

Casper Gubler and Anna Katherina Gubler Ackerman Gubler and Katherina Magdalena Ackerman Gubler

Casper Gubler

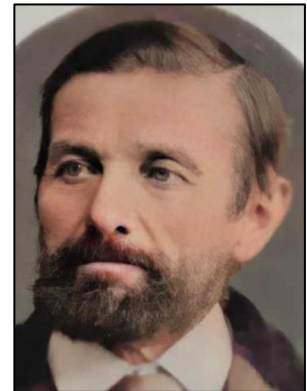
Compiled from life stories by himself, his daughter, Rose Ann G. Hafen and Nellie M. Gubler and taken from the book "The Gubler Family of Utah"

Casper Gubler was one of the handcart Pioneers of 1857. He was born 1 August 1835, and 14th of 15 children born to Hans Heinrich and Anna Margaretha Dinckel Gubler of Mullheim, Thurgau, Switzerland.

The mortality rate in the family was very high. The parents died just a few months apart in 1851; the mother being only 58 years old and the father 68, and seven of their children had preceded them in death, their ages ranging from six to twenty-five years. Casper was only fifteen years old when he was orphaned and he said, "I felt that my birthplace was no longer a home so I traveled 50 miles on foot to Zurich where I had brothers and sisters."

He lived with a sister and found work in a silk and wool factory. One day as he was walking, he saw a sign in a bakery which read, "Boy wanted to deliver bread," so he applied and got the job.

He worked there for two years, carrying the bread in huge trays on his head. One day as he made a delivery to a bar and café establishment, a group of men, sitting drinking beer, saw him receive the payment and called him over to have a drink with them. As he started to leave his host said, "You don't mean to leave without treating us do you?" Casper told them he had no money, but they insisted that they had seen him collect for the bread. The proprietor, seeing his difficulty, stepped up and said, "You let this boy go. That money does not belong



Casper Gubler

to him, and he is an honest boy!" Casper always felt that the Lord was watching over him and helping him at such times.

Another day he was delivering bread, and he saw a sign over the door of a carpenter's shop, "Apprentice Wanted." He went in and talked to the manager and decided to give notice to his former employer and become a carpenter. After completing his training, he drifted into Germany where he plied his trade for a while, but when German officials told him he would have to join the army and have a year of military training if he remained he went back to Zurich. He tells of one of his experiences. He had begun earning a little money and decided to take a ride on the train. He bought himself a new suit, a couple of cigars and a train ticket to nowhere in particular, and enjoyed his first train ride. As he was smoking, some ashes fell on the shoulder of his new suit, burning quite a hole in it. This brought him down to earth and he resolved never to smoke again. He said that this was the only money he ever wasted in his life.

His parents had belonged to the Reformed Church of Switzerland, and he remembered they had told him to "always keep good company," so when he met the Mormon Elders, he felt he could keep no better company. He accepted the Gospel and was baptized on 28 July 1854 at age 19. Three years later he "bid good-bye to his homeland," went to Liverpool, England, and embarked for America.

After the sad experience of the Martin Handcart Company late in the season the Elders presiding over the British Mission announced to all the Saints intending to immigrate to Utah to get ready early enough to sail from Liverpool by 25 March so as to land in the States by the first of May. There were only two vessels chartered for emigration going straight through to Utah, the George Washington and the Westmoreland. Casper was booked on the George Washington as a carpenter, age 21; his passage was listed as three pounds, and he was one of 127 named to go on to Utah by handcart. There were 817 passengers, mostly British, but there were several from the Swiss Mission with Orson Pratt listed as agent. Elder James L. Parks was

chosen President of the Company, and there were several other returning Elders in the group. At the end of the voyage, Captain Cummings wrote a compliment letter to)President Parks saying, "I am free to acknowledge that on no previous voyage have my passengers conducted themselves so orderly and peaceably as those in your charge; cleanliness morality, sobriety, reciprocating of favors and general good behavior were pre-eminently conspicuous in the conduct and character."

They sailed from Liverpool on 28 March 1857 and after a "speedy and prosperous" voyage of 23 days, they landed in Boston on 20 April 1857. There had been four deaths and one birth during that time. Those intending to go straight through to Utah left by rail that same afternoon going by way of Albany and Buffalo. They reached Iowa City on the 30th where they were met by James A. Little, the emigration agent. He had provided tents, wagon covers, and commodities to make them comfortable for the night, and the next day a supply of provisions arrived and everyone set busily to work preparing for the journey across the plains.

