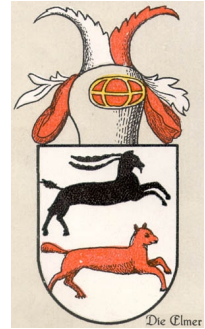


On the History of the Glarner Families, Particularly Those of the Sernf Valley
A Medley of Pictures from Past Day.
(*Zur Geschichte glarnerischer Geschlechter, derjenigen des Sernftales insbesondere
Allerlei Bilder aus vergangenen Tagen*)

by
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With a Coat of Arms

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

I. THE ELMERS

[pg. 6-39]

It is obvious where the Elmers derived their family name from. As the Beglingers came from Beglingen, the home of the Bönigers was Bönigen, a hamlet near Nidfurn, the Luchsingers were so called as the residents of Luchsingen, the Netstallers (Cantonal President Math. Netstaller, etc.) came from Netstal, and the Krauchers, who were already mentioned today [*in the Introduction*], derived their names from Krauch, which was a hamlet belonging to Matt (according to the 1900 census, Krauch numbered 22 dwellings, 27 households and 89 residents), so the residents of Elm were called the Elmers. At the time when the family names came into existence, obviously all residents of Elm called themselves Elmer, but by which is not said that other family names did not come into existence at the same time in the lower valley [*below Elm*] or in Hintersteinibach [*a hamlet near Elm*] and from there subsequently also become occupiers of houses in Elm. If then the meaning of the Elmer family name causes no concern, thus this ought to be the case even earlier with the name Elm itself; there were, of course, doubtless some who derived it from Alm. However, since Alm means, of course, only one [*pasture*] on an alpine hillside, this meaning does not by any means fit for the Elm situated in the valley; and still less for the villages and cities of this name situated in Alsace and Thüringia [*Germany*]. Therefore, we doubtless have to search for another meaning of the name.

In order to proceed with it pedagogically, that is, to let you find the meaning of the name Elm yourselves, I recall to mind beforehand that Elm was actually called Elme or Elmen. Thus the Säckingen^a land assessment register (*Document Book of Canton Glarus III*, pg. 75) enumerated

a Säckingen refers to a Baden Benedictine cloister which was located on an island in the Rhine river near Basel, Switzerland and was founded by St. Fridolin. It owned Canton Glarus in the 9th - 13th centuries. [SW]

the hide^b at Elme¹, under the hides of Canton Glarus. Moreover, we still say in the great valley [of the Linth river] today: I go to Elme, or: they know of Elme; and I think that people also say Elme in Matt and Engi more frequently than in Elm.

I recall to mind more distantly that also in Freiberg [Canton Glarus] an Elmen was found, a smaller district forest in the lower valley, opposite the Salengrat [Alp south of Schwanden]. I recall to mind more distantly that a small town called itself Elmenau (Elmen pasture) in Weimar [Germany], and a Lake Ilmen was found in the Russian province of Great Novgorod. And, if this all was still not enough to surmise about the name Elm or Elmen, thus I again recall to mind how many of our place names derived their meaning from trees.² Of the 4 localities from which the present Tagwen of Glarus has grown together, one calls itself the B u c h h o l z [beech wood], however, the old Glarner court site was at the Eichen [oak-trees], or under the Eiche [oak-tree]. Beech-trees and oak-trees, however, are found also in a series of other Swiss place names. If you climb up in the Prättigau from Schiers to Pany [Canton Graubünden], you come through the village of Buchen; however, the upper and lower Rheintal [Canton St. Gallen], the upper and lower Toggenburg [Canton St. Gallen], and [Cantons] Luzern and Appenzell also have their villages which call themselves Buchen. And how often Eiche recurs in place names: Eichen in the Gaster [Canton St. Gallen district] and near Gossau, in [Canton] Aargau and in upper [Canton] Valais, Eichberg in [Canton] Aargau and in Canton St. Gallen, Eichbühl in [Cantons] Bern and Luzern, Eichholz near Meilen [Canton Zürich] and near Hinweil [Canton Zürich], near Köniz and Burgdorf [Canton Bern], etc. Scarcely less numerous are place names which owe their names to the linden [Linde] and the pine [Tanne]. Also our Thon [hamlet near Schwanden] had nothing to do with the Thonerde [alumina], but originally meant “at the pine”, and Däniberg [hamlet near Schwanden], the place of the Landsgemeinde^c, probably brings back the same memory. However, apple [Apfel] and pear [Birne] trees also appear occasionally as name givers. Thus, we are all aware of Rudi “unterm Birnbaum [under the pear tree]” from the Fahrtsbrief^d. On the other hand, it might be less well-known that names such as Affoltern (A. on the Albis [Canton Zürich], A. near Zürich, A. Bern) and Affeltrangen [Canton Thurgau] are derived from Apfelbaum [apple tree]. And yet the original spelling of these names plainly refers to it: Affalterum; Aphel [apple] and ter = Baum [tree]; Affaltrawangas = Wang, slope [= apple tree slope]; the Apfelbäume [apple trees].

b Hide - an old measure of land, originally about 120 acres, considered to be large enough to support a family. [SW]

1 Thus also wrote Cantonal Secretary Aebli (1604 Judgment Letter) in the very first document which the Elm Tagwen* book quoted: “The Tagwen Community at Elm e n.”

* 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]

2 In the vicinity of Teufen, [Canton] Appenzell, are found the place names Linde [Linden], Buchen [Beech-trees], Lortanne [Larch] and Elmen [Elms]. Huttwil [Canton Bern] has an Elmenegg, “mountain ridge of Elms”.

c 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]

d Fahrtsbrief - the medieval document about the 9 Apr 1388 Battle of Näfels, which includes a list of those who died. [SW]

And now: after all this, doesn't the conclusion follow that the name Elm, Elme is derived from Ulme [*elm*]? As people elsewhere met under the linden tree, so, in the hide at Elme, under the Elme or Ulme? According to the Swiss *Idiotikon* I, pg. 193, *Elme* is already found in Middle High German under *Ulme*.

Nevertheless, after this digression, we return to the Elmer family. Their first authentic mention is found through a document of the 14th of November in 1289. One and a half years before, on the 5th of April in 1288, the Abbess of Säckinggen, as is generally known, "probably obeying more the necessity than the inner urge", had entrusted the illustrious rulers, Albert and Rudolf, dukes of Austria and Styria [*south of Austria*], sons of the Roman Emperor Rudolf, "our sublime lords", with the office of steward over the Glarus district. The Abbess had also sweetened this, for them, perhaps somewhat bitter pill by the reflection that "the status of each God's house [*e.g. the Säckinggen cloister*] would shine more brilliantly and acquire an increase to higher honor, if noble and powerful lords, with their descendants, were placed among the vassals paying homage to it". The Glarners, as far as they were concerned, would have scarcely been aware of great profits from this honor. On the other hand, they had already, in November 1289, been deemed worthy of the honor for one of those services which are common among cousins and good friends and which one cannot reject if one does not want to quarrel with those who demand it. Lord Rudolf, the estate owner of Walenstadt [*Canton St. Gallen*], had lent the above-mentioned Austrian dukes, who now and then, and more often, found themselves in financial difficulty, 90 marks of silver, and the dukes, on their part, had then requested their new friends, the Glarners, to undertake the guarantee for the repayment of the aforesaid loan. I think they would have been told that they should not be moved at all by it (what they had also, in addition, always said to us, if they demanded from us a similar service), that the Glarners, however, could take into account the honor of being allowed to support such illustrious men as guarantors. And so they then provided 30 of their citizens as guarantors for it, that a third of the loans which were mentioned would be paid off at Martinmas [*11 Nov*] in 1290, a second third at Martinmas in 1291, and finally, the third third at Martinmas of the third year; should that not take place, thus all the provided guarantors pledged themselves to proceed at the first summons into a public inn in Glarus or Weesen [*Canton St. Gallen*], as hostages. Among these 30 guarantors the document of the 14th of November in 1289 then named as first of all: "t h e E l m e r o u r o v e r s e e r." How he was named, whether Rudolf or Uli (a repeatedly occurring name later for naming Elmers) or Hans or Werner, that is told to us neither here nor by other documents, so we also cannot know. What we come to know is the one that at that time was an Elmer overseer of the "citizen people of Clarus"; therefore it also mentions in the introduction of the document: "in the district of Elmer", this in contrast to the "lower district". On the other hand, we must not introduce this Elmer to ourselves as a cantonal president elected by the cantonal people of Canton Glarus. Insofar as Glarus did not yet exist at that time. Overseer Elmer is rather a district magistrate installed by the Austrian rulers, as, according to him (in 1302), Rudolf the Sümer was overseer at Glarus and in the lower district. On the other hand, it matters, without a doubt, for the Glarners, as a friendly willingness to oblige the new rulers, that one of theirs had been entrusted with this district. However, how an Elmer, a farmer from the highest lying Glarner village, came to that end, to be entrusted with the office of a Glarus overseer by the Austrian dukes, we do not know. Whether he recommended himself for it through warlike virtues or as a richer, more independent landowner, history keeps silent about it.

On the other hand, we learn from still surviving documents that, after that, in 1302, the above-mentioned Rudolf the Sümer had occupied the office of an overseer at Glarus, and, in 1315, Count Friedrich of Toggenburg [*Canton St. Gallen*] had held office as guardian of the Glarus district, of the upper districts and also of the lower districts (Weesen and Gaster [*Canton St. Gallen*], together with Bilten, Niederurnen and Kerenzen [*which includes Filsbach, Mühlehorn, and Obstalden*], and, once again, an Elmer acted as overseer at Glarus. On the 3rd of March in 1318 the heirs of a Heinrich Huntöri and his wife finalized an agreement with the convent of the Wettingen [*Canton Aargau*] cloister, which the aforesaid married couple had remembered in their will far too amply, in the opinion of their heirs, and Wernher the Elmer, “our overseer at Glarus”, approved and sealed this agreement. Whether he was a son of the Elmer who served as overseer in 1289, we do not know; nevertheless, the conjecture suggests itself. This overseer, Werner Elmer, officiated on the 21st of April in 1322 at an agreement regarding the children of serfs in the lord’s domain of Sargans [*Canton St. Gallen*]. At this occasion he was called, certainly, district overseer at Glarus [*Glarus*]. That we, however, might still not consider one of the Glarner citizens himself chosen leader of his people, the report shows clearly that, in the agreement of the allocation of the serfs in question, he, instead of the “reverend gentlemen, by the grace of God the Dukes of Austria”, negotiated with regard to Steward Hartmann of Windeck [*Canton St. Gallen*], on the one hand, and to the Duke of Austria, on the other hand. Likewise, in a document of the 5th of May in 1322, Lüpold (Leopold), “by the grace of God, Duke of Austria and of Stire (Styria), Lord at Kreyen (Krain) [*south of Styria*] and Count at Habsburg [*Austria*] and at Kiburg [*Kyberg, Canton Zürich*], named Werner the Elmer “our overseer at Glarus”, because he, as such, had carried out the sale of the Silbern Alp in the Klöntal [*west of the Glarus commune*] to the Muotta valley [*Canton Schwyz*] cloister. And this same Wernher Elmer, district overseer at Glarus, served, on the 1st of June in 1322, at Weesen, so doubtless as overseer also for the “lower district”, in a lawsuit between Johannes Müllistein in Weesen and the small women’s cloister “in the woods” at Weesen. At this same decision, Walther Elmer, the brother of the overseer, was also present as witness. On the other hand, Werner Elmer meets us once again as overseer of Glarus 2 years later — on the 14th of June in 1324. Here he, as “steward to Glarus”, approves the ceding of an Alp right to the Silbern Alp by Madam Katherine, widow of the late Ulrich Kolben, to the Muotta valley cloister. However, that is the last occasion at which Werner Elmer was named to us as overseer at Glarus, but also the last occasion at which a Glarner served the Duke of Austria as overseer in the district of Glarus; there were, from this time on, foreign names which we find in this position: in 1327, Knight Eberhard of Eppenstein [*Styria*], in 1330, Knight Hermann of Landenberg [*Austria*], in 1331, Ulrich of Wissenkilch [*Austria*], etc. Apparently, in 1323, so therefore while Werner Elmer was overseer of Glarus, the Glarus citizens had not behaved quite properly in the existing conflict between the forest settlements [*Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden*] and the dukes of Austria, but, on occasion, had betrayed their sympathies for the forest settlements. For this reason, the dukes might not have seen themselves obliged any longer to allow a Glarner, whose attitude could not be relied on in an impending war, to rule as overseer in the Glarus district, but, instead of this, to place a knight who was loyal to them, who was not of Glarner origin, as overseer, who ought to give them more guarantee of restraining the Glarners, in case of possible incidents. We know from the history, of course, that a Knight Ludwig of Stadion, who served in 1344 as Austrian overseer at Glarus and Weesen, also did not succeed in preventing the Glarners from showing their sympathy to the courageous aspiring forest settlements.

