

A life sketch of

Christina Maria Klingler Oswald

1877 – 1922

It was June 6, 1877 when Christina Maria Klingler was born. She was the first child of Friedrich Ludwig Klingler and Anna Maria Bauer. Anna Maria had a son, Ernst Friedrich, and a daughter, Babette Christine, from a previous marriage. Although these children lived with their Bauer grandparents, they were excited to have a new baby sister.



Friedrich met Anna Maria in Gottwolshausen, Germany. After they were married they moved to Sulz where they farmed his family's property. Here is where Christina Maria was born. This was a happy, but hard time for this family due to serious concerns that faced their country at this time. It was recorded that 'through dishonest means', Friedrich lost the farm. This situation forced the family to move.

Seventy miles to the west, where the Neckar River joins the Rhine River, was the city of Mannheim. Mannheim was a large city, which supported many factories, which were offering work to laborers. Several members of the family were living and working in this area. The Klingler's packed their belongings and left for the city. Friedrich obtained work in a machine shop and moved his family into an apartment building.

Christina was a busy little girl, helping with chores around the house and caring for younger brothers and sisters. During the next five years, four more children were born; Gottlieb Jacob (lived only a few weeks), Caroline, Godfrey Christopher and Charlotte (lived only two months).

In 1881, the family was introduced to missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Several members of the Klingler family had joined the Church and were anxious for Friedrich and Anna Maria to hear the doctrines and principals that these men taught. After many discussions and questions, they joined the Church and were baptized in the

Neckar River, September 18, 1881. Christina and other members of her family were anxious to learn more and do all they could to be faithful members of the Church.

At this time, the Church was encouraging its members in foreign lands to join Church members in America. This idea of 'immigrating to Zion' became the goal of the Klingler family. Friedrich and Anna Maria bid farewell to many good friends and family members, including Friedrich's father, as they left Germany for America. They too wanted to go, but the idea of funding their large family to this new land seemed out of the question. They continued to work, save what they could and have faith that the day would come when they too could sail to America

. Christina's father continued to work in the factory, her mother continued to manage their home and care for the children, and she continued to grow and be a responsible helper and companion for her family members. On February 2, 1886, she was baptized a member of the Church.

The time finally came when the Klingler family was ready to follow their dreams. Plans were made and passage was booked for the entire family. The oldest son, Ernst, was in the German Army and was not able to leave, but the rest of the family was included in this emigration plan. With the mixed emotions of leaving their native land and all that they had ever known, and venturing to a new land that was full of so many hopes and dreams, the family of Friedrich and Anna Maria Klingler left Mannheim, Germany, May 16, 1886. They boarded a small vessel on the Rhine River and headed for Rotterdam, Netherlands. At Rotterdam they transferred to an ocean going vessel bound for New York City.

The voyage created a lasting memory in their minds. They traveled second class and the accommodations left much to be desired. Christina would always remember the white enamel cups filled with syrup and biscuits provided as part of their rations, open port holes that allowed the ocean waves to splash into their living quarters, the monotonous noise of the engine, long hours of rocking back and forth with nothing to do, and the sea sickness that seemed to affect everyone. Anna Maria was pregnant with their 10th child and was very ill and uncomfortable. This left the responsibility of the children to their father. Christina was expected to help all she could. They were relieved and very excited when they finally arrived in New York City.

The challenges of being in a new country were great. The language barrier was an instant obstacle. Trying to communicate in order to obtain needs and make arrangements to continue their journey was a major problem for these emigrants. With the help of translators arrangements were made to go west aboard a train. The Klingler family was anxious to continue their journey and find other family members. They had never ridden on a train before and so this presented itself as quite an exciting adventure.

After what seemed like forever, they arrived at Market Lake, Idaho (which is now called Roberts, Idaho). It is not known at what point in this journey, Christina celebrated her ninth birthday, but they arrived in June of 1886; no doubt a birthday she would always remember.

With no way to advise their family in Rexburg about their arrival, no one was at the depot to meet them. They were all alone in a place that seemed to be the end of the earth. They had nothing to eat and unsure of where to go or what to do. The decision was made that their father would go to Rexburg. The family would stay in Market Lake until he returned for them. Friedrich left on foot in the general eastern direction of Rexburg. Christina, her mother, brothers and sisters stood outside the depot waving farewell and God speed.

While waiting for her father to return, Christina, along with the rest of her family, spent their time close to the depot. When they got tired they slept on the depot floor. Water surrounded the area and the mosquitoes were terrible. They could not understand the new language they were hearing and found it difficult to communicate. They had no food, very little money and no way of knowing how or when their father would return. It was an anxious time. What a relief when Friedrich returned and with transportation to take them to Rexburg.