There were two handcart companies that crossed the plains that summer: the Sixth or Evans Company, and the Seventh or Christensen Company which consisted mostly of Scandinavian Saints who had come on the Westmoreland. The Evans Company left Florence, Nebraska on 13 June 1857 and arrived in the Valley on 11-12 September 1857. There has been no roster found of either of these parties but the Evans Company consisted of 149 souls, 80 of whom were women and 28 children under six years of age. There were 28 handcarts and a four mule team to pull extra provisions. The Journal History states also that "they all arrived in good spirits." The Christensen Company arrived a few days later, but as Casper describes his journey he apparently was in the Evans Company.

The Handcart

A crude and lifeless thing of wood—
Two wheels, two shafts, and a box.
Yet it rolled the road to a Zion home
With never a mule or ox.
Propelled by blood of the human heart.

Creeping thirteen hundred miles
It squeaked and groaned and whined
Through dust, and rivers of mud and sweat,
Greased with a bacon rind.
At night, as silent as the graves
New-hidden under grassy waves

Hand-fashioned, this rude family cart
Of Iowa hickory, oak,
No iron strength in the rustic art
Of axle, shaft, or spoke
Creaking along while the pioneers plod,
Choraling anthems to their God.

But the lowly cart, with its miracle wheel
As timeless as the poor,
Was a circle of faith that eased the way
To an inland Salt-sea shore.
A man and wife, its walking team,
Trundling a baby and a dream!

He walked the entire distance of 1300 miles, and when crossing rivers, he waded through mushy ice up to his waist, sometimes carrying women and children across on his back. He told his children that they often sang as they went; such songs as “Some Must Push and Some Must Pull, as we go marching up the hill, as merrily on the way, we go, until we reach the valley, oh.”

They often went hungry as the food was rationed out to them. They were given ½ pint of flour each day which they could prepare as they wished. As Casper was a strong, healthy lad, he often gave part of his

rations to others whom he felt needed it more than he. However, the long tedious journey, the exposure to cold, and the lack of food broke down his health. He developed a very bad cough which remained with him the rest of his life. He says only, "A tedious journey it was. I arrived in Utah in September 1857, well worn out from the hardships of the plains." He never was heard to complain about the hardships endured for the Gospel's sake.

The year 1857 brought troublesome times to the Saints; Johnston's army was on its way to "subdue the Saints" and the Indians were giving trouble in the outlying settlements. As Casper says, "There was trouble in every way and to get work was hard," but he found employment under John D. Lee as a carpenter. They were fed potatoes and black coffee made from roasted grain, without any sugar. They had no bread for six weeks. He said that John D. Lee was an honest man and treated his employees as he himself would want to be treated.

When Johnston's army finally established themselves at Camp Floyd, Casper was employed to help build the barracks there. It was at this time that he met a good looking French girl and her mother. They probably thought that as he was making good wages, he would be a "good catch." He and this French lass were married and he moved in with them. Apparently she was a "high flyer" and wanted to go dancing and sporting each night. Casper worked hard and was in no mood to go out every night to celebrate.

The girl and her mother continued to "hang around" Camp Floyd. When Casper came home after work expecting to find a wife and supper waiting for him, he usually found only dirty dishes. After only two weeks of this type of life, he returned home from work one evening and his wife's dog ran at him, grabbed his pants, and tore a strip of cloth from them the full length of his new pants.

His wife and her mother stood by laughing so as Casper says, "This was the straw that broke the camel's back." He went to a lawyer and asked what he could do about the situation. The lawyer made out a bill of

divorcement and told him to have the girl and her mother sign it. When he took it to them for signatures, the girl turned to her mother and said, "Shall we sign it?" Her mother said, "Sure." Thus the short marriage was terminated with no alimony to pay,.

When President Young called a group of people to settle Dixie in October Conference 1861, Casper had a good job making counters and doing cabinet work for stores. He had been earning six or seven dollars a day and accumulated quite a little property, but he answered the call to go south. They were advised to consider marriage before they left Salt Lake City, so on 9 November 1861 Casper married Anna Katherina Gubler, who was one of the recently arrived Swiss converts to the Church.

