

The History of the Citizen Families of Engi and their Development
[Zur Geschichte der bürgerlichen Geschlechter von Engi und ihre Entwicklung]

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

VI. The Altmann Family

[pg. 47-51]

The Altmanns are also a very old Engi citizen family. From the beginning of the church books in the year 1595 we encounter several Altmanns in Engi. Two Hans Altmanns, of whom the one is thought to be a head of family, then a Peter and Balthasar Altmann. Peter Altmann had three sons, Heinrich, Hans and Fridli; however, their fate is unknown.

On 14 April 1656 a Hans Altmann died at 90 years old. It is not now established whether he had 2 or 3 wives, and the first church books present a puzzle to us here. For, in 1596 the baptism book reports to us that on 28 March a girl, Elsbeth, was baptized to Hans Altmann. This Elsbeth died in August 1629, probably of the plague, as the wife of Fridli Pfändler from Schwanden, son of Cantonal President Jost Pfändler. On 21 January 1600, a Hans Altmann celebrated marriage with Verena Jakober. From this marriage came: 1. in December 1600, Anna, who died in 1685 as the wife of Adam Härzi from Werdenberg, whose father, Fridli Härzi, acquired the Engi *Tagwen*^a rights in 1652. (In 1680 he bought out again; see the Introduction, pg. 6). 2. in April 1603, Barbara, who died single on 27 October 1620. 3. in May 1609, Johannes, whose fate is unknown.

Then, on 31 January 1613, a Hans Altmann again celebrated marriage, with Barbara Hämmerli, daughter of Franz from Engi. From this marriage came 7 children; 2 of them died in 1629, in August, of the plague. A daughter, Elsbeth (1631-1710), married Hans Rudolf Büsser from Engi, and Maria (1633-1692) married Mathäus Marti from Engi. Two sons died young, and the youngest, namely Hans, 1635-1703, became a head of family, a *Tagwen* official and a federal councillor.

Councillor of States Heer and J. J. Kubli-Müller believe at present that we are dealing here with one and the same Hans Altmann, who just married three times and grew to be 90 years old. I hold instead that this must have been 2 or 3 different Hans Altmanns, because, in the first place, we have 2 daughters named Elsbeth who surely could not have had the same father. Furthermore, this Hans Altmann which died in 1656 at 90 years of age would have been almost 76 years old at the birth of his youngest son, Federal Councillor Hans Altmann.

In the council records of the 16th century, which also formed the subject of exhaustive study by Mr. Kubli-Müller, are found a number of Altmanns. However, here also the inexcusable brevity of the cantonal secretaries takes revenge. It is extremely difficult to separate the Altmanns who were already in Ennenda at that time, and those appearing in Engi, from one another. In the records, in addition to the simple names, they never, or in the most infrequent of cases, appended the place of residence or homeland. It is thought to be completely proven that around 1550 two different Hans Altmanns had already existed, of whom the one probably

belonged to Engi, but the other to Ennenda. That is, the following appeared before the council:

In 1547, in November, Hans Altmann, as overseer of Andli Stähli, of Giren Frau.

In 1549, Captain Hans Altmann from Ennenda.

On 7 May 1561, a Joss Altmann as Alpine resident at Fessis, who, doubtless, belonged to Engi.

On 1 February 1575, Jakob and Peter Altmann had appeared before the council on behalf of a Jakob Schneider (apparently from Elm) against Bläsi (Blasius) Zentner from Elm. Both of these, Jakob and Peter Altmann, might well have been relatives from Engi, to conclude by the names.

N.B.: On 23 May 1581, Bläsi Altmann appeared in Elm besides, against Jakob Schumacher, and, what is of particular interest, this Bläsi Altmann who appeared before the council was granted the proprietorship to the baths at Wichlen in Elm. Incidentally mentioned, the Wichlen baths were filled in in the year 1762, in the year of the great water shortage. Also the baths at Mattlauri, from which the wash now take its name (hence, at the Badkopf wash), were flooded out by the Sernf [*river*].

What still must be called special attention to was one of the first slate tile-cutters on our Plattenberg, the Hans Altmann who became 90 year old and Hilari Büsser from Engi. We have already made the acquaintance of the Büssers in the Introduction as a very old Engi family.

That is all that I was able to discover about the origins of the Altmann family.

The Altmanns have at present grown neither stronger nor weaker than the Luchsingers, for the statistics show 110 individual families each in both civic families by 1920. With the Altmanns there were 18 families by 1800 (the Luchsingers had 12); by 1750, 15 (17); by 1800, 27 (28); by 1850, 48 (57); by 1880, 70 (85); by 1900, 80 (92); and by 1920, 110 (Luchsingers 110).