Upon their arrival in Rexburg, friendly, German speaking family and friends greeted them. Uncles, aunts and cousins were a welcome sight. They soon had food and a place to sleep. There was much catching up to do as they had been separated for years. There were not many homes built at the time and people were living in make-do shelters and dugouts. The Klinglers felt fortunate to find a vacant dugout next to Aunt Charlotte Pfof's dugout. It was about 18 to 20 feet long with a dirt floor and a dirt ceiling. Christina cried and cried because she did not want to live in the ground. This was not quite what any of them had dreamed of, but they tried their best to think positive thoughts. They were grateful to have found their family. They were sure this 'Zion' would be good to them.

Food was their first concern. The Pfosts had a cow and were very generous and eager to share with the Klinglers. The diet of bread and milk was a day to day, guaranteed menu for sometime. When the grain that had been planted was ready, they were able to help with the harvest and gleaned fifty bushels for themselves. When potatoes were ready to harvest, the family went into the fields and worked for twenty five cents a day. Not only did they earn a little money, but they were able to glean cull potatoes (potatoes too small to harvest) for their own use and storage. What a treat! They now had wheat and potatoes and enough to get them through the coming winter months.

The German emigrants had a deep love for their native land, customs and traditions. They wanted to preserve this heritage for their children. Many families continued to speak, eat and live German. The Klinglers were no different. German was the language spoken in their home. Much of their food was German recipes, however, they knew that if America was going to be their home they would have to adapt to this way of life. The children became involved in school and learned the English language quickly. Foods that were strange to them, soon became favorites. It is hard to imagine all of the changes this family faced, as they became more accustomed to their new life. It is evident that they did so with a strong belief in their faith and an unwavering trust in their God.

NOTE: In an effort to become more 'Americanized', it was quite common for emigrants to make slight changes in the spelling and pronunciation of their names. The changes were often made to be more accepted by English speakers. At some point, the Klingler family made some of these changes. Fredrick became Fred, and Christina Maria became Christine Mary. This explains why signatures on American documents differ from German records. Christina will be referred to as Christine from this point on in this life sketch.

Word reached Rexburg that they were hiring workers for the railroad in Pocatello. Fred applied and was hired as a machinist in the railroad roundhouse. This work proved to be profitable. Arrangements were made to move his family to Pocatello. When the family arrived they could not believe what they saw. The little lumber shack behind the stock yards in Pocatello looked like a mansion after living in the dugout. The family soon settled in and did very well. When cows were unloaded from the rail cars, Fred would milk those that were heavy with milk and take the precious liquid to his family.

While in Pocatello, Anna Maria gave birth to their eleventh child. They were all delighted with another baby boy and named him Joseph. Unfortunately, things did not go well. Anna Maria developed pneumonia after the baby was born. Christine's mother died July 18, 1889 and her baby brother, Joseph, died eleven days later. They were both buried in Pocatello.

This was a devastating turn of events for the family. With work and the care of his large family, Fred turned to his sister for help. Charlotte, advised him to keep his job in Pocatello and send the children to Rexburg where she could care for them. Christine was twelve years old. Being the oldest daughter at home, she was left with much of the responsibility for this motherless family of seven children.

Under the direction of her aunt, Christine continued to carry out much of the work she had grown up doing at her mother's side. Limited schooling had helped her learn the English language, even though she did so with an unmistakable German accent. She had become accustomed to the American ways and was capable of conducting business for her brothers and sisters. Although the loss of her mother was overwhelming, the responsibilities required to meet her family's needs helped her keep going.

Fred traveled as often as possible to Rexburg to see his children. It was on one of these trips that Aunt Charlotte introduced Fred to a good friend, Christine Walz Buchmiller, who was a widow with three children. They courted for some time and gave much thought to marriage. Finally, they decided to merge their two families together. On February 11, 1891, they traveled to the Logan Temple and were married for time only. Christine had been sealed to her first husband, Karl Heinrich Buchmiller.

Christine now had a stepmother. If anyone had to find a substitute for 'mother', Christine was an excellent choice. With Fred's seven children and Christine's three, the new Klingler Family faced many challenges as they moved into the Buchmiller home in Rexburg. They were crowded, but the atmosphere was cheerful and it wasn't long until these two families grew close together. Fred continued to work in Pocatello, but traveled home often and did all he could to help on the home front.

As the older children began to leave and start homes of their own, the Klingler Family filled the empty places at the table with more children; George Ludwig, Eva Rosina, Sarah, Wilhelm Wilford, Frank Jacob and Alma.

