

The Clary-Aldringens

Bonus text no. 01

The noble family of Aldringen hails from Lorraine and the princely family of Clary originated in Tuscany. Their destinies coupled in the 17th century and have been inherently connected with Teplice.

On 25th February 1634, Albrecht von Wallenstein was murdered in Cheb along with the last offspring of the Vchynský family, the lords of Teplice. Johann Aldringen, who stood behind the premeditated murder together with other nobility members, was rewarded for this "faithful service" by Emperor Ferdinand II. He acquired the Teplice and Benešov estates. Unfortunately, Johann himself could not take the reign over the estates as he died in a battle against the Swedes. Three years later, his sister Anna married Hieronymus Clary and the families coupled.

Under the Clary-Aldringens, Teplice became a popular destination frequented by eminent European personalities. The town used to host heads of states with their families, ambassadors, ministers, generals and spies, as well as scientists, scholars and artists, and their presence contributed significantly to the growing popularity of the spas.

The key period for the Teplice estate was the end of the 18th century, when young Prince Johann Nepomuk Clary-Aldringen, an educated and enlightened nobleman, took his reign in 1787. He is famous for being a model of nobility of mind and elegance of manners and was an honoured and popular guest in the high circles for his rapier wit. He married Maria Christine, the daughter of Prince Karl de Ligne.

Six years into Nepomuk's reign, on the night to 1st June 1793, a fire broke out in a barn near Market Square (nowadays Freedom Square) and spread quickly. By morning, half of the town was burnt to ashes. Rapidly, the Prince managed to obtain resources for renewal – mainly from German noblemen who frequented Teplice for curative purposes.

Edmund, Prince Johann Nepomuk's grandson, was undoubtedly the most famous Clary-Aldringen. He was only nineteen when he took over the family heritage. He married a beautiful Countess Elisalex Ficquelmont. In the Chateau Park, he had a romantic island built for her, preserved up to the present time. Edmund was a wise, educated and politically liberal man. He freed the peasants in his manor from corvée even before it was officially abolished. To be able to further develop his enterprises in Teplice, he sold his Benešov estate and the Clarys' palace in Prague. Along with the spas he took care of Dubí and nearby Hřensko. In Dubí, he started negotiations on constructing the Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary and, in Hřensko, he built Edmund's Pass (nowadays Quiet Pass) and a path to the Pravčická Gate.

The Clary-Aldringens kept the Teplice estate for fifty years after Edmund's death, i.e. until 1945 when they had to leave Bohemia along with many others. At present, members of the family live in Germany and rarely visit Teplice.

The Clary-Aldringens' coat of arms may be seen on the facade of Teplice's chateau and on the New Spa building. The escutcheon is sectioned into four parts and carries a heraldic jewel. The upper part comes from the Aldringens, the lower part comes from the Clarys. Both halves are separated by a red stripe with a shield showing an imperial eagle whose chest is adorned with the Austrian emblem.