

Heinrich von Arnim

Born in Planitz on Juli 18th, 1800;

Died in Planitz on October 9th, 1855;

Proprietor of mines, iron and steel works

Georg Heinrich Wolf was the eldest son of the Lord of the manors Planitz, Voigtsgrün, Irfersgrün, Crossen, and Groß Milkau (all in Saxony), Carl Christoph III von Arnim, and his second wife Johanna née von Möllendorf. He lost his father when he was only 12 years old. At the early age of 16 he had already become a miner and thereafter worked in the silver mines of Freiberg (Saxony). At the age of 20 he took up his studies at the mining academy of Freiberg.

Having reached 30 years of age, he took over the management of the hard coal mines at Planitz to the south of Zwickau which he inherited from his father. Over the following 25 years he proved to be a far-sighted and energetic entrepreneur who managed to modernize and extend the hard coal mining in that area and on his estates. Through combining his resources with those of the nearby Königin-Marien mine in Cainsdorf he made their supplies attractive for larger-scale iron smelting and steel production works. Heinrich von Arnim successfully evolved from an agricultural landowner to a forward-looking and caring entrepreneur at the beginning of the Industrial Age.



Heinrich von Arnim

Proprietor of mines, iron and steel works in Planitz

by Dr Günter Zorn, Planitz

For almost 250 years the manorial estate Planitz had been in the possession of the Arnim family until it was sold to the Planitz City Authority in 1930. From the long list of lords of the manor, Georg Heinrich Wolf von Arnim can be singled out as a particularly remarkable personality for a number of reasons.



Chateau Planitz 1930 at the time of its disposition to the town Planitz



Chateau Planitz 2010, today a "Gymnasium"
(BE: grammar school, AE: high school)

The manor of Planitz and its owners had been involved in hard coal mining for centuries, while Heinrich von Arnim distinguished himself as a particularly energetic entrepreneur. He did not consider himself to be a landowner restricted to agriculture with mining as a business on the side but instead to industrialise the rich resources of the land surrounding him.

In contrast, his father Carl Christoph von Arnim, canon of Merseburg, lived a life devoted to nature and wild game, having founded a small deer enclosure on the outlying farming estate Voigtsgrün which has become a regional wildlife park and zoo today. Nonetheless Carl Christoph von Arnim appointed the estate's first academically trained mining official to deal with the land's resources. At his early death he left behind three sons from his second marriage.

Heinrich, the eldest, was born on July 18th 1800 "in the evening at 6 o' clock" in Planitz and was christened in Merseburg eight days later, the town his mother, Johanna Friederike Louise, née von Möllendorf, came from. Five gentlemen and five ladies from the aristocracy and clergy were his godparents. His brothers Hans Carl and Friedrich Henning were born in Merseburg with two years in between and also christened in that town.

Heinrich was a learned man, had been to university at the mining Academy of Freiberg and was in possession of an extensive library, including around 100 volumes of modern technological and scientific agricultural literature. Besides he was described as courageous, as prepared to take risks and persistent, but above all as visionary. Like only a few of his contemporaries he interpreted the signs of the time and adapted himself and the estate's management to the rising age of industrialization.



Heinrich and his first wife
Julie, née Countess von Beust

In order to allow efficient commercial distribution of the mined coal Heinrich set up an unique and unconventional connection to the newly built railway Zwickau and Cainsdorf. A car driving training ground today, Heinrich had built the so-called braking hill – a slope equipped with rail tracks and wagons which worked as a cable pull. Wagons were loaded with coal, pushed onto a rail track and then lowered down on a rope. The wagons weight pulled the empty wagons at the bottom of the slope up and the whole structure was able to transport 12 wagons an hour. A further 60 metres lower in the valley of the river Mulde, the wagons then were connected to the newly built railway route from Zwickau to Cainsdorf. Thereby Heinrich managed to open up the entire Saxonian railway network to his mines.

Under Arnim's management, narrow windlass shafts became modern competitive hard coal mines.

Arnim displayed concern for his workers and employers, which can be seen from the miner's guild insurance which he founded, granting certain advantages to civil servants and those workers employed for many years.

These kinds of privileges and other regional mining traditions may have contributed to the fact that the miners of Planitz were known as 'the manor's shafters' (German: "Herrenschächter"), a title that gave them a particular pride and bumptiousness amongst their peers.

