

Solomon and Anna Barbara Meier Blickenstorfer Gottlieb Blickenstorfer

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Solomon Blickenstorfer was born at Affoltern, Zurich, Switzerland, on 20 August 1821, the son of Heinrich and Anna Barbara Schneepli Blickenstorfer. Information is lacking on Solomon's childhood and his growing up years. However, at age 24 on 18 May 1846, Solomon, having courted Anna Barbara Meier, married her in Affoltern, Zurich, Switzerland. Anna Barbara was from the neighboring village of Obfelden, Zurich, and was born on 31 December 1827, the only daughter of Jacob Meier and Elizabetha Weiss Meier.



Anna Barbara Meier

Their marriage was blessed by their only son, Gottlieb, who was born on 31 July 1846. Again we have no information on their activities from Gottlieb's birth until missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, working under President Daniel Tyler, contacted the Blickenstorfer's in the Zurich area in 1855. After hearing their message and subjecting it to earnest prayer, Anna Barbara was convinced that it was true. She was the first to be baptized. Daniel Bonelli, a local Swiss elder who was later in charge of the Swiss Saints on their journey to Santa Clara, baptized her in the River Sihl on 4 April 1855. Two years later, Solomon was baptized on 30 September 1857 in the Tonabach River. Gottlieb, 11, was baptized the following month on 23 October in the same stream.

The doctrine of the gathering resounded in the Blickenstorfer's hearts, and finally in 1860 after making the necessary preparations, they

journeyed from Switzerland to Le Havre, France. There they boarded the William Tell, a sailing vessel, which arrived in Castle Garden, New York on 13 August 1860 . They are listed on the ships roster as Sal Blickenstreiffer (sic), 39, Barbara, 29, and Gottlieb, 14. Also on this vessel was another original Swiss settler family of Santa Clara, the Heinrich Muller's. Arriving too late in the season to journey west, they settled in Williamsburg where they found temporary employment. After they arrived in New York we are again unable to track them in their journey to Utah.

The Blickenstorfer's have not been identified in any of the Wagon Trains that came to the Valley. We are certain that they did cross the plains in 1861 for on 24 September of that year Sal (sic) Blickensdoerfer (sic) was debited \$152.40 by the Perpetual Emigrating Fund indicating that they had insufficient funds to make the journey without help. Among others who were debited on 24 September 1861 was Jacob Tobler who was in the Sixtus E. Johnson Company. Johnson's Company was the last to cross the plains in 1861. Since they were both debited on the same date (Records of Members Collection, Reel 6817. Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives), it is assumed that they were in the same company e.g. the Sixtus E. Johnson Company. On the journey west, young Gottlieb, 15, was largely responsible for his parents as his father, Solomon, was crippled with rheumatism. He drove the wagon and provided for much of their food and wants by carving dainty jewel cases and sewing boxes and then selling them to anyone who wished to buy them.

The family had not been in the valley long when at the October conference of the Church, they were called as one of 29 families to go to the Southern Utah Mission and help settle Fort Clara. Arriving there on 28 November, they participated in drawings for land presided over

by Daniel Bonelli. Obtaining their land they helped build a dam, constructed irrigation ditches, and planted seeds for a vegetable garden and later prepared land for planting of corn and grain and brush in preparation to again begin planting. Solomon, not in the best of health and weakened by the arduous journey across the plains, could not long survive such an existence.

Four months after their arrival he passed away on 9 April 1862. He was only 40 years old and was reputedly the first adult Swiss Saint to be buried in the new settlement.

His passing left his wife, Anna Barbara, 34, a widow with a son, Gottlieb, not quite sixteen. She was placed in a very difficult situation since she only had this rapidly maturing son to provide for her. Gottlieb worked at carving and developed carpentering skills. He played the harmonica, the accordion, and other musical instruments as well. He also played the lead horn in the Staheli Brass Band. That fall, George Staheli who had lost his wife, Sophia Haberli Staheli in June of 1862 from typhoid fever and desperately needed help in raising his six children, persuaded Anna Barbara to marry him. They were married in December of 1862. Anna Barbara as the new step-mother to the Staheli children.

