

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

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

INTRODUCTION

[pg. 3-6]

Since, in earlier reports, I narrated the history of the families of the Betschwanen church commune (*Historical Yearbook XV*), of the Linthal commune (*Histor. Yearb. XXIII*) and of the Eschen *Tagwen*^a (*Histor. Yearb. XXVI*) as colorful "pictures from past days", in the present reports, the families of the Sernf valley are to find their portrayal in a similar way.

In order for my work to possess the proper foundation, I have first permitted myself to give the inventories by the competent persons of the "Tagwen rights" existing in 1915. Accordingly, in 1915, Engi numbered 288 *Tagwen* rights; of these nearly a third, 87½, were found in the possession of the Martis; next to them stood the Baumgartners with 65½ *Tagwen* rights; then followed the Hämmerlis with 53 and the Blumers with 40; the Altmanns were endowed with 13 *Tagwen* rights and the Luchsingers with 10, the Gigers numbered 9, the Bräms 5, the Wysses 3, and the Burgers and Däfters 1 each.

In Matt (160 *Tagwen* rights), the Elmers and the Stauffachers, who number 32 each enjoying *Tagwen* rights, are presently the most numerous; the Bäblers follow them with 28, and the Martis with 22; the Speichs, once Matt's largest family, now number only 12, the Kublis 9, the Schulers 8, the Wohlwends 5, the Madutzes 4, the Beglingers and Wirths 3 each, and the Schneiders 2.

In Elm, the Rhyners stand in first place; in 1915, they possessed exactly one quarter of all *Tagwen* rights (55 out of 220). The Elmers follow with 49, the Zentners with 20, the Disches and Freitags number 18 each, the Schneiders 13, the Bäblers 12, the Hausers, the Heftis and the Kublis 9 each, the Martis 6, and the Gigers (or Geigers) 2.

From this it appears that, among the families of the Sernf valley, the Martis are the most numerous; in 1915, in all three *Tagwen*, they numbered 115½ *Tagwen* rights; the Elmers

a *Tagwen* - an ancient Glarner term, from at least the 6th century A.D., which is still used today in Canton Glarus to denote the commune of the citizens, i.e. those who have inherited or purchased the *Tagwen* rights (this may only partially coincide with the political commune). It is derived from *Tage Wann*, meaning the work someone could perform in one day in the commonly-held fields, pastures and forests. Over the years the number of *Tagwen* in the canton has varied considerably, with the present-day number being 29. Also its duties have changed – from jointly working on and enjoying the benefits of its common property, to administering all the commune's public interests, to (today) administering and enjoying the benefits of its common property. [SW]

followed them with 81, the Baumgartners with 65½, and the Hämmerlis with 53; the Bäblers and Blumers numbered 40 each, the Stauffachers 32, the Zentners 20, the Disches, Freitags and Kublis 18 each, the Schneiders 15 and the Speichs 12. Fewer than a dozen *Tagwen* rights points to the Gigers (11), the Luchsingers (10), the Hausers and the Heftis (9 each), the Schulers (8), the Bräms and the Wohlwends (5 each), the Madutzes (4), the Beglingers, Wirths and Wysses (3 each), and the Burgers and Däfters (1 each).

From a total of 27 citizen families today in the Sernf valley, 21 are enjoying the benefits in only one of the three *Tagwen*. Five of them are represented as citizens in two *Tagwen*: the Bäblers, Elmers, Kublis and Schneiders in Matt and Elm, the Gigers in Engi and Elm. Only the Martis are represented in all three *Tagwen*.

This inventory could give rise to socio-political considerations. However, we omit that in order to make some comparisons with earlier times instead. About 1½ centuries ago, an inventory was given to us by Melch. Schuler, who, in the appendix to his [1836] *History of Canton Glarus*, displayed a summary of the 1763 cantonal tax rolls, arranged in order by family. Sadly, at the same time, it was lacking — alone of all the Canton Glarus *Tagwen* — the commune of Elm, while Engi and Matt are listed together.