They traveled to Dixie with the Swiss company of 85 persons. George A. Smith said of them, "We met a company of 14 wagons led by Daniel Bonneli. They excited much curiosity through the country by their singing and good cheer. They expect to settle at Santa Clara village, where there is a reservation of land selected for them that is considered highly adaptable to grape culture. Six of the wagons were furnished by the Church." (Millennial Star 24:41-42)

They arrived in Santa Clara on 28 November 1861, Casper and Katherina had their own ox team, covered wagon, plow, shovel, hoe and other farming implements and a few of the comforts of life many of the company did not have. Some had nothing with which to start their new life there. They drove to the Fort where they camped around the adobe meeting house. Those who had covered wagons used them, and the others built willow wigwams for their shelter. After three weeks, it was decided to make a permanent townsite below the point of the hill, on the bend of the creek where they would be safer from flood water and the land appeared to be fertile.

A survey of the new townsite was made, the land dedicated by Elder Bonneli; their lots were numbered and drawn from a hat. Each family

was given three different pieces of land. They immediately set to work to prepare for winter.

Since the Indian missionaries had been in Santa Clara several years, they had orchards, vineyards, and farm land already producing along the creek, but the spring and summer was a hard one for all the settlers who by now were in dire circumstance. Dudley Leavitt made a trip north for a load of flour which he divided among the people according to the size and need of the family; a pan full here and a part of a sack there. During the summer he killed several head of beef, giving each family a piece of fresh meat, and the settlers learned to eat sego roots and "pig weeds," a sort of wild spinach.

The story is told of Samuel Stucki walking to Cedar City to earn money for food, leaving what little there was for his family. When he was about fifty miles from home, he met Casper Gubler, one of his neighbors, who was driving home from a trip north. Samuel was so dizzy from hunger that he could scarcely walk. When Casper saw him reeling along the road, he called out and asked if he were drunk. Samuel replied, "Only hungry, I've had nothing to eat for three days." At that Casper gave him bread and meat to strengthen him for his further journey. (As related by his daughter, Mary Ann Hafen)

Casper's daughter, Rose Ann, tells this story: "When father was using an ox team, he had to run his oxen out over night on the bench to feed. One morning when he went out to get them, they were gone,. He found their tracks headed for the Indian farm which plainly showed that they were being driven by an Indian. He went on and finally could see them with a large Indian hurrying them along. Father encircled them and was attempting to drive them back when the angry Indian swung his tomahawk in the air and threatened to kill him if he didn't let the oxen go. About this time a white man came along on horseback, saw what was going on and said, "You let this man have his oxen." The Indian gave no more trouble, but slunk off into the bushes. I don't remember the white man's name (I think it was Jacob Hamblin), but he had a great influence with the Indians.

Casper stood guard many nights when the Indians were bad. He used his old muzzle loader gun which his son, Emil, still owns.

Casper and Katherina were parents of four children: Selina, Mary, Casper A., who died at 13 months of age, and Jacob J. Gubler.

In 1870 Casper took a plural wife, Magdalena, daughter of his wife Katherina. She died just two weeks after the birth of her first child, Henry.

On 22 November 1877 Casper married Polina Rosby. She lived in a small house one block west of the chapel where the Emil Gubler home now stands. When her first child was 10 days old, she had such a "hankering for green grapes that she got up out of bed, went out into the lot and ate some." She died a few days after. Her baby died also.

On September 1886 Casper married Agnes Florence Horsley, a young convert to the church from England. They were the parents of six children: Casper Ensign, Ida Florence, Rose Ann, Alice Otilia, Samuel Robert and Emil, making a total for Casper of 12 children plus an adopted daughter, Eleanor, daughter of Agnes Florence.

Casper went on a mission to Switzerland and Germany just two years after this last marriage, leaving a young wife with two little children to care for. The damp climate of Switzerland did not agree with him due to his lung trouble, and he became very ill. His landlady wrote to the Mission President and told him if Brother Gubler wasn't released, they would send him home in a box. He has told the story of being baptized for his health. It was wintertime and the ice had to be broken. He had to be carried into the water, but he said that he was able to walk out and felt that he was almost healed by the power of God.

After eighteen months he received an honorable release from his mission and returned home, but his health was such that many times during his life he was lying ill when he needed to be at work providing for his family.

