

## JOHN (JOHANNES) AND CATHERINE (KATHERINA) RUEGSEGER STUCKI FAMILY

John Stucki, son of Johann and Elizabeth Schenk Stucki, was born on 16 October, 1831 in Bowyl, Bern, Switzerland. He was their second son. His older brother Samuel who was nearly eight years older was very happy to have another boy in this family. Their father Johannes moved about from Rothenbach to Signau to Bowyl and then back to Rothenbach as he searched for work in these communities.



John Stucki and Katherina Ruegsegger Stucki

The children born to Johann and Elizabeth Schenk Stucki were :

- Elizabeth, born 22 November 1820 who died at age six months;
- Samuel, born 18 January 1824;
- Anna Barbara, born 1 February 1829, who married John Reber in 1850;
- Johannes, born 16 October, 1831
- Magdalena, born 20 October 1833, who married Samuel Gerber in Switzerland on 27 March 1857.

All of these children immigrated to America except Magdalena who remained behind in Switzerland.

John's mother, Elizabeth, died in 1854 and his father Johannes died in Rothenbach 19 years later.

When John was 21, he married Katherina Ruegsegger on 16 July 1852. While in Switzerland two children were born to this couple: Rosetta, on 6 June 1856, and Godfrey, on 2 December 1858. It was about this time or a little earlier that the Stucki's heard that Mormon missionaries were in the area. John's mother, Elizabeth Schenk Stucki, whom the family loved and respected, had foretold that men would come from the west having the true gospel to preach.

Wondering if these men might be the ones whom their grandmother had seen in vision they welcomed the missionaries. Among those preaching to the family was Jabez Woodard, Swiss-

Italian mission president and local traveling missionary Ulrich Loosli. Seeking for the truth it did not take them long before they accepted baptism. In 1859, on a cold February night (22nd), the Stucki's went to the Emma River where they chopped a hole in the ice and John Stucki was baptized, then his sister, Elizabeth, wife of John Reber, and lastly John Reber was helped into the frigid water and baptized. All of the baptisms were performed by Loosli. He then confirmed those baptized but in addition gave John Reber a blessing in which he was told he would be restored to full health. This blessing proved to be prophetic for after the baptism, Reber who was crippled and bent over with rheumatoid arthritis, thrust aside the sticks he used for walking, and began walking straight and tall and continued to do so the rest of his life.

Of interest is the fact that Samuel Stucki was baptized 12 days later and another brother of Reber's, Peter, 13 days after that. Their baptism changed the way in which their neighbors treated them. Before their baptism their neighbors were friendly and kindly disposed towards them. Afterwards they were shunned and neighbors ceased to do business with them and their children were taunted and teased.

About a year after their baptism and with a desire in their hearts to gather to Zion, the Stucki families (Samuel and John) joined with a party of 85 Mormons under the leadership of John Keller who was bound for America. They traveled to Basel where Keller was the emigration agent for J. Barbe and Company. There they went via the Rhine River to Mannheim, then to Rotterdam where they boarded a steamship which took them to Hull, England and from there, by rail, proceeded to Liverpool, England. In Liverpool they boarded the William Tapscott under the command of the solicitous and gentlemanly Captain Bell. There were 730 Saints on board with 85 of them being from Switzerland. Keller was appointed to preside over the Swiss Saints. After a voyage of 36 days (11 May – 16 June) they were quarantined off Staten Island as small pox had broken out on board. Unfortunately three Swiss infants died of smallpox; Christian Stauffer, son of Christian on 17 June, Heinrich Reiser, son of Heinrich Reiser, on 18 June, and John Keller, son of John Keller on 19 June. All three were buried on Staten Island. The next day the Stucki's disembarked at Castle Garden and the following day began their journey west. Boarding the Isaac Newton, a river steamboat, they journeyed to Albany then by train to Rochester and to Niagara Falls. Crossing the Niagara River on the Grand Suspension Bridge they continued by rail along the north shore of Lake Erie to Windsor, Canada, where they crossed the Detroit River and continued south to Chicago and then to Quincy. They then crossed the Mississippi River to Hannibal, Missouri, and traveled by rail to St Joseph where they boarded another steamboat which took them up the Missouri River to Florence, Nebraska.

