



A BELIEF HISTORY

OF

JACOB FREI - 1862-1950

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LENA REBER FREI - 1864-1951

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Jacob Frei was born November 27, 1862, in the first dugout completed in Santa Clara, Utah. He was the son of Rudolph and Marguerite Naegle Frei, early Swiss emigrants there. Lena Reber was born in Santa Clara, November 9, 1864 to John and Barbara Stucki Reber. Mr. Frei once started a story of his life which reads:

I was born in Santa Clara, Utah on November 27, 1862, in the first dugout there. It had a dirt roof. A large fireplace with a chimney was in one end and a door in the other end. There were no windows. I was my father's oldest boy. In about two years, Father built a log house with a dirt floor and one room. The log house was more dry and comfortable. I learned to do hard work while he was grubbing land. I would help by piling up the small brush which we would burn. The large pieces we would haul home for firewood. I remember helping him water corn. Water was very scarce, only enough for two rows at a time. One turn came in the night. Father had me go to the lower end of the rows. When the water got down I was to tell him and he would turn the water in two more rows. Towards morning I got very sleepy so I lay down in one of the rows. I thought that when the water run under me I would wake up, but I didn't. Father came to see what was the matter. He found me lying in one of the furrows with the water running all around me. Once when Father was grubbing white willows, he dug around a small one. I asked him to let me cut that one off. He gave me the axe. I squeezed around to do the job. Just as I was raising the axe, Father stooped to pick up the shovel. I hit him across the forehead with the axe and cut a gash about three inches deep clean in to the

bone. He tied our dinner sack around his head, hooked the oxen to the wagon, and went home. I got no wages for that day's work.

One morning word came to Santa Clara that there was a beef killed in St. George and if any of the Swiss people wanted a piece they would have to come and get it. I was nine years old and my father put me on a horse and gave me a white sack and told me where to go. The meat shop was on the old Cannon place. I got there at ten. There was a big line-up of people and I was so frightened and had stood so long waiting my turn that I fell asleep by the steps. When the meat was all gone, Mr. Cannon came out and was locking the door when he saw me. He woke me and asked me whose boy I was. I told him that I was Rudolph Frei's boy from Santa Clara. He said, "Oh yes, why didn't you come in?" I told him that I had stood in line until I was so tired that I fell asleep. He said, "The meat is all gone but come in my house and I will share mine with you." And so he gave me a boil and a roast. It was getting dark when I got to the black rocks and my mother was coming to meet me. She said, "Thank God you are alive."

I had very little schooling. Three months out of the year was all I had. My first teacher was Emily Bunker, then Olena Hug, an old man by the name of Peck, Kate Grange, Samuel Crosby, and George Burgan. I went to school three months in St. George; it was the first high school in St. George and was held in the basement of the tabernacle. John Hafen and Emil Graff also attended this school.

One of the sorrows of my life as a young boy was the fact that my mother refused to cut my hair and it fell in curls down around my face. I hated it. One Sunday as I was walking behind my parents to church one of the town boys came up to me and whispered that if I would get him a quart of wine he would cut my hair. I told him to wait a minute and when my parents had gone

into the meeting house we slipped back home. I measured some wine for him and he cut off all that awful hair. Then I became frightened at what my mother would do to me and I ran away and didn't come home until dark. Mother had noticed that I didn't come to church and she was very angry. When she saw me without my hair she said to father, "Now look at him. A bad boy who doesn't go to church and cuts off all his pretty hair." My father looked at me and laughed. Then he said, "I'm glad he had enough sense to do it. He looked just like a girl before." Then he handed me the milk bucket and I went off to milk with him and mother didn't even get to whip me.

When I was about 14 years old, I helped my father mow hay with the sythe. Machines and rakes were not known then. We cut our grain with a nickle cradle and bound it by hand. Father had a few cattle and horses and I did all the riding. I did considerable freighting, hauling fruit to the mining camps.

In the early days school teachers had to take produce for their service. There was no money in circulation. In those days we raised quite a lot of corn. Men freighting with 6-8 mule teams from Salt Lake to San Bernardino, California, would buy our corn. That was the first money that came into circulation. When our fruit trees began to bear, we would haul our fruit to the mining camps in our wagons. We also dried tons of peaches which were shipped to Salt Lake City. Bishop Hafen usually did the business. From then on Santa Clara people always had money.

