

A Collection of Memories

Ludwig 'Lou' Friedrich Oswald Jr.

MEMORIES OF MY FATHER

-written by his daughter, Verna Oswald Taylor

Father was born January 16, 1871, in Riederich, Germany. He was the third child born to Eva Dorothea and Ludwig Friedrich Osswald. Grandfather had completed his military obligation before he and my grandmother were married, but he was called back into service when war broke out in 1878-1871. Father was born when grandfather was at the front in France. These were very trying years for grandmother. Life was hard.

When the war was over, grandfather again followed his trade as a stone mason. The Mormon missionaries were laboring in their community about this time and members of the family were interested. They were often forced to hide the missionaries in their homes when people became hostile. The grandparents did not want their boys to grow up under the German military training so they took the missionaries advice to come to America.

When they had accumulated enough money for grandfather's fare, he left unbeknownst to anyone – not even his mother knew. Only his wife, Dorothea, knew where he was going. He was working on the chimney of a home. He laid down his trowel and left. The next morning, August 28, 1881, he emigrated from Germany to America. He was baptized just a few days before.

Father often told us about his grandmother, Anna Maria Osswald, who lived on the other side of the River Erms. Grandfather installed a bridge, but it was considered dangerous. They loved her very much and they often stole away while their mother was at work in the fields to go see her. Father said he had a very vivid memory of how she cried when they left to go to America. The last he saw of her, she had fainted and people were trying to comfort her. These were her only grandchildren and she knew she would never see them again. Father said that his sister, Aunt Dora Kedzie, looked so much like his grandmother as he remembered her, that all through the years they were close.

As soon as grandfather made enough money for their fare, he sent for his wife and seven children. It was a very frightening thing to start out on a voyage like that. Times were very different than they are now and so were the ships. They paid for first class fare, but there was no first class. First they traveled by train to Mannheim, located

on the Rhine River – stayed all night in a hotel and the next day traveled in a river boat to Rotterdam, Holland. That evening, they boarded a large steamer ship to cross the North Sea to Hull, England. There were bad storms at sea. Everyone was ordered to go below deck.

Father told us often about the roaring sounds and how frightened they were. They thought for sure that the ship would capsize. There was straw on the floor. Everybody got sick and he found out what the straw was for: they not only threw up, but went to the toilet under it. Knowing my father, he wouldn't go for that, even as a 12 year old boy, so he went up on the deck to go to the toilet. The sea was so rough and the wind was so bad it nearly blew him away, but he caught hold of a door. He said he never expected to hold on long enough to be rescued. Someone found him and got him back down below, but his arms were so bruised and sore the rest of the trip that he could hardly move them. He was just glad to be alive.

He told me about a young boy on the boat that he made friends with who got sick and died. They buried him at sea. He had vivid memories of their tying him to a board and tossing him out in that stormy, shark infested water, and how his mother cried. Some cried, some prayed, but the missionaries were most helpful. They kept telling them not to worry – that they had never heard of a ship being wrecked that had Mormons on it.

At last they sighted a seagull and knew that land was close. Father remembered saying to Aunt Annie, "Look at that big woman," as they sighted the Statue of Liberty. They landed in New York and then went on to Chicago. They were told to stay in this state for if they were to go on to Salt Lake City they would become slaves. Grandmother said 'No', she had bought her ticket to Salt Lake and to Salt Lake she was going.

Grandfather was there to meet them on June 4, 1882, and they had a happy family reunion. They lived for awhile on a farm in West Jordan in a house grandfather built. Father says while they were there his father went hunting ducks with a muzzle loaded shotgun. The powder back fired and blinded him for six weeks. The father found him his eyeballs were sticking out and he had to lead him back home.

At this time the ward teacher came and asked if they needed help. They told him they would really appreciate it until he could get back to work. He was working at the Salt Lake Temple doing mason work before the accident. But these ward teachers never did return and he heard nothing from the Church. Six weeks later, father and grandfather walked into Salt Lake and ran into some Lutheran people. These people gave them supplies from their store and told them they would keep an open account for him until he was well. This was a bad, unfortunate experience, as these ward teachers were certainly not true representatives of the Mormon Church. Grandfather never felt quite the same toward the Church.

They lived in a place east and south of Salt Lake and stayed there for five years. They enjoyed it there. Father worked in a brewery. He told us stories of conflicts with Indians and how afraid they were of them at that time.

The family moved to Idaho on July 18, 1889. There was government land to be taken up there. They had 320 acres. Father drove the team and wagon and brought all their belongings from East Canyon. His younger brother, Chris who was only 12 at the time, drove the cattle. Grandfather started work immediately on a house and built a lovely four room, stone house that still stand today.

