

The History of the Glarus Families, especially 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)

By Gottfried Heer, 1920

Printing and publishing by Rud. Tschudy, Glarus, 1920

Translated by Sue Wolf

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

XVI. The Altmanns

[pg. 129-131]

On 28 March 1596 a little daughter named Elisabeth was baptized to Hans Altmann and Anna Speich in the Matt church. She remains, however, the only child of these parents, of whom the Matt church book informs us. On the other hand, on 21 January 1600, a Hans Altmann married Frena Jakober, and to this married couple, in the years 1600-09, 3 children were baptized (Anna on 27 December 1600, Barbara on 3 April 1602, who died on 27 October 1620, and Johannes on 7 May 1609). And, on 31 January 1613, again a Hans Altmann married Barbara Hämmerli, and to these parents then, in 1613-35, fully 7 children were baptized (Elsbeth in 1613, Johannes in 1618, Fridli in 1622, who died in 1623, Fridli in 1626, who died in 1629 of the plague, Elsbeth in 1631, Maria in 1633, and Hans in 1635). The brevity of the church books' announcements of that time has the consequence that we do not know, with the entries that were passed on, whether it was a question of 2 or 3 Hans Altmanns, or whether it was one and the same Hans Altmann who, in 1613, married Barbara Hämmerli in a third marriage, and whether it was a son of this Hans Altmann's first marriage who, on 15 November 1618, married Columbine Zopfi and, on 14 November 1619, had registered a son named Heinrich Altmann for baptism, as his first (and only) child.

On the other hand, what we are told by the chronicler, J. Heinrich Tschudi, is that, of the Hans Altmann reported above, or of one of the Hans Altmanns reported above, his occupation beforehand was of significance for the story of the Sernf valley. In the introduction to his chronicle, J. Heinrich Tschudi reported to us, namely, (on pg. 21): "What Canton Glarus also had, in particular, was the so-called Blattenberg^a (*Ardesia Glaronensis* [*Glarner slate*]) or the mine of black tiles, lying nearest to Matt in the little [*Sernf*] valley; at what time, strictly speaking, they first began to put this mountain to use, and to hew out and polish the tablets or slates, is not known to me; but 2 men living in Matt, Läry Beusser¹ and Hans Alpmann [*sic*], are said to have made the first start to this, about 100 years ago². Some time later, about the year 1617, a foreign cabinet-maker, born in Silesia [*now SW Poland*], stayed there, who was the first one who enclosed these tablets in neat frames of wood, and later only people at Ennenda taught such handiwork, as well."

The last remark refers, indeed, to a relationship of the Altmanns from Engi with those from Ennenda. Moreover, Ennenda might well be considered the ancestral lodging of the Altmanns. In the 1763 cantonal tax roll 26 head-taxpaying Altmanns (property: 33,600 fl.) were found in Ennenda, and 9 of them (600 fl.) in Engi. In 1876 the cantonal tax roll in Ennenda had recorded 30 of them (property: 59,500 Fr.), and in Engi [*number of people omitted*] (3000 Fr.); moreover, 2 (60,000 Fr.) in Glarus³ and one each in Schwanden and at Sool.

We find the first mention of Altmanns in 1444: the Linth [*river*] valley anniversary book mentions among those "who lost at Barspurg [*Birsburg?*] near Basel in the Zürich war" (St.

Jakob on the Birs) a Hans Altmann from the Glarus parish, who belonged at the time to Ennenda.

Likewise, the following belonged to Ennenda:

Joh. Heinrich Altmann, cantonal standard bearer, 1636-43,

Tagwen official Heinrich Altmann, who, in 1713, was elected as one of the 9 judges, for which he paid 33 crowns, and held this position until 1733,

Captain and Federal Councillor Jakob Altmann, who, in 1765, was elected cantonal official of Lauis [*Lugano, Canton Ticino*], "with the addition that he did not want to come to a standstill, but to compete for other offices"; however, he paid for this: 10 fl. into the communal arsenal, 40 fl. into the Evangelical arsenal, 300 fl. into the Evangelical cantonal treasury, and 26 fl. into the Evangelical treasury.

David Altmann from Ennenda held the position of a cantonal captain in the beginning of the preceding century, of whom Melchior Schuler, in his *Glärner story* (p. 444) gave the testimonial that he was a man "who, in general, distinguished himself by a co-operative, charitable disposition".

The chronicler, J. H. Tschudi, had already expressed the wish in 1714 that he would like to revise the cantonal book and have it printed, so, by this means, many a dispute and lawsuit would be avoided, and the chronicler, Chr. Trümpy, expressed the same wish in 1774. But both times it occurred without success, and the judges had to continue to manage with their handwritten cantonal books. In 1806 the cantonal captain at the time, David Altmann, placed a fee of 30 doubloons at the disposal of the council in order to make possible the printing of the cantonal book; then, after that, "in 1807 the *Landsgemeinde*^c moved to adopt the revised cantonal book, it was approved by them, and it was printed."

As regards the meaning of the name Altmann, I had assumed, at some earlier time, that it belonged to the group of family names like Alt (Thurgau), Altheinz, Alherr and Altheer, Jung (Basel), Junghans, etc. The spelling "Alpmann", as the chronicler Tschudi presented it in the above-cited quotation, but also as it is found in the Matt baptismal book, on the other hand, suggests the presumption that it earlier belonged to that group, like the family names of Bauer, Baur, Baumann, Mühlbauer, Landmann, etc., which pointed back to the occupation of their ancestors. Also, today the customary pronunciation, if we listen sharply, is not "Altmann", but "Alpmae".

^a Plattenberg [SW]

¹ The Matt baptism book had reported as fathers who brought children to baptism in the first third of the 17th century, Hans, Melchior and Rudolf Büsser. I have not come across a Lärer Büsser. He could, however, go back before 1595.

² The Chronicle of J. H. Tschudi appeared in 1714.

³ In 1706 the following bought into the Glarus *Tagwen** rights for 400 fl: Captain, Church Official, Judge and Federal Councillor J. Heinrich Altmann, and *Tagwen* official Heinrichs [*Altmann*] (already in 1560 two Altmanns are found in Glarus as guard and mineral spring partners: Pfister Altmann and Fridli Altmann).

* *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]

^c 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]