It is also well-known to us how the forest settlements had obtained the Glarner sympathies; also in the Glarner hearts was the wish for more freedom awakened, as their neighbors over in Uri and in Schwyz had acquired it themselves. In dogged struggles they have pursued this goal. One result of this ongoing quest for greater freedom and independence was that, around 1370, the Glarner had obtained, from the Abbess of Säckingen, the right to participate in the deliberation of their affairs through their own council. We learn that from a document of the 5th of February in 1372, by which the Abbess of Säckingen acknowledged to the Glarner the receipt of more overdue taxes and revenue. As is apparent from the context of the document, the Glarner had provided the Abbess with 42 guarantors, who had assumed the guarantee for the proper payment of an accrued debt, and since now the debt had been properly paid, the Abbess released the 42, whom she cited by name, of their fulfilled guarantee. As these 42, she named the 12 judges and the 30 councilmen. Among the 12 judges, however, appeared, again in the first place, an Elmer: U l r i c h t h e E l m e r.

This significant position which an individual Elmer had actually held at the time of Säckingen also caused the great historian Aegidius Tschudi, who is well-known to you all by name, to rank the Elmers among the free coat-of-arms associates [*lower nobility*], “who had served our God’s house (Säckingen cloister), and had defended the God’s house with its rights by shield and spear, if they had need of it”. Unfortunately, however, I must declare explicitly that they have proved to be that only by the grace of Aegidius Tschudi.

According to the interpretation of Aegidius Tschudi, the inhabitants of the Glarus territory at the time of the Säckingen lord’s domain (until 1388) were organized in the shape of a pyramid. The lowest broad layer of inhabitants were the “serfs”. A step above them stood — according to Tschudi’s interpretation — the free God’s house people, 34 families, among them, as Sernf valley families, the Speichs, those in Krauch and those in Bifang [*Engi area*]. A third higher step, on the other hand, was composed of the 12 families of the free coat-of-arms associates, among them the Elmers, the Stuckis, the Dölders, and the Wichsers. However, the highest and uppermost step, the apex of the pyramid, that was the Tschudis, and, as far as they are concerned, or rather, as far as he is concerned, Tschudi had probably made up the whole fable. In order to manage to get a patent of nobility from Emperor Ferdinand, he had fabricated a number of documents, by which the origin of the Tschudis was illuminated back as far as 906. A document from 1274 proclaims that the Abbess Anna of Säckingen presented certain property to Rudolf Tschudi as free possessions, under the stipulation that he renounce all claims to that office of steward that Diethelm of Windeck had given him in fief. A second document, 18 years older [*1256*], then traces the kinship back further; a third, from the year 1220, proceeds from Heinrich Tschudi and speaks of his father Rudolf, his grandfather Johann, and his great-grandfather Heinrich. Then again a document from 1128 begins with the last-named, Heinrich Tschudi, which document presents to us, at the same time, Hermann as his father and Johann as his grandfather. However, the last bridge, which then goes back to 906 and establishes the relationship with a Johannes who was freed in 906 (the document dates from 1029), proceeds from the steward Johannes Tschudi, and names Ulrich as his father, Johannes as grandfather, Rudolf as great-grandfather and Johannes as great-great-grandfather. So the ancestral line was established from 1274 back to 906. Were the documents referred to authentic, then the Tschudis would indeed possess a family tree more complete than the Habsburgs and the former emperors of Germany, the Hohenzollerns, possessed it. However, this genealogy was, among other things, just treachery; where, with a bill

of sale or similar agreement, the contracting party also will not only include the name of his father, but also that of the grandfather and great-grandfather, and, what is more, that of the great-great-grandfather. “We realize the motive and we are annoyed.” I do not believe that today a serious history still accepts the authenticity of the questionable documents. However, exactly by that was the distinction also made of families of the free God’s house people and the free coat-of-arms associates there in the valleys of Glarus; because they also are found only as insertions in the Säckinggen property assessment register transmitted to us by the Tschudis. The Säckinggen rolls, which still exist in Karlsruhe [*Baden*], which apparently served as the original for the Tschudi copy, contain none of this.

I have told this history in such detail for this reason, because, in my first printed work, the history of the families of the Betschwanden commune, I also, for my part, was still entirely under the spell of the Tschudi historical interpretation and therefore, also — this was now 40 years ago — introduced my audience at that time, and likewise the readers of the *Historical Yearbook*, to the Elmers and Wichsers as free coat-of-arms associates. Therefore, I look upon it as my duty not only to admit my errors at that time, but also to give the reasons for the abandonment of that delusion.

Just as there were and are, always and everywhere, rich and poor, and, just as also today, rich people generally have a more influential say in political matters, so there would also have been, among the inhabitants of the Glarus district at that time, those who had landed property at their disposal and those who found themselves in thirstier positions, and the first were probably also at that time more likely than the others to have attained offices and honors. To these rich and respected people, however, clearly also belonged various Elmers, granted that the political position of the families was also not one so fundamentally different than that description of Aegidius Tschudi’s made us believe.

Of the prominent importance of the Elmers at the time of Säckinggen besides that which was already presented, there is, in addition, also evidence that, according to a still existing tax roll, “the Elmer” had to give 75 cubits of cloth and 15 Schillings for butter bowls and for blessing lambs and for fish and 1½ goats.³ According to another roll, the Abbess, in her turn, gave Elmer 5 Schillings and a sheep, in return for which he had to make the women of Säckinggen their milk on St. Martin’s Day [*11 November*], from Weesen to Zürich, and, likewise, for St. Pancras’ Day (the 2th of May), had to give 2 Schillings of fish.

We have already mentioned at the beginning (above, pg. 6 [*in the Introduction (pg. 3 in the SW translation)*]) that, on the Weesen Murder Night [*21-22 February 1388*], an Ulrich Elmer had also fallen a victim to the treacherous plot of the “disloyal Weesners”.

On the occasion of the 1395 redemption of the Glarner from their obligations to the Säckinggen cloister, a Rudolf Elmer appeared again, clearly as representative of the Elm *Tagwen*, as one of 14 guarantors which the district of Glarus had to provide for the punctual discharge of an obligation to be paid — the payment of a yearly tax levy of 32 Pounds. And the same Rudolf Elmer from Elm, already 3 years earlier, constituted the intermediary, jointly with his colleague

3 Document Book of Canton Glarus III, pg. 95.

from Matt, between the district of Glarus and Count Hans from Werdenberg-Sargans [*Canton St. Gallen*].

From the first quarter of the following, 15th, century we make the acquaintance of 2 *Elmerinen* [*female Elmers*]. In the year after the Battle of Näfels, in 1389, a Näfels chapel had been built, no doubt as a sign of thanks for the glorious victory of the 9th of April in 1388, and 24 years later — in 1413 — then the appointment of a chaplain of their own also took place, to whom the Glarus council offered a yearly stipend of 40 Pounds, and, on the same occasion, had also arranged a charitable gifts collection for the provision of the chapel and the chaplain. At the same time, Trina (probably Katharina) Elmerin donated 2 bedsheets and 2 pillows, I think, which she wove herself. Possibly she was the daughter of the Ulrich Elmer who was murdered in Weesen and her gift, in this case, was an act of piety; in any case, however, she displayed, through her gift to the surely rather distant chapel, her religious sense of sacrifice and her wealthiness.

In addition, the second Elmerin produced a more fully validated proof of her wealthiness, to which I hinted earlier. You have all probably already heard of Jost Tschudi, who, in 1419-1452, so for 33 years, occupied the position of Glarner cantonal president and, during the old Zürich wars, was the leader of the Glarner. Precisely this Jost Tschudi had for his spouse, in his first marriage, a Kraucher (therefore, a citizen of Matt) and, in his second marriage, a Margret Elmerin. On the occasion of this second marriage, Cantonal President Jost Tschudi entered into an inheritance contract with his father-in-law, by which he [*Elmer*] established what the sons, Tschudi's future brothers-in-law, should be given as “*Vorlass*” [*a legacy already allocated by a living person*]. As such a “*Fürling*” or *Vorlass* he designated: house and farmstead and the properties in company with the house which lie within the moat at Elm, and the pasture which also lies near it, and all “house junk” (household effects) that he had, he named, as usual, in the house or wherever he was, with the exception only of cash funds; furthermore, the entire armor and all the alps which he possessed at the time of this inheritance contract (the third part of the alp in Schingeln [*Tschingeln, above Matt*] and the third part of the alp in Valzüber [*Falzüber, above Elm*] and 62 cattle alps at Riseten [*above Matt*] and 12 cattle alps at the Nüwen (Neuen, above Mollis) and a house and estate in Beglingen [*near Mollis*] and the closest one-room house and household effects. That all was designated as the sons' *Vorlass*.⁴ How much his “matrimonial mistress”, Margret Elmerin, would receive as inheritance was not told to us; on the other hand, the quite extensive *Vorlass* of the sons permits an inference on the fortune the father Elmer called his own, and on that which Jost Tschudi had expected as the inheritance of his wife. I suppose that more than one of the Sernf valley bachelors at that time were not exactly edified over it that Jost Tschudi appeared the second time as suitor in the Sernf valley. On the other hand, the Elmer family would have considered it an honor all the more that one of theirs became the spouse of the leader of the Glarner people, who was highly regarded in the whole u.

As regards Margret Elmerin's father, our document of the 27th of July in 1428 calls him Ulrich Elmer. Four months earlier, on the 12th and 13th of March in 1428, he had attended a meeting in [*Canton*] Luzern, along with Cantonal President Jost Tschudi, Albrecht Vogel and 5 other Glarner, at which the votes of [*Cantons*] Bern, Freiburg, Solothurn, Luzern, Uri, Schwyz and the borderlands, Unterwalden, Zug, Baden [*Canton Aargau*] and Bremgarten [*Canton Aargau*]

4 Document Anthology of the History of Canton Glarus I, pg. 620.

decided a dispute in which Canton Glarus was entangled with the Count of Toggenburg [*Canton St. Gallen*] and the city of Zürich and which had agitated the entire Confederacy quite a lot.

