

Hans Georg Hafen

Barbara Hafen (Wili Tobler)

Johann George Hafen, Sr



Hans Georg Hafen

Hans Georg Hafen was born on 19 April 1803 to Johannes Hafen and Anna Elisabeth Mast. Hans' father, Johannes, (1763-1842), was born on 3 November 1763 and was 39 when Hans was born. His mother, Anna, (1773-1849), was born on 6 March 1773 and was 30 at the time of his birth. Hans was the fifth of ten children born to his parents. He was also the only son born to his parents. His older siblings included: Veronika (1796- Deceased); Anna Elisabeth (1797-1865); Anna Ursula (1799-Deceased); Susanna (1802-1802). Hans' younger siblings included: Anna (1807-1855); Barbara Doratheia (1808-1884); Anna Kathrina (1813-Deceased); Anna Barbara (1813- 1848); and Ester (1815-Deceased).

This farming village in the extreme northeast of Switzerland, consisted of some 50 families. Hans George helped his father on the farm. Their farm consisted of 12-15 acres. There they raised grain, hay, fruits, and potatoes. From their vineyard they would make wine and the surplus would be sold. Farming conditions were primitive. Hay was cut with a scythe and raked by hand. Oxen were the principal farm animals used. As Hafen grew to manhood he was attracted to his distant cousin, Maria Magdalena Hafen. Following a courtship, they were married on 3 March 1835. Two children were born to this union: Barbara, 8 December 1835, and John George on 17 October 1838.

As the Swiss had a compulsory education system, he was able to receive the standard education of that day and attended school until age sixteen. He was also a great help to his father on the farm. John G. was only 14, when his mother became ill and died in May of 1853.

This was a devastating blow to Hans George and his children but they carried on. Fortunately, Barbara was old enough (17) that she could take over the responsibilities of feeding the family and of doing the necessary household chores.

When missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came to Scherzingen, John George's sister, Barbara, was the first in the family to listen to the missionary's message. Later, Mission President Jabez Woodard's message of hope and salvation was the first message that her brother and father heard. At first her father and brother were very opposed to her listening to the missionary's message but with gentle persuasion and the missionary's help she was able to show them from the scriptures that the things the missionaries were teaching were from God. Barbara was the first in the family to accept their message and was baptized in the Bodensee by Johannes Diethelm on 5 April 1860. She was confirmed by him the same day. Her father and brother, after serious soul searching, followed her in baptism 12 days later in the Bodensee on 17 April. They were also confirmed by Diethelm the same day. Shortly thereafter, the younger Hafen was ordained a priest by Christian Moosman and then accompanied him on a missionary journey to canton Zurich.

It was there that he first became acquainted with a young lass from Turbenthal, Zurich, Susetta Bosshard. In accepting the Gospel, the Hafen's also embraced another corollary of the Gospel which some have labeled the fifth principle of the Gospel; the gathering. As a journey to Zion was planned for the following spring, Hans George was able to sell his home and leave friends and relatives behind. He would never see his beloved Switzerland again. The next spring in April, Father Hafen and his son and daughter joined a group of Swiss Saints on their way to a foreign country they had only read about and of which they knew very little. Their mission president, Jabez Woodard had just been released after serving four years as president of the Swiss-Italian Mission and led this group of Swiss Saints. Leaving Switzerland when the cherry trees

were in bloom they traveled by train and riverboat to Holland where they crossed the English Channel in a steamboat which took them to Hull, England. From there they traveled by rail to Liverpool which was a smoky, dirty city when compared to their beautiful Switzerland. There they boarded the Monarch of the Sea which at that time was the largest sailing vessel to carry Saints to America. It also carried the greatest number of Saints on one vessel (960). Under the command of the kind and courteous William R. Gardner the ship left Liverpool on 18 May 1861 and arrived in New York City on 16 June. Jabez Woodard was appointed president of the company which was divided into eleven wards. Ignaz Willi, a young Swiss from St. Imier, was chosen to be the leader of the eleventh ward comprised of Swiss Saints. This was a vote of confidence for this young man.

Shortly after arriving in Salt Lake City, the Hafens, along with others from Switzerland, were called to go to settle along the Santa Clara in Southern Utah.

