

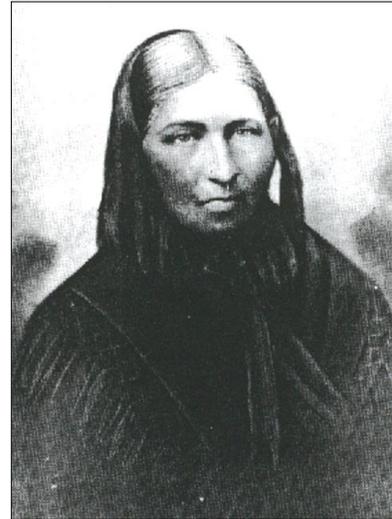
*A life sketch of*

# Christine Katherine Reiff Schwab

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1806 – 1891

Christine Katherine Reiff was born 9 November 1806, at Riederich, Wuerttemberg, Germany. She was a daughter of Johann George Reiff and Eva Katherine Reiff. She was the first in a family of seven children. She married Johann Christoph Schwab, 12 February 1832. He was born 29 August 1804, at Metzingen Wuerttemberg, Germany. To them were born six children.



Mr. Schwab was a carpenter by trade. In their early marriage, he felt the urge to go to America to seek his fortune, but his wife persuaded him to stay in their native land and make out as well as he could there. Her husband died June 25, 1867, at Metzingen of dropsy a few months before his sixty-third birthday.

In some way Christine Katherine obtained a Book of Mormon. There was much anti-Mormon\* feeling and mob violence at that time, so she dared not let anyone know she had the book. She hid it by her bed and studied at night when there was no danger of others knowing what she was studying. She gained a testimony of the book and was ready for the missionaries when they came around.

*\*Note-Mormon is a nick-name given The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Any reference to the Mormons in this life sketch is in reference to the family's involvement with that religion.*

The next part of her story is taken from excerpts of my grandfather, Carl Christian Schramm's, missionary journal. Elder Schramm was in Riederich, Germany on 3 June 1881, and went to visit a Sister Soeffaer at eight o'clock. While there he states, "An old lady seventy-four years old with the name of Schwab came to hear something of the gospel. He gave her his

testimony and she acknowledged it to be the truth.” Afterwards her daughter, Mrs. Osswald and her husband came, to whom he also gave his testimony and they acknowledged the truth and explained themselves willing to obey. The group was together until after 11 p.m.

“On the morning of July 9, 1881, Mr. Osswald and wife came again and we spoke of the great work of the latter days. They feel the truth of it, but are afraid of persecutions if they should obey.”

On August 10, 1881, Elder Schramm wrote, “In the evening came Brother Osswald and his wife, and later in the evening came Sister Hauber and her husband. I spoke with them and gave them testimony and expounded the work of God to them. Osswald and his wife and Mr. Hauber wished to be baptized and I went to the water at half past 10 o’clock and baptized the three of them and confirmed them. They felt very well and thankful to the Lord and we were together until after 12 o’clock.”

Mrs. Schwab’s son, Christoph, was not baptized at this time, but he continued to see Elder Schramm. On August 14, 1881, in Stuttgart, Germany, Christoph Schwab came to see him and attend a meeting. Elder Schramm bore his testimony to him. On August 17, 1881, in Stuttgart, the Elders held a meeting and had the Sacrament. Ten saints were present. Elder Schramm wrote, “Brother Christoph Schwab was there. After the meeting Brother Schwab asked for baptism. We went to the Nekar at 11 p.m. and returned back at 12 o’clock. I confirmed Brother Schwab and then we all went to rest.”

Now Mrs. Schwab and three of her children were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Her son Johann Martin, my grandfather, never joined. It wasn’t easy being a Mormon in those days. People’s friends turned against them and they received much persecution. Mrs. Schwab and her family began planning on going to America. Her daughter, Mrs. Osswald’s husband, went first. He seemed to be happy in the new land and wanted his family to join him.

In the spring of 1881, Christine Katherine Reiff Schwab made preparations to go to America. She was now going on 76 years of age. Her friends and relatives tried to discourage

her going, saying she would surely die at sea and be fed to the fish. She told them she would rather die at sea than not to be able to worship as she pleased. Her son Johann Martin was especially worried about her. He was sure that she had been taken in by the Mormons. His son Carl, who had been ill, insisted on going with his grandmother to America. Carl was not a convert. Carl and his father worked out a secret code whereby Carl could notify his father if things were not going well.

On 11 May 1882, Christine Katherine emigrated for America with other members of her family: Christine Katherine Hauber, her husband Johannes Hauber and little daughter Katherine Hauber, Johann Christoph Schwab, Eva Dorothea Schwab Osswald her seven children, and Carl Schwab, son of Johann Martin Schwab. The mother and one daughter advanced the fare for eight grandchildren and the youngest daughter so they could all go together.

Missionaries Carl C. Schramm and Charles Schneiter were returning home at this time and they helped the saints as they gathered in Stuttgart where they were joined by saints from Switzerland. They traveled by train to Mannheim, located on the Rhine River. More Mormons joined them there. They stayed all night in a hotel. The next day they traveled in a riverboat to Rotterdam, Holland. That evening they entered a large steamship to cross the North Sea at Hull, England.

There was a storm at sea which caused much delay and made them late in reaching their destination. The people were all ordered to go below deck where there was straw on the floor and a lantern strapped to a pole in the center of a large room for light. There was a terrible roaring sound. Everyone was frightened thinking the ship would capsize. Some were ill from the dashing of the ship and soon learned what the straw was for. Some of the people were crying and some praying. The missionaries told them to pray and not worry. They had never known a ship to go down with Mormons aboard. When the storm calmed, they spread their blankets on the straw and slept. They had no bathrooms and had to use the straw for that also. They had paid for first class accommodations, but received only second class.