From a document of the 22nd of February in 1414, we see that Ulrich Elmer was the son of Rudolf Elmer, whom we made the acquaintance of a short time ago as guarantor of the district of Glarus in opposition to the Säckingen cloister. On the 22nd of February in 1414, that is to say, in a lawsuit which Peter Stucki of Oberurnen brought before the 9-judge court concerning the tithes in Oberurnen and Näfels, Ulrich Elmer appeared as witness and testified that he had heard from Rudolf Elmer, his late father, that he had spoken of Peter Stucki and his tithes; thus he remembered that his father had said, at that time when Peter Stucki and the late Galati, for this reason, had stood before the council, the council had numbered 60 men and he — Rudolf Elmer — had proposed that they give Stucki the money that he had had to give for the tithes; Rudolf Schindler, indeed, had proposed to award the contested tithes to Stucki, and that had become the majority. That Ulrich Elmer had to appear before the 9-judge court to bear witness concerning this testimony of his deceased father probably seems unusual to us today, but was typical for a court practice of the times. No court minutes were yet taken at that time; anyone who didn't want to content himself with the orally-communicated verdict had to apply separately for a sealed verdict letter from the court, that is, from the president himself (cantonal president or *Landsgemeinde* sergeant-at-arms). However, where no such verdict letters could be presented to the court, there the living were allowed to appear for the dead as witnesses, but also had to reaffirm their testimonies under oath in their stead.

On the threshold of the time of the Reformation was named to us, among the Glarner who died on the battlefield of Novarra [*Italy*] (in June 1513): Jakob Elmer from the Sernf valley.

During the Reformation we repeatedly encounter Fridli Elmer. As is generally known, the residents of both valleys [*of the Linth and Sernf rivers*] had at first declared for the Reformation, while the gentry of the capital city in their majority resisted the reforms — perhaps less from religious motives than out of fear for their pensions, against which the Zürich reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, also got not a little agitated. As spokesperson of the Evangelicals of the great [*Linth*] valley, we are aware of Hans Wichser from the Rütli^e, who spoke for the reforms at the *Landsgemeinde* of the 15th of March in 1528 — according to Valentin Tschudi's report of the *Landsgemeinde* he recommended a secret compromise⁵ — and who, likewise, represented the cause of the “new believers” at confederate meetings. Besides this Hans Wichser, Fridli Elmer likewise participated at confederate meetings as representative of the new believers. Thus, on St. Laurence Day [*10 August*] in 1528 in Baden [*Canton Aargau*]. And, likewise, on St. Verena Day [*1 September*] of the same year, both again represented the cause of the new believers at a meeting in Baden, but, for reasons unknown to us, were “turned away” at the eleventh hour, held back by their own party's members. On the other hand, both participated again on St. Othmar Day [*16 November*] at a negotiation which was called for Einsiedeln [*Canton Schwyz*], of course without result, since, as Valentin Tschudi reports, “the contentiousness was so great, and jealousy and hatred was very much (better, more) in force than agreement and love of peace, that the matter once again remained undecided”.

e *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 The “old believing” Captain Frid. Bälgi called him therefore, merely “the Wichserly” [*i.e.* “the little Wichser”] (G. Mayer, *Chronicle*, pg. 90)

Also, in the Gaster [*Canton St. Gallen*], on “Old Shrove Tuesday” [*the day before Lent begins*] in 1529, Hans Wichser and Fridli Elmer took part in negotiations which were held regarding religious beliefs, in the presence of Schwyzer and Glarner delegates. Without showing much consideration for their overlords in Schwyz, those from Weesen and other old cantons had also taken the liberty to introduce reforms which the rulers from Schwyz had rebuked them for, while they held out the prospect of punishment to them. Doubtless, Wichser and Elmer had entered a plea for them and thus encouraged them to the declaration: they — those of the Gaster — recognized the Schwyzers and Glarners as their rulers and wanted to have nobody better as rulers than they; but because their quarrel concerned religious beliefs, they could only acknowledge the word of God as judge in this.

As a staunch adherent of the “new beliefs”, for this reason, the reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, also sent Fridli Elmer his greetings on occasion. In the name of his fellow-believers, Hans Wichser had made inquiries to the head of the Zürich church for advice and this one [*Zwingli*] had also willingly given this by a November 1528 letter. In this letter to Hans Wichser, he added greetings to Friedr. Elmer, Zay, Gorius Wichser, Largius Beglinger and the brothers, Fridolin and Philipp Brunner; so Friedr. Elmer was in first place. Since the good Glarner name of Fridli was very familiar to Zwingli, as a result of his 10 year residence in Glarus, it is striking that he cited the Elmer as Friedrich (Fridericum) Elmer; all the same, there is no doubt that this is the same Fridli Elmer that Valentin Tschudi acquainted us with on the cited occasions as a partisan of Hans Wichser.⁶

In the second half of the Reformation century, we encounter 3 Elmers in public, cantonal positions. The first of these was H a n s E l m e r, whose tombstone today, after more than 300 years, is still maintained at the Elm cemetery and gives testimony as an ornate product of the wealth and prestige of his family. He held office in 1581 as *Landvogt*^f in Werdenberg. Whereas, for other cantonal vassal territories, Glarus was in joint possession with other old cantons, thus in the Gaster and Uznach [*Canton St. Gallen*] with Schwyz, in Sargans, in [*Canton*] Thurgau and the Freie Ämter [*Canton Aargau*] conjointly with Zürich, Luzern, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden and Zug, beyond the Gotthard [*Pass, between Cantons Tiscino and Uri*] held in common with 11 other member states (the 13 old cantons with the exception of Appenzell), in Werdenberg the Glarners were sole possessors, and their *Landvögte* had been answerable exclusively to the Glarus council. While Hans Elmer held office in this “Glarner province” in 1581-84 as *Landvogt*, he seems to have obtained the goodwill of his co-cantonal people through the style of his administration. For this reason, the council assigned to him, in 1593, the office of b a n n e r e t. This was one of the honorary offices that deserving officers were often assigned. Thus, Cantonal President Paulus Wala, called Schuler, held the office of banneret, as predecessor of Hans Elmer, in 1558-93, for 35 years. If it was, no doubt, originally the purpose of the banneret to carry the cantonal banner not only at ceremonial parades but also in war, so the office of a banneret later was obviously a more honorary office, since the higher seniority of a Cantonal President Paulus Schuler, etc. had hardly permitted him the participation in active military service. On the other hand, the banneret had to faithfully secure the different banners in his residence and to exhibit

6 Also the later cantonal president, Fridolin Marti, was called Friedrich Marti in 2 confederate decrees. That was probably supposed to sound somewhat more elegant.

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

them to the people at ceremonial occasions. In particular, the handing over of the banner to a new banneret and the conveyance of it to the residence of the newly selected person gave rise to lavish feasts. The preservation and conveyance took place in a chest of walnut wood. Four of the most distinguished federal councilors had to carry it, and the entire council escorted it in solemn procession. Whether, at the selection of Hans Elmer for banneret, the festivity of banner day had taken place in the capital city of Glarus, or in Schwanden, as the dwelling place of the retiring banneret, or in Elm, as the dwelling place of the new banneret, was not reported to us. I presume, however, that it had taken in place in Glarus or Schwanden. On the other hand, the Elmers were, no doubt, allowed to give themselves credit for the honor that the cantonal banner, the *Palladium*^g of the Glarner people, was located on their frontiers, in the commune of the canton that was the highest-lying and most remote from the capital city, for protection and constant safe keeping. Likewise, the Sernf valley residents would gladly have furnished the honor escort to the banner, when it had to be brought from Elm to Schwanden or Glarus. — As banneret, Hans Elmer was also one of the first members of the “*Schranken*”^h, the actual cantonal government. The value of the office of banneret would, no doubt, also be assessed yet all the higher, as its occupant didn’t have to submit to a reelection like the cantonal president, cantonal treasurer, etc., or, after the lapse of a shorter time, to make way for another. Rather, the office of banneret had been transferred to the selected person for life. Thus, as we noted already, Cantonal President Paulus Schuler held it for 35 years; a Peter Tschudi even possessed it 38 years (1675-1713). Hans Elmer remained in possession of the office of banneret for 10 years, then he died in April 1603.

Heinrich Elmer, who previously, in 1574, had served as *Landvogt* in the cantonal vassal territory of Lauis or Lugano [*Canton Ticino*] on the other side of the mountain, followed him as banneret. He occupied the office of banneret in 1603-21.

A third Elmer who was prominent in the second half of the 16th century in the public life of Canton Glarus was Cantonal Treasurer and Cantonal President Heinrich Elmer.⁷ Already, at the time, since the position of cantonal treasurer was imposed on him (it had been since 1586), he represented the member state of Glarus more frequently at confederate meetings — both at general confederate *Tagsatzungen*ⁱ and at separate conferences of the Evangelical member states. Thus, on the 16th of February in 1597, in [*Canton*] Aarau, at a conference of the old Evangelical cantons, which Treasurer Heinrich Elmer, in the name of, and

g *Palladium* - an object of great antiquity on which the safety of the country is said to depend [SW]

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

7 As we understand from documents of the 13th of August in 1595 and the 6th of May in 1596, Banneret Hans Elmer and Cantonal President Heinrich Elmer were brothers. “The Agreement of the Goat Pasture By Halves Between Cantonal President and Banneret, Both Brothers, the Elmers, and Those from the Lower Valley” from the 6th of May in 1596 begins: “We, Cantonal President and the Council at Glarus, acknowledge and do announce clearly to one and all with this letter, that, on today’s date, came and appeared to us the pious, honorable, prudent and wise Heinrich Elmer, our faithful, dear old cantonal president, and Hans Elmer, also our faithful, dear banneret, and have produced to us and disclosed that, just as in past years, they made an agreement and settlement regarding their goat pastures with those from the lower valley, namely, Batt and Fridli, the Rhyners, Geörg Solman and Fridli Egli.

i *Tagsatzung* - the legislative and executive council of the Old Swiss Confederacy, from its beginnings in the 14th century until the formation of the Swiss federal state in 1848. Its power was very limited, since the cantons were essentially sovereign. [SW]

on behalf of, member state Glarus, strongly advised to also include the League of the 10 Jurisdictions in the confederate alliance, “in the same way as the federation which it had already previously had with the other 2 leagues (Grey League and God’s House People’s League)”. Elmer had accomplished this assignment probably all the better, as the Sernf valley from time immemorial cherished the relationship with the Leagues' land. Likewise, on the 9th of November in 1587, in Bischofszell [*Canton Thurgau*], he participated in a conference of the 7 old cantons who ruled the Landgraviate of Thurgau, and again, on the 9th of October in 1589, in a conference of the 5 old Evangelical cantons in Aarau. At the latter conference, the question was, above all, “how they would act in the event that the peace negotiations between Bern, Geneva and Savoy [*France*] should be broken off and Bern, the old canton which had taken its French-speaking territories into its protection, would ask for help to protect them.” Also Treasurer Elmer assured Bern, in the name of his member state Glarus, of the faithful performance of its federal obligations.