More comfortably outfitted than many of the Swiss they were able to furnish their own teams and oxen for the journey while others of the poorer Swiss were helped on their ways by bishops who would take these emigrant travelers from one town to the next. After a difficult four week journey the Swiss arrived in St. George, skirted the black hill to the south and followed the Santa Clara River to Fort Clara where they were greeted by the 20 English families. The Swiss gathered about the fort and adobe meeting house where they found temporary shelter in wagon boxes, tents, and dugouts dug into the hill. Their furniture consisted of homemade chairs and a bed and tables. They later settled about a half mile southeast of the fort. There the land was surveyed by Israel Ivins of St. George and the land dedicated by Daniel Bonelli on 22 December. Lots for three pieces of property, a town lot, one-acre a little further out and a three-acre lot further to the east were drawn from a hat in a drawing presided over by Bonelli, and each of the Swiss Saints received their property.

John George's lot was across the street south of the present school house. The adjoining lot east was given to his father and the next one east to his sister and her husband [this Willi home was occupied by Ignaz and Barbara until Willi's death. On his lot John George built a small log house in which he and his wife lived for a while. Hans George first built a lumber shanty on his lot, later an adobe house which subsequently became the home of his grandson, John Hafen.

The industrious Swiss, including the Hafen's, with their extended family, immediately went to work and began to construct dams and irrigation ditches. They also cleared the land of rabbit brush, sagebrush, creosote, and sunflowers, in preparation for planting. Many of the settlers had no horses or oxen and had to do all of their farm work by hand using borrowed tools. Some found that their land was impregnated with alkali which was a great deterrent in raising crops. Food was scarce and their mettle was tested when they were forced to eat pigweed greens, the bulb of the sego lily and any other edible greens which they could find. On Christmas day the rains began to fall – gently at first and then in torrents. After 25 days the little Santa Clara Creek which at low levels could be easily stepped over had now turned into a massive, roaring, river which began sweeping everything in its path.

The extended Hafen family and the Saints watched with horror from their vantage points on the low hills as Walter E. Dodge's nursery, the schoolhouse meeting house, seven homes, and the grist mill and the fort were all swept away after first being undermined. Due to the heroic efforts of Jacob Hamblin and many others, no fatalities occurred. The flood was much more devastating to the original Fort Clara settlers than to the Swiss as their settlement was in the flood plain whereas in moving the Swiss northeast from the original site they were on higher ground. Discouraged but undaunted, the settlers had no choice but to duplicate their labors of the past two months. They again constructed dams, irrigation ditches, and cleared the land of flood debris. Some even retrieved fruit trees which had been uprooted and carried

some distance away and replanted them with varying degrees of success. With back breaking labor and primitive tools they planted gardens, grains, cotton, fruit trees and vineyards.

The Hafen's were among the Swiss who had vineyards in the old country and their knowledge of grape culture was a great advantage as they became vintners in Southern Utah. However, cotton culture was a new venture and challenged Hafen as he learned to deal with this fiber producing plant. Hans passed away sometime in 1864, only three years after he settled in Santa Clara with his son, John G. and his daughter, Barbara, and their spouses. He was approximately 61 years old at the time of his passing. Hans was faithful to his baptismal covenants.

Barbara Hafen

Barbara Hafen was born on December 8, 1835 in Scherzingen, Canton Thurgau, Switzerland to John (Hans) George Hafen Sr and Mary Magdalena Hafen. One other child was born to this couple, a son, John George Hafen, Jr. Barbara's mother passed away in 1854, and Barbara assumed the duties of keeping the house for her father and brother.



Barbara Hafen Willi Tobler

When missionaries of the Latter-Day Saints visited Scherzingen, Barbara became interested in the new church. She listened with interest, and was converted. Her father and brother were at first opposed to her baptism, but through her enthusiasm and influence, her father and brother were converted and were baptized.

Following counsel from the Church, they sold their belongings and prepared to immigrate to the United States. Saints from various parts of Europe assembled at Liverpool, England, where they sailed for New York City, and then on to

Florence, Nebraska. The Hafen family purchased four wagons and some livestock. They traveled to Utah in the Sextus E. Johnson Company.

In October 1861 Brigham Young announced the calling of a group of Swiss saints to go to Southern Utah to settle the area, plant cotton, grapes and other crops. They were to leave in early November, and travel under the direction of Daniel Bonelli. Single persons were encouraged to marry before they left.

Barbara married Ignatz Willi on October 18, 1861. He died in 1863, and Barbara then married Jacob Tobler. They became the parents of two sons, William Ignatz Tobler and John Albert Tobler, who lived to maturity and two daughters, Magdalena and Barbara Emma, who both died as small children.

Barbara died in 1873, leaving her two small sons to be raised by her husband and his second wife.

Johann (John) George Hafen Sr.

(also known as Hans George Hafen-Hans is a shortened version of Johann)

See separate page for this person.