Anna Barbara died on February 9, 1880 in Washington, Utah.

Taken from "Oh, These Red Hills, This Roily Water" Life Sketches of the Original Swiss Settlers of Santa Clara, Utah Third Edition by Waldo C. Perkins, MD

Gottlieb Blickenstorfer [Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]



Gottlieb Blickenstorfer was born 31 Jul 1846, in Affolten, Zurich, Switzerland. He was the son of Solomon Blickenstorfer and Anna Barbara Meier.

Solomon and Anna Barbara joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Switzerland and emigrated to Utah in 1861 when Gottlieb was 15 years old. They crossed the plains with the Sextus E. Johnston Company, and shortly after reaching Salt Lake, the family was called to join the Swiss Company in moving south to Santa Clara, Gottlieb Blickenstorfer finally arriving at their destination on 28 November, 1861.

The trip across the plains was hard for the boy, for his father was in bed most of the way and his mother was badly crippled with rheumatism. So it was up to Gottlieb to care for his parents and provide for them. He did this by carving with his pocket knife dainty jewel cases and sewing boxes and selling them whenever there was an opportunity. He also was an artist on the harmonica and whenever they stopped he would be called upon to play. In the towns he was able to earn a little with his carving and his music.

Soon after they reached Santa Clara, Gottlieb's father, Solomon, died. He was the first man buried in the new settlement. Now Gottlieb had to provide for his mother. He built her a home and cared for her until she married George Staheli, a widower in December of 1862. George's wife had died from an illness after childbirth leaving him with six children which Anna helped raise. Anna died in 1880 in Washington, Utah at the age of 53.

While Gottlieb was Anna's only child, he helped her to raise and care for the little Staheli family. In the Staheli family there was much musical talent and as Gottlieb also had great musical ability they formed what became known as the Staheli Brass Band, often providing music for entertainment and enjoyment. The leader, George Staheli, was his step-father. In this band Gottlieb played the lead horn. He really was able to

play all the instruments of the band and as mentioned above, had earned his living coming across the plains by playing musical instruments, especially the 2 harmonica. This band became famous through all of Southern Utah, furnishing music for special events in all of Washington County, and in Cedar City and Parowan in Iron County.

Eventually Gottlieb fell in love with one of the girls in Santa Clara, Mena Heldebrand, but her family planned to move to California. Before they left Mena promised Gottlieb that if he would help her family move, she would marry him in California. He went with them driving his outfit loaded with their belongings. When they reached the coast city, the girl changed her mind, so Gottlieb had to return alone. His wagon broke down and he had to abandon it along with his dreams, riding one of his mules and leading the other.

The Indians were still very troublesome along the way and he had more than one narrow escape with his life because of them. His mother had grieved about Gottlieb leaving for California, and was very pleased with the results of his trip. She hadn't felt good about the arrangements and felt this was the answer to her fervent prayers.

Soon after he returned home, he found another sweetheart, whom he married after a short courtship. She was Eliza Knecht. Gottlieb was very happy in this marriage. He was a good worker and thrifty, and they soon had their own home, a wagon and outfit, and they were doing well. But sorrow soon came again to him. They were so happy with the prospect of their first child, but Eliza died at her baby's birth and the child died, within a few days, leaving him again lonely and in sorrow. He felt that calamity had hit him hard as he also lost his best horse and a milk cow. Finally his interest turned to Rosena Stucki, a charming daughter of Samuel and Magdalena Stettler Stucki. Although he was 27 years old and she just 17, they seemed a perfect match. They were married in the Salt Lake Endowment House, August 4, 1873, making the

round trip in three weeks in company with her sister Mary Ann, who was going to be married at the same time to John Reber. Gottlieb's mother went along on the trip, and did sewing for the girls as the wagon jolted along, making a wedding dress for Rosena on the way up.

