

1939 Homecoming Celebration



Swiss Colony Settlement in Santa Clara

In 1859-1860, a group of Swiss citizens were converted to the gospel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Most of them lived in and around Mulheim, Switzerland. In those years, these converts left their homes in Switzerland and traveled to the United States, most arriving in New York at the Crystal Palace (fore-runner of Ellis Island), before embarking on a difficult overland journey by oxen and wagons or by hand-carts, to the Salt Lake Valley in what was then a land called Deseret, at that time a part of Mexico. The Latter-Day Saints had moved their headquarters to this location, outside the boundaries of the United States, to find safety from persecution.

In 1861, Brigham Young, the leader of this group of stalwart Christians, assigned this group of Swiss converts to go to Santa Clara to raise cotton and grapes. At this time, Jacob Hamblin had settled a small group in the area to preach the gospel to the local native Americans. The Swiss left their homes in the Salt Lake area, and joined Hamblin's small group, settling in this dry desert land. Can you imagine going from

THIS:



Mulheim, Switzerland

TO THIS?



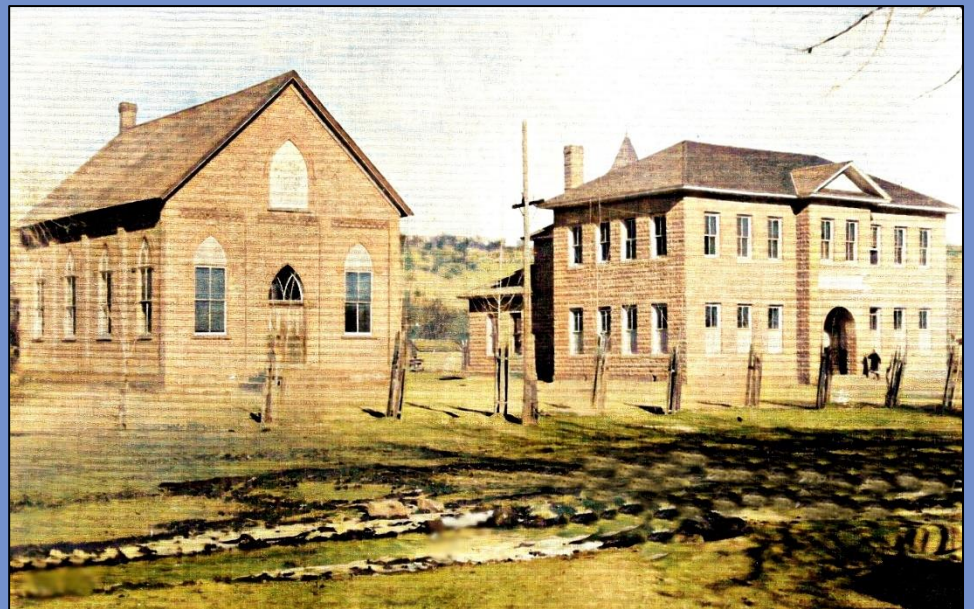
These people were faithful and hard-working, and in 1939 they held a "homecoming celebration to mark the incredible accomplishments they had achieved. They had built a beautiful little community, flourishing with fruit orchards, homes, church, school and industry.

In 1939, as the 78th anniversary of the arrival of the Swiss Saints approached, the local chapter of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers (DUP) organized a celebration. They designed and had made a monument to those hardy Swiss settlers, and placed it in front on the school.



The photos in this post show the four women from the DUP who organized the event, and those original settlers who were still living, along with the photos of the first children born into the community after its settlement in 1861.

The Santa Clara LDS Chapel, left, and the school, probably in the 1920s

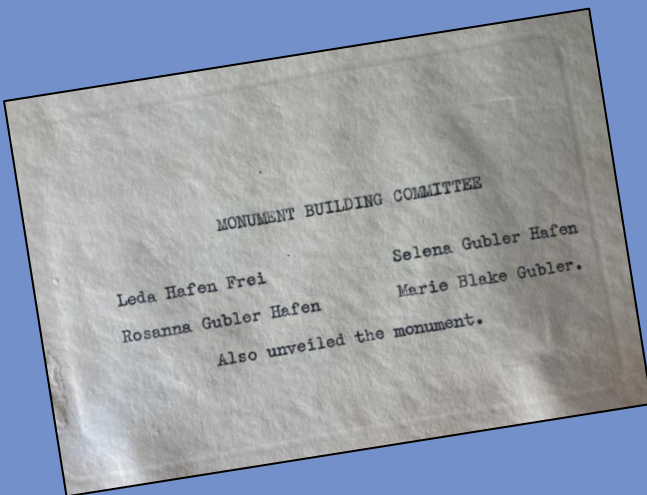


A chorus comprised of DUP members provided music for the dedication. They wore pioneer bonnets for the occasion.

