

Johannes Enz

(John Ence)

John Ence

Some incidents in the life of my grandfather, John Enz and family, and of his Father's family written by his oldest grandchild, Cecilia Hulda Enz Tobler on November 28, 1947.

Father John Enz was born the 22nd of August, 1835, in the town of Mettlen, Thurgau, Switzerland, of goodly parents. Their names were Hans Jakob Enz, born 12 July 1804; and Elisabeth Wegman, born 6 September 1806. His brothers and sisters were: Jacob, born the 23 June 1829; Johan Georg, born the 10 of November 1830; Katherina, born 9 of September 1832. She married John Keller; Anna Elisabeth, born 22 October 1833; Johannes, born August 1835 who is the hero of this story; Gottlieb, born 26 August 1840; a baby born 1841 and died 1842; Mary, who married Mr. Stutz and located in Millcreek; and Emilie, who married John Myers and located at Ovid, Idaho.



John Ence

This family did not possess great material wealth but owned a substantial farm. The father was a carpenter and the mother a dressmaker and they were both very industrious and thrifty. With this set-up they were able to provide for their large family. Grandfather told us that his father and mother lived very congenially together. They were of a religious temperament, believing in God. They appealed to him for help through the means of prayer.

One day, as his father was building a house in a neighboring town, he had the misfortune to fall from the roof to the basement; breaking his back. He was unable to speak another word. He died three days later,

leaving his wife with six young children, ranging from twelve to five years; and an unborn child. This child after birth lived only one year.

As soon as the two oldest boys became old enough they left home and shook off all responsibility to help their mother. That was not all; they would rather take from her than help her. This mother worked hard at her trade, exchanging work with men who would come and get her land in shape for planting. She would work as much as fifteen hours a day for others in exchange, then still three to four hours longer to earn means to clothe and school her children, and there were other expenses.

Her children testify that she was a good woman who had great faith in God and taught her children to pray. She was prayerful, and said she received strength to carry her load, through the help she received from her Heavenly Father. She taught her children to be honest, upright, and to have respect for every good man and woman, to fear God, and do His will. She kept her children clean. Through her efforts they always had plenty to eat.

Grandfather tells that in the year 1847 there was great shortage of food, almost to the extent of a famine. Through the thrift and foresight of his mother they had enough to eat.

She was very kind to her children and confided in them. They were her closest companions. She cried many times because of the way her two oldest sons treated her; also a brother-in-law who lived next door. He refused help of any kind, even counsel, but would rather work against her and take all he could from her.

At one time Grandfather was hired to milk goats owned by one of his oldest brothers. He would carry a small bottle in his pocket and fill it with milk to take home to his mother for her coffee, thinking he would not care for so little. When his brother discovered this he sold his goats and Grandfather was out of a job.

At this time I wish to state that when this brother became old, his children turned him and his wife to the poor house, and they made use of their property.

Great Grandmother considered God her best friend and she trusted in Him continuously. Through her faith in Him, friends were raised up to give her assistance. As time went on she became acquainted with a man who persuaded her to marry him, but it proved to be unsuccessful, so a separation resulted. Sometime after, a man by the name of Georg Vollenweider offered to teach the children how to weave, if he might live in the home with them. Grandmother accepted the offer. After living with them for a few years he proposed to her. She accepted the offer and they were married. There was one child born to them, who name was Emilie. Soon after the marriage Mr. Vollenweider resumed his drink habit and in his drunken state would be abusive to the children. This resulted in the children leaving home and it caused the mother much sorrow.

It was about this time in the year 1860 that a man by the name of John Keller came along selling brushes from Weinfeldon. He came to great grandmother's home and told her of a new religion he had embraced called "Mormonism". After he had explained it to her, she was favorably impressed. He then invited her and her family to attend their meetings. The mother and her husband and daughters soon were baptized. Mr. Vollenweider could not leave his drink alone, so it wasn't long until he was disfellowshipped from the church. This now caused a separation.

The boys, who were John and Gottlieb, came home occasionally to visit their mother and sisters. It was on one of these visits soon after her conversion, that she told them of the Gospel she had embraced and desired that they attend meeting the next Sunday. When Saturday came they made ready to do as their mother desired. They must walk several hours before they would reach their home from where they

worked. This was the third of March 1860. Spring had not yet come and the ground was still covered with snow, but they loved their mother and did everything they could to make her happy.

When the meeting time came this mother and her children were there in attendance. The boys listened very attentively. They were also favorably impressed by the speakers who were Elders John Keller, from Weinfeldon and Jabez Woodard from Utah. These men bore strong testimonies to the truthfulness of the Gospel, and that Joseph Smith was a true prophet.

After the services they asked the boys what they thought of the teachings of the restored Gospel. They answered that their hearts were touched and they knew they had spoken the truth. They were both ready to accept baptism. They were then baptized and confirmed members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the 3rd of March 1860 in Mettlen Thurgau, Switzerland.

The mother was very happy now that most of the family belonged to the true church. A short time after this conversion, Gottlieb received an opportunity to immigrate to Utah. He finally located in Richfield. He married two sisters, Elisabeth and Caroline James. They had come from England. Uncle Gottlieb and his wives had a family of twelve children; two girls and ten boys. He passed through many trying experiences during the first two years in Utah. He was defrauded by many, even if they professed to be Latter-day Saints. Through it all he became more humble and relied upon God, who blessed him abundantly. He also saw where the Lord punished those who had mistreated him. Some apostatized from the Church.