We raised cotton in Dixie a few years and manufactured cotton goods at the Washington Factory, the walls of which still stand. That industry was a help to the pioneers. In 1880 I worked for Fred Blake at his saw mill on Mt. Trumbull with a young man by the name of Andrew Jacobson. We

cut the large pine trees, sawed them up into lumber lengths, and trucked them to the mill on two-wheeled trucks. We rolled the logs onto the truck with skids. Then with two yoke of oxen, we hauled the logs to the sawmill. Some of the time we worked at the mill. One day when I was off bearing (that is carrying the lumber from the mill) I started off with a board on my shoulder. The end of the board touched the saw. The board was jerked from me with such force that I stumbled and fell backwards into the saw, just missing the blade by only a few inches.

In 1881 I worked for Bishop Ensign Gubler. He moved the house that the present Ensign Gubler lives in from a little above the hill to where it now stands. When the house was moved, I hauled about 12 loads of wheat for him with which he paid his masons and carpenters. I would haul wood out of the hills and Bishop Ensign would haul the wood to St. George. I worked for \$1.50 a day and boarded myself. With the money I earned on this job, I bought the lot we called the vineyard which looked out into the lane. In 1883 I worked for Frank Walker in Spring Valley, Nevada, feeding and milking cows.

Most of my time I spent on the farm with Father and my brother Edward looking after our cattle, freighting, and hauling our fruit.

In 1882 I went into courtship with Lena Reber. In 1885 on February 12 we were married in the St. George Temple. John Graff and Emma Hafen were married the same time. We had a double wedding which was really a town affair. We gave a free dance. The four of us lived in our present home for one year. In the meantime, John Graff bought the Ruly family out who moved to Oregon.

Father gave me a team, harness, and wagon, also four acres of land up at the Three Mile place. Soon after I bought the two lower lots, one from

Samuel Stucki and one from Mary Ann Leavitt. I paid for the home and two lots by hauling fruit and vegetables to Silver Reef.

Lena and I spent our honeymoon taking a load of fruit to Frisco and Milford. We brought back a load of freight for the Lunds. On the third of August Robert, our first child, was born. Effie, our second child, was born on the 27th of September, 1888. Lena Della was born on the 26th of May, 1890. I left home to go on a mission to Switzerland and arrived in Salt Lake City February 8, 1890. I was set apart on the 11th by an apostle. On the 15th of February I went to Providence to see Aunt Mary Neaf. I stayed with her three days. In the morning at 6 a.m. I took the train back to Salt Lake City. Sunday I went to meeting. Monday morning I met my companion, Henry Jancher. I agreed to meet him in the office in New York where we got our tickets through to Liverpool, England. It cost us \$66.90. Next day we took the steamer "Tonierg." Our voyage on the sea was a very rough one. I became very seasick. The cook noticed that I hadn't been to the table for several days. He came to the cabin and asked what was wrong. He asked me to come with him. He took me to the kitchen and gave me a warm piece of apple pie. It was the best piece of pie I ever ate. After then I continued to eat. We arrived in Liverpool March 16, 1890. I will say no more here about my mission; I kept a journal of my labors in Switzerland which can be read by anyone.

(Mr. Frei's journal is a day-by-day account of the things he did and the families he visited. Many were kind and friendly; others threatened to throw him from their homes, saying, "the elders are all swindlers and Joseph Smith was one of the meanest men who ever lived. You are trying to coax young maidens to Utah and take them for wives, and your old wives, those that you are tired of, you give to the Indians to kill." While on his mis-

sion, Mr. Frei made the acquaintance of John Hafen, the artist from Springville, Utah. He visited Landschlacht and saw the old home of his mother. He went in for a minute and was entertained for a few minutes by a friendly old lady. Because it was the custom of the country, he often drank wine and beer with the people. He baptized a Miss Barbara Baumgardner and last saw her in 1902. This young lady married and moved to the U. S. She sent Mr. Frei a photograph of herself in 1946 surrounded by 51 of her grandchildren, all members of the Mormon faith. She was then Mrs. Barbara B. Fluckiger, a grey-haired old lady.)

