmetic, nature studies and singing. Since they gave him to understand, however, publicly in a *Tagwen* assembly, that the latter [*arithmetic, nature studies and singing*] were unnecessary matters of minor importance, he gave his resignation and considered looking around for a teaching position in another canton, where they would appreciate his teaching style better. Meanwhile, however, at that same memorable *Tagwen* assembly, Pastor Jacob Heer had been summoned by a messenger. This one came also, almost out of breath, just before the end of the *Tagwen*, and accomplished so much in his fiery speech that they not only raised the salary of Schoolmaster Samuel from 12 to 16 Doubloons, but they also promised him that they would not interfere with him in his teaching methods any more in the future. Samuel Blumer then withdrew his resignation and remained in Engi until his early end. He also rendered great services to the commune as *Tagwen* secretary. The Matt church book reports to us about his death: “This dear man honorably held the position of senior teacher in Engi for 14 years. In him, the family lost a faithful father, the school, an excellent teacher, and the entire commune, a man who had a heart for its well-being and woe.”

Since 1850, the Blumers from Engi have increased further in their reputation, which has been demonstrated by the increase in the number of offices which have been conferred on them since then.

In the foreground stands the venerable figure of Leonhard Blumer, 1844-1905, Nr. 231 of the family tree, who was awarded the high position of C o u n c i l l o r o f S t a t e s of Canton Glarus. As is well known, he has also created an indelible name in the field of education, of industry and, above all, of commerce. His life and work G. Heer has also laudably examined in his history of the Blumers^g and also remains, in addition, in the grateful memory of our valley citizens, so forgive me when I content myself with this brevity for today.

Furthermore, the Blumers produced, in addition, five cantonal councillors, two chief justices, three communal presidents, two church presidents, three school presidents, one orphanage official, four communal councillors, one mediator, two registrars, one

3 G. Heer. *School History of Canton Glarus*.

g See pg. 138 in “The Blumers” chapter of G. Heer’s book: *On the History of the Glarner Families, Particularly Those of the Sernf Valley* [pg. 3 of the SW translation] [SW]

police chief, and one church official (Church “Steward” Leonhard Blumer, Bifang).

Six Engeler Blumers took up the vocation of teacher, three that of doctor, and three that of engineer. The latter one was Emil Blumer, 1850-1900 (a brother of Oskar Blumer im Bergen), who, in 1887, took a prominent part in the construction of the famous Przemysel fortress at the edge of the Carpathians, which was destroyed in the world war in the year 1915, and which was an undertaking of Swiss General Daniel von Salis-Soglio. Later he [*Emil Blumer*] was city engineer for Chur [*Canton Graubünden*] and director of the gas and water works at Thun [*Canton Bern*].

Adam Blumer (1827-1887), brother of Federal Councillor Fridolin Blumer-Coray, was a missionary in North America.

In the distribution of first names and their inheritance by the heads of family of the Blumer family, Fridolin stands in first place with 45 = 12.15%; 2. Jacob 36 = 9.72%; 3. Hans or Johannes 33 = 8.91%; 4. Josef 31 = 8.37%; 5. Paulus 25 = 6.75%; 6. Samuel 17 = 4.59%; then follows Johann Jacob 15 = 4%; Meinrad 14 = 3.78%; Mathias, Heinrich and David 11 each = 2.95%.

Since the greater portion of the Blumers from Engi live in other communes, only 31% of all their wives are also from Engi, and, therefore, of our civic families, they exhibit the intermarriages with the weakest percentages. Of 443 wives, only 138, therefore, stem from Engi, of them, the most are allotted to the Martis 42 = 30%; 2. [*to*] the Baumgartners 25 = 16.5%; 3. to the Blumers themselves 20 = 14.5%; 4. to the Hämmerlis 19 = 14%; 5. to the Altmanns 15 = 10.7%; 6. to the Luchsingers 10 = 7%; and 5 each to the Bräms and Wysses, 2 to the Geigers, and 1 to the Norders.

Eight Blumers perished in the foreign military services.

In 1650, Fridolin Blumer, born in 1628, died at Tolosa in Spain, and, 10 years later, in 1660, Paulus Blumer, both sons of Wolfgang Blumer, a grandson of the ancestor, *Landvogt* Wolfgang Blumer.

In 1678, Tailor Wolfgang Blumer, born in 1650, died in the foreign service, whereabouts unknown, in the first year of his marriage to Rosina Schneider from Elm; after his death, she bore him a son, Fridolin, whose son, Wolfgang Blumer, born in 1707, likewise a tailor by occupation, perished in the year 1741, on the 16th of October, as the husband of Margreth Blumer, in the English military service in Gibraltar.

In 1709, on the 11th of September, Rudolf Blumer, born in 1682, on the 13th of January, son of *Tagwen* official Jakob, lost his life in the bloody battle at Mons [*Belgium*].