Arriving in Florence between 30 June and 1 July, they were greeted by George Q. Cannon, the Church emigration agent. There the Stucki's found shelter in vacant houses and began to make preparations to cross the plains. After waiting nearly three weeks, John, who was better off financially than his brother, Samuel, was able to join the William Budge Wagon Train which left

Florence on 20 July 1860. After a 77 day journey the John Stucki family and other emigrants would arrive at the mouth of Emigration Canyon on 5 October where they were greeted by a Brass Band. Although neither the John nor Samuel Stucki families were well-off, they were not helped on their overland journey by the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. We know nothing of their stay in Great Salt Lake City. The following year, at the October General Conference of the Church, the John Stucki family was among twenty nine Swiss families called to settle Santa Clara in the Southern Utah Mission.

Not having teams and wagons, they were helped along their way by bishops who would provide them with teams to their next destination. Arriving at Fort Clara on 28 November, they found shelter first in the nearby school/meeting house. Later, after moving to the "lower flat" John made a shelter of posts and willows which he plastered inside and out with mud and covered with a dirt roof.

After obtaining shelter, the Swiss went to work in earnest, building dams, digging irrigation ditches, clearing land and later planting gardens, grains, fruit trees, and vineyards. Adjustments were many in this southern Utah outpost. John's sister-in-law, Magdalena Stettler Stucki, remembering the green hills and clear mountain streams of Switzerland, no doubt spoke for many Swiss settlers when she was heard to say, "Oh these red hills! This roily water!"

In the latter part of December the rain began to fall and continued unabatedly. John invited his Brother Samuel's family to share his shelter. The two brothers and their families, although very crowded, at least would stay dry. There was no let-up in the rain. The nearby Beaver Dam and Pine Valley Mountains were now covered with snow. When a warm Chinook wind started to blow a few days before 19 January the run-off from the mountains melting snow, combined with the incessant rain, turned the Santa Clara Creek into a raging torrent. The supposedly impregnable Fort at first split the waters around it but as its walls began to erode the fort was soon washed away. The nearby grist mill, school/meeting house, seven houses and Walter Dodge's nursery all met a similar fate as they were carried away by the raging waters.

Miraculously no lives were lost but heroic efforts by Jacob Hamblin and others were necessary to preserve the lives of some of the settlers. The Swiss were very fortunate as most of their lots and some of their farms were on the "lower flat" which was on higher ground and not damaged by the floods. Finally the rains stopped and the rebuilding process was begun.

By mid-March the dams and irrigation ditches had all been restored. With irrigation water flowing, gardens and crops were planted as well as grains and orchards and vineyards. John and Katherina welcomed a son, Edward, into their home on 13 March 1862. Three years later, daughter Catherina was born on 20 September 1865. Finally their last child, John Arnold, was born on 29 March 1870. Four years after their last child was born, President Brigham Young, on 11 January 1874 spoke at the St. George Tabernacle for an hour. He then "expressed his desire

to see the people begin to prepare to enter into the Gospel of the Son of God after the order of Enoch.”

With these words, the United Order was once again introduced among the Saints. Several Swiss families of Santa Clara were inducted into this Order and assigned to work in Price (present day Bloomington). Christian Stucki, John’s nephew, relates the following: “My father, Samuel, with his second wife, Barbara Nuessli, went to Price, south of present day St. George, Utah. I stayed with my mother at Santa Clara and worked under the United Order. We got along pretty well. Many people took advantage and many were selfish. So the United Order soon broke up. During the United Order, the bishop would preside and other men were appointed as foremen. My uncle [John Stucki] was one of the foremen. The men would go out in crowds under the foreman to do the work. The hay and grain was then stacked in big piles and given out to the people. The United Order built homes for the families. When the United Order broke up my father came back to Santa Clara and rented a house.” Apparently John Stucki was a hard worker and Bishop Edward Bunker had confidence in his ability to lead other men. John and Katherina would live together in Santa Clara and both were alive to usher in the Twentieth Century. Death would separate them by only two and one-half years. Katherina died first on 11 February 1904, only three months shy of her 77th birthday and John would follow on 21 August 1907, only two months from his 76th birthday.

What happened to original settlers John and Katherina’s children Rosetta, (6 June 1856), and Godfrey (2 December 1858) who were both born in Switzerland? These children grew to maturity in Santa Clara. Rosetta married William Atkins on 2 October 1879. To this couple was born a daughter, Nellie Rosetta on 12 October 1880. They were later divorced. Rosetta married Jefferson Hunt on 21 December 1900. Rosetta was 44 at the time of this marriage and her child bearing days were over. Jefferson and Rosetta would live together for 20 years before her passing on 27 June 1920. She is buried in the Santa Clara cemetery.



Rosetta Stucki

Son Gottfried apparently was single all of his life. He died in Santa Clara at age 64 on 11 September 1922 and is buried in the Santa Clara cemetery.



Gottfried Stucki

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