As the children married, they gave each of the boys 40 acres. Father built a house on his farm and there he took his bride, Christine Klingler, after they were married. Although I was only six years old when we left there, I still remember much about it. I remember the apple orchard and berry bushes, the creeks and canals, the animals and chickens. I'm sure they were happy years for my father. There were also hardships. He mortgaged the farm to buy 160 acres of dry farm land out in Oswald Basin. His brothers also invested in it. It looked like a bonanza for a couple of years. Then, because of drought, all failed. He lost both farms and we moved to Idaho Falls for a year. Then he farmed for the Utah Idaho Sugar Company at Osgood for several years. It was while we were there that mother died in childbirth. After that, things were never the same and I'm sure that he was very lonely.

When I think of my father, I see a man on integrity - a kind, sensitive person who was a joy to be around. I really loved him. If he had a single fault it was that he had a hard time saying no when he perhaps should have. He kept the family together and worked hard to give us the things we desired. He tried to be both father and mother to us. With seven boys and three girls, that was a mighty hard job.

He died May 8th, 1942, of a heart attack. He was working out in his garden when it happened. It was a terrible shock to all of us and we still miss him. I was married and we were living in Blackfoot, Idaho, at this time. We had three children, Lyn, Ardith and Ralph. That has been fifty years ago last month, but I can see him with his hat, which he always wore, just like it was yesterday.

Tomorrow is Father's Day, and I pay my respects and salute a wonderful father.

MEMORIES OF MY FATHER

-written by his son, Willard Oswald

Ludwig Friedrich Oswald was born the 16th of January 1871, at Riederich, Schwartzwald, Germany. He was the son of Ludwig Friedrich Oswald, Sr. and Eva

Dorothea Schwab. While he was yet a child, he was given the nickname of Lew by which he was known by family and friends throughout his life.

Lew was the third child of seventeen born to Ludwig F. Sr. and Dorothea Osswald – six sons and eleven daughters. One son and seven daughters died as infants or were stillborn.

Lew's father and mother and grandmother were devout members of the Lutheran Church and each child was baptized a few days after birth. Ludwig F. Sr. and Dorothea were baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Riederich, Germany, on the 11th of August 1881. Dad was baptized in 1894, in Grant, Idaho. The missionaries, Elder's Carl Schramms and Charles Schneiter, found the Osswalds in Riederich and were instrumental in teaching them the Gospel and helping them to leave Germany and emigrate to Salt Lake City, Utah. More information about their preparation and later departure o the U. S. is found in the histories of Grandmother Dorothea Oswald and also the history of Carl Schwab.

Grandfather Ludwig F. Sr. left Germany a year before and came to Salt Lake to find employment and locate a place to live for his family. When Lew and the family arrived, Ludwig F. Sr. met them at the station. It was a happy reunion after the traumatic experiences of leaving Germany. Grandfather had leased a two-story house where they lived temporarily. Grandfather had found a job at the Park City Mines. After a short stay in Salt Lake, they moved to Payson, Utah, where Ludwig F. Sr. built a home in East Canyon.

Lew had a hard, but interesting childhood, but because of his experiences he matured fast and learned to handle responsibilities well. He was strong physically and was able to do a man's work long before he was the age of a man. His first job was in a brewery in Salt Lake City. All the money that he earned he gave to his parents. They were able to buy a cow and a horse with the money Lew and his sister, Anna, gave them. Lew lost two fingers in an accident at the brewery.

On April 23, 1889, Ludwig F. Sr. came to Idaho Falls (then called Eagle Rock), and homesteaded 320 acres of land from the government. He stayed on the homestead and soon had some small buildings and a house started. Lew and Chris were soon on their way with a team of horses and a wagon loaded with furniture and supplies. Lew drove the wagon and his brother rode a horse and drove the cattle.

When the responsibilities for the new venture were given, dad and Chris were to work on the farm. Will helped Ludwig F. Sr. with the mason work. There were times when they all worked together to accomplish what needed to be done. Things started to take form on the Osswald homestead as they all worked together.

The first home in Idaho was built, the trees planted, the land was being cleared of sage brush and rocks, the ditches for irrigating were started, crops were planted and grandfather's business was very successful. Dad spoke of these times on many occasions, and has spoken with pride the words grandmother wrote in her Bible: "The Lord may give us a lasting homestead." Her wish was granted and her dream had come true. Lew and each of the children had an important part to play in fulfilling that dream.

Some time between 1885 and 1886, the Klingler family left Germany and settled in Rexburg, Idaho. The families became acquainted, became friends and finally an interesting courtship ensued between Lew and Christine Klingler. There is not anything written, but dad has told us how very impressed he was at their first meeting. She was young and beautiful, had a wonderful personality and it seemed like destiny had a part in bringing them together.