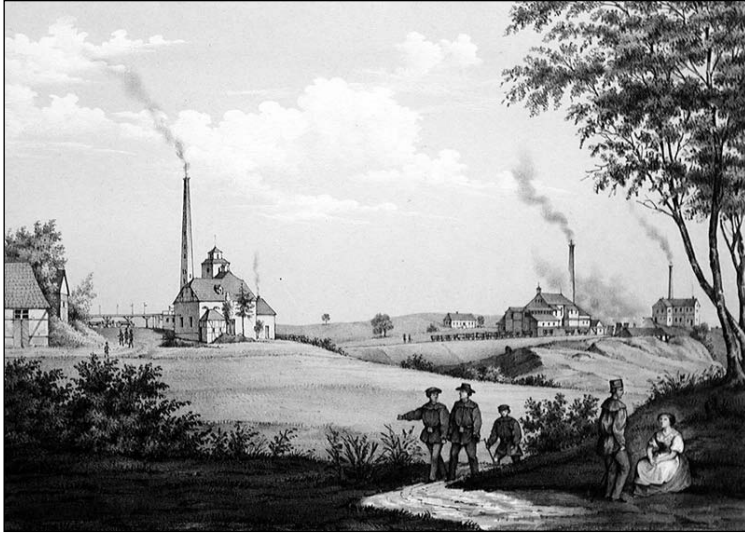
After 1820 the beginning industrialization supported a strong growth in mining.

In response to the growing demand for his land's riches, Heinrich von Arnim had deeper shafts sunk into the ground in Planitz – the "Kunst-", "Julien-", "Himmelfahrt-" and also the old "Alexander shaft" which had already reached 243 metres in depth. Heinrich also purchased the first steam-driven engine in 1836. Although only 10 hp strong it constituted a forerunner of what to come in the fast approaching age of heavy machinery. Also a coking plant with 48 beehive ovens was set up which was the biggest in the Zwickau coal mining area at the time.



Heinrich's second wife Isolde,
née Countess zur Lippe-
Weissenfeld

Arnim also showed particular openness to innovation by supporting the innovative geothermal endeavours of Ernst August Geitner, a medical doctor, chemist and inventor from Schneeberg. Attempting to grow tropical plants in a large greenhouse heated by underground seam fires, Geitner faced tremendous difficulties at the beginning. Without Heinrich von Arnim's support this greenhouse and the mechanical invention behind it would not have become known and famous throughout



Germany and even Europe-wide among experts. [In the Planitz seams, frequent underground fires had broken out over centuries and could not be fully extinguished despite many attempts. The first fires are said to have broken out as early as 1479. In 1505, newly sparked flames were reported that continued to burn, with interruptions. From 1641 onwards fires raged permanently and could only be smothered by means of a costly fireproof wall, which prevented the supply of air, after 1870. J. v. A]

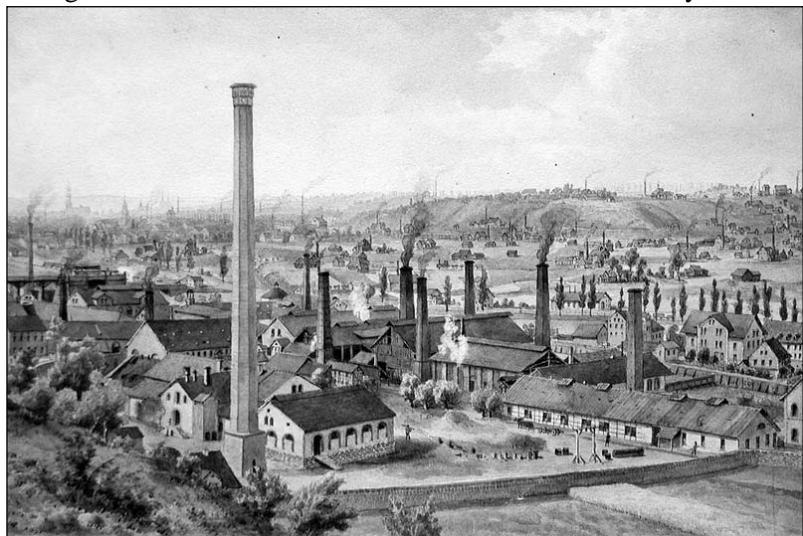
Arnim's hard coal mines in Planitz in 1865, left: the 'Kunst' shaft, middle: the old Himmelfahrt shaft, right: the Alexander shaft