On the 16th of September in 1590, Treasurer Elmer attended the general confederate *Tagsatzung* of the XIII old cantons in Baden [*Canton Aargau*]. Along with the delegates of 4 other Evangelical member states (Zürich, Bern, Basel and Schaffhausen), Treasurer Elmer also tried to persuade the delegates of the 8 other old cantons to forgive Mülhausen [*Alsace*] and take it back into the alliance. As is likely to be known, Mülhausen had long [*since 1515*] been regarded as “an affiliated old canton” in the alliance with the confederates, but had recently displeased the Catholic old cantons again, so that these, in rather ungracious tones, terminated their friendship with Mülhausen and sent back their alliance letters to them, from which they cut off their seal. The delegates of 4 Evangelical member states and, with them, their Treasurer Elmer, now sought to motivate the 8 old cantons⁸ to forget what had happened and want to establish contact with Mülhausen again. However, their plea remained unheard. Thus, at that time, Mülhausen was lost for the Confederacy, as, on other occasions, Konstanz [*Baden*] and, in 1799, Valtellina [*Canton Graubünden*] was lost to them. That Glarus was not implicated in this short-sighted politics no doubt contributes to our joy. On the 7th of March in 1592, Elmer attended a confederate *Tagsatzung* as cantonal vice-president and, on the 26th of June in 1594, for a first time as cantonal president. Both times he had reported on a complaint of member state Glarus against Schwyz, while, at a conference of member states Zürich, Schwyz and Glarus, he had to defend Glarus and Schwyz against complaints of the Zürichers, as though the two member states, as regents of Gaster [*Canton St. Gallen*], obstructed the shipping on the Linth [*river*]. Having become cantonal president in 1594, he resigned already in May 1596, for the Catholic Melchior Häffy (cantonal president for the first time in 1574-78; for the second time in 1582-84, for the third time in 1596-99) took his place. At that time, the alternation in the cantonal president’s office between Evangelicals and Catholics was still not required by law. Since, however, the Catholics protested over and over again, they were “pushed”, and it was necessary, from time to time, to hand over the mace to a Catholic. Cantonal President H. Elmer died in December 1600.

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As we step across into the following, 17th, century we meet there, as the most distinguished representative of the Elmers

C a n t o n a l P r e s i d e n t J o h . H e i n r i c h E l m e r .

8 Oechli, W., “Old Cantons and Affiliates” (in: *Yearbook for Swiss History*, vol. XIII), pg. 390.

In the course of more than 40 years he stood in the foreground of Glarner political life. Four times, in 1641-44, 1646-49, 1661-64, and 1671-74, he had, for 3 years each, occupied the position of cantonal president, and it was not that he had to hand over the “mace” (or the sword) of cantonal president to another in between because the Glarner people had withdrawn their trust from him in the meantime, but was the consequence of the Glarner government institutions at that time. To begin with, it was a consequence of the 1623 cantonal agreement. This cantonal agreement determined that, during each 5 years, for 3 whole years the mace of the cantonal president must be handed over to an Evangelical and for 2 whole years to a Catholic. In the interval for which the Evangelical was appointed the cantonal president, the Catholics had the vice-presidency, and, conversely, during each 2 years when the office of cantonal president was held by the Catholics, there was an Evangelical cantonal vice-president, who then, if nothing came between them, moved to the cantonal president after the expiration of these two years. Obviously, the selected one was looked upon as the head of the Evangelicals during all 5 years. So our Joh. Heinrich Elmer was also vice-president in 1639-41 and president in 1641-44; however, he had to resign as cantonal president in 1644, so the *Landsgemeinde* had also been pleased to elect him again as cantonal president. Under the contract he had to resign in order to give up the mace to a Catholic. As such, Kaspar KÜchli from Glarus held office in 1644-46. nevertheless, the resigning cantonal president, J. H. Elmer, was elected immediately again to the vice-presidency, in order to take over the position of cantonal president again in 1646 for 3 years. Thus he was either cantonal vice-president or cantonal president from 1639 until 1649 uninterruptedly. On the other hand, he withdrew in 1649 for 10 years, not to take possession of the cantonal vice-president seat again until 1659. But this inactivity of 10 years was, likewise, surely not caused because the *Landsgemeinde*, in a bad mood, had become alienated from him, but also was again the consequence of a cantonal practice at that time. It does not belong to the bright sides of the “good old days” that the elections which the *Landsgemeinde* had to make arrangements for gave rise to “*Gauzen und Trölen*”, that is, the ambitious or greedy who were lusting after an office, seeking through drinking-bouts or gifts to win voters for themselves. Already in the 16th century, a cantonal president, Paulus Schuler, made his complaints about it. The *Landsgemeinde* also issued its decrees against the *Gauzen und Trölen*, and finally those who were elected had to take an oath — the so-called practitioner’s oath — that they had used no unlawful measures of that kind for their election. However, since the Glarner doubtless knew how to produce good laws, but they only understood poorly how to keep them, the *Gauzen und Trölen* flourished again, to the chagrin of good patriots. Good patriots, men who meant well to the community, were, therefore, the ones who recommended to the Evangelical *Landsgemeinde* the institution of the “lottery” as a remedy, which appears strange to us today. During the time that the *Landsgemeinde* agreed to this proposal, 8 candidates were selected by the *Landsgemeinde*, for example, for the most desired *Landvogt* post, and these 8 competitors then had to draw lots. The idea which led to this arrangement was: if the lottery had to decide among 8 selected people, one of those selected by the *Landsgemeinde*, therefore, still has so little prospect of achieving the desired office, then it was not worthwhile to offer bribes to electors by gifts and drinking-bouts and, with the resulting failure, in addition, to become an object of ridicule or contempt. Also, the lottery was instituted for the position of cantonal vice-president (and with it, logically, the cantonal president), only that here not 8, but only 3, of the *Landsgemeinde* were selected for the lottery. Thus it happened that in 1649 former Cantonal President Joh. Heinrich Elmer was not chosen again, but Jakob Marti was chosen as cantonal

vice-president; likewise, in 1654, the “golden sphere” of another, Anton Clerik, was drawn. Not until in 1659 did the lottery again decide in favor of J. H. Elmer.

The first step for the office of cantonal vice-president and cantonal president had been, for J. Heinrich Elmer, the office of *c a n t o n a l m a s t e r b u i l d e r*. What the duties and authorities of a cantonal master builder were perhaps you can remember from an earlier lecture: he had the superintendence over the state of the roads, in that where the roads were defective anywhere in the canton, he then had to remind the local resident of his duty to repair the damage again and, where this turned out to be far too slow or unmanageable, to arrange for the serviceability by himself.

That Joh. Heinrich Elmer was cantonal master builder in 1631 we learn on the occasion of a conference of the Evangelical old cantons, which was held on the 19th of March in 1631 in [*Canton*] Aarau. As the Glarner delegate, Federal Councillor and Banneret Melchior Marti reported, in particular: “As the prelate of St. Gallen had received their allegiance for some time [*since 1538*], the Thur valley residents [*Toggenburg, Canton Thurgau*] had sworn allegiance with the proviso that the prince-abbot also later remedy the complaints which had been promised by him. Now the Thur valley residents learned that a so-called impartial court of justice was supposed to take place, however, not to remedy their complaints, but to punish the highest-ranked people among them. For this reason, they desired that Cantonal Master Builder Elmer should give them assistance. It was considered advisable that Elmer not give them assistance alone, but that still another council envoy would be added to him, both of whom should be helpful to the honest people.”

We learn from this pronouncement that J. H. Elmer not only was cantonal master builder but that he also was thought of, almost outside of the canton, as a mainstay of the Evangelicals. What it was that had brought him personally into a closer relationship with the Evangelical Toggenburgers, I, of course, do not know what to tell you for the time being.

Two years later — still cantonal master builder — he accompanied the envoy of the Evangelical Glarner, Cantonal President Rudolf Tschudi from Schwanden, to the confederate *Tagsatzung* which met in Baden [*Canton Aargau*] on the first Monday of July in 1633, and met there from the 3rd to the 21st of July. The delegate of the Catholic Glarner, Vice-President Fridolin Tschudi from Glarus, stated that the agreement which was made in the year 1623 had been violated by their Evangelical co-cantonal citizens. Also, for the filling of the *Landvogt* offices, the 1623 cantonal agreement had envisioned, in particular, that both denominations fill these positions alternately and, indeed, so that the Calvinists take a turn twice, then the Catholics enjoy the honor themselves once. As a result of this agreement provision, Cantonal Vice-President Tschudi explained, the Werdenberg *Landvogt* office would have come to the Catholics, according to the rotation, and Captain Ludwig Bussy had been elected by them as Werdenberg *Landvogt*. However, when he had wanted to take possession of the government there for more than 6 or 7 weeks, his entry into his new post had been denied to him by the Evangelicals. Catholic Glarus, for this reason, had delegated him [*Tschudi*] and Cantonal President Gallati to ask the old cantons to dissuade the Evangelical co-cantonal citizens from their actions, which were unauthorized and contrary to the agreement. After that, in 1624, 4 deputies from Zürich and Luzern had realized that the Evangelicals were responsible for giving their Catholic co-cantonal

citizens 1060 Fl. towards their incurred expenses, which, however, had not been reimbursed until now. The envoys of the honorable old cantons would therefore like to urge the Evangelicals to fulfill the law from now on.

In opposition to this, the delegates of the Evangelical Glarners, Cantonal President Tschudi and Cantonal Master Builder Elmer, entered a written response to the effect that the entry of the officer into his new post had been denied in consequence of the protestation which had been made more than a year ago, not because the Evangelical Glarners meant to overlook the article of the agreement concerning the filling of officials' offices, as the delegates of their Catholic co-cantonal citizens had charged them with a moment ago, but because the agreement had, first of all, been violated on the other side, in that, contrary to the clear letter of the same agreement, several years ago they "had dismissed quite derisively" their (the Evangelical Glarners) lords and masters of the Uznach and Gaster territories [*Canton St. Gallen*]. Although the 1623 agreement ordained that, with the filling of the *Landvogt* offices, one third falls to the Catholics and two thirds to the Calvinists, all the same, Schwyz denied the Calvinist Glarners the entry into their new posts as *Landvögte* of Uznach and Gaster. By the same laws with which the Catholic Glarners demanded admission of a Catholic *Landvogt* in the entirely Calvinist Werdenberg, the Calvinists demanded admission of Calvinist *Landvögte* into the, of course, Catholic cantonal vassal territories of Uznach and Gaster. When satisfaction had taken place for them — respectively, Cantonal President Tschudi and Cantonal Master Builder Elmer — with regard to both named territories, the sustained expenses were reimbursed, and "proper delight" was given, they (the Evangelical Glarners) would allow the *Landvogt* elected by the Catholics to be raised up unhindered in Werdenberg. In case this did not happen, they continue with the protestation that they'd made.

Since the filling of a third part of the *Landvogt* positions by Catholics actually meant, after all, a promotion of the Catholics *per se*, in that the Catholics at that time amounted to scarcely a fifth of the population, the *Tagsatzung* also could not overlook the fairness of the demands brought forward by the Evangelicals; it wouldn't do, after all, that, to the Evangelical Glarners, the filling of the *Landvogt* positions falling to them in Uznach and in the Gaster was hindered under the pretext of religion, nevertheless, simultaneously, it was demanded that, in Werdenberg, a Catholic must be permitted the entry into his new post as *Landvogt*; because the Evangelicals would be curtailed too much, the 1623 cantonal agreement would be "derisively" ignored. Also, the delegates of the Catholic Glarners had to admit that they only asserted they were innocent of the actions of the Schwyzers and wished themselves that Schwyz refrain from its prohibition.