The settlers had many problems with stray cattle and irrigation water. No one wanted his grain ruined when it was almost ready to be harvested, but that is what happened to Casper. One season he came in pale, tired and heartsick for his grain that he had been counting on for bread for the winter had been trampled and partly eaten off. He tried stray penning the animals but their owners would let them out of the pen at nights and the next day the cattle were back again.

One day he put these cattle into the stray pen and stood guard all night long. As a weapon, he took his old single barreled shotgun which wouldn't shoot. After a while the neighbor came to get his cattle and was determined to do so. Casper said, "If you come any closer I'll bang this gun over your head." The man left but had Casper arrested for carrying a deadly weapon. He was tried in Bishop's Court in St. George and won, receiving money for the straypen bill.

The water was the life blood of the community and was always very scarce. Some of the people often tried to "borrow" a little from their neighbor's turn. This was a source of many arguments and fights. Casper often not well and could not stand up for his rights, so there were some who took advantage of him. After his son, Jacob (Jake) grew up, offenders were more careful of their water turns. Jake was a large, powerful young man who stood up for his rights and saw that justice was done.

However, Jake moved to Lund, Nevada in 1899 and Casper's son, Henry, died, so the water problems began again. Jake was still able to help his father out occasionally. When Casper's house began to leak and needed a new covering, it was Jake who sent money to buy the shingles and Ensign put them on the house. He also helped out when tax time rolled around.

Casper continued to work on his farm with the help of his sons, Ensign, Sam, and Emil, until his death at age 82 years.

Only a short time before his death, he walked out to the vineyard to turn the water. It was November and the weather was cool. His foot

slipped and he fell into the ditch. He dragged himself out and walked the mile home but was chilled to the bone and contracted bronchitis from which he never recovered. He died on 8 December 1917.

Biography of Casper Gubler

Written by Lula Stucki, for the English Department of the Dixie Normal College during the winter of 1916-17. This project was sponsored by the Genealogical Committee of the St. George Stake Relief Society with Josephine J. Miles as Chairman. Copied by Ella J. Seegmiller, County Historian of DUP in April 1943.

Casper Gubler, one of the early, sturdy pioneers, who helped to build up the Dixie Country, was born August 1, 1835 in the little farming village of Mulheim, Thurgau Canton, Switzerland.

His parents were Margerite Dinkel Gubler and Heinrich Gubler, both natives of Switzerland, who lived and died in their native land. They were both staunch and devoted members of the Reform Church of Switzerland. They had a large family which they often found difficult to feed and clothe. His father owned a small farm, and did a little carpentry work on the side, which helped along considerably in making a living.

Although Casper's parents were poor, he gained a very good education in the public schools of Switzerland, which ran the whole year, except for two or three weeks during the busiest harvest time. All children were compelled to attend these schools, and if a father kept his son out he was heavily fined.

Casper entered the public school at the age of five, and remained there until he was fifteen years old, at which time he had completed the schooling given in the public schools. It was during this fifteenth year of his life, that he suffered a very great loss, for during this year both his father and mother died. His mother died in the spring, and his father in the fall of the same year. This great crisis came into his young life just at

the time when he most needed parental guidance and instruction. However, he ever forgot their splendid teachings and instructions. These he always tried to put into practice.

Casper stayed out of school one year, during which time he worked in the city of Zurich. The next year he entered a trade school or was apprenticed out three years to learn the “goiness” Trade, as it was called in German, but means practically the same as the Carpenter’s Trade.

He joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in August 1854, having been converted and baptized by Elder Myers, one of the first Elders that came to Switzerland. He was the first member of the family to join the Church, his father and mother having died several years before this time. All the rest of the family except two, joined the Church and later immigrated to Utah. Before joining the Mormon Church, Casper belonged to the same church as his parents, the Reform Church.

In 1857, he left his home, friends, and relatives, and his dear native land, to journey to that far off land in the valleys of the mountains, and arrived in Utah that same dear. He started on his journey across the plains in Israel Evans Handcart Company, from Iowa City in May, and was on the way fourteen long, weary weeks before finally reaching Utah. The company arrived at Salt Lake City in September, 1857.

On the journey, nothing unusual happened. They held their regular meetings, had singing and prayer every morning and night. Only two deaths occurred in the company on the journey, those being a Mrs. White and a young child. In crossing the plains, Mr. Gubler had nearly all of the pulling of a loaded handcart to do alone, and often had to let the aged man of seventy-five and the aged woman of seventy, ride in the cart.