In Engi, the Martis appear, already in 1763, as the most numerous family; on the other hand, the Baumgartners stand closer to them than they are today, in that the Martis are presented with 40 head-taxpayers, and the Baumgartners follow on their heels with 39. In third place appear not the Hämmerlis, who number only 14 head-taxpayers, but the Blumers with their 36. In fifth place stand the Altmanns with 9 head-taxpayers. The Luchsingers number 8, and the Bräms (Schuler writes "Brem") and the Gigers 4 each. Of the citizen families that are in Engi today, only the Burgers and Däfters are missing; on the other hand, 6 Schneiders, 2 Winteler and 2 Norders were also found in Engi at that time.

In Matt, the Stauffachers stand at the peak with 40 head-taxpayers, and the Bäblers with 27. The Elmers follow with 21 head-taxpayers, only in third place. The Speichs and the Martis numbered 8 each, and the Beglingers and the Schulers 3 each. Of the citizen families that are in Matt today, only the Madutzes, the Schneiders and the Wirths were missing in 1763; on the other hand, the Wilds are presented with 7 head-taxpayers, the Jakobers with 5, and the Blumers, Steinmüllers, Störis and Zwickis with 1 head-taxpayer each. So, compared with 1915, there were some shifts, but, on the whole, not a very different picture of the citizen inhabitants' composition.

On the other hand, the decline is that much more if we once again go back 1½ centuries and look over the numbers of the children baptized in 1595-1617¹ in the churches of Matt and Elm. Then even the numerous Stauffachers, Martis and Blumers of 1763 recede into the shadows. In Matt, the Speichs, with 25 people to be baptized, meet us at their most numerous, the Bäblers follow them with 19, and the Buchmüllers, who today, and as early as 1763, are extinct, with 18, the Hämmerlis with 16, the Kublis and Büssers with 12 each, the Elmers and Baumgartners with 11 each, the Jakobers with 9 and the Stigers with 8 people baptized. Not until 11th and 12th place do

1 The baptism registers of Matt and Elm begin with the year 1595. The period of 1595-1617 gives the number of baptized people for approximately 20 years, since large gaps are found in between. Thus, the year 1611 is completely missing in Elm and, in Matt, only 3 baptisms are recorded (in January and February). It was the year of the plague, when even the pastor of Matt fell victim. But, even besides that, some large gaps are found.

the Martis and the Stauffachers follow, with 7 people each baptized; however, the Blumers follow only in 24th place with only 2 people baptized, as the Höslis and Solmans (6 each), the Altmanns, Wysses and Zopfis (5 each), the Wohlwends (4) and the Dusts [*sic*], Fleischmanns, Husers, Lagers, Luchsingers, Norders, Schärers and Suters (3 each) precede them. With the Blumers compete the Blums, Eugstlers, Gigers, Hoffmanns, Leglers², Pfiffers and Ulrichs, who all, likewise, report 2 people baptized.

Fifteen other families are represented by 1 person each to be baptized, among them the Bräms, Cloters, Schniders and Zentners.

In Elm, in the period from 1595-1617, the Bäublers were represented the most strongly, which should surprise you too. Whereas, today, Matt appears as their headquarters, it was, at that time, the Elm church commune, perhaps because Elm itself [*emphasis added*] was, no doubt, the headquarters of the Elmers, and the Rhyners lived in the lower valley, as it appears, on the homestead of Hintersteinibach. Of the 234 people to be baptized, which the Elm baptism book mentions to us for the time-period being considered, 59 children were from the Bäubler family, which thus numbered a full quarter. In second place followed the Elmers with 27 people baptized, in third place, the Zentners (21) and, in fourth place, the Husers (14). The Rhyners, who today are the most strongly represented in Elm, were found only in 5th place, with 13 people baptized. The Disches followed them with 11, the Josses³ and the Solmans, with 9 people each baptized, the Gigers and the Michels, who today are extinct or emigrating, with 7 each, the Schniders and the Flämmms, with 6 each, the Stigers with 5, and the Dunouws and the Schellenbaums, with 4 each. With 3 children each are recorded the Barlis, the Ritzes and the Toblers (the children of Pastor Tobler). Two children each have the Pastors Engeler, Goldbach and Dorta to designate as their own; likewise, 2 children each are found from the families of the Höslis and Welis. Still not represented at all, therefore, at that time, were the citizen families of Freitag, Hefti, Kubli and Marti, who today are in Elm.