"After they listened to the agreement established in 1623, as well as other decrees and agreements which had also been issued because of this, and the complaints brought forward on both sides besides, and had concluded from them that the Catholic Glarners indeed were willing to allow their co-cantonal citizens the entry into their new posts and their possession (occupancy) of both the *Landvogt* offices of Uznach and Gaster, and that it would be agreeable to them if Schwyz would permit this, thus they therefore finally decided, in general, to send a legation, to which Catholic Glarus will also appoint someone, to Schwyz from Zürich, Bern, Luzern, Uri, Unterwalden and Basel on Sunday, the 31st of July; the same shall request Schwyz, with reservations of its religious- and other rights in both territories, for the preservation of peace and for the prevention of unpleasantness, to allow the Evangelical *Landvögte* to enter their new posts

and take possession of the administration in the territories of Uznach and Gaster, when they had arrived according to the rotation.” (*Confederate Decrees V, 2, pg. 758*)

In the following year of 1634, Cantonal Master Builder J. H. Elmer again attended a conference of 4 Evangelical cities (Zürich, Bern, Basel and Schaffhausen) and this time not only as adviser of the Glarner delegates, but, personally, as representative of the Evangelical Glarners. In the name of the Evangelical Glarners, he sought advice from the delegates of the above-mentioned cities as to how they should conduct themselves in the future in their dispute regarding filling their *Landvogt* positions. At the same time, he also made himself heard: “After the admittance to both territories had, in fact, been closed to them, last year, when usually the rotation had been to their Catholic co-cantonal citizens, they had also elected an Evangelical as *Landvogt* to Werdenberg, and this election communicated to the Catholics, with the protestation, that they [*the Evangelicals*] would not allow the *Landvogt* to be presented by the other religion if they will not allow satisfaction regarding Uznach and Gaster. His [*Elmer's*] lords and masters were rejected last year regarding the presentation of their newly elected *Landvogt* and had been admonished to be patient, with the consolation that it would otherwise be beneficially helpful to them.” Of this beneficial help they had not been aware until now, however, and they, therefore, had placed their patience to an all-too-difficult test.

“Next Sunday the usual yearly *Landsgemeinde* will then occur, and there is no doubt that there an advance will be made with regard to this matter, and that the common man, who likes seriousness, will want the presentation. On the occasion of the journey which was entrusted to him [*Elmer*], to Solothurn, to the French ambassador who resided there, instruction was also given to him to learn the opinion of Zürich, as well as of the nearest-lying old cantons. This person [*the French ambassador*] had told him his opinion, but at the same time had instructed him also to bring the matter forward at this conference. If his lords and masters had been notified of this conference, they would not have failed to delegate him quickly” (to delegate him officially to this conference, in which case they would also have given him credentials).

“They thought, in general, that, when they wanted to present their *Landvogt* who had been elected by them to Werdenberg last year, the Evangelical Glarners could do it with good justification, since the Baden agreement regarding the territories of Uznach and Gaster had not restrained them either, and they again protested the presentation of the *Landvogt* elected by their Catholic co-cantonal citizens before gaining satisfaction, and all XII old cantons, as also their Catholic co-cantonal citizens, had recognized as reasonable that this satisfaction was due to them. They considered this presentation all the more ‘responsible’ since for some years the *Landvogt* of the Catholic cantonal citizens had also occupied the possession in spite of the protestations of the Evangelicals, and behind their backs. Nevertheless, this presentation should occur quietly and with simplicity. Because they [*the Evangelicals*] worried that, when he became aware of this scheme, the ambassador to Solothurn (the envoy of the French king) would want to keep it from the delegates and, thru them, their lords and masters, by threatening persuasion that they [*the Evangelicals*] should remain quiet until the next general assembly (the general confederate *Tagsatzung*), therefore they put it to him [*Elmer*] frankly to ride there, and asked him, as long as he had to ride there anyhow, to speak nothing to him [*the ambassador*] about it without cause.” (*Confederate Decrees V, 2, pg. 854*)

In what manner Cantonal Master Builder Elmer complied with the advice given him, we do not learn; on the other hand, we hear that he had to concern himself more than once on the same matter, until finally (in 1638) an agreement was achieved there, that “when the rotation comes to those from Glarus, the territories of Uznach and Gaster will make the appointment only with persons from the number of Catholics, but Werdenberg, only from the Evangelicals. On the other hand, legal rights to common land usage of all of these 3 territories, freedom and justice, be it the administration of justice, personnel, permits, confederate clergy and diplomatic travel, appeals, collection of accounts from territories and legations, etc., should belong undivided to the whole canton and common government control (not to the denominational councils)”.

In the year 1639, J. Heinrich Elmer participated at a general confederate annual financial reckoning for a first time as cantonal vice-president and, along with it, in the usual manner, as appointed head of the Evangelical Glarner. The *Tagsatzung* had even been convened on the 26th of June, instead of on the first Monday of July, as was the usual custom, because of questions of the handling of neutrality. After all, for the last 21 years, the 30 Years War raged thither and hither over there in Germany, and, as in our time during the war between the Central Powers and the Entente, the sympathies and antipathies of the Swiss were divided, and probably also still are today, and, from time to time, their all-too-loud utterances instilled misgivings into us, so it was also at that time, only that it was not a question of the antagonism of German and French-speaking, but a question of that between the two creeds: victory of the imperial troops met with joyful response in the inner cantons, while victory of the Evangelicals and their friends — Sweden, etc. — awakened unconcealed joy likewise in Zürich and Bern. Nevertheless, it was to ward off a concern of more genuine patriots that these demonstrations will not “go too far” and the Confederacy would be entwined within the war which brought such unspeakable misery upon the German districts. It was in this seriously troubled time that Cantonal Vice-President J. Heinrich Elmer — together with his colleague, the Catholic Cantonal President Balthasar Müller — rode into Baden [*Canton Aargau*] as Glarner *Tagsatzung* members. However, although he participated for the first time as the actual *Tagsatzung* envoy to a general confederate conference (general confederate, in contrast to the special conferences of the Evangelical member states and the 7 old Catholic cantons), that he was entrusted, on this occasion, by the *Tagsatzung* with an important confederate mission, and was dispatched by the *Tagsatzung* as its envoy to Paris, no doubt demonstrates clearly the esteem that Cantonal Vice-President Elmer already enjoyed.

The causes on behalf of which Cantonal Vice-President Elmer was sent to King Louis XIII were two: as everyone knows, a department of the French Republic, the *Franche-comté*, formerly the free count’s domain of Burgundy,⁹ was now adjacent to our Switzerland on the west. This had very close economic and political connections with the Old Confederacy for a long time. In its feeling of independence it had even repeatedly expressed the wish for admission into the alliance of the confederates.¹⁰ Bern, whose eyes were naturally directed more and more towards the west, would probably have been inclined to gratify this wish. The other member states, on the other hand, allowed themselves to back off from it as a result of various concerns. After all, after expanding repeatedly for 3, for 10, for 20 years, the free count’s domain was guaranteed neutrality by a treaty, the “hereditary agreement of 1511” (certainly violated often enough) and

9 The free count’s domain supplied the confederates not only with corn and wine, but also with valuable salt (“salt pan” from Salins).

10 Dr. R. Maag, *The Free Count’s Domain of Burgundy*, pg. 27.

the Confederacy ordered “faithful attention” in relation to the free count’s domain. By a new treaty of neutrality of 1597, it had even been determined: if the free count’s domain were wrongfully attacked, the confederates should first attempt a friendly mediation; if this was of no use, they should come to the rescue with troops, not under 4000 and not over 12,000 men, at Spain’s expense, whose crown had fallen to the free count’s domain through marriage. Since the 30 Years War also brought its horrors to the free count’s domain, despite its guaranteed neutrality, the extraordinary envoy of the Spanish king, D o n D i e g o S a a v e d r a Fajardo, appeared at the *Tagsatzung* in Baden [*Canton Aargau*], “filed a letter of remembrance regarding Burgundy, and, after that, read a paper in which he stated, among other things, that they would have the old Evangelical cantons believe that the free count’s domain was to be included in the Milanese alliance for another purpose than merely for their defense.” (As far as they [*the Spanish*] were concerned, they [*Burgundy*], therefore, had actually abandoned their neutrality; that is, it was not for them.) “The king's only view has been to affirm Burgundy as a bulwark of the Confederacy, he is even willing, during peaceful times, to negotiate about an alliance between the aforesaid province and the XIII old cantons. — By means of committees, they [*the confederates*] now let Don Diego, together with Meliand” (the envoy of the French king), “put forward whether at least one ceasefire could not be established in Burgundy. The French ambassador answered that he did not regard Don Diego as a kingly ambassador and had no instruction to negotiate alone about a ceasefire regarding Burgundy.¹¹ If, however, one of the authorized delegates of all the interested parties of the other side who were at war had the authority to conclude a ceasefire, then his authority extends so far that he could negotiate with such a one. — The Spanish ambassador remarked that the king¹² at present thinks less about physical assistance than with interposition¹³ for Burgundy. Once more committees were sent to both ambassadors. The French stuck to their point of view, Saavedra likewise, with the addition that he was also not unwilling for the sake of the deposition. — They [*the confederates*] wrote to the king, to Cardinal Richelieu¹⁴, Lord High Chancellor Signier, Marquis Coislin, to Bouthillier, Bouillon and Nayers concerning a ceasefire for Burgundy. Cantonal Vice-President Elmer from Glarus was delegated with the writing, and the mandate was given to him because of the complaints of the merchants, as well as because of the outstanding payments which the retired and the still serving chiefs and leaders yet had to claim. Meliand offered himself to the greatest possible promotion of this matter. Because of this importance, the matter concerning Burgundy was also written to the emperor, the king of Spain, the Cardinal-Infant and the duke of Bavaria. Also, Luzern was requested to cause a letter on this matter to be sent, for the sake of and concerning the general ceasefire.” (*Confederate Decrees* V, 2a, pg. 1140.)

The second reason for which Cantonal Vice-President Elmer was sent to Paris lay, as was already indicated in the foregoing, in the complaints of the confederates, probably mainly the St. Gallen merchants. For this reason, the following had also appeared at the *Tagsatzung*: Dr. Sebastian Schobinger, mayor, nobleman Bartholomäus Zollikofer and nobleman Daniel Studer, all from St. Gallen, the first-named as envoy of the mayor and council in that place, the 2 others “in the name of merchants from different old cantons of Switzerland who carried on trade in

11 “No separate peace”.

12 King Philipp IX (1621-65).

13 Diplomatic mediation.

14 Cardinal Richelieu (born in 1585, died in 1642) was, since 1624, chief minister and, under Louis XIII, actually regent, who, while he crushed the Huguenots in France, brought about a French coalition with Sweden and the German Evangelicals against Austria-Spain.