Christine helped prepare the food, learned to make clothes, knitted stockings, and helped wash the mountain of clothes on wash boards. There were trying times for the entire community when flu and typhoid fever broke out. Few families escaped the deadly effects of these illnesses with very little medical knowledge or know how available. The Klingler family suffered through these times also, but felt blessed that none of their family members were lost or had lasting effects.

The German families living in the Snake River Valley stayed in touch with each other. They would gather when they could, do business with each other and welcomed opportunities to associate with fellow countrymen. Such was the case with the Klingler Family and a family living about 30 miles south of Rexburg. Ludwig Friedrich Osswald and his wife Eva Dorothea Schwab were farming a homestead in Coltman. As these families got acquainted, so did their children. It was at this type of activity that Ludwig Friedrich Oswald Jr. met Maria Christina Klingler.

Ludwig, who had changed his name to Lou in an effort to be more American, said that he was very impressed at their first meeting. Christine was young and beautiful, had a wonderful personality and it seemed like destiny had a part in bringing them together.

An interesting courtship ensued. Lou made many trips to Rexburg in his horse drawn buggy. It was not unusual for him to work all day on the farm, then hitch the horse to the buggy and drive to Rexburg. He would then be back home and ready for work the next morning. Much credit was given to his horse, who could find his way home in the dark while Lou slept in the seat.

Their courtship lasted several years. Christine had said that she did not want to be married until she was twenty and she wanted to be married in the Temple. There was no record of Lou's baptism. Arrangements were made and he was baptized in a canal in Grant, Idaho on February 1 1894. This put their plans to be married in motion. Finally, all the waiting was over and this handsome couple traveled to Logan, Utah where they were married in the Temple on June 23, 1897.

Lou's father gave him a portion of the Osswald Homestead in Coltman. Lou built a home on this property and that is where he and his new bride began their life together.

Christine and Lou were happy and busy as they began to farm their land and make the small, log house a home. Lou affectionately nicknamed Christine 'Stina', and was often referred to by that nickname. It wasn't long until they were expecting the first of what would be a total of twelve children. The care for her husband and new baby were Christine's first priority. The skills she had learned helping her mother and step-mother had become second nature. Years of practice had made her a wonderful cook, talented seamstress and cheerful homemaker.

Their family grew over the years and included - Ludwig Fredrick born October 6, 1898; Henry George born May 23, 1900; Dorothea Christine (named after their mothers) born October 1, 1902 but died December 16, 1902; and Arnold Martin born December 8, 1903; Elmer Heber born September 27, 1905; Herbert Wilford born February 20, 1907; Willard James born November 26, 1909; Verna Pauline born January 9, 1922; Mary Matilda born October 11, 1912; Victor Ray born January 8, 1915; and Violet Irene born March 20, 1917. These children were all born at Coltman, Bonneville County, Idaho. On August 17, 1922, a little girl was born in Idaho Falls, Bonneville County, Idaho. On May 23, 1900 George Henry was born at Rexburg, Madison County, Idaho.

About this time, Lou and some of his brothers had acquired some homestead property west of the Snake River, which became known as Oswald Basin. They were trying to make improvements on that land so they could get it ready to plant crops. Sagebrush had to be removed, and ground leveled. The days were long and hard. Christine spent much of her time alone with her children doing not only the household chores of cooking and washing, but also taking care of the small animals and light chores that needed attention on the farm. She had learned to work hard as a young girl and was accustomed to long, full days.

Christine was determined to make her home a wonderful place for her family. She planted berry bushes, trees and flowers that would not only help provide for her family, but make their place more beautiful. Her garden was large and she grew fruits and vegetables that were dried and preserved for their year around use. Her 'green thumb' extended to her flowerbeds, which became a showcase in the community.

In 1906, Christine was thrilled to participate in a trip her family made to Utah. With her stepmother acting as proxy for Anna Maria, Christine's parents were sealed and the children

that could be there were sealed to them. Christine was thrilled to think her family could be together forever. This brought a lot of comfort to her.

The daily work involved in caring for her growing family was overwhelming at times, but Christine possessed a remarkable attitude. Perhaps it was her German stubbornness, and determination to not give in that kept her going, but it was most likely her love for her husband and children that gave her the strength and desire to make their home a heaven on earth.

As their family grew, the need was obvious and Lou set to work making an addition to the home. A larger kitchen and an extra room was welcomed and allowed a little stretch to their living quarters.