I came home with an honorable release in May, 1892. I met my little family. Lena Della had been born while I was gone. While I was on this mission, my family and brother took care of my family, farm and cattle. They kept me on this mission. When I arrived, my wife met me in St. George. I had driven a team and load of freight from Milford. When I got around the Black Hill, I got down into a deep wash and changed my clothes because I didn't look much like a returned missionary and my wife didn't want our friends to see me wearing those old, dirty clothes. When we arrived home, the Staheli Brass Band and many of our friends were there to welcome me. They were all glad to see me except little Lena Della. I was not the man she was looking for. After arriving home, I took more interest in religious matters and Bishop Hafen put me to work. I was put into the Sunday School superintendency. I went ward teaching and was Bishop's clerk for ten years. I was also superintendent of religion class.

I had decided when I left Switzerland that if I was going to have a large family I would buy some forceps so I could pull my children's teeth. I brought a pair home and soon everybody in town heard about it and it wasn't long until I was pulling most of the childrens' teeth and some of the grown-

ups for twenty-five cents a tooth.

In 1893 two twin boys came to our house on the 8th of February-- Victor Edward and Vivian Jacob. Victor Edward died when he was a year old, just as the little fellow was beginning to talk. I was occasionally called on home missions to other wards in the stake. I acted as Justice of the Peace and Constable on different occasions, also as School Trustee when the present Public Schoolhouse was built. On the 16th of February, John Claud Frei was born. By this time we had 6 children. On the 16th of March Grandma Reber died while I was away on a trip to Milford. She had been living with us. Lena fell heir to what we called the Reber land. About that time I bought what is known as the Foster land. That gave me a nice farm, all I could take care of. I sold my Three Mile farm to Lorenzo Leavitt for \$250. That saved dragging a mowing machine and rake up to that farm four times a year.

In 1899 I served three months as an M.I.A. missionary in Kanab with Levi Syphus. I supported my family by hauling fruit and vegetables to mining camps and freighting cattle. I hauled about 30 calves a year.

In 1907 I was called on another mission. I left my wife with nine children--Effie, Vivian J., John Claud, Lena Della, Elsie Barbara, Adda Marguerite, Rex. R., Newell Reber, and Clark. I was called to go to Switzerland. I met the president of the Eastern States Mission in Salt Lake City and he had me changed to the Eastern States Mission. He took me with him and placed me in what was known as the West Pennsylvania Conference. There were quite a lot of German-speaking people in that locality. I was to labor among these people. Soon after I arrived a conference was held. Twenty-six missionaries were present at the Priesthood meeting. All but two were young, well-educated men. The thought came to me that these

are the kind of men to be preaching the gospel. Me, an old 49-year old, ought to be home with his wife and nine children. This thought haunted me for some time, but I finally won out over it, filled an honorable mission, and returned home a happy man. While there, Elder James A. Robinson and I took a trip to Gettysburg and went over that great battlefield where the struggle between the North and the South took place. A guide took us over the ground in a cab. He told us of all the important events of that struggle. From there we went to Washington, D.C. and called on Senator Reed Smoot, who was glad to see us. We spent half a day in the U. S. Senate listening to the debate on national questions. It was very interesting to us. From there we went to Baltimore, Maryland and met the elders there. William Whitehead of St. George was laboring there. This was a very interesting trip for us Southern Utah boys.

I had left Salt Lake October, 1907 after the General Conference. Returned from my mission in October, 1909. My wife met me in Salt Lake. She came up with William Staheli. We spent three days in Salt Lake attending conference and visiting missionary companions and friends. We met our son, Vivian J., at Modena. He had been out to Pioche with a load of fruit. He had been waiting there two days for our arrival. He was then about 16 years old and J. Claud was about 14 yeats old. They, with the help of my brother, took care of the farm and cattle. My daughter Effie taught school while I was gone. All helped keep me on my mission and had \$200 dollars in cash in the bank, with which we bought a new wagon and harness. I had sold a new wagon to Father to get the money to go on the mission. I took over the responsibility of the farm now while the boys went to school. Nine months after my return Cecil M. Frei was born. Bishop Hafen put me to work in the ward. I was put in as Sunday School Superintendent. I

taught a class in M.I.A. in 1912. I was elected County Assessor for two years. I was the first assessor ever sent on K. Mt. to assess sheep that were grazing on grants that belonged to Washington County. I turned in \$1100 to the county. At that time St. George comprised Bunkerville, Mesquite, and all of Moapa Valley. I was frequently called on home missions to these wards. Will mention only one of these.

