

# The surname Gedeon in Ober- and Unter-Metzenseifen

The following material summarizes copyrighted research carried out by Herr Anton Eiben on the origin of the surname Eiben. It was translated from the original German by Heinz Schleusener, and edited and amplified by James O'Hara. Errors, omissions from, or misinterpretation of Herr Eiben's work are solely the responsibility of the editor.

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The most frequent surname in Unter-Metzenseifen is/was **Gedeon**.

16 of the blacksmith foremen, which produced agricultural devices for Hungary (until 1918) and the Balkans, had the surname **Gedeon**. At the same time there were 16 mechanics with the same surname. To distinguish between families with the same surname, they adopted the so called "house name" or "zu-name".

For the Gedeon surname some of the zu-names were:

*Aftan, Almascha, Barga, Djuro, Föbe, Greega, Grubigl, Grubega, Kaiml, Katis, Katrul, Klarejüek, Koschemaat, Lankasiml, Mischen, Palsteffl, Parventommes, Potra, Preötl, Schneidajakob, Schneidas Poli, Zilimaat, etc.*

Between 1371 and 1376 the first three hammer mills were built at the Dombach orifice into the Bodva river. During the signing of a contract with the *Praemonstratense Probst* in Jooß (Jossau, Jászo, Jasov) the judge Christian **Gedohn** of Metzenseifen was present as a witness. One of the three hammer mills was used for forging iron clumps into forgeable iron, the other two produced devices for agriculture and the prospering mining industry. These three hammer mills were the beginnings of the town of Metzenseifen.

The spelling **Gedohn** can be found in documents of the mining guild. In contrast to that, in Urbario Ferdinand III you find the spelling **Gedon** and **Gedeon**. That shows the family tree of Klement **Gedeon** from Almás, created by Béla Kempelen and the coat of arms of the professor of law Ladislaus **Gedeon**, Großwardein/Nagyvárad (present day Oredea in Romania).

The Society of Names Research at the University Leipzig, Germany, gives this interpretation: The form of the name is derived from the biblical name **Gideon/Gidion** meaning "judge" or "impose a punishment" - as found in the Old Testament book of "Judges". Christian **Gedeon** (see above) may have gotten his name through his position/function. Day laborers and serfs at this time had only one Christian name (1).

We can find the surname **Gedon** in Austria and Germany too although there is no known connection between **Gedohn/Gedon/Gedeon** in Metzenseifen and those in Austria and Germany. The latter were Huguenots who escaped from **France** and received asylum in the county Ansbach. Later they converted back to the Catholic religion.

There are two well known artists from this group:

**Friedrich Gedeon** from Vienna, who designed the Cathedral of St. Pölten and received multiple honors from the Academy of Arts, (founded by Maria Theresia).

**Lorenz Gedeon**, was one of the most important architects and sculptors in Munich (2).

Béla Kempelen (3) in his book "Hungarian Aristocratic Families" lists several Gedohn/Gedon/Gedeon:

- **Andreas Gedon**  
He received a letter of knighthood with a coat of arms on 20 March 1659. It is kept in the archive of the Borsod-Komitat (Hungary), published under Vö. Bor. I/230.
- **A family Gedeon (alias Kovács)**  
This family was living in the Abauj- u. Sáros-Komitat in the 17th century. - Compare Tóth I/313.
- **Klement Gedeon**  
He was given a letter of knighthood from Maria Theresia (LR.XLI/403) on 14 May 1749.  
A miner in half size is striking in the upper shield with a drumstick (possibly a hammer ?). This and other attributes point out his Metzenseifen origin (4). He was a lawyer in Almás/Jablonov, district Rosenau/Rozsnyó/Roznava.
- **Mathias Gedeon, citizen of the town Kaschau/Kassa/Košice.**  
He was a rich farmer and took part in the Austrian-Prussian war with his own Lazarett and bearing his own costs. Emperor Franz-Josef I gave him the title of knight on 27 Jun 1868. It was possible for him to use the coat of arms of Klement Gedeon in Almás because his grandfather was the brother of Klement (Hungarian state archive, K 19 Királyi könyvek – kingly books – vol. 68 p. 411, plain entry without coat of arms)
- **Lajos (Ludwig) Gedeon, the grandson of Klement Gedeon.**  
He was married to Karolina Gedeon and his great-granddaughter Maria married Gáspár Gedeon. The daughter Karolin of his son Ferencz (Franz) married Lajos Gedeon. Therefore the housename Almscha (from Almás) was brought to Metzenseifen.
- **Ladislauus Gedeon**  
Professor of law in Großwardein/Natgyvárad, (present day Oradea in Rumania). On 2 Nov 1883 he was given a letter of knighthood with a coat of arms, also for his sons Stephan, Gabriel and Franz (LR.LXVI/727).
- **The coat of arms of a Gedeon family**  
An emblem signet of a Gedeon family can be found in the archive of Nógrád and Pest Komitat (Hungary). Compare Simon 36; Kösz. 111. Unfortunately, there is no information about the year.

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### **Literature:**

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- (4) Jozef Novák: Rodové erby na Slovensku II. Pet'kova zbierka pecati (Geschlechterwappen in der Slowakei, Die Siegelsammlung Pet'kos). Vydavateľstvo osveta 1986.