While crossing the North Sea, a little boy took sick and died. He was buried in England. It was very hard for his family to leave the lone grave and go on to America without him.

From Hull, England they traveled to Liverpool. They were very disappointed at how dirty London was. At Liverpool they got on board the ship 'Nevada' to cross the Atlantic. It took several days for the other Mormons to gather from England, Denmark, and Sweden. Each nationality had a group of missionaries that could speak their language. The missionaries could all speak English so they could interpret for the people. On board the ship there were 1200 people speaking six different languages.

The new ship was larger than the one that brought them from London and had bunks to sleep on. The missionaries organized the people in groups according to their nationality. They were organized so people speaking the same language could use the kitchen at the same time, and then quickly moving on so the next group could have a chance.

While on board ship, most of the people got very sea sick. Christine Katherine Rieff Schwab, the oldest of her group, was the only one of her group that didn't get sick. Her family said they didn't know how they would ever have gotten along without her to take care of them.

The missionaries held many meetings in different tongues aboard ship. Usually they would end up with everyone singing, "Oh My Father," each in his own language. It did much to bring the groups closer together.

While traveling, they encountered two large icebergs. They were so large that they stopped the ship until the icebergs passed by. There were polar bear on one of the icebergs. They also saw whales spurting water in the air. One came quite close to the ship.

On May 27, 1882, they saw some seagulls and shortly after they sighted land. Soon they saw many more ships. Then one of the grandchildren called, "Look at the big woman." It was the Statue of Liberty. Around 5 p.m. they neared New York City. The ship stopped and a doctor came on board and looked all the people over. After that they proceeded to the docks where they stayed overnight. The next day they had to go through customs. A man with a tall

hat and a cane in one hand came in and opened all their baggage, mixed everything up, and called it an inspection before entering America. No one seemed to like that man.

They landed in New York in the evening and stayed there two days. Then they boarded the emigration train for Chicago. The cars were not too clean or comfortable. The train stopped often to let the people exercise and the children play. They reached Chicago May 30, 1882. They bought some more supplies and then boarded the train for Omaha. On the way measles broke out among the children. There were no doctors so the people placed their trust in the missionaries.

Finally, one week after leaving New York, the weary travelers reached Salt Lake City, June 4, 1882. Ludwig Friedrich Osswald was at the station to meet them. It was a happy reunion. All were well except Johannes Hauber, who had been ill all during the trip. He died the first week after their arrival and was buried in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Mr. Oswald had rented a two-story house. He and his wife and children lived on the first floor. Mrs. Schwab, her son Christoph, the Hauber's and Carl Schwab lived in the upstairs. Mrs. Schwab was out walking one day and some children threw mud at her. She felt so bad that she cried and said, "Is this Mormonism."

In the fall, Mrs. Schwab, her son Christoph, and daughter Katherine Hauber, bought a little home and lot in Payson, Utah and moved there. The lot had a small orchard on it.

After his arrival, Carl Schwab wrote back to his father in Germany and told him everything was well with them and that he need not worry about the Mormons. With the rest of his family gone, however, Johann Martin just couldn't feel at ease. He was still concerned about his family being "taken in" by the Mormons.

In the second year Carl Schwab sent for his brother Martin to come to America. They saved their money and helped their father (who was still uneasy about the Mormons) and his son Herbert to come to America. They arrived in the fall and worked with his son Carl herding sheep. Together they saved enough to send for the rest of the family. Johann Martin's wife,

Pauline, and three daughters, Pauline, Martha, and Caroline, arrived in Salt Lake City, June 28, 1888. They went to live in Payson with Mr. Schwab's mother and sister.

Later, Carl Schwab and his father homesteaded some land in Star Valley, Wyoming. They built a log cabin and got ready for winter. In the fall, Carl returned to Payson to get his mother and sisters. The women had been busy all summer drying sacks and sacks of fruit. Carl fitted out a sheep wagon to take the family to Wyoming. After a very difficult trip, they arrived in Star Valley just ahead of the storm that closed the roads for the winter. Here they endured the hardships of true pioneers.

A few years later, Mrs. Schwab's granddaughter, Pauline, came from Wyoming to visit her grandmother in Payson. She decided to stay and get work. She lived with her grandmother for some time. Her Uncle Christoph closed in part off the front porch so she could have a room of her own. Pauline was not a Mormon at the time, but she used to go to church with her grandmother. She said she asked her grandmother why she went to church when she couldn't understand the language. She said her grandmother said she went to PARTAKE OF THE SPIRIT of the meeting! She could catch the spirit even if she didn't understand the language.

There were a number of German people who settled in Payson. Elder Schramm arranged to have some meetings conducted in German so they could be instructed in their own language.

Christine Katherine Reiff Schwab remained true and active in the Church to the end of her life. She died in Payson, Utah, September 9, 1891, and was buried in the Payson City Cemetery, 12 September 1891. She was nearly eighty-five years old, and had lived in Utah nine years.

Christine Katherine was not a large lady in the physical sense, but she stood tall in her determination to stand for what was right in principle. She was quick to recognize the truth in the religion she had waited for most of her life. Her desire was to be with her family and serve her God, which she did faithfully until her earthly life was completed.

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*Information for this Life Sketch of Christine Katharine Reiff Schwab was obtained from Pauline Schwab Schramm. Excerpts taken from Carl Christian Schramm's missionary journal, a history by Mrs. Schwab's grandson, Carl Schwab, and a history by her great granddaughter Caroline Gneiting Miller.*

*Written by Leona Schramm Metcalf (February 28, 1979).*