We have traced the poor growth of the Luchsingers back to their large number of emigrations (41%); thus, with the Altmanns, it is the extremely small number of children, comparatively speaking! Of all our citizen families, we find, with the Altmanns, per family, the fewest children of all, merely 3.85, and with the Baumgartners the most (5.4). Of course, with the Altmanns, still other factors also played a part, about which the statistics [*at the end of this book*] are able to give further information.

In the latest *Tagwen* accounting, the Altmanns, likewise, are reported on with only 12 enjoying the benefits of *Tagwen* rights, in spite of everything, still one more than the Luchsingers.

The emigration by the Altmanns, comparatively speaking, would be called one which was not considerable. We have calculated 41% with the Luchsingers; in comparison, it was only 30.5% = 165 persons with the Altmanns. Of them 37 = 23% went to North America; 10 = 6.2% to Brazil; 67 = 41% to other cantons; 33 = 20.5% to other Glarner communes; and 14 = 8.5% to someplace unknown.

Of the 119 wives of the Altmanns, 51 = 43% originated from Engi, and the marriages into our families are distributed among them as follows: 14 = 29.5% to the Martis; 8 each = 15.4% to the Blumers and Hämmerlis; 7 = 13.5% to the Baumgartners; 3 each = 5.8% to the Bräms and Winteler; 2 each = 3.8% to the Luchsingers, Wysses and Gigers; 1 each to the Altmanns and Norders.

The transmission of first names with the Altmanns produced the following picture: 20 = 18% of all heads of families are named Fridolin; 16 = 14.5% Jost; 13 = 11.7% Jakob; 11 = 9.9% Hans and Johannes; and 10 = 9% Samuel. These are the most frequent Altmann first names.

In the communal and church offices the Altmanns are also represented only sparsely. They produced one each of a federal councillor, a *Tagwen* official, a church steward and a chief charity official. In the old military they supplied one each of a lieutenant and a sergeant.

The federal councillor and *Tagwen* official occurred in the same person, Hans Altmann (Nr. 5 on the family tree), 1635-1703, back to whom all of today's Altmanns from Engi have actually traced themselves, and who is, therefore, considered to be their ancestor. He had married 2 wives: in 1661, Verena Marti, of *Tagwen* official Jost from Engi, who died on 13 February 1670, and, on 8 November 1670, Rosina Becker from Ennenda, who died in 1711. From the two marriages, 11 children, among them 4 heads of families, resulted.

The church steward and charity official also occurred in the same person, Lieutenant Hans Altmann (Nr. 13 on the family tree), 1707-1771, a grandson of the above. From him no more descendants exist.

Four Altmanns lost their lives in the foreign service:

On 23 January 1714, Hans Altmann, single, born in 1689, died, namely, by wounds received at the siege of the city of Freiburg im Breisgau [*Duchy of Baden*], in the Kaiser's service, under Company Captain Fridolin Zwicky.

In November 1740, the brother of the preceding, Fridolin Altmann, single, born in 1702, died in the Neapolitan service under Regimental Colonel Tschudy. Both were grandsons of Federal Councillor and *Tagwen* Official Hans Altmann. Their brother, Leonhard, was a great-grandfather of Wald^b-Paulus and Höfli-Jost, as well as Wald-Leonhard and tile-scraper-Leonhard, besides also of Spicher-Christof and Geiser-Samuel and their brothers and sisters. I have mentioned these in order to show how many-branched the descendants of one individual can be. This individual Altmann family, that is to say, occupies almost half of the entire Altmann family tree.

On 9 March 1736, Hilarius Altmann, single, born in 1715, died in the French service under Company Cantonal President Zwicky. His 2 brothers, Fridli and Kaspar, are forefathers of the late Fridolin Altmann, on the Allmeind, or of the late Fridolin Altmann of Hoschet Altstafel, as the case may be.

On 8 May 1810, Mathäus Altmann, born in 1783, husband of Anna Wyss, rode off as an enlisted soldier and remains missing, like, in addition, many a one who, in those times, enlisted as a soldier or were forced into the service. Probably he also fell in battle in Russia under Napoleon I. - From his marriage no more descendants exist.

With the Altmanns there are very few fatal accidents to report:

On 24 June 1852, Fridolin Altmann, 14 years old, froze to death on his father's back, while crossing Segnes Pass [*east of Elm, into Graubünden*]. His father, Heinrich, moved to Brazil about 1855 with his other son, Kaspar, after his second wife, Barbara Giger, died in childbirth. He was a brother of Wald-Leonhard Altmann.

On 11 November 1853, Anna Altmann, single, born in 1833, a sister of tile-scraper-Leonhard im Boden, fell to her death at the straw gathering.

On 14 November 1863, Sara, the 15-year-old daughter of old Jost Altmann im Höfli, drowned in the Sernf. The corpse was first found in the following year, on 10 March.

^a Tagwen – an ancient 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]

^b People with identical names were differentiated by adding their occupation or a descriptive term for the area where they lived. [SW]