In 1721, Josef Blumer, born in 1699, died in the French service in Paris under Major Bachmann.

In 1794, on the 15th of October, Kaspar Blumer, born in 1773, son of Carpenter Hans Jakob, lost his life at Breda [*Holland*], in the Dutch service, in the Regiment Stockar.

In 1842, on the 1st of January, Joh. Jakob Blumer, born in 1819, son of Vintner Johannes Blumer, residing in Chur, died at Bologna [*Italy*] in the papal service.

With the Blumers we encounter an unusually large number of a c c i d e n t s, which we want to mention in sequence, at least those from the time before 1850:

In 1652, on the 26th of August, Wolfgang Blumer, who was already mentioned at the beginning of the Blumer history [*see above, pg. 19 (pg. 2 in the SW translation)*], born in 1595 (Nr. 3 of the family tree), grandson of the ancestor and husband of Margreth Hämmerli, had an accident in which he fell into the Mühlebach and died as a result.

In 1717, on the 4th of December, Josef Blumer, born in 1662 (Nr. 14), husband of Barbara Schiesser from Schwändi, a great-grandfather of Coppersmith Heinrich Blumer, (then also of Teacher H. Blumer in Luchsingen) and of George Blumer, at the old post office, fell to his death in the woods.

In 1741, on the 30th of June, Hans Peter Blumer, called the “young”, born in 1694 (Nr. 25), husband of Verena Altmann, was killed on the Plattenberg.

In 1765, Fridolin Blumer, born in 1757, young son of Meinrad Blumer, Nr. 51, drowned in the Sernf. His body was never found.

In 1769, on the 21st of October, Joh. Jakob Blumer, born in 1744, husband of Barbara Bräm, fell to his death on the Eggenberg on his way home from gathering straw, leaving behind five underaged children. He was the grandfather of the now-still-living 83-year-old, Katharine Baumgartner, born Blumer, widow of “young” Martin (his signature), and great-grandfather of our oldest communal citizen, Jakob Blumer im Wyden.

The r e d d y s e n t e r y, which was rampant with us in the year 1771, had afflicted the family of Peter Blumer (Nr. 53) especially seriously, in that, in the time between the 2nd - 20th of September in 1771, four children between 1-10 years old fell victim to it.

In 1790, in October, Paulus Blumer, born in 1748, husband of Anna Altmann, had an accident. The death book reports of him: “Paulus Blumer had an accident in Schwendi, a half-hour outside of Weisstannen in the highland, he fell down from a rock and was first found after some time had passed, and was only still recognized from pieces of his clothing. He was buried in Weisstannen, according to the Catholic custom.” He left behind two underaged daughters, of whom the one, Regula, born in 1784, got married to Johannes Marti from Engi (Nr. 150) in the year 1806, on the 25th of December, who, as we have heard in the Martis [*see pg. 16 in “The Martis” chapter (pg. 8-9 of the SW translation)*], drowned with his stepsister in the Sernf in 1807. In 1810, this Regula Blumer got married for a second time to George Elmer from Matt, father of the late George Elmer im Friedhof. She was, therefore, his mother.

In 1794, on the 3rd of July, Fridolin Blumer, born in 1776, therefore 18 years old, fell, as a goat-herder, on the so-called Silberblanken in Elm. “He was taken along by a mudflow and hurled down over the high rock face.” His sister, Sofia Blumer, born in 1786, married Shoemaker Dietrich Kubli from Matt in 1807 and died as early as 1810. Kubli married for a second time, Regula Bähler, widow of Bartholomäus Stauffacher from Matt, who, in the year 1807, on the 15th of May, was b e h e a d e d as one of the last in Canton Glarus (because of repeated thefts). The last one executed was Shoemaker Joh. Josef Rudolf Michel, Netstal, who suffered death by the sword in 1836, on the 24th of Nov., because of robbery and murder.

In 1799, on the 27th of May, Mathäus Blumer, born in 1754, Nr. 81, was inadvertently wounded by a gunshot in Schwanden, and died twelve hours afterwards. Since this event happened in the year 1799, one is tempted to believe that this happened in connection with the battles of the Russians against the French. In May, however, there were no foreign troops still in Canton Glarus.

In 1817, on the 13th of April, Anna Katharina Blumer, born in 1753, on the 7th of February, single daughter of Hans Blumer and Anna Barbara Ruch (Nr. 37) (great-grandparents of old Wyden Jacob Blumer) had an accident. The death book reports of her: “She wanted to go home on Sunday (probably from Mitlödi), missed the path, was forgotten during the night, and froze to death.”

In 1818, on the 20th of November, Paulus Blumer, born in 1773, on the 19th of November (Nr. 84), husband of Susanna Marti, was murdered on the road from ~~Caro~~ [Claro] to Cresciano in [Canton] Ticino, and was buried there. Further details are not specified. Probably he was on French-speaking Swiss business. He was the grandfather of David Blumer, Mühle, or the great-grandfather of Communal Councillor Paulus Blumer and his brothers and sisters. A daughter of his, Susanna, married Matthäus Luchsinger, a brother of Jacob Luchsinger im Schlattberg (this family has emigrated).