France". These merchants had previously enjoyed very significant trade privileges in France,¹⁵ but then, since 1634, they had experienced a significant reduction, mainly from fiscal reasons. For this reason, as the *Confederate Decrees* report, the afore-named merchants stated that for some years not insignificant new duties had been instituted at Lyon and Valance [*France*]; also they had placed a duty on the foreign, and the confederate, merchants at Lyon, to pay, within the space of a month, 270,000 Fr., which had been reduced to 245,000 Fr., for the conduct of war. They would like to ensure that these complaints would be remedied and the confederate merchants would not be looked upon as other foreigners or the crown vassals, but as allies¹⁶. — They wrote to the king, Cardinal Richelieu, and the Lords de Bouillon, Bouthillier and Nayers, as superintendents of finance, concerning cancellation of these changes. In case they should be prosecuted for payment, the merchants will be ordered to appeal to the old confederate cantons and to protest against possible use of force. — They will also, therefore, talk with the French ambassador, and this one gives good answers. They also charged the envoy (Elmer), who was afterwards sent to the court regarding Burgundy, to put forward the concern of the merchants appropriately. Zürich and Luzern were given authority "to do what was necessary, in case the merchants had to complain about something in addition." (*Confederate Decrees*, loc. cit, pg. 1138.)

Regarding the success that Cantonal Vice-President Elmer achieved in Paris, that was probably about the same that A. Bubenberg, the well-known defender of Murten [*Canton Freiburg, in 1476*], and his fellow envoys had achieved at that time in the same Paris: "Good words and many promises, but little cash and support." The *Confederate Decrees* from September in 1639 reported about it in V, 2, pg. 1147: "Cantonal Vice-President Elmer, who, soon after that, returned from his mission to the king of France, reported about its outcome in detail and explained that he could not have any success with the king of France because Burgundy 'was attached to the state in general to such an extent' that it could not be separated. Consequently, they did not cause the" (already decided before Cantonal Vice-President Elmer's arrival) "letters to be sent to the king and to the Cardinal and can do nothing other than take everything to referendum."

And, on pg. 1148, the same reported: "Cantonal Vice-President J. Heinrich Elmer from Glarus reported about his work with the king of France and submitted the written reply of the king. In reference to Burgundy, he [*the king*] answered that it was impossible to separate its affairs from those of the other countries (Alsace, Swabia, etc.). On the complaints regarding the duties and levies for Lyon and Valance was answered: as soon as the king will have his finance council with him, they will take the appropriate measures to remedy the situation at hand. The enforcement of the last seizures because of certain duties are cancelled; after the return of the king from Grenoble [*France*], he will allow negotiating with the confederate merchants at Lyon regarding the duties. The payment of the confederate principals was impossible in view of the courses of events at that time; meanwhile, a portion of the money allocated to the Confederacy should be distributed to them." We will hardly reproach Elmer because of his failures, and want to accuse him of a lack of diplomatic skill. It went no better for him, and no more unpleasantly,

15 Following Ella Wild, *The Swiss Trading Privileges in France, 1444-1635*.

16 "The trade privileges can be traced back, in the last analysis, to the Swiss gold services because, without this, they would never have been granted in the manner such as was done in 1516 and would also not have been able to be maintained in the long run. Only the consideration for the gold agreements prevented the French kings from a complete eradication of the confederate privileges." E. Wild, loc. cit., pg. 232.

than the Swiss delegates fared in the summer of 1916 in the same Paris. As is well known, they had been honored there as delegates of the high-minded Swiss, so that individually these gentlemen were entirely delighted about this “warm welcome”; however, the end of the song was that Federal Councillor Hoffmann of the Federal Assembly had to announce: the mission of our envoys has failed. Things went no better for our Elmer. To be sure, he was also honored in Paris and presented with a gold chain (it still exists to some extent); but in the first session, in which he only verbally made a preliminary report, he explained entirely honestly and openly: that he had not been able to accomplish anything with the king. However, what the official writing, which he submitted in the following meeting, said was scarcely much different than “good words and many promises, but little cash”. For our Elmer, the journey also personally had a somewhat bitter aftertaste. The journey and the stay in Paris naturally had cost him a lot of money; because he did not want to be frowned upon at the king’s court, he could not appear too republican-poor. And yet, in July of the following year, apparently no one had yet reimbursed him anything for it. For this reason, at the assembled *Tagsatzung* in July 1640 in Baden [*Canton Aargau*], he brought up a request for reimbursement. Zürich, Bern, Luzerne, Uri, Glarus and Schaffhausen immediately saw to it that he received 10 doubloons for his expenses from each of them from the [1511] hereditary agreement money, which was for future distribution, and the Appenzell Outer Rhodes sent 5 doubloons; on the other hand, the envoys from Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zug, Freiburg, Solothurn and the Appenzell Inner Rhodes had to take the matter first to a referendum. However, even 2 years later, in November 1642, Schwyz had still given nothing for its part. Since the failure received in Paris was itself disagreeable for Vice-President Elmer, he probably liked all the less to be reminded of the expenses he’d incurred. At a conference of the 3 member states, Zürich, Schwyz and Glarus, which took place in November 1642 in Rapperswil [*Canton St. Gallen*], he, or his colleague and fellow-traveller, Cantonal Vice-President Frid. Tschudi, nonetheless, asked Schwyz for payment of his 10 doubloons.

Also, what he had proposed to a conference of the Evangelical cities and old cantons in July 1643 may have caused him embarrassment. He had to report to his colleagues from Zürich, Bern, Basel and Schaffhausen about difficulties and disagreements which the *Fahrtsfeier*^j caused. At the ceremony of the Näfels *Fahrt*^k, the Catholics had appeared quite unexpectedly in the procession with a silver picture of St. Fridolin. Since the Calvinists, who had removed the holy pictures from their churches (they were regarded as “idols”), were angry about it, they demanded that this picture not be brought on the *Fahrt* again in the future, and, since the Catholics did not want to dispense with it, they did not participate in the *Fahrt* in 1640 and 1641, but celebrated the day in their churches as a day of praying and fasting. However, then in 1642, because the Catholics had dispensed with the picture which was objectionable to the Evangelicals, the *Fahrt* would have been celebrated jointly again. Moreover, furthermore in 1642, when he, as cantonal president, had to make the speech, he would have permitted himself a small modification in his speech; instead of the Mother of God he would have spoken of the Holy Mother Mary; likewise, in 1643, the *Fahrtsbrief*, which, as is well-known, speaks of the “highly praised heavenly princes”, St. Fridolin and St. Hilarius, would have been read aloud by a Catholic clerk. However, bitter rebukes were then made to him and his fellow-believers in letters of the Calvinist ministers of Basel, Bern and Schaffhausen, as if they were not true Christians, but would pull at a yoke

j *Fahrtsfeier* - the ceremony held as part of the annual 9 Apr 1388 Battle of Näfels memorial pilgrimage, which includes the reading of the *Fahrtsbrief*. [SW]

k *Fahrt* - the 9 Apr 1388 Battle of Näfels memorial pilgrimage, which is held annually on the first Thursday of April. [SW]

with the unbelievers; they were more interested in the prosperity of the body than in that of the soul; they had gone back again to the “belching forth” and had accepted bribes. Glarner ministers would also have been intimidated by such rebukes; although the Zürich theologians would have advised them to attend the *Fahrt*, they would have stayed away in this year (1643). By Cantonal President Elmer telling his colleagues such and reminding them that the 1564 cantonal agreement provided for joint celebration of the *Fahrt* festival, the latter found his approach correct; they also recommended to continue the form adhered to in 1643 and undertook to inform their ministers of the facts and to tell them that they might have to behave with more discretion and moderation, in the same way as they would have expected of the Glarner ministers, that they would have showed themselves obedient towards their government and would have attended the *Fahrt*.

As soon as Elmer parried the rebukes of the Evangelical factions in 1643 in this manner, he had to lodge a complaint towards another faction at a conference of Evangelical member states that occurred in February 1645: the abbot of St. Gallen and his officials tried all means for dissuading the Evangelical Toggenburgers, who were under the jurisdiction of the abbot, from their religion; thus they granted dispensations with marriages within forbidden degrees (with too close kinship) if the Evangelical in question converted to the Catholic religion, and so on. “Since Glarus has owned the cantonal right with the Toggenburg, it should take the first steps against St. Gallen and apply for the religious freedom of the Evangelical cantonal citizens. If this is unsuccessful, then they will continue to deliberate on the received report on how Glarus would like to be supported.” (*Confederate Decrees* V, 2, pg. 1344)

The deliberations of the Evangelical old cantons' conference on the 16th of September in 1662 also demonstrate what crises caused a statesman who had to guide the little ship of state through danger-threatening reefs the strained relations of the denominational antagonists at that time. The same 1564 cantonal agreement which we already mentioned earlier, because he ordered the joint celebration of the *Fahrt* festival, also specified that the Canton Glarus Calvinists had to celebrate certain feast days to which the Catholics adhered (above all, the Apostles' feast days) with them. That was then an extremely troublesome matter to many Calvinist Glarners, particularly if these feast days fell in the haying time or otherwise in weeks full of work. It might also allow judges, who could only make a decision heavy-handedly, to punish fellow-citizens who had not observed the relevant prohibitive rules. Similarly, there seemed to have been ministers who “forgot” or, in some other way, shortened the feast days that were dictated to them. The V old (Catholic) cantons protested over it and demanded of Glarus strict application of the legal decree that was established by the 1564 cantonal agreement. In their letter to the Evangelical Glarners, they even held out the likelihood that, if their wish was not acceded to, they will not allow any more Calvinist cantonal officials to assume office in territories under joint administration. Asked for advice about that by Cantonal President Elmer, in the name of his member state, the Evangelical member states certainly protested against the threatened legal remedy, but also would surely have had the Evangelical Glarners consider that the 1564 cantonal agreement actually held them to the observation of the feast days in question.

And also, with regard to a second question, the conference of the 16th of September in 1662 was not able to give that answer which Cantonal President Elmer probably had wanted. *Landvogt* Stucki of Oberurnen had erected 2 crosses on the Oberurnen common land in memory of his

daughter, who had drowned in the Linth [*river*]. Today, even good Evangelical-minded people can let a cross be placed on their graves; at that time the erection of 2 crosses — inconceivably to us — was perceived by the Calvinists as a provocation and requiring their removal; however also, that's why they had received a sharp reprimand from factions of the V old Catholic cantons. The old Evangelical cantons, to whom the matter had been presented at an earlier conference¹⁷, had issued the advice to hold out the hope of the exercise of the right of reciprocity; “without saying in what this right of reciprocity would exist”. (Asked in what this could exist, the petitioner probably was not a little embarrassed himself.) This time they probably found that it was not worth it to bring about a federal involvement for the sake of such a thing, and advised, for this reason, “rejecting all consequences to be drawn from the compromise, to let the cross stay”. The Calvinist Glarner also followed this advice; their secretary, however, committed a new awkwardness with the announcement of this decision. Namely, he referred to the erection of the crosses as a “novelty” (innovation), which they refused to tolerate for the future. And which the V old cantons could not and would not again put up with. After all, in 1388 and even earlier they had erected crosses. That must not, therefore, “be christened as a ‘novelty’”. “Determined not to tolerate this word ‘novelty’ and to order expulsion from the co-regency in the territories under joint administration in the case of persistence, even as in 1564 and in the past year, they called upon Cantonal President Elmer, through 3 members, to bring about the removal of that word; and when he made excuses for the same as an awkward editing, but declared himself powerless to accomplish the desired change on his own, the demand was put in writing to the non-Catholic part of Glarus.” (*Confederate Decrees* VI, 1, pg. 575.) Since they could not risk, for the sake of this awkward word, that the V old cantons carry out their threat and not allow the Calvinist cantonal official to assume office, they had no other choice but to delete the word “novelty”; what sort of other word they inserted for it, I, however, do not know. On the other hand, we see from what was communicated that even then they could already weigh the words exactly and that the people at all times frequently troubled themselves unnecessarily, and, for this reason, governance was not a very easy matter in those times as well.¹⁸

