

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  
Martin Baumgartner, teacher in Engi.

Self-published by the author. Buchdruckerei Glarner Nachrichten, Rud. Tschudy, 1923  
Translated by Sue Wolf

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

## VII. THE BRÄMS

[pg. 51-54]

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

In the council minutes, as early as the year 1548 (June), we come across a Bräm from Engi, whose first name, however, is unfortunately not noted; it says there simply, "Säumer<sup>a</sup> Bräm". Whether this Bräm is identical to the ancestor, Mathias Bräm from Splügen [*Canton Graubünden*], who possibly, yes probably, because of the pack-animal of that time, came from Valtellina [*Canton Graubünden*] into Canton Glarus, can only be surmised, but a proof does not exist.

In 1566, ancestor Mathias Bräm from Splügen then purchased himself the Glarner cantonal right for 40 fl. and, thus, became a citizen of Engi, but not also his descendants, otherwise the purchase sum would have to have amounted to at least 100 Gl. (see the Baumgartners' purchase [pg. 26 in "The Baumgartners" chapter {pg. 1 in the SW translation}]). All of Mathias Bräm's descendants remained then, until 1836, residents without the citizen right, or "patient ones", in Engi (see page 35 [in "The Hämmerlis" chapter (pg. 2-3 in the SW translation)]), dispute regarding the church right of the Hämmerlis and Bräms). Only thru admission into the cantonal right in the year 1836 did the Bräms, twelve in number, become full-fledged citizens of Engi. These twelve Bräms who were admitted into the cantonal right are as follows:

1. Samuel Bräm, born in 1800, died in 1874. Brother of Herrenerg<sup>b</sup> Heinrich. His marriage to Anna Hämmerli (1790-1853) remained childless.

2., 3., 4. Mathias Bräm, born in 1804, died ?, a brother of the first, and his young sons, Jakob (1831) and Heinrich (1835). This family moved to North America, with five sons and one daughter. Further details about them are not known, except that the daughter, A. Katharina, was married to a Meinrad Zentner from Elm in 1855 in New Elm [*Wisconsin*] (America).

---

a Säumer – a person crossing Alpine mountain passes with a pack-animal, carrying goods [SW]

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]

5. Heinrich Bräm, Herrenerg (1810-1881). His nine children from his marriage with Barbara Luchsinger (1811-1885) were only born after his admission into the cantonal right.

6. Burkhard Bräm (1772-1837) and 7. his son, Burkhard (1805-1848), and 8. and 9. sons of his, Burkhard (1829-1884) and Peter Bräm (1834-1894). Their brother, Heinrich Bräm, Linden, was only born in 1841.

10. Fridolin Bräm (1802-?) and 11. his son, Fridolin, born in 1829, died in 1854, single. The father, Fridolin Bräm, moved, after the death of his wife, Kath. Zentner (1805-1855), with the only surviving daughter of seven children, Ursula, born in 1839, to Brazil, from where no information about their further fate exists.

12. Jakob Friedrich Bräm, born in 1820, died in 1855, single, at Basel of cholera, the only son of Samuel Bräm (1784-1831), who lived in Basel, whose father, Mathias, died as early as 1816 in Basel. Of this family, no more descendants exist. A sister of this Samuel Bräm, Elisabeth, 1785-1828, was an ill-famed person and publicly condemned. In Basel, she was arrested as a prostitute and, as such, was transported back to Engi. In 1809, she gave birth to an illegitimate child. She was imprisoned more than once. Eventually she married, however (1822). Another sister, Barbara, 1791-1837, was mute. In 1817, she gave birth to an illegitimate, dead child and could not name the father.

Around 1550, Bräms must also have existed at Kerenzen<sup>c</sup>; thus, a Lienhard Bräm, who owned a little farm near Filzbach. 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 prohibition and handed over his mother as security. Wine was also forbidden to him in 1547, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, after it had been previously permitted to him again. In 1548, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, he was before the council because 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" dungeon, the worst of the prisons at the time, which were of three types, namely 1. the "little closet", 2. the "companion dungeon", and 3. the "bad dungeon". (Cultural-historical contribution.) — Today the so-called Bräm – Boden still exists above Filzbach as evidence of the existence of the Bräms at Kerenzen.