In 1918, Lou and Christine had an opportunity to increase their property. Lou's brother decided to sell his farm, which was adjacent to theirs. In order to do this they had to mortgage their farm. After arrangements were completed they began the increased work of two farms in Coltman, as well as the homestead at Oswald Basin. The year was not good for crops. A drought cycle made harvest pretty bleak and the hope of a prosperous harvest faded. When the time came they did not have the money to make their payments and the bank foreclosed on their properties in Coltman. This was a devastating time for Christine and Lou. All the work and efforts they had made over the years seemed in vain. The loss was extremely hard on them. Grateful they had each other, they loaded their family and personal belongings into the wagons and left Coltman moving to the desert land of Oswald Basin.

Oswald Basin was a desolate spot! The country was rough and rugged with lava rock and sagebrush. The wind was constant and the sand blew and sifted into the cracks, windows and doorways of their poorly constructed house. They planted what they could and concentrated on helping it grow. The crop was poor because of the drought conditions and there was no irrigation. They harvested what they could and moved to Idaho Falls before winter. The property at Oswald Basin had to be turned back to pay taxes.

In the spring of 1920, the family moved to the Osgood Project. This was a section of farming ground owned by the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company. Once again, Christine took hold of the situation and put her home making skills and positive attitude to work. In time the house was tidy and improved upon. The yard showed signs of improvement too as berry bushes and fruit trees were planted. Spring brought a garden spot and all kinds of vegetables were planted.

Water was carried by bucket to each bush and tree, and each row of the garden. Things began to grow!

The family wash was done weekly on wash boards until a hand operated washing machine was brought home. Some of the older boys then had the chore of helping, which was a big relief to Christine. She made six, sometimes eight loaves of bread three, sometimes four times a week. She and her smallest children took care of the chickens and pigs. Some how between all the work, she found time to give each child the personal attention they needed. The darning, mending and sewing of clothes were part of the evening routine after the daily chores were done, supper was finished and dishes were washed.

Christine grew a variety of flowers, which were the delight of her neighbors and family. She took great pleasure in them. It was while showing her flowers and garden to her sister-in-law that Christine had a terrible accident. That day would change her family forever.

Christine was expecting their twelfth child. Aunt Dora had come to visit and they had gone out in the yard to see the beautiful flowers and garden. While moving through the garden, Christine stepped in a posthole and fell. She started to hemorrhage. A doctor was sent for, but by the time he arrived the situation was beyond his help. She was taken to the hospital in Idaho Falls, but there was nothing they could do. August 17, 1922, Christine and her twelfth child died. That night a heavy frost killed all of the flowers in her yard.

Lou and his children were devastated. They buried Christine and the baby girl on August 20, 1922 in the Central Cemetery in Grant, Jefferson County, Idaho, next to another baby daughter Dorothea Christine.

Life was never the same. Lou did his best to be both father and mother for his family. The older children who had married and living on their own helped where they could. Lou held the younger family together and did his best to provide them with those things they needed. With all the effort that was made – there was just no way to make life the way it once was.

Christine's influence and example remained with them as they grew to be individuals she could be proud of. No mother was more devoted and dedicated to her family or husband. Her passing left a void that was never filled. Her memory and the lessons learned from her

teachings and example were all they had, but with that and the faith they could be with her again gave them the hope and determination to carry on.

This Life Sketch of Christina Maria Klingler Oswald was compiled from stories, documents and other records collected by Karla K. Oswald.

Additional facts were obtained from writings and a personal interview with Christina Maria Klingler Oswald's son, Willard James Oswald and from writings of her daughters, Verna Pauline Oswald Taylor and Violet Irene Oswald Randall.

Christina Maria's name is shown differently on many documents -

Christina Maria – Germany Birth and Baptism Records

Mary Christine – 1897 Utah Marriage Records

Christina – U.S. Census 1900

Christina M – U.S. Census 1910

Christine M – U.S. Census 1920

Mary Christina - Christina Maria's Obituary 1921

Christina Mary – Death Certificate 1921

Mary Christine – finagrave.com Memorial #76303381

Maria Christine – Headstone at the Central Cemetery, Grant, Jefferson County, Idaho

Marie C – Ludwig Friedrich's obituary 1942

It is also noted that in an interview with her son, Willard Oswald, he stated that his mother's name was Americanized as the family dropped the 'a' on Christina and it became Christine, and Maria became Mary. He also stated that his mother went by Christine. The Germany Birth and Baptism record which shows she was given the name Christina Maria Klingler is the record used in this life sketch as verification of her legal birth name.

Names, places, and dates have been verified with family genealogy information and records in possession of K. Oswald, and family history records in possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.