I could tell you all sorts of similar incidents in addition from the official duties of Joh. Heinrich Elmer; he had represented the member state of Glarus and his Evangelical cantonal citizens, particularly so often at *Tagsatzungen* and conferences, like scarcely another Glarner magistrate. However, I would tire you if I wanted to single out even more details from his parliamentary activities.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned further that he had also been dispatched in 1647, together with 2 other delegates from Zürich and Uri, as an envoy of the *Tagsatzung* to the Swedish generals, as French and Swedish troops had conquered Bregenz [*Austria*] and besieged Lindau [*Bavaria*] and, for this reason, caused the confederate member states to send out larger contingents of troops into the Rheintal and the regions on the Bodensee [*Lake Constance, N. of Canton St. Gallen*] for the preservation of neutrality. The confederate envoys, however, were “all assured confidentially of friendship and neighborliness” by the Swedish generals, as then every danger was also averted. In November 1663, however, Cantonal President J. H. Elmer was once again dispatched to Paris, this time in a larger company, since each of the XIII old cantons

17 It had taken place on the 15th of January in 1657. So for five years this matter had been dragged around.

18 With good reason, the wise Sirach said about it already (28,29): “You weigh your gold and silver, why do you not also weigh your words on the gold scales?”

dispatched 2 envoys apiece (in addition to Cantonal President Elmer, Glarus dispatched Cantonal Captain Fridolin Freuler) and the affiliated old cantons dispatched a delegate apiece for the celebration of the renewal of the alliance with France, which took place with great “solemnity”. That there was great excitement in Paris goes without saying; there was nothing but joy and exultation. In the Palace of Versailles today an elaborate tapestry is still supposed to glorify the solemn act of the alliance’s invocation in the church of Nôtre Dame. Whether, however, all the confederate delegates, and our Elmer in the front, returned home with satisfaction, I do not know. When we read in the *Confederate Decrees* (VI, 1, pg. 600): “Punishment of the journalist who portrayed the solemnization of the alliance as one paying homage to the king, and suppression of a calendar engraving portraying the Swiss legation in most unacceptable posture and clothing, is demanded and obtained,” thus this seems to indicate that they were not spared the feeling that their republican dignity had not had a particularly auspicious hour. And when the Evangelical delegates were blind to the hardships which their co-religionists, the Huguenots, even then suffered, when 2 delegates from the Languedoc [*region in S. France*], who, in the name of the persecuted Evangelicals, had wanted to commend their petition to the Evangelical delegates “under fear and terror”, were delayed so that they reached them too late, just at the moment of departure, thus we can imagine how Cantonal President Elmer, who so often served as advocate of the Evangelicals, was grievously saddened by it.

After we thoroughly discussed his o f f i c i a l actions, we also want to communicate still in brief something about the personal relations of Cantonal President J. H. Elmer. He was the son of Cantonal President Heinrich Elmer, who died on the 16th of December in 1600; his mother was a Katharina Schönwyler from Bischofszell [*Canton Thurgau*]. For his part, born on the 7th of June in 1600, he lost his father before he became 7 months old. On the other hand, his mother spared no pains to bestow on him a thorough education; he was said to have had complete mastery of the Latin, French and Italian languages.

According to information of Glarner Genealogist J. J. Kubli-Müller, in his first marriage, he was married since the 21st of November in 1624 to Marie Elisabeth Streuli (born on the 9th of July in 1611, died in 1655 on March 25), daughter of Captain and Werdenberg *Landvogt* (1613) Dietrich Streuli of Glarus. In this first marriage 12 children were born to him; we mention: the first-born, Dietrich, born in 1626, died in 1642, Barbara, born in 1629 on December 22, became the spouse of Dean Abraham Dinner, who served as pastor of Mollis and Glarus and died in 1686. Katharina, born in 1631 on October 23, became the spouse of Federal Councillor, *Landvogt* (in the Rheintal) and Judge Fridolin Zwicky of Mollis. Heinrich, born in 1633 on May 22, Captain and Federal Councillor, died in 1710 on May 13. Kleophea, born in 1635 on February 15, became the spouse of Dean Hans Rudolf Weiss, who occupied the office of pastor of Matt in 1671-1707. Joh. Christof, born in 1639 on April 8, of whom we have to tell immediately afterwards as the third cantonal president from the Elmer family. Dietrich, born in 1644 on July 9, Lieutenant, died in 1693.

In the second marriage, Cantonal President J. H. Elmer was married since August 1658 to Margreth Gantenbein of Werdenberg (died in 1692) He died, at 79 years old, on the 19th of October in 1679.

There is a well-known anecdote according to which Cantonal President J. H. Elmer, as he attended a *Tagsatzung* the first time, was looked at somewhat askance by the delegates of other member states because of his rather rustic clothing; when, at the usual greeting, the turn then came to the envoys from Glarus, he had looked closely at his coat hither and thither and observed at the same time: “Coat, speak!” As enjoyable is the anecdote, I also believe today, as 40 years ago (*Historical Yearbook XV*, pg. 20), that it did not fit for our Cantonal President J. H. Elmer. After all, the very first *Tagsatzung* that he attended sent him, who at that time was not yet cantonal president, only cantonal vice-president, as their delegate to Paris. That would, of course, scarcely have happened unless his entire manner had revealed a skillful man of education qualified for such a mission.

And now, in addition, the son of Cantonal President J. Heinrich Elmer and grandson of Cantonal President Heinrich Elmer: Cantonal President J. Christof Elmer. The record of the Evangelical *Landsgemeinde* of the 27th of April in 1684 reported of him: “4. Since, according to the accustomed practices, the office of cantonal president has fallen to the Catholics, Lieutenant Joh. Christof Elmer, instead of Joh. Peter Weissen, has been chosen by the lottery as the cantonal vice-president and shall give into the treasury, as his predecessors also had to repay, 300 Fl. for the levy, according to the plan.”

As we already recalled on an earlier occasion, as cantonal vice-president he was the leader of the Evangelicals, and he had to lead the yearly Evangelical *Landsgemeinde* in Schwanden. From the agenda items which he had to deal with as such, I mention that, at the Evangelical *Landsgemeinde* of the 26th of April in 1685, he had to plead the case for the decision of the gracious lords and masters concerning his cousin, “Nobleman Captain Christof Tschudi”. He [*Tschudi*] had come up with the idea of getting engaged to Katharina Weiss, the beloved daughter of the cantonal president, although he knew that he was related to her in the 2nd and 4th degree. For this error, the Evangelical *Landsgemeinde* sentenced him “to give 6 Batzen for his penalty payment to each cantonal citizen who was 126 years old and over, as a warning to others”. (The Evangelical cantonal citizens over 16 years were, at that time, around 2,500; the penalty, therefore, amounted to about 15,000 Batzen, or about 900 Fl.)

When he had held the office of cantonal vice-president 2 years, Christ. Elmer, in the traditional way, advanced to cantonal president. That was so obvious that the *Landsgemeinde* record did not consider it worthwhile to report that explicitly, but contented themselves with the remark: “Court and council were confirmed to perform again for a year, as from time immemorial.” On the other hand, in 1689, since the office of cantonal president again went over to the Catholics and the Evangelicals had to appoint the vice-president, the “non-partisan lottery” was not in his favor, but had elected “by the lottery, Cantonal Treasurer Fridolin Zweifel for cantonal vice-president”. The next election of an Evangelical to cantonal vice-president, in the traditional way, took place in April 1694, and the *Landsgemeinde* this time determined, as “burdens” of being elected cantonal vice-president: “100 Fl. into the Evangelical cantonal treasury and, as yet besides, 4 Batzen to each cantonal citizen who was 16 years old and over” and “Cantonal President Christof Elmer again had been elected by the lottery as our official and cantonal vice-president”.

In the 2 years for which he was first elected as cantonal vice-president, he had notably attended frequent *Tagsatzungen* and conferences concerning the disagreeable “Wartauer affair”.

In Sargans [*Canton St. Gallen*], Jos. Anton v. Reding governed at that time as the *Landvogt* elected from Schwyz, and he was a strict supporter of the Borromean League¹ and wanted, for this reason, also to introduce it again in the church of Wartau [*St. Martin, village of Gretschins, Lordship of Wartau, Werdenberg, Canton St. Gallen*], in which no Catholic divine services had been held for the past 116 years, except for the occasion of the homages [*to the Landvögte*] which occurred every two years. The conversion of a hitherto Calvinist citizen, who lived in Azmoos [*Sargans, Canton St. Gallen*], to the Catholic creed gave him, as he believed, the legal pretext for his proceedings. So, on Sunday, the 28th of October in 1694, with 100 soldiers from Sargans, he then marched hither into Wartau and allowed the Catholic divine service to be held by a priest he brought along with him; this also happened on the following Sunday, during which the officiating Capuchin very forcefully ran through the heresies of the Evangelicals. Against these unauthorized proceedings of the *Landvogt*, Zürich and Evangelical Glarus raised vigorous opposition, but found little favorable hearing in the other 5 old cantons who governed the count's domain of Sargans with them (the 4 forest cantons [*Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Luzerne*] and Zug). Although frequently not a soul appeared at the Catholic divine service and the few Catholics from Palfries were less distant to the church of Sargans than to Wartau, they persisted, nevertheless, encouraged by the Papal Nuncio, in their demand to hold Catholic divine service in the church of Wartau and, for that reason, to appoint a Catholic priest. On both sides they became overheated to such an extent that it seemed they should come to civil war over it. The Military Council of the V old cantons already took all steps, as it directed in the relevant decree, for "moving the dance-floor into the house of the enemy and living out of his kitchen" at the outbreak of war.

In the negotiations which were conducted on account of this unpleasant business, Knight Ludwig Tschudi, the cantonal president elected by the Catholics for 1694-96, and J. Christ. Elmer, the vice-president chosen by the Evangelical *Landsgemeinde*, repeatedly clashed sharply with one another. The *Tagsatzung*, among others, had been told that in Niederurnen entrenchments were dug, and a bridge had been recently thrown across the Linth [*river*], which naturally should be a war measure, in order to be in a position to quickly invade the Gaster [*Canton St. Gallen district between Canton Glarus and Sargans*]. Based on these notices, the Catholic old cantons demanded that these preparations be removed again. In the face of these accusations, Vice-President Elmer declared that the bridge in question was absolutely not a change, on the contrary, a bridge has been at the same place, in the interest of reciprocal traffic at any time, only that it should have been replaced because of its dilapidated condition. However, with the entrenchments which had been dug near Niederurnen, that was merely an invention of his co-minister, of Cantonal President Knight Ludwig Tschudi, "whose reputation and character is sufficiently well known". Moreover, even if Evangelical Glarus would have dug entrenchments near Niederurnen, there would have been sufficient reason, since the Capuchin monastery, which had recently been built on the hill of Näfels, was more like a fortress inside than a house of worship.