The only son of ancestor Mathias who carried on the family tree was Gorius (Gregorius) Bräm, who died in 1607, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February. In 1584, he also bought the Schwanden *Tagwen*<sup>d</sup> right (it would have been more advantageous if he had acquired the cantonal right instead!). He married Regula Zopfi, and three children had been baptized by him: 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, comes into

---

c *Kerenzen - Canton Glarus district which includes Mühlehorn, Obstalden & Filzbach [SW]*

d *Tagwen - an ancient Glarner term, from at least the 6<sup>th</sup> 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]*

consideration, from whose marriage to Maria Tschudy, who died in 1677, nine children resulted, six daughters and three sons. Of these, again, only the youngest, Samuel Bräm, became a head of family. The oldest son, Hans, died single 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* right from Engi, and then, however, in 1680, bought out again. From this marriage with Härtzi ten children were baptized in the years 1652-1673 (see pg. 9[6] of the Introduction [pg. 5 in the SW translation]).

The Bräm family increased, compared with the others:

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

We see, therefore, that the Bräms showed an extremely sparse development from the beginning. A significant reason for this is the fact that the individual family units of this family occurring in the period 1675-1830 had very small numbers of children, with almost no heads of family. 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 resulted. All four heads of family of the latter Bräm family on the Herrenegg did not remain in Engi, however. 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 Bräms 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 (seven 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. Of his two children, Pio Henrique, born in 1889, and Henriquihina, born in 1891, nothing further is known to me. — The fourth was Samuel Bräm, 1849-1922, baker and proprietor for "The People's Garden", Glarus. Of his three heads of family, two (Heinrich, pastor in Brooklyn, [*New York*] North America, and Abraham) had childless families. — A striking example of how a family can disperse and even become extinct.

To the number of those enjoying the benefit of *Tagwen* rights, the Bräms contribute only seven. That this number increases itself is a poor likelihood for the time being, since, even proportionally, a great many of this family moved away, in total, 104 people. In the emigrations list, 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 whereabouts unknown.

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

With the *f i r s t* n a m e s of the Bräm heads of family and their inheritance, stands in first place: Heinrich 10 = 22.5%; Samuel 9 = 18.75%; Burkhard and Mathias 6 each = 12.5%; Johannes 5 = 10.4%; and Gregorius, Fridolin and Peter 3 each = 6.25%.

Since the Bräms were regarded, until 1836, only as "patient ones", up to this time they also had no right to *T a g w e n* o r c h u r c h o f f i c e s. They were, no doubt, allowed to enjoy the benefit of the communal profits as *Tagwen* associates, but, as non-cantonal citizens, they, as well as a portion of the Hämmerlis, had no voting rights. So it is understandable that we do not find a single dignitary of any *Tagwen* or church office in the entire Bräm family tree.

Three Bräms lost their lives in the *f o r e i g n* m i l i t a r y s e r v i c e s:

In 1643, Hans Bräm, born in 1625, "had left his life altogether gallantly" (death book) in France, in the battle near Rocroy. He was the son of Mathias and Maria Tschudy; and a great-grandson of the ancestor, Mathias from Splügen.

In 1786, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, Meinrad Bräm, born in 1759, single, died in Lothringen [*Lorraine*] under the Swiss regiment Castella. He was the son of Samuel and Elizabeth Blumer, and a brother of the father of Herrenerg Heinrich Bräm.

In 1807, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, Gregorius Bräm, born in 1781, set out as an enlisted soldier (according to the list of the enlisted soldiers in the Glarus public-record office) and remains missing (very probably died in Russia). He was the son of Gregorius 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 a c c i d e n t s recorded with the Bräms.

In 1687, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, on a Sunday, Regula Bräm, the nine-year-old little daughter of Samuel Bräm (Nr. 3), drowned in the Sernf [*river*]. Her corpse was only found 13 days later in the "Herren" [*in Schwanden*], and she was buried in Schwanden.