At the same time, Heinrich strived to make another enterprise work on his grounds, which was the mining of iron ore, thereby freeing his coal sales from the fluctuations of the market; secondly, banking on the growing demand for pig iron. He realized three conditions beneficial for an iron foundry in the close vicinity of his land:

- Extensive supplies of coal, however coal hadn't been proven suitable for the blast furnace process yet
- The fact that in his view those deposits of iron ore mainly in places of the Erzgebirge and its foothills were considerably overestimated in their yield;
- Available water and hydro power from the river Mulde.

Plans were established to erect a modern foundry on the grounds of the old watermill. In order to procure capital the Saxon Iron Company was founded in 1839, of which the principal shareholders were Heinrich and [his brother] Henning von Arnim. In 1842 the first sod was turned. Two years later the young enterprise was given the proud name "Queen Mary foundry" (German: Königin-Marienhütte) which, however, could not prevent the enterprise from a first failure unfortunately. While all the capital had been used up in building the works, first production results were disappointing.

Only by assuming direct control through taking a lease on the works as well as putting their personal money towards the company bankruptcy could be averted.



Königin-Marienhütte in Cainsdorf, 1865

Reoccurring financial difficulties were finally met when the Arnims founded an administrative mother company of their several holdings, the ‘von Arnim mining and foundry administration company’ (German: “von Arnimsche Berg- und Hüttenverwaltung”), of which they held over 88% of the shares.

The extraordinary perseverance which Heinrich von Arnim showed towards the mining enterprises over so many years did eventually pay off; though only after his death. A profitable business proved to be producing railway tracks and bridge constructions – of which the most well-known is the ‘Blue Wonder’, a steel bridge over the river Elbe in Dresden, Saxony. The ‘Queen Mary foundry’ (German: “Königin-Marienhütte”) became the most efficient iron and steel works in Saxony during the second half of the 19th century.

Heinrich aimed to connect the local and regional public life to his mines wherever he could, finding special satisfaction in holding miners’ parades in case of sad but also joyful events. These parades took place according to exact instructions Heinrich gave to the shaft- and mining workforce who were marching up to the chateau, accompanied by music and torchlight.

For those kinds of events trim dress uniform was to be worn – a black workman’s cloth frock and the high miner’s hat which featured a six-inch high plume in white and red Arnim colours above the five-pronged Meißnian (German: “Meißnische”) mural crown.

Even unskilled workers were supposed to wear uniform frocks. Heinrich even founded a marching band, the ‘trumpeter corps’. This impressive ceremony formed the official surroundings of such mournful events as the early death of his first wife, Julie, n^{èe} von Beust in 1843, but also underlined Heinrich’s standing as a successful manor and proprietor of the Arnim mines when, four years later, he presented himself to Isolde, n^{èe} Countess von der Lippe-Weißenfeld, for his second marriage.



On October 9th 1855 “at half past two in the morning” Heinrich von Arnim of Planitz died “peacefully after a long serious illness of dropsy” and was given a quiet burial three days later.

Here, “quiet” has to be put into context of the aforementioned traditional ceremonial proceedings, which indeed led to a carefully orchestrated funeral procession of several hundred people who were marching as part of 16 individual formations. .

His grave between the resting places of his two wives has remained in good condition on the old cemetery close to the chateau chapel of Planitz.

Behind the chateau chapel and in immediate connection with the chateau grounds lies the so-called “Arnim Cemetery”.

Beginning from the right: Charlotte von Witzleben, aunt of Heinrich’s, Isolde von Arnim, n^{èe} Countess zur Lippe – Weißenfeld, Heinrich von Arnim, Julie von Arnim, n^{èe} Countess von Beust, Emilie Countess zur Lippe, Isolde’s mother.

The cross in front of the tombstones stands on the grave of Heinrich’s grandson of the same name (1879 – 1992).

Planitz, August 2010

pictures inserted by Jasper von Arnim
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