

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]

## IX. THE SCHNEIDERS

[pg. 92-94]

While we had to acknowledge, of the family name of the Rhyners, that its original meaning was uncertain to us, that of Schneider [*tailor*] is beyond any doubt. It is obvious that this name belongs to that plentiful group of family names by which the occupation of their ancestor was revealed. We are reminded of the names, which are also represented in Canton Glarus, of Schmid [*smith*], Müller [*miller*], Weber [*weaver*] and Walcher [*fuller*], Zimmermann [*carpenter*], Maurer [*bricklayer*] and Legler (Lägler) [*small wine barrel maker*], of Becker [*baker*] and the elsewhere represented Beck [*bake*], Brotbeck [*bread bake*] and Pfister [*baker*], of Glaser [*glazier*], Metzger [*butcher*], Schreiner [*cabinet maker*], Baur and Bauer [*farmer*], Scherer [*shearer*] and Gerber [*tanner*], Graber [*digger*] and Pflüger [*ploughman*], Schuhmacher [*shoemaker*], Schuster [*shoemaker*] and Suter [*tailor*], Fischer and Vischer [*fisherman*], Schlosser [*locksmith*] and Wagner [*coach builder*]. Even more than today, it certainly held true in earlier times that the son had to follow in the father's footsteps, had to pursue the same trade that his father practiced. So it is also not surprising then, that everywhere we encounter the family of the Schneiders or Schniders, there everywhere the menfolk stand in need of the clothing artist who makes them their coats and trousers. Thus, we find the Schneiders, as in Canton Glarus, so also in [Canton] Aargau<sup>1</sup>, in [Cantons] Basel City<sup>2</sup> and Basel Land<sup>3</sup>, in [Cantons] Bern<sup>4</sup>, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen and Zürich, likewise the Schniders in [Canton] Solothurn and the Schnyders in the Wäggi valley, Canton Schwyz, and in [Canton] Luzerne<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1631, Provost Johannes Schneider had performed the "Comedy of Discord and Harmony" in Baden [Canton Aargau] before the *Tatsatzung*\*. Bächtold, *History of Swiss Literature*, pg. 467.

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

<sup>2</sup> In Basel City, we were acquainted with a respected Schneider Bookshop; also, in the same place, Schneider, the newspaper editor who became noted as an agitator, worked, as of 1920, as a member of the governing council!

<sup>3</sup> Basel Land is represented today in the Council of States by a Dr. Schneider.

<sup>4</sup> Member of the Governing Council J. Rudolf Schneider (died in 1889), as chief sponsor of the Jura Water-Correction in Nidau [Canton Bern], had erected a monument [*a canal*] to it (see Dierauer, *History of the Swiss Confederation* V, pg. 760).

<sup>5</sup> In 1830, Cantonal Advocate Anton Schnyder played a political role in Luzerne; however, for the Glarner, Music Director Christ. Schnyder (also known as a composer) is remembered more pleasantly.

In Canton Glarus today they possess the citizen right in Elm and at Riedern. Nevertheless, for the Schneiders who, today, are citizens of Riedern, Elm is also their authenticated original home. They are descendants of a Caspar Schneider from Elm (born in 1718, died in 1770), who established himself in Riedern because, in 1746, he had married Anna Maria Vögeli, widow of Fridolin Heer of Riedern.

For Canton Glarus, to the best of my knowledge, the Schneiders were mentioned in a document a first time by the venerable *Fahrtsbrief*<sup>a</sup>, which enumerated a Heini Snider from the Glarus church commune among the fallen of the 9<sup>th</sup> of April in 1388. However, the Mollis anniversary book had also recorded several Schniders as donors for the church there; thus a Heini Schnider and his wife, Anna, Peter Schnider and Ulrich Schnider, who made rather sizable donations with the agreement that the people say a vigil in the evening and a requiem mass in the morning, in their honor, yearly, on the next Sunday after St. Fridli's [*Fridolin's*] Day [*6 March*]. In the 1763 cantonal tax roll, on the other hand, we find no Schneiders in Mollis and, at Riedern, only one (doubtless the Casp. Schneider mentioned above).

For the Sernf valley, we obtain their first mention through the again-remembered 1525 [*tax*] roll. This reports: "Item Jakob Schnider a Sol [*coin*] ij.. [*sic*] tax from the Eternal Light, the Sol he gives to the poor people by God's will, and he is situated at his estate in the Perrig, and one finds also in the anniversary book how and why." Unfortunately, we can learn no more in our time of this "why", since the anniversary book is lost to us. And also, I have so far not been able to learn where the estate in the Perrig that belonged to Jakob Schnider was found, and can also not say whether it was found in Engi or Matt or in Elm<sup>6</sup>.

Among those to be baptized which the Matt-Engi baptism book for 1595-1617 had recorded, we find no Schneiders; on the other hand, the 1763 cantonal tax roll for Engi reports 6 taxpaying Schneiders, who, however, were all citizens of Elm. Of the 234 people to be baptized which the 1595-1617 Elm baptism book records, 6 are found from the Schneider family. In 1876, they are registered in Elm with 13 head-taxpayers, and, with that, moved forward to the 8<sup>th</sup> place for this commune<sup>7</sup>.

For the entire canton, 40 Schneiders are reported by the 1876 cantonal tax roll: 13 in Elm, 5 each in Schwanden, Netstal and Matt, 3 in Ennenda, 2 each in Ober- and Niederurnen, and 1 each in Rüti, Diesbach, Mitlödi, Riedern and Bilten – the distinct majority of them as settlers or residents outside of their citizen communes, thereby, on their part, still following a little the roving spirit which old folksongs repeated to the Schneider people.

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

<sup>6</sup> In 1566, Paulus Schneider served as Federal Councilor from Elm.

<sup>7</sup> A note from the Elm death book is mentioned here, in addition, that connects to deaths from the Schneider family and ought to be interesting at this time when we have been experiencing one of the most severe influenza epidemics. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of December in 1688, Hermann Schneider and his wife, Magdalena Speich, died, and, about this, the death book remarked: In outgoing *Wintermonat* [*November*] until in *Christmonat* [*December*], a virulent fever had made itself felt among the people, which passed over almost no house and few persons. With some, it had come with chills, with all, it had given a great headache, pains in the back and in the legs, with some, it had burned in the sides, with the majority, it had left behind a cough and some asthma. Few had died from it, and the majority had remained unaffected after a 2, 3 and 4-day illness. What it means and what might go on after it, God knows.