We would like to go back once more about 1½ or 2 centuries to learn about the citizen families of the Sernf valley in the 14th and 15th centuries. Were the Matt anniversary book of old still extant for us, then it would offer rich occasions for that purpose. But sadly, at that time, by chance, in Glarus, it perished in the May, 1861 "Great Night of Fire", together with other valuable documents, and the few pages which are still preserved in the Matt pastor's archive as excerpts from the old anniversary book, and to which we return a few more times on later occasions, offer us no substitute for it, since they do not name for us the former donors, the citizens of the 14th and 15th centuries who made their legacies for the benefit of the church; they name for us only those who, in 1525, had to pay taxes on their homesteads as a consequence of these legacies.

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- 2 Pastor Schörli (in Matt in 1612 and 1613) writes "Lägler"; that meant, no doubt, *Lägelen*-maker (*Lägelen*, the common wine measure). The father of Johann Lägler, the child who was baptized in 1612, stemmed from Diesbach and came as a tailor to Engi, where he remained in 1612-1614, and then returned to the great valley [*on the Linth river*], at first to Haslen. From 1616-1633, another 6 children were baptized to him in Schwanden.
 - 3 All 9 children are children of a Joss Joss. Doubtless because he bore Joss as a baptism name and, at the same time, as a family name, he was called, according to the Elm baptism book information, the "Ueberjoss" [*"more-than-Joss"*]. The death register reports about one of his sons: "Around this time (around 1635) died in France Michel Joss, son of Ueberjoss, who was a p i p e r under Captain Jakob Marti's and Mr. Kaspar Tschudi's flags."

So only a few scanty statements are at our disposal for the pre-Reformation inhabitants. Our time-honored *Fahrtsbrief*^b names for us, among the victims of the Weesen [*Canton St. Gallen*] "Murder Night" [21-22 Feb 1388], as citizens of the Sernf valley: Ulrich Elmer, Rud. Kröcher (Kraucher), Hans Touri, Aebli Neyung and Heini Salman, and as victims of the heroic [*Näfels*] battle of the 9th of April in 1388: Sutter Welti and Welti Koli. Among the heroes of [*the battle of*] St. Jakob on the Birs [*Canton Basel*] [26 Aug 1444], the anniversary book of Linthal names: Hans Elmer, Uli Elmer the young, Welti Zay, Hans Kündig, Hans Schuomacher, Heini Ramer, Hans Thörn and Heini Schütz. As killed in action in the battle of Novarra [*Italy*] (1513), the same anniversary book names as Sernf valley people: Jakob Elmer, Thomen Solmann, Rutsch Pfiffer and Largy Dürst. How many unfamiliar faces these names point out to us. Only the Elmers will you still recognize as today's citizens of the Sernf valley. Then, in addition, join with them the Speichs, as a 1416 Alp regulations document names for us as Alp leaders of the Mühlebach Alp: Rudi Speich, Albrecht Wichser, Hans Hopphan, Fridli Speich and Hans Speich, and a supplement of this document names: Hans Wüst, Hansli Linder, Rudi Wichser, Joss Speich and Heini Jänny. For this reason, it is appropriate that, when we now turn to the history of the individual families, we give the Elmers and the Speichs priority.

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