I was called with Brother Bracken of Pine Valley. He came with his team and wagon and picked me up in Santa Clara. The reason he took his team was to bring a load of rock salt home from St. Thomas to Pine Valley. We were gone about a week. On our way home we camped at Bunkerville. We met William Tobler who had just returned home from his mission to Switzerland. He had his father and mother with him. They were there visiting their daughter who was the plural wife of Samuel Williams. They came home with Brother Bracken and me. When we got to the Mesquite Dam, The Toblers were ahead of us. It was considered a bad crossing. Mr. Tobler's team and wagon went down in the quicksand and there they stuck. They were terrorized. Brother Bracken told the Toblers to stay on the wagon and not to get excited. He said that he had a good team and would pull them out all right. The result was I had to pull off my shoes and pants and go into the water to help get the Tobler team cut on dry land. We hitched the Bracken team to the Tobler wagon and pulled. The wagon was in the sand up to the hubs of the wheels with sand packed all around. It was quite a job to get out.

When we were going up the slope from Beaver Dam, Bishop Edward Bunker Jr. rode up on horseback. Brother Bracken suggested that he tie the horse behind the wagon and ride with us. I was tired of the wagon and decided to ride the horse for awhile. As I was riding along listening to what the

two men said, the horse got excited and galloped away into the junipers, bucking all the time. I had a hard time stopping him.

When we arrived in Santa Clara, the brethren stayed with us. My wife had a bite of refreshments for all. In the morning we all went to quarterly conference. Brother Bracken attended conference, then went home with his load of rock salt.

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This is as far as Mr. Frei got with his story. His writing hand grew shaky and it seemed too big a job. His son Robert died on the 22nd of September, 1903 with typhoid fever. Adda Marguerite choked on a bean she picked up from the floor and died the 16th of February, 1904. Lena Della suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. Jacob Frei had served at the St. George temple grounds as a stake missionary, been head of the Santa Clara water board when the headhouse was built, and been president of the town board. He died November 29, 1950 at the age of 88. Funeral services were held in the Santa Clara Chapel on December 2, 1950 under the direction of Bishop Grant Hafen. Opening prayer was offered by Lorenzo C. Leavitt. Speakers were Adolph Hafen, Henry Graff, President Harold S. Snow, and Dr. Walter P. Cottam. Closing prayer was offered by John Stucki. Musical numbers were: "Ave Maria" a violin solo by Irene Averett, "Beyond the Sunset" by Vella Ruth Hafen, Elva Hafen, and Annaliese Ence, "Dear Old Dad" by Stanley Schmutz. The grave was dedicated by Edward Frei, Jr. Olive Moss played preliminary music on the organ.

Lena Reber Frei was his faithful wife and companion all these years. She taught in the Primary Association, the Y.W.M.I.A., and other auxiliary groups. For fourteen years she served as a member of the Sta Clara Relief Society presidency and for more than 40 years was a visiting teacher.

She was the typical mother and home-builder, laboring long and devotedly for her family. When the typhoid epidemic swept Santa Clara and killed her son, Robert, she cared for her entire family as they caught it one by one, although she had the disease herself and was with child. Dr. Walter P. Cottam said in a letter to them on their wedding anniversary that Jacob Frei reminded him of a high-spirited stallion but the hand of the reins was that of his calm, steadfast wife. She guided him and kept that high spirit of his from running away with them both. Never the type of person to make flowery speeches or pay empty compliments, she was nevertheless an intensely honest and frugal woman. She died Tuesday, December 4, 1951 at the age of 87.

Her funeral was held in the Santa Clara Chapel under the direction of Bishop Grant Hafen. Opening prayer was offered by Henry Graff. Speakers were Sylvan Graff and A. K. Hafen. Arlo Hafen read an anniversary letter written to Mr. and Mrs. Frei by Dr. Walter P. Cottam. Musical numbers were: "Peace Be With You" by the Singing Mothers of Santa Clara, "Gently and Softly Jesus is Calling" by Elva Hafen, Vella Ruth Hafen, and Anna-liese Ence, and a piano-organ duet by D'on and Gwen Andrus. Closing prayer was offered by John Stucki. Olive Moss played introductory music on the organ. The grave in the Santa Clara cemetery was dedicated by Lorenzo Leavitt.
