

A SHORT SKETCH OF THE LIVES OF EDWARD RUDOLPH FREI  
AND HIS PARENTS

JOHANN RUDOLPH FREI AND ANNA MARGARETHA NAGELI

by EDWARD RUDOLPH FREI, JR.

As a small child I remember Grandma and Grandpa Frei, they lived just above us on the same block where we lived. I don't remember much about my Grandfather as he died in 1902 when I was only six years old, I remember he had a long white beard and was very good to me.

Grandma loved flowers and gardens, I helped her prepare the soil and plant the seeds, and helped her weed the garden. I had to pass her home when I went to the corral to milk the cows each morning and evening, as I came from the corral I would stop in and leave her some fresh milk. She always talked to me in her native tongue, Swiss, I never learned to talk it, but could understand most of what she said to me, I always answered her back in English, which she could understand.

Grandma was 18 years old when she came to Santa Clara. She remained here, never going farther then the grist mill at Washington, after she moved here from Switzerland.

After Grandpa died, at the age of 67, Grandma lived alone, until the last years, when she went to live with her daughter, Aunt Mary Reber, who cared for her until she died in March 1911.

Grandpa and Grandma both came from Switzerland, they were not in the same company and never met until they arrived in Salt Lake City, Grandpa came a year before Grandma. Grandpa's father died in Switzerland before he had a chance to join the Church. His Mother accepted the Gospel when the Missionaries visited her home. She wanted to be with the Saints so sold everything she had and with her three children set sail for America. His Mother took sick on the way across the ocean and died, she was buried at sea somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean, in 1860. The three children, one girl Anna Maria, and two boys Gottlieb, and Johann Rudolf, my Grandfather. Anna Maria married a man by the name of Neff, they moved to Providence, in Cache County to live. Gottlieb never married, he remained in Salt Lake City, he worked at the Holy Cross Hospital, where he lived until his death.

Johann Rudolf met Anna Margarethe Nageli in Salt Lake City, and when the Swiss emigrants were sent to Southern Utah to Pioneer, by President Brigham Young. This young couple was advised to get married so they could be sealed in the Endowment House then come with the other Swiss emigrants to make their home in Santa Clara. They arrived in Santa Clara in November 1861. They lived in their wagon until the next year.

Grandpa and Grandma had seven children named: Jacob, Mary and Carl, twins, Edward Rudolph, Emma Margaret, George, and Joseph.

My father was Edward Rudolph Frei, he was born 25 Sep 1867. He loved sports and was a good athlete. He was a good boxer, he played baseball, he was a backstop on the town team. Often after a game his hands would be so swollen and sore often blistered, as they didn't have catchers mits only a light glove to protect their hands. 2

As a young man Father attended school in St. George where he met my Mother Agnes Wilson, he went with her and Uncle Harmon Hafen went with her sister Frances Helen, Grandpa Wilson had a summer home in Pine Valley so Father and Uncle Harmon would make several trips to Pine Valley on horse back to visit the Wilson girls during the summer. At one time while they were up there visiting a man challenged my Father to a match to see who could knock the other's hat off first. My Father said "Are you ready", the man said "Yes" and before he could move his hat was on the ground, he said that Father had cheated so they tried again with the same results, so he gave up and declared Father the winner.

Father attended school at the B.Y.U. in Provo for one year, then he was called to fulfill a Mission for the church in Switzerland. At this time he was engaged to my Mother so they decided to get married before he left for the mission field. They were married 4 May 1893. Mother stayed with her Mother while Father was away.

Father was gone for two and one half years on his mission. He had many converts who came to Utah. Many years later he was invited to a reunion in Salt Lake City of the converts and their decedents. There were 1,500 people there to honor him.

Soon after Father's return from the Mission field, he was sustained as a counselor to Bishop John G. Hafen in the Santa Clara Ward, where he served for 10 years, then was sustained as the bishop of the ward for 15 years.

In the days when Father was the Bishop, visitors who came to visit the ward had to travel by horse and buggy or on horse back, so they had to stay sometimes over night. They stayed in our home, my Mother cared for them she provided them with lodging and prepared their meals for them. Sometimes the Auditor would come and have to spend as much as a week in our home as a guest. The school teachers boarded in our home, as we were the only family in town able to care for them.

Father had the only telephone in town, so often one of the children would have to go and get someone to come to the telephone when they were wanted, or go to St. George for a doctor when a call came from as far away as Gunlock. People came in to use the telephone when they needed to.



While Bishop Father was very concerned about the widows and older people in the ward. He assigned the boys holding the Aaronic Priesthood, to chop the wood for them, and to chop the wood to heat the Church building on Sunday, and to make the fire Sunday Morning. He was there to supervise and help with this work.

Tithing was paid in kind, so often Father had to take a load of hay, grain, meat, or produce to St. George to sell. He handled pork, beef, eggs, and butter and had to convert them into cash to send into the tithing office in Salt Lake City. The ward had a tithing barn and store house where much of the produce was kept until it could be disposed of.

On Christmas morning Father would get up early and visit every home in town to see that all was well, and wish everyone a Merry Christmas, this he did as long as he lived in Santa Clara. If there was illness or trouble in a home Father was there to give advice, assistance and comfort.

Father was a very public minded man, he served as a county commissioner, was on the school board, he served on the Stake High Council, he taught school, was instrumental in the building of the town of Ivins, helped and pushed the building of the Ivins Reservoir and canal, was president of the water company. It was through his efforts that the Church at Ivins was built with the help of President Heber J. Grant and Anthony W. Ivins, with the help also of the Church Building Funds, and donated labor from people living in Ivins and Santa Clara.

Father made several trips to the mining camps in Nevada, each Summer, to sell Fruit, vegetables, chickens, eggs, butter, and meat. He traveled in a wagon with a team of horses. He had to take along an extra team of horses to pull the load up to Dameron Valley. I would go with him that far and bring the extra team of horses back home after night. I would have to help get the next load of produce ready for the next trip for my Father. At least once during the Summer Father would let me go with him on his peddling trip. This was a wonderful experience one I looked forward to all Summer.

Father had cattle that were grazed during the winter on the hills south of town, and in the Summer at Bull Valley Ranch. Each Spring we would have to gather the cattle and move them to their Summer range, and in the Fall we would gather them and move them home where we would wean the calves, cut out the ones to be sold and move the others to their Winter range. I went along with Father and the other men of the town on these round-ups. We would have to camp out sometimes for a week at a time.

My Mother worked very hard even though her health was not very good. The last year of her life she was bedfast. She died 19 November 1930.

After Mother died Father was called to fill a Mission in Southern California, and was then called as a guide at the Mesa, Arizona Temple, where he finished his Mission.

When Father returned home he married a cousin of Aunt Lena's, Annie Reber Shonie, who lived in Salt Lake City, she was a widow with grown children. He brought her to Santa Clara where they lived for several years, until Annie's health was not good so they moved to Salt Lake City. They worked in the Temple and Father did other work, as long as he could.

He died 13 October 1945 in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was buried in the Santa Clara Cemetery, in Santa Clara Utah.