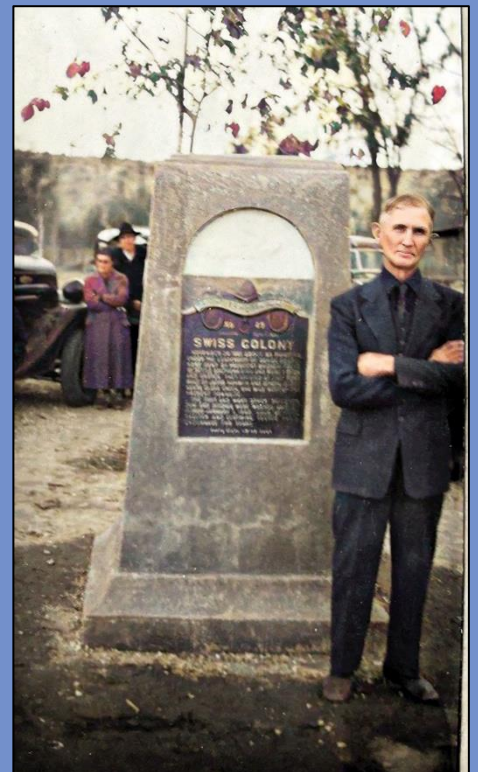


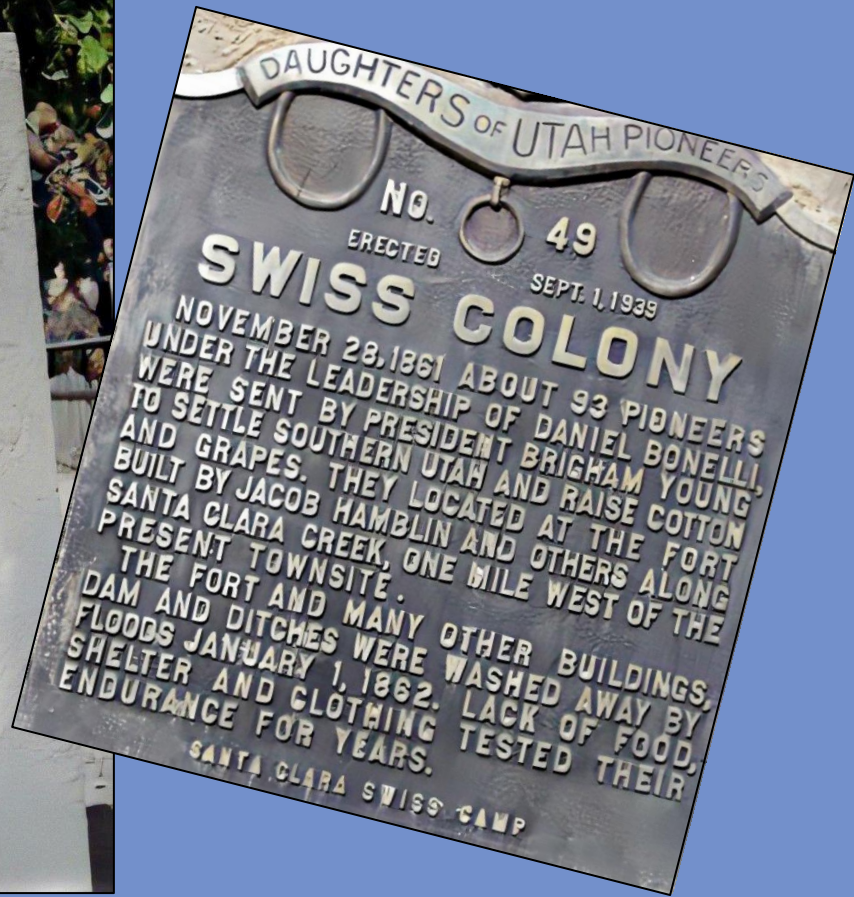


The DUP committee members, from left: Leda Hafen Frei, Selena Gubler Hafen, Rosanna Gubler Hafen, Marie Blake Gubler
 These women are all descendants of original pioneer settlers who arrived with the Swiss Saints.



The monument was dedicated on September 1, 1939 by Jacob Frei, the bishop of the Santa Clara Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.





At the time of this dedication, five original settlers from the Swiss Company were still living. They had come to Santa Clara as small children, and were true pioneers as they helped to create the beautiful community Santa Clara became, from the rough desert.



Five surviving original pioneers:

From left: John Staheli, Christian Stucki, Herman Gubler, Anna M.R. Hafen, Julia Roulet Graff



Barbara Staheli
Born January 25, 1862

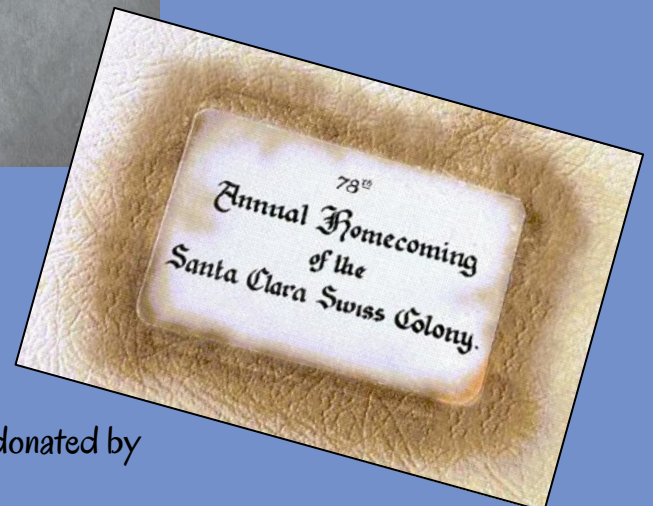
Joseph Graff
Born January 4, 1862

Listed as the first babies born to the Swiss Settlers at Santa Clara

**Santa Clara
History Museum**
Santa Clara, Utah



GROUP OF PIONEERS
WHO CAME
BEFORE 1869.



A small memorial booklet was created as a keepsake of this event. The cover of the booklet is shown here, and these photos and typed descriptions were included in the booklet.

This keepsake booklet belonged to **Leda Hafen Frei**, and was donated by her great granddaughter, **Lyndi Frei Ison**.

The photos from the booklet have been enhanced and colorized using My Heritage.