He made two trips back to Omaha, Nebraska, to bring Saints to Salt Lake City. He had some very interesting experiences on these trips.

During the summer of 1861 Grandfather John Enz and his sister, Katherina came to Salt Lake City. They went to Ogden, but were called

with the other Swiss people to go and establish and build up Dixie, in southern Utah. They, with the other Swiss, were dumped off into the greasewood and sagebrush which covered the now Santa Clara town and fields.

He helped make the first canals and roads, and built the first homes and public buildings. During these early years in Dixie the Indians were very troublesome. He took his turn standing guard, protecting the settlers from the Indians.

Katherina, his sister was married to John Keller as second wife. They had a son born to them who was named Alma. He is the grandfather of Donald Beacham and Tom Watson. She had one more child, but at its birth she died and the baby also.

Grandfather John Enz was called with several others to go back to Omaha, Nebraska, to bring Saints to the west. It was on this trip that he met a girl by the name of Amollie Nazer (Amalie Anazer), whom he married in the Endowment House at Salt Lake City. They settled in Santa Clara. One child, a girl, was born to them, but they weren't to stay long. They both died leaving him alone.

On his next trip back to Omaha, Nebraska he met a convert named Barbara Knecht, whom he fell in love with. He also married her in the Endowment House at Salt Lake City. They too lived in Santa Clara. A girl was born to them in due time. They were very happy, but during the second summer, the child died from summer complaint. Then in the summer of 1868 a pair of twin girls were born to them, but the mother had to lose her life through the birth, and soon the babies followed their mother in death. Grandfather told us that his neighbors were kind to him and tried to help care for the babies, but it seemed nothing helped. By this time he had almost more sorrow than he could bear, but through the hope the Gospel gave him, and the kindness of neighbors and friends, he got along.

It was at this point that my Grandmother Lena Knecht, was on her way to Utah; thinking she would soon be able to visit her sister, Barbara, who was Grandfather's wife. When they were only one day's drive beyond Salt Lake City, a man who they called Big Hafen, informed her that her sister and all her children had died. This was a great trial to her as she had anticipated seeing them soon.

She was met at the large tent (where emigrants were taken) by Grandfather. She had never known him before. She was very happy to meet someone who was interested in her, but they both sorrowed over the death of their loved ones. They remained at the home of his brother, Gottlieb, and family, for one week. It was at this time that Grandfather asked her to marry him. It was rather a surprise to her. She felt that she would rather get adjusted to the conditions here in Utah first. She also felt she wasn't hardly qualified along the lines of housekeeping, because she had worked in factories most of her life. Through the persuasion of his brother and the two wives, she was convinced. They were married on Saturday August 24, 1868, in the Endowment House. They remained in Salt Lake City until Monday, when they started for Santa Clara.

By this time Grandfather's property was two lots with log houses on them, and also some land. His wife Barbara, used to write home and tell her folks how rich she was. She would say she had a home in the country which was the home on the lot where Aunt Mary Blickenstorfer lived; and a home in the city – the lot where Kenneth Ence and his mother live. This place had previously been owned by Bishop Edward Bunker, the father of Martin Bunker, which had been bought by Grandfather. Grandfather owned about twenty acres of good land with sufficient water rights. He worked to obtain this land. He bought land from people by the names of Leighs, McClellans, Dodges, Leavitts, Kellers and Bunkers. The land was named after their first owners.

Grandmother often told us children how dearly he paid for this land, by working for others in the day time to obtain means to pay for his land, and doing his own work at night. No doubt he followed in the footsteps of his hard-working mother.

Grandfather Enz was a hard worker. He did much freighting from Milford, and hauled rock salt from the Muddy salt mines. He traveled a lot with his brother-in-law, Gottlieb Blickenstorfer, who had very poor health. Many times on these trips from the Muddy, with loaded wagons, they would get stuck in the quicksand of the Virgin. This would necessitate having them carry the loads out. Grandfather did this many times for them both.

Grandmother's health was very poor and she had her children at regular intervals of around two years. She needed help, and Grandfather would have remained home more if it had not been for the pleading of Blickenstorfer's wives. They would say they would gladly take care of his wife and children, if he would only go with their husband. Aunt Mary, one of his wives, was Grandmother's sister.

Grandfather used to peddle at State Line, Pioche, Silver Reef, Cedar City, Parowan, Red Creek and sometimes Pine Valley. He made many friends in these places. As Grandfather advanced in years his eye sight became dimmed, so it was necessary to take someone with him. Otilia and Hulda accompanied him on these trips. They would always bring crackers and candy home to me. I was anxiously waiting the time when I would be old enough to take their places and go with him. I never received this great anticipated joy, because he died before I had this privilege.

Amalie Anatzter Ence

She actually didn't come with the Swiss Company. She came later when her husband John Enz was called to go back to Omaha, Nebraska to help the Saints to Salt Lake City. He met and married her in the

Endowment House. She then came on to Santa Clara with him. She had one daughter. Both mother and child died at this childbirth and were buried in Santa Clara.