As time went by, dad made many trips to Rexburg. Those were horse and buggy days. It was not unusual for dad to work all day on the farm, and then hitch the horse to the buggy and drive to Rexburg, then back home to be ready to work in the morning. We must give credit to a very fine buggy horse that could find his way home in the dark and do it alone while Lew slept in the buggy seat.

The courtship lasted a few years before they were married. They wanted to be sealed in the Temple, but to do this there was something that they must do first. Christine was baptized in February 1886, in Germany. Lew was not baptized in Germany when his parents were. On February 1, 1894, Lew was baptized. We are told it was done in a canal in Grant, Idaho. There is no record of his Priesthood ordination, but it is customary to wait a year after baptism before receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood. He did receive the Priesthood or he could not have been married in the Temple.

Lew and Christine received their endowment and were sealed for time and all eternity on June 23, 1897. Lew was ordained a Seventy on November 14, 1901, by B. H. Roberts. There may be other ordinations if I had time to research the records. I thought he was a High Priest, but I could not document it. Dad was not one to attend Church regularly, especially after mother died, but he was a good husband, a wonderful father and a special friend. He possessed many of the great qualities and characteristics that qualify him as a good Latter Day Saint: love, patience, kindness, honesty, integrity. I think Violet summed it up well in the history she wrote, which is enclosed.

Dad had a good sense of humor. He loved to hear and tell stories and jokes, mostly from personal experience, and unusual situations that happen to people every day. Adversities and trials of faith came quite often to dad and his family. I remember mother telling us that dad was stricken with pneumonia and for several days his

condition was critical. Mom stayed by his bedside doing all she could to help him recover. Finally his fever broke and he began to breathe a little better. On another occasion, dad had purchased a horse and he was told that it was tricky and mean. Dad was very careful about getting too close to his heels, but one day, he had pulled the plow all day and he looked pretty subdued and gentle. Dad cautiously walked up to unbuckle the tug from the hitch. As he stooped down, the hose let go with both hind feet as if he was waiting for that moment. It struck dad right in the face and needless to say, it was a wonder he wasn't killed.

Herb recalls this from his personal memories with dad. He invited dad to go fishing on a lake where they had to hike three miles from their truck to get there. They were on the lake fishing with a row boat and high wind came up, causing some rough water and high waves. About then, dad hooked a good sized fish. In his excitement, he stood up in the boat to land the fish. He lost his balance and fell into the lake. The high waves carried the boat away from him and having only oars for power, Herb could not get back to him. Only because he was an excellent swimmer was he able to stay afloat until Herb got close enough to throw a tow rope to him. Then he couldn't get into the boat without dumping Herb into the lake. He held on to the boat until they could get to shore. Dad lived close to the River Erms in Germany where he learned to be an excellent swimmer.

Then there was the day when the bank foreclosed on the farm. This was a very traumatic experience for us all, especially for mom and dad. I was just a kid, but I still remember how angry dad was when they came out to the farm to have dad and mother sign the foreclosure papers. That person sensed it too because he left in a hurry. That is the only time in my life that I had seen dad really angry. Dad always tried to stay out of debt as much as possible, but this time was different. The way I heard the story – Uncle August had his place (40 acres) for sale. It joined dad's property to the south. He reasoned that with his boys all growing up he needed more land to keep them busy. He had to mortgage his 40 acres to buy the other. He closed the deal. With a drought cycle on the dry farm out west and a couple of bad years in the valley for the farmers, he failed to meet all the mortgage payment. His only alternative was to lose it all or to sale the farm for what he could get at that time and move off.

Well, sometimes good things come from sad experiences. With money left after the mortgage was paid, dad purchased a new Model T Ford car. That sort of took the sting out of the tragedy momentarily, from a kid's point of view. It was quite a change from the buggy and horse. We could go more places, more often and much faster.

Dad would take us quite often to Heise Hot Springs to swim. The big thrill was crossing the river on the old ferry boat. It was a frightening experience. It would carry four cars. It was propelled by the force of the water and was held in tow by pulleys on a

cable that stretched across the river. This was especially scary at high water time in the spring.

Dad made several moves after the family left Coltman. They dry farm, Idaho Falls, Osgood, Shattuch Farms, back to Idaho Falls, back to Coltman to the old homestead and a final move, the Muelfeit farm east of the Coltman school.

Dad passed away on May 8, 1942, from heart failure. He was in the field a short way from where he lived burning some weeds just to have something to do. When he felt the attack he immediately went to the house and lay down on the bed, and quietly passed away. George was there. Aunt Dora soon arrived and Victor and myself were there. I remember the words of Aunt Dora. She said, "He died with his boots on." Then she explained that was what he said he would like to do when called home from this mortal life.

