

John Conrad Naegle
1825-1899



John Conrad Naegle, WCHS

Bavaria

Born in September 11, 1825 in Albersweiler, Bavaria, Germany. The Naegles had lived in this beautiful little village, nestled among foothills on a tributary of the Rhine River since about 1653 when Leonard Negelin, a direct ancestor, was among the first to have settled there with his family after the town was swept clean by a civil war. The Naegles played their part in the history of the town after that time. Legend affirms that in feudal days there was a castle on every strategic hilltop occupied by lords of the manor or the monks who ruled with them. Today those same hillsides are terraced to the top since wine making is the foundation of this town's economic and commercial life and every available foot of ground must be planted to grape vines.



*Terrace Vineyard
Slope, Bavaria,
Germany*

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John Conrad Naegle immigrated to Indiana with his parents. In 1832. As a young man, he changed his surname from Nagle to Naile, legally changing it back to Naegle in 1873.

In 1844, at age 19, he joined the Mormon church and lived in Nauvoo, Illinois until 1846. John took part in the Mormon exodus from Illinois to Winter Quarters, Indian Country. In Council Bluffs, Iowa he was a member of William Clayton's Nauvoo Band Company. It was at this time that William Clayton wrote the hymn “Come, Come, Ye Saints” (*All is Well*). In July of 1846, Naegle was among the 500 Mormon men who volunteered to join the United States Army to fight in the War with Mexico, declared by the U. S. Congress that May. The Mormon Battalion marched 2,100 miles from Council Bluffs, Iowa to San Diego, California along the Mexican border. A year later in 1847, the Mormon Battalion was discharged.

The Mormon Battalion, George Martin Ottinger, 1881



Naegle was present at Sutter's Mill when gold was discovered there, washing out gold worth several thousand dollars for himself. In 1848, he purchased a large Spanish land grant in San Jose, California. John engaged in profitable farming and stock-raising enterprises, supplying the needs of gold miners.

He rented out his California farm, then travelled by ship to Panama and crossed the isthmus by mule. And then continued by ship to New York City. He travelled overland from the east coast, arriving in Indiana where he was re-united with family and married his childhood sweetheart, Mary Louisa Kepple, in June of 1853. After the wedding, his new wife, his parents, his younger brother and John set out for California. Mary did not know that her husband was a mormon when the trip began. But when they arrived in Utah that November, she was baptized and became a member of the church. Her husband left for San Jose in December, and returned in April, 1854. The young couple were then sealed for “time and eternity”, before returning to California, where their first child was born. John and Mary embraced all the principles of the their religion including the principle of celestial marriage (polygamy). Wives Susan and Rosanna Zimmerman (sisters), Verena Bryner, Regula Benz, Pauline Beck, Rosalia Ann Zahler became Naegles. <https://wchsutah.org/people/john-c-naegle1.pdf> The stories of all seven wives.

In 1853, John Conrad Naegle purchased a farm in Lehi and homesteaded two ranches west of the Jordan River in Utah valley. Over the next twelve years, the Naegle family ranching, farming, fruit growing

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operations thrived. He sold his California properties and used some of the profits to help pay for construction of the Salt Lake Temple.

On assignment from Brigham Young, he purchased the materials and machinery for a grist mill, a lumber mill, and a cotton/wool carding operation to be located in the Salt Lake Valley. And directed others in the operation of each facility. John provided wagons with horse and mule teams for church assisted immigration across the great plains into Zion.



*Naegle Winery view from North
P. Kent Fairbanks, Historic American Building Survey, 1968*

In 1862, the Naegles expanded their ranching and horse-raising activities to Beaver, Utah and the Buckskin (Kaibab) Mountains on the Arizona Strip, near the Grand Canyon. Three years later in 1865, John Conrad was called by Brigham Young to help colonize Utah's Dixie, with the specific assignment to establish vineyards and a wine industry. He moved his wives and homes to Toquerville, where he built a large stone building (1868) that was used as the headquarters of his family's businesses, with winery operations in the basement floor and living quarters above. Toquerville remained the center of his business and social life until 1889.

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Ranch Land in Apache County, Arizona

John Conrad Naegle served a mission for Mormon church in 1873. He extended his ranching operations and land holdings to the area around the small Mormon town of St. Johns, and near Concho, in Apache County, Arizona in 1880. These ranch lands at an elevation of nearly 6,000 feet provided some relief from Toquerville's summer heat.

Increasingly, during the 1880s federal prosecution of Mormon polygamists created difficulties for his Utah and Arizona operations. Naegle relocated to Mexico, purchasing 180,000 acres of land in northern Sonora along the Bavispe river, on which two Mormon colonies were located. Colonia Morelos and Colonia Oaxaca.



Bavispe River, Sonora

<https://wchsutah.org/people/john-c-naegle.php>