On arriving at Salt Lake City, he was completely exhausted and worn out. Though he was a young man this strain had been too great on him, for after staying in Salt Lake City only a week, he went to Lehi with a Bryner family, where immediately after arriving, he took sick. It was

thought that the disease he had was consumption, and all winter long he had to keep to his bed. Many times he was so bad that he was not expected to live, but in the spring he began to improve gradually, and after some months, was well and quite strong again.

He stayed in Lehi about nine months, then went to Provo, where he got a job in a machine shop. He stayed with this job about a year, then went to Salt Lake City where he worked in a furniture shop for a few months. From there he went to Ogden, where he took up a small farm. He stayed here about a year, when he was called by Brigham Young to settle and build up the Dixie Country.

In November 1861, he left Ogden with four span of oxen, and joined the main company of pioneers who came to Dixie in 1861. They were on the way about a month, their progress being slow on account of the large company, the great number of cattle, and in many places they had to make their own road.

On arriving in Dixie, Mr. Gubler with many other pioneers, settled on the Santa Clara, a little settlement just five miles west of St. George. Here there were just a few old settlers who had been there for a few years, acting more as Indian Missionaries than settlers. Two of these were Brother Samuel Knight and Jacob Hamblin, who were always called upon to settle disputes with the Indians.

Six months before starting for the Dixie Mission, Mr. Gubler was married at Salt Lake City, May 1861, to Catherine Gubler. He took his bride with him to Dixie, and on reaching there, a hard life stared them in the face, but bravely they fought side by side. They could scarcely make a living, and many times they scarcely had enough to eat. However, they were as well off as the other settlers if not better than quite a number. Foodstuffs were very expensive, flour at one time cost twenty-five dollars a hundred. Mrs. Gubler was young and strong, however, and often went to the neighboring settlements where he could get jobs doing carpenter work. In this way he was able to get

along fairly well, and soon had him a comfortable home and a small farm.

His life's work, as one can plainly see, has been pioneering mostly, and trying to live up to the requirements of the gospel. It has satisfied the ideal of his childhood fairly well.

Some of the things that have most influenced his life, he says, were his father's early teachings, one of which was "to always choose good company." "This always had a great influence on me, and I always try to seek good company. This is one reason why I joined the Mormons, for I knew if I did, I would be in good company." "My religion, too, was the greatest factor in influencing my life, for I knew if I would but live up to its requirements, I would be on the right track."

In 1888, he was called to go on a mission to Switzerland, but he only stayed one year, having to be released on account of ill health. After being home a while, he was appointed Counselor to the President of the Quorum of Elders, which position he held until he was put in President. This position he held for twelve years. For thirty years he labored faithfully as a Ward Teacher. He was also a school trustee for many years.

His occupations have been mostly farming and carpentry work. At present, he is too aged to do very much work, but he is still quite hale and hearty, cheerful, and full of humor. Although he is now eighty-one years old, he generally walks out to his little farm, only a short distance from town, once a day. He does not appear to be so old as he really is, and he has good prospects of living several more years.

He has raised two large families which are a credit to their community. He has always been a prominent citizen in his church and community, and still attends the Sabbath Meetings. He loves especially to go visit and chat with his children, friends, and relatives, now that he is too old to work.

He has always been a thrifty industrious person, who has a strong sense of justice, and tried to treat everyone else justly. He has done very much in helping to build up the Dixie Country.

Anna Katherina Gubler Ackerman Gubler

Anna Katherina Gubler was born in Mullheim, Thurgau, Switzerland on 25 November 1825. She was the second of six children born to Joseph and Katherina Jack Gubler.



Anna Katherina Gubler

Anna Katherina married Jacob Ackerman in April, 1853 in Mullheim, Thurgau, Switzerland. They had one daughter together, Katherina Magdalena Ackerman in 1853. We don't have documentation at this time of Jacob's death, but we assume he died before Katherina joined the church and immigrated to the United States.