1 *The Borromean (or Golden) League was founded on 5 Oct 1586 by Ludwig Pfyffer as a Catholic Counter-Reformation alliance of the seven Catholic cantons [Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Lucern, Zug, Freiburg and Solothurn] for mutual aid in maintaining the "true" faith. This alliance also pledged itself to use armed force to expel heretics [anyone who believed the doctrines of the Protestant religion]. Its insistence on Catholic interests as superior over those of the Swiss Confederation severed all ties with those cantons who had embraced Protestantism. This nearly led to the destruction of the Swiss Confederation, and precipitated the division of the canton of Appenzell along religious lines. [SW]*

In the eleventh hour, the efforts of the uninvolved old cantons succeeded in preventing the imminent outbreak of civil war. Since, for months, not a single Catholic had appeared at Mass, and thus the Catholic divine service had “dissolved” by itself, the emissaries of the original cantons also satisfied themselves that it would be criminal “to play with fire” and to bring the destitution of war over the canton on account of a divine service not wanted by a soul.

At the Evangelical *Landsgemeinde* of the 26th of April in 1696, the position of cantonal president should have been filled again, and it was considered self-evident that, in addition, Vice-President Elmer should again advance to the “governing cantonal president”, as directed elsewhere. Only 7 weeks earlier, Cantonal Vice-President J. Christ. Elmer died, not yet quite 57 years old. So then the position of cantonal president was to be filled anew. On this occasion something happened, however, that seems remarkable to us, considering our democratic ideas of today. The *Landsgemeinde* records of the 26th of April in 1696 reported as follows: “1. It is together an undivided tally of my gracious lords and masters and ordinary Evangelical cantonal citizens, on the submitted intercession of the widow and maiden daughter. It recognizes the honorable friendship of the late Cantonal President Joh. Christoff Ellmer, who is now resting in God, and grants his wish; for this reason, we have elected, with almost unanimous majority, the Cantonal Vice-President Joh. Heinrich Zwicki for 3 years as our official and cantonal president, nevertheless, without a certain discontinuance and weakening of the lottery.”

That is: At the recommendation and request of the widow of the deceased Cantonal President Elmer and his maiden daughter, Susanne, the *Landsgemeinde* elected, with almost unanimous majority, H. Zwicki for Cantonal President. It is indeed a beautiful token of affection to the deceased cantonal president. But, in addition, how did the two women happen to make such an unexpected request to the *Landsgemeinde*? As you heard, at his election to cantonal vice-president, the deceased had paid 100 Fl. into the Evangelical cantonal treasury and 4 Batzen to each Evangelical cantonal citizen over 16 years; all the same, when we contemplate not only the value of the metal (1 Fl. = 2.22 Fr.) but the current market price, that is, bear in mind that a Gulden reached further at that time than 10 Fr. today, that makes quite a significant sum; and he paid this sum in the anticipation of 5 years of office (2 years as vice-president, 3 years as president) and, no doubt, in the further anticipation that the “shavings” which fell to him as a byproduct during his cantonal presidency would restore to him the money he paid. However, when he then died as early as after 2 years, before taking possession of the cantonal president's office, then the money he'd paid would have been mostly lost for him or his family. It would have served to prevent this loss by his family when the *Landsgemeinde* agreed with the widow of the deceased cantonal president and his maiden daughter. Cantonal President Zwicki will have appeared grateful for the recommendation of the two women. However, that the *Landsgemeinde* turned down any further consequence, and kept away any further “discontinuance and weakening of the lottery”, was obvious.

In addition to the 3 Elmer cantonal presidents who served the canton in 1594-1696, the Werdenberger *Landvogt* Hans Gabriel Elmer and Cantonal Secretary Kaspar Elmer had also drawn attention to themselves in public life in the same period from the Elmer family. The former, who occupied the position of cantonal captain in 1632-36, led a Glarner company to Graubünden in 1635, for the Leagues — under the direction of the noble French Duke of Rohan

[*Brittany*] — to lend a helping hand for the expulsion of Spain from Valtellina [*Canton Graubünden*] and the reconquest of this much sought-after province. Cantonal Secretary Kaspar Elmer¹⁹ officiated in 1655 and 1656 in Lauis [*Canton Ticino*] with the investigation of the annual accounting of the XII old cantons that were ruling the 4 territories on the other side of the mountain; in 1643-44, however, he was himself the *Landvogt* in Sargans and in 1659/60 in the Freie Ämter [*Canton Aargau*]. With his election as *Landvogt* of the Freie Ämter, the *Tagsatzung* had hesitated to approve the election and to let the *Landvogt* assume office, not because they had taken offence at the person of Elmer himself, but because of the large tax which the Glarner *Landsgemeinde* imposed on him and which he had allowed himself to impose. When a *Landvogt* had to pay such large levies for obtaining his position, as was the case in Glarus, certainly suggests the temptation for the person elected to obtain compensation for the levies paid by them through severe fines and in all kinds of not entirely honest ways, and probably also still to earn something beyond. For this reason, the *Tagsatzung* hesitated to approve Elmer's election, and, since they then approved him, they severely reproached the Glarner envoys, Cantonal President J. H. Elmer and Vice-President Frid. Marti when, in 1661, the *Landsgemeinde* again imposed just as high burdens on the new *Landvögte* for Baden [*Canton Aargau*] and the Rheintal [*Canton St. Gallen*]. Both envoys affirmed "that the confederate warning letter has already made a good impression, a second letter would have still better success and t h e y t h e m s e l v e s had desired, after all, that *Landvogt* Blumer had o n l y (!) been levied with a half Gulden from each cantonal citizen and with 200 Fl. into the cantonal treasury, also he had already been promoted into Baden [*Canton Aargau*]. Conclusion: With Blumer they should let it rest there, on the other hand, the oath of the *Landvogt* appointed in the Rheintal was postponed until the following year, and member state Glarus delivered the statement that, if that levy was not rescinded and limited to the payment of 200 Fl., as in other old cantons, no more Glarner *Landvögte* would be accepted." (*Confederate Decrees* VI, 1, pg. 532)

In April 1754, the following was elected as *Landvogt* to Werdenberg by the lottery: Honorable Envoy and former Cantonal Secretary Nikolaus Ellmer from Elm. It seems that he also wanted to compete for an office again in 1761. Then "it is pretended by factions of the back part [*of Canton Glarus*] that *Landvogt* Niklaus Elmer is put in the lottery, not in the back, but in the middle part, since he always stays in Glarus [*commune*] and has fire and smoke there". As is well-known, with *Landvögte* and similar positions, just 2 were elected in the lottery from the back part, 4 from the middle and 2 from the lower part of the canton, and so the question was whether Nik. Elmer should go into the lottery as a back-lander, since he was a *Tagwen* citizen from Elm, or as a middle-lander, since he had fire and smoke in Glarus. He himself received an office neither in 1761 nor in 1762. On the other hand, his son, Clerk of the Court Wolfgang Elmer, was elected in 1761 as ship master. Furthermore, the latter came later to the West Indies and died in 1771 on June 15 at Surinam [*South America*], according to the attestation of the East Indian Chamber in Amsterdam.

Also, Lieutenant Federal Councillor Nik. Elmer should still be mentioned, who, according to information of J. Kubli-Müller, in 1675, married a Verena von Capratz from Ilanz [*Canton Graubünden*], daughter of the old Cantonal President Pankrazius, and called his first-born Pankrazius Elmer. I mention that, to begin with, because this fact also gives testimony again for the brisk trade which had taken place for centuries between Elm and the Graubünden highlands,

19 His daughter, Adelheid, was the afore-mentioned widow of Cantonal President D.[sic] Christof Elmer.

and, then again, it explains where the Christian name Pankratius came from to Elm. The ice-holyday Pankratius^m, as is well-known, is not at all popular in Canton Glarus, and, also, it is not found as a Christian name in other communes of our canton, as far as I know. That he established himself in Elm had its cause in the marriage of Federal Councillor Nikl. Elmer that was mentioned.

And now, after we mentioned a number of personalities from the Elmer family, in addition, a general observation. According to the 1876 cantonal tax roll, the Elmers in Canton Glarus numbered 126 head-taxpayers, who were presented with a property of 1,597,000 Fr.²⁰; by that, they stand in 16th place with regard to the property, and in 17th place with regard to the number of head-taxpayers. Of the 126 head-taxpayers, 51 were found in their original ancestral seat of Elm, 32 in Matt, 12 in Glarus, 7 in Schwanden, 6 in Linthal, 4 each in Ennenda²¹ and Niederurnen, 3 each in Rüti and Bilten, and 1 each in Engi, Luchsingen, Netstal and Mollis.

In Matt, the Elmers had already established themselves before 1600. In the beginning of the 17th century, lived there, among others, “L o r d” Hans Elmer, who was married to a baroness, A. Maria von der Hohen-Sax²², who was obviously the favorite of her Matt co-citizens as a godmother or godparent. In addition to this aristocratic family of Hans Elmer, however, in 1595-1617, already several other Elmer families are found in Matt.²³

The Elmers probably emigrated to Glarus [*commune*] at the end of the 16th or beginning of the 17th century, especially those who had held offices or sought such. Around 1645, 9 Elmers were already in Glarus, thus in the upper *Tagwen* (in Wiesli, today the property of old Cantonal Judge Tschudi-Streiff) were Cantonal President Joh. Heinrich Elmer, Standard Bearer Hans Caspar Elmer, son of the late Secretary Caspar, Lieutenant Gabriel Elmer, in the lower *Tagwen* were *Landvögte* Elmer, Rudolf Elmer, son of the banneret, Inspector of Weights and Measures Hans Elmer, Cantonal Secretary Elmer, and so on.

In Rüti, the first Elmer appeared in 1604 in the person of Jos Elmer,²⁴ whose son, Heinrich, was the ancestor of the Rüti Elmers; the same Jos Elmer, however, then emigrated in 1614 to Linthal and was, for his part, the ancestor of the Elmers there.

Also, they had settled in S c h w a n d e n at about the same time; in 1615-19, 3 children (Elsbeth, Barbara and Hans Heinrich) were baptized in the church there to Hans Elmer and Margreth Hösli, and in 1626 occurred the baptism of a Rudolf Elmer, as the little son of Hans Elmer and Margretha Zäntner, to whom, in 1628, Martin Elmer, as a child of the same parents, followed.

m *St. Pankratius Day, which is celebrated on 12 May, is the first of the “ice-holydays”, so-called because they are usually still cold. Frost is unlikely after 15 May. [SW]*

20 Of that, the main part, 1,079,000 Fr., was allotted to Glarus, 244,000 to Elm, 77,000 to Matt, and 100,000 to Bilten.

21 In Ennenda, Werner Elmer (born in 1738, died in 1812) had acquired the citizen right in the 18th century.

22 Compare: the Baron v. Sax at Hohensax, *New Year’s Journal of the Historical Society of Canton St. Gallen*. The genealogical table on pg. 48 calls the spouse of Heinr. Elmer, “Barbara”, the Matt church book: “Baroness A. Maria von der Hohensax.”

23 A second or third introduction of Elmers occurred in Matt in the 18th century, in that, in 1789, Cantonal Treasurer J. U. Elmer of Elm acquired the citizen right of Matt for 300 Gulden.

24 Today, likewise, a Jost Elmer is the only one from the Elmer family who enjoys the *Tagwen* right in Rüti, while a second Elmer lives in Bern as official of the S. B. B. [*Swiss Federal Railways*].