Some time after arriving back in Santa Clara and getting settled, Gottlieb took another wife. This time he chose Mary Knecht, a sister to his first wife, Eliza. She and Rosena lived together in the same house in perfect harmony. Rosena bore three children, but Mary had none. Mary, however, mothered Rosena's children as her own. Gottlieb built himself two homes, one in Santa Clara and

Gottlieb built himself two homes, one in Santa Clara and one on the Virgin River about three miles below Beaver Dam in Arizona. He also owned two farms. On the Santa Clara farm he raised grain, alfalfa, had an orchard of peach, plum, apple and pear trees, and a fine grape vineyard of 3 varieties of grapes and a very nice garden. On the Virgin River farm he raised cane and cotton. From the cane he made molasses. These products he took to Dixie and exchanged for other produce. In the summer time Gottlieb left his wife Rosena, and son Henry on the farm in Santa Clara and took wife Mary and little daughter Rosena to the house and farm on the Virgin River. Here he also hired a man, John Heider, who did much of the farm work.

When the United Order was set up at Price, a few miles below St. George, Gottlieb was one of those who put all that he had into it. During this time food was very scarce, the water was often bad, and tea and coffee were served. He drank a great deal of this, trying to make it take the place of nourishing food that he needed. He soon became very nervous, and decided that the tea and coffee were doing him harm. He left it alone and would never allow it in the home, and both he and his wives taught their children strictly to abstain from its use.

When the Order broke up they soon began to accumulate things and became prosperous. Gottlieb was able to build a house from the foundation to the roof. He was a natural craftsman. He could put in the brick foundation, lay up the adobe walls, do the carpenter work, and even the plastering. Gottlieb and his brother-in-law and neighbor, John Ence, formed a partnership and began freighting for Daniel Bonelli from Milford, Utah, to a settlement on the other side of the Colorado River, where Daniel Bonelli had a store. The freight had to be ferried across the Colorado River at Bonelli's Ferry near where Boulder City now stands. When they carried their freight down, they always brought back a load of rock salt, which they obtained from a salt mine a little below where the town of St. Thomas used to be. This salt was sold in St. George to the Wooley, Lund, and Judd Stores.

On one of these trips he had a wonderful experience. It was while he was camping at what is now Littlefield, and he was awakened in the night to see a lady sitting on the front of his wagon. To his delight, he saw that it was his mother, who had passed away about a year earlier. She spoke to him and told him that she would soon come and take him with her. He answered, "Mother, I would rather remain here. I am happy here with my wives and children." She would not listen to him, but made it clear that it would not be long until she would come and get him. She admonished him to be true to the faith that he had embraced. He again told her that he would prefer to remain with his family. But God's ways are not our ways, and it was not long until he became ill and never recovered. He died on December 12, 1881, at the young age of 35.

But he was not young in experience. He had a lifetime of accomplishments. He with John Stucki built the first boat that crossed the Colorado River at Bonelli's Ferry. He was a musician with the accordion, the harmonica, and he played the lead horn in Staheli's band. Gottlieb was endowed with many abilities. He was a builder, an

expert carpenter, an excellent farmer, and a very good organizer. In fact, he seemed to be able to do whatever he tried. He was a very kind man, and while he lived the law of polygamy, treated his wives without any partiality. Along with his wife, Rosena, he married Marie Knecht, sister of his first wife, Eliza. His daughter Rosena says, "The testimony of both she and my mother was that he never showed the slightest difference between them. He loved them both dearly and showed equal love for both. If he did anything for one, he did for the other; if he bought one a gift, he had one exactly like it for the other. These two women lived together in the same house, one that he had built from the foundation up, and ate at the same table. The love that existed between the two women was beautiful. Marie was never blessed with children, but she was keenly interested in my mother's as if they had been her own. They both lived for many years after his death, and they always bore the same testimony."

He was the father of four children, Eliza's baby that died right after birth, Rosena born October 14, 1875, J. Henry born August 1877, and Barbara Selena. Barbara died as an infant and Henry in his young manhood, leaving his daughter, Rosena Blickenstorfer Gubler Blake of St. George, Utah as the only child to reach adulthood and live a long and productive life. Rosena Stucki Blickenstorfer became the fourth wife of John G. Hafen, who had also married her sister, Mary Ann, after he husband, John Reber was killed. Rosena died 2 Jun 1912 in Santa Clara, Utah, having had two children with John G. Hafen.

Rewritten 4/09 by Jeanine Vander Bruggen