Katherina was baptized by the Mormon Elders on 12 June 1859 (according to Swiss Mission records), and that same fall she, with her six year old daughter Magdalena, her brother Heinrich and sister Magdalena, left for America. They left Liverpool, England on Saturday, 20 August 1859 on the ship "Emerald Isle" in a company of 54 Saints, 50 of whom were from the Swiss-Italian Mission, and four from England. Captain Cornish brought them safely to New York after six weeks on the water. Johannes Gubler with his wife and four children, Anna Marie, Louise, Johannes (John) and Herman were also on this ship.

In Florence, Nebraska they prepared for their western trek. Katherina, her daughter and sister came in their brother Heinrich's wagon, with a total of nine persons, four oxen, three cows and one heifer. Captain Jesse Murphy was in charge of their wagon train of 279 persons, 38 wagons, 164 oxen, and 39 cows. They left Florence on 19 June 1860

and, after a successful journey, arrived at the public square in Salt Lake City about noon of Thursday, 30 August 1860. There had been no deaths in the company but two children were born en route.

Kathrina married Casper Gubler in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City on 9 November 1861. Casper had sent money to Switzerland to help bring the Saints to Utah, and she was one of the recipients. Though they had the same surname, they didn't know they were related, but through our genealogical research, we have found that they both were descendants of Hans Adam Gubler (about 1610). Katherina came down through his first wife, Klara Schmidt, and Casper through his second wife, Margaretha Wurt.

Casper had previously married a French girl from whom he was separated after about two weeks of marriage. He and Katherina had four children: Selina, Mary, Casper A., who died at age 13 months, and Jacob J. Gubler.

When Katherina's daughter, Magdalena was 15 years of age, she became the plural wife of Casper, her mother's husband. Two years later she died when her first child Henry was born. Katherina took him to her breast, weaning five month old Jacob, and reared him as her own son.

Katherina worked hard, helping her husband in the field and with the fruit. She was a very devout Latter-day Saint. Her son, Jacob said that he often found her in the vineyard on her knees, praying vocally to our Heavenly Father.

Anna Katherina was left with her boys in later years; Casper had married Polena Rosby who also had died with the birth of her first child, the child dying also. Then on 16 September 1886 he married Agnes Florence Horsley, and they were the parents of six children.

Her daughter Selina had married, 11 December 1879, Herman Gubler, and Mary had married, 31 May 1883, Christian Stucki, and they now had families of their own. Jacob took care of the garden, farm and

peddling while Henry served a mission to Switzerland. He married on 29 January 1896 Agnes Mary Horsley, and they lived with his mother until she passed away, the following year, 26 May 1897. Henry had only been married a few weeks at this time.

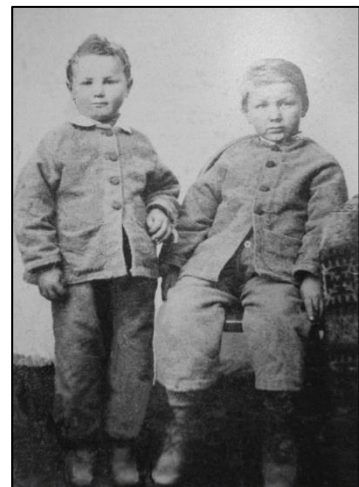
Anna Katherina told my mother, Agnes, that she spoke to her boys in Swiss but they answered her in English. So they seemed to be able to communicate by using both languages. The boys had spoken only Swiss until they entered the first grade of school.

My mother taught us all how to make excellent noodles – a favorite dish of the whole family. She said that it was our grandmother, Katherina Gubler, who had shown her how to make them. The Swiss people are noted for their noodles, bread, etc., and I think of Grandma when I am cutting my noodles very fine and thread-like.

Katherina Magdalena Ackerman

Magdalena Gubler was born in Mullheim, Thurgau, Switzerland to Katherina Gubler and Jacob Ackerman. The only account we read says she came to Utah with her mother, Katherina Gubler and her mother's sister Magdalena and her husband Heinrich when she was only six years old. Her mother married Casper Gubler in Salt Lake City when they reached Utah. Casper had sent money to Switzerland to help saints come over and they had been recipients. They came to Santa Clara in 1861.

When Magdalena was fifteen years old she married Casper Gubler, her mother's husband, as a plural wife. Two years later she died when her first child, Henry was born. Her mother raised him as her own.



Jacob John Gubler and Henry Gubler

As referenced above, Casper had an additional wife, Agnes Florence Horsley, whom he married in 1882. Her life history is not included here as she was not an original settler.