LIFE HISTORY OF MY FATHER

-written by his daughter, Violet Oswald Randall Jenkins

Born in Riederich, Germany, January 16, 1871, son of Ludwig Friedrich Osswald Sr. and Eva Dorothea Schwab. With brothers and sisters: Anna, Katy, Will, Dora, Mary, Chris and parents, he sailed from Germany on an emigrant boat, took a train from Chicago to Salt Lake City and lived in West Salt Lake in a home his father built near the River Jordan. His father contracted and built houses. They lived in Salt Lake until all the children were through school. August and Carl were born during this time – August in Payson, Utah and Carl in Idaho Falls, Idaho (then called Eagle Rock). Grandfather brought his family up with him and took up a farm. He also contracted and built houses for a living. They lived in Idaho Falls the first winter before building their home. Grandmother came up later with the younger children, Will and Dora.

Lou (the English name for Ludwig) went to school in Germany and finished, or nearly finished the 8th grade. He didn't go to school after coming to the U. S. He worked in Fisher's Bottling Works in Salt Lake for several years, where he had two fingers mashed and taken off by a barrel falling on them. He helped grandfather build a mill (Burgess and Eidelmann) – the first in Idaho Falls – at which he worked for several months tending masons.

About this time, grandfather made the abutments for the first bridge across the Snake River in Idaho Falls. Lou was the first to cross the bridge, which wasn't completely finished. The planks were still loose. He was guiding the wagon with the tongue and a loose plank flipped the tongue and threw him into the fore bay of the Snake River, which was dangerously high. His outstanding physical strength and ability to swim saved the day for him.

Lou, Will and Chris all worked out. In the fall, they did a lot of hauling and stacking hay for other people. In their spare time, they cleared sage brush from the land and worked on a canal (3 miles) to help get the water down. Working at a disadvantage with small scrappers, they didn't get the canal done the first year. In the winter, they hauled their water from the river in barrels and drove the cattle to the river for water.

Lou, Will and Aunt Dora went to Rexburg to visit the Klinglers. The old folks Klinglers and Osswalds were acquainted. There Lou met Mary Christine, whom he later married, and their acquaintance grew. These were horse and buggy trips from Grant to Rexburg. The boys helped with the farming and turned all the crop and money over to their folks until they year before they were married. Grandfather gave each boy 41 acres. They kept one crop before they married.

Lou and Christine were married June 23, 1897, in the Logan Temple and built their first home in Coltman of frame lined with white rock pieces called spelts. Christine was a wonderful wife, mother and homemaker. She loved flowers and always had a profusion of them growing in her yard, along with all sorts of fruits can currant bushes.

On August 10, 1911, the five Oswald brothers went to the Oswald Basin dry farm. They had to prove up in five years and do a certain amount of plowing each year. During this time they went back and forth between the two places – Coltman and the dry farm. After the five year period, Lou took a mortgage on the Coltman place and lost it. They then moved to the dry farm and lived there until the spring of 1921, when they moved to the Osgood Project. They lived one winter in Idaho Falls before they moved to Osgood, I believe.

While living in Osgood, Christine passed away and the baby born at the time of her death died also, on August 17, 1922. This left Lou with a family to raise alone. They ranged in ages from 24 to 5, pretty well on their own – working for the Utah Idaho Sugar Company. Verna and Victor lived with Aunt Dora while attending high school in Idaho Falls. Mary and Violet stayed with their father during the years that he stayed and farmed in Osgood and also when he moved north and east of Osgood on the Shttuck Farm, which he farmed for three years.

In the fall of 1931, Lou moved to Coltman and lived in Grandmother Oswald's home and ran the farm. He stayed there until 1939. At this time he and Mary, his only unmarried child, lived in an apartment on 6th Street in Idaho Falls, near a son Arnold and his family, for a year or two. Then they moved back to Coltman into a two-story brick house one mile east of the Coltman store. They lived there until Lou passed away from a heart attack at the age of 71 on May 8, 1842.

Lou Oswald, as he was known, was a good natured, patient, easy going man with a heart of gold. He would give anyone the shirt off his back if he thought they needed it. He was very gullible and an easy mark for a salesman of any kind because he believed whatever they told him, taking it as gospel truth, assuming that everyone was just as honest as he himself was. The story is told of him that he once bought a car that turned out to be a real 'lemon'. The salesman gave it a very high recommendation.

Never in his life did Lou use words of profanity – or even slang. He was a quiet, unassuming man who had great respect for the laws of God, as well as the laws of the land. He would never have knowingly said or done anything to hurt anyone's feelings in any way and while he may not have taken an active part in Church, public or civic activities, the world could not have helped but be a better place for his having been here.

His calm, reassuring presence was a source of comfort to his family throughout the years and he will be lovingly remembered as one who could always restore our faith in mankind.