

A short sketch of the lives of

Johann Rudolph and Margarett Nageli Frei

From the year 1854 missionaries were sent to all parts of Switzerland, especially to the German speaking parts of Switzerland. Many were ready to accept the Gospel, of those humble people among them were my parents. As soon as they were baptized they had a desire to emigrate to Utah to mingle with the Saints. They would sell everything they owned to get the means for the trip. They would leave their Country in small companies. It often took them 2 to 3 months to cross the ocean. and that was not the hardest by no means. The hardships began by crossing the plains. The earliest ones came with handcarts, later with ox teams. Some who had spare money were able to buy their own team of horses, or mules. It happened by 1860 there was quite a large company of Swiss people in and around Salt Lake. No doubt the leaders of the church were concerned how these people could best make a living, not being able to speak English. In 1861, during Conference a proclamation was given by Pres. Brigham Young that all the Swiss people in and around Salt Lake were called on a mission to go to the extreme part of Southern Utah and make homes for themselves. This part of the country had been previously explored by some of the Church leaders and about twenty members were sent ahead. (among those in the company was Jacob Hamblin, who was the head of the Mission). This settlement was about 350 miles from Salt Lake. The Church furnished the teams for those who didn't have any. The trip took about three weeks. Among those in the company was my father, Rudolph Frei, and my mother, Margarett Nageli Frei, who came from Switzerland as a young girl with a company the year of 1861. My father came to Salt Lake in 1860, a year before . He met my mother in Salt Lake and they were married in the old Endowment House. My father bought his own team to come to Santa Clara. There were 93 members in the company. My father was born in Lutisburg, St Gallen, Switzerland and my mother was born in Altnau, Thrg, Switzerland. To them were born 7 children, of which 3 are living. My brother Jacob was the oldest. He married Lena Reber when he was 22 years old. Next comes my sister Mary, she married Fredrick Reber when she was 20 years old. I am next and I married Agnes Wilson in 1893.

My parents, like all the colonists in early days, had to go through many hardships and exposures. My mother had a pair of twins of which one died, also three other children who died in infancy, on account of the hardships mother had to go through. When they first settled in Santa Clara they lived in a covered wagon until a dugout was made to live in. A few years later they built a log house where they lived many years, then they built an adobe house, in which they lived to the end. My father died in 1902. My mother was a widow for 10 years. The house was then remodeled, and her oldest grandson, Vivian, took it over. I remember when I was a boy and living in the log house, every time it rained we had to put pans on

the bed at night, so the bedding wouldn't get wet. I also remember when we had no bread in the house. One day father learned that Brother Leavitt had come home from a trip up north and brought five sacks of flour. My father was a very reserved man, but seeing us children hungry as we were (bread and molasses was our best meal in those days), took courage and went to Brother Leavitt. When Brother Leavitt saw him coming, he knew what he wanted, he said "Brother Frei, all the flour is gone except a little more than half a sack and you are welcome to that". My father had tears of joy in his eyes. He thanked him and left his blessings with them as he walked out. His wife called him back and said, "Here, take these warm biscuits for your children", she turned a dripper full of nice warm biscuits on a napkin. You bet we thought we had a feast when father came home with those good biscuits.

My father was the first Post Master in this town. He held that position for 20 years. He was school trustee for many years. They worked very hard to make a living. I remember when we children were small, we would all go with father and mother to the St. George field to plant the crop. Taking our meager meal with us, working hard all day and walking both ways. When I was young, everybody made their own wine. My father had some but we used it very sparingly. When I was young somebody gave me a drink, and it made me sick. That taught me a lesson for life.

When I was a student at the B.Y.U. I was called to go on a mission to Switzerland and Germany. I left school and came home to get ready to leave. Since I was engaged to my future wife we decided to get married before I left. This was done, but she stayed with her mother until I came back. I was gone $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. When I came back we started to keep house. We sure were poor. We lived upstairs in mother's house and for a while we had a room in my brother Jacob's place. I taught school for a couple of years but didn't like the job. I liked to work in the open, so I started to freight from here to Milford.

I was engaged in Church activity. I was ward clerk for a number of years. I was class leader in Sunday School for 10 years. I was Mutual President. I was on the Stake Board of Mutual for 12 years. I was first counselor to Bishop Hafen for 10 years. I was bishop of Santa Clara for 15 years. When released I was ordained to the High Council. I was first counselor in the Stake High Priests Quorum. I'm class leader for the Adult class in Mutual, also chairman of the Genealogical committee. I was called on a six months mission in 1930 to California.

I was constable for two terms. Trustee a long time. I was County Commissioner twice. I was at the head of the Town Board twice. I was on the Board of Education for many years. I was Justice of the Peace two terms, and other jobs. I always was willing to help build up the community. I have been and am still Commissioner for the Farm Adjustment Department. My work is farmer and stockman.