In 1823, on the 3rd of August, Josef Blumer,⁴ born in 1782 (Nr. 90), father of old Cantonal Rifleman Josef Blumer, fell to his death while picking cherries. Six years before, in 1817, his brother, Mathäus Blumer (Nr. 85), who lived in Matt, was also killed by a fall from a cherry tree.

In 1829, on the 2nd of September, Johannes Blumer, Nr. 135, born in 1808, husband of Ursula Zentner from Elm, lost his life in a flood on the Ueblibach. He was a son of old Meinrad Blumer in der “Engi”.

In 1831, on the 11th of November, Michael, the 4-year-old youngest little son of Michael Blumer, Nr. 98, fell into the Mühlebach unobserved and was first found in the Biäsche [in Weesen, Canton St. Gallen] and buried in Mollis. He was a brother of Wagoner Bernhard and Tailor Josef Blumer (father of Furrier Kaspar Blumer), and also a brother of Johannes Blumer im Mattbrunnen (great-grandfather of Communal Councillor Michael Baumgartner and his brothers and sisters).

4 A citizen from Matt.

In 1832, on the 27th of May, Josef, the two-year-old little son of the first marriage of Cantonal Policeman and *Tagwen* Secretary Josef Blumer, drowned in the septic tank.

In 1845, on the 25th of October, Sergeant, Church Steward, Mediator, and Charity Official Fridolin Blumer, born in 1784 (Nr. 103), and the grandfather of Councillor of States Blumer and his brothers and sisters, had an accident. The church book reports of him: “This man, who had been subject to spells of gout for a long time, after he had brought their midday meal to two wood-choppers who were busy on the Badkopf, was found dead there soon afterwards by us by the steep Badkopf path. A fracture of the upper arm, a bruise on the temple and some other injuries pointed to a slip and fall, but that was probably the consequence of a gout attack.

In 1848, on the 25th of August, Joh. Jakob, the little son of Church President Adam Blumer, was crushed to death at the age of six on the Kohlbödeli by a log that had been sloppily laid down.

In 1850, on the 22nd of November, Samuel Blumer, born in 1823, on the 14th of September (Nr. 170), husband of Midwife Maria Marti (who then, in 1854, married Hilarius Luchsinger, Engi), was crushed to death on the Plattenberg by a cliff that was caving in. It is he who was the father of the late Guildmaster, Fridolin Blumer.

After 1850, many such accidents which brought great sorrow to the Blumer family would still be enumerated. We will, however, only still report on those that might not be generally known any more.

In 1855, on the 27th of June, Jost Blumer, born in 1837, therefore 18 years old, fell to his death in the woods on the Plattenberg. He was a brother of Verena Blumer, the mother of Communal Councillor Paulus Blumer and his brothers and sisters.

In 1869, on the 6th of April, Jakob Blumer, born in 1814 (Nr. 157), husband of Katharina Altmann, had a fatal accident on the Plattenberg. His only son, Joh. Jakob, known under the surname, “Gässler”, if I am not mistaken, was married to Verena Baumgartner, daughter from Watchman Jakob Baumgartner’s first marriage. This family has emigrated, where to is not known to me.

In 1871, on the 22nd of November, Maria Blumer, born in 1839, a sister of Printer Heinrich Blumer at Riedern, whose son, Fridolin, still lives as a coach builder at Riedern, smothered on coal fumes in the Ingrube^h in Glarus. She was married to Adam Marti from Engi, residing in Glarus. He would be a brother of old Shepherd Mathias Marti, and Tailor Mathäus Marti. Also smothered with her was her oldest daughter, 13-year-old Verena Marti.

In 1881, on the 4th of September, Haberdasher Fridolin Blumer from Engi, born in 1855 (Nr. 267), drowned in high water in the Birs near Basel. His father, Fridolin, as yet lived in Basel and had a family of twelve, of which six sons became branches of the Blumer family tree. The wife of the casualty, Verena Nägeli, then married his brother, Karl Blumer.

h *Ingrube* - the name of a low-lying property near Glarus, formerly called *Richstätte* [SW]

In 1888, on the 1st of October, what will be well-known by the older people as the so-called “Thornhouse” in outer Mattbrunnen, which was occupied by the Markus Blumer family, the step-brother of George Blumer at the old post office, burned down, completely down. Unfortunately, at the same time, his 16-year-old daughter, Barbara Blumer, also lost her life in the flames.

In 1915, on the 17th of August, Locomotive Engineer Jakob Blumer from Engi, living in Zürich, was crushed to death in Dietikon [*Canton Zürich*] by the collision of two trains. He left behind two underaged children, and was descended from the Niederurnen line.