

Hans Jakob Kuenzler John Paul Kuenzler

Most of the details known about John Paul Kuenzler and his family can be found in the following life sketch, which was included in the back of a family-produced book containing part of his missionary journal¹²:

John Paul Kuenzler was born the 10th of August, 1853 in St. Margrethen, Switzerland. He was the fifth child of Hans Jacob Kuenzler and Maria Elizabeth Kuenzler. Their family consisted of eight children. In St. Margrethen, he spent his childhood days and was reared by his parents according to the beliefs and customs of the Lutheran Church. He was trained to earn an honest living, to have clean habits, to believe in God, and to believe there was a life after death.

John Paul graduated with honors from the schools of Switzerland. He learned the trade of a stonecutter. He was very successful at his trade. He served the four years of training required by his country for the standing army. At the age of twenty-five, he worked at one of the largest railroad stations between Switzerland and Austria. When he first began to earn wages as a young man, he gave his wages to his parents. As he grew older and earned more, he had one third for himself.

In this way, the family spent many happy, peaceful years – until one Christmas Day, in 1871, his beloved brother Jacob, who at the time was working in another town, came home and told them he had become a member of the Mormon Church. This brought great sorrow and a test to the whole family. The Mormon Church at that time was considered a very bad church. It was the saddest Christmas the family ever spent. From that time on, persecution followed them.

In the early summer of 1873, his beloved brother Jacob left his beautiful Switzerland and his loved ones and came to Utah. The night before Jacob's sad departure, Jacob and John Paul slept together knowing that this could be the last time in this life that they would see each other again. They talked long into the night and finally they were quiet and wanted to ease their minds before morning. John Paul could not sleep, but lay very still. Thinking that his brother was asleep, Jacob slipped out of bed and onto his knees to pray to his Maker one more time in his father's home. The prayer so deeply impressed John Paul, that a tender spot was raised in his heart to find the religion that could give a young

¹²Missionary Journal of John Paul Kunzler, Volume II (1910) and Family Life, pp. 127-128.

man faith to offer such a prayer.

In 1880, John Paul's sister Anna Barbara (Babetta) joined the Mormon Church and left for America on 17 May 1882. She traveled to Utah to be with her brother Jacob in Rosette, Box Elder, Utah.

Then, in the late afternoon of 3 September 1882, Hans Jacob's family home burned to the ground. Not a thing was saved in the whole house and the family barely escaped with their lives. Two sisters of John Paul nearly burned to death. The family had to separate; some with one sister to a neighbor's home and some with the other sister to another neighbor's home, doing all in their power to try and give aid to their daughters and sisters to recover. John Paul's youngest sister Bertha died after three weeks of terrible suffering. Not long after the home had burned down and Babetta had left for America, John Paul's father came to him and said, "Now John Paul, it is settled, we go to America to Jacob and Babette."

John Paul and his father Hans Jacob were both baptized members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the beautiful Rhine River on the 31st of March 1883. Soon afterwards (within the same year), his aged parents, John Paul and his sister Catharine, who was still very weak, left their beloved Switzerland and journeyed to Utah. Prior to the family's departure for America, three of John Paul's grown siblings had died within a few years. Bertha died a few months before they left.

The Kunzler family arrived in Ogden, Utah, in June 1883. They traveled by rail to Kelton, Utah. From there they journeyed by wagon to Park Valley and on to Rosette, Utah where their Jacob was living. John Paul's father (Hans Jacob) was so homesick he left his trunks on a railroad car in Kelton for two weeks. So, Hans Jacob, his wife (Maria Elizabeth, and their children John Paul, Babetta, and Catherine went south, by the Great Salt Lake, to locate a home for the family. John Paul's family made their home in Willard, Box Elder, Utah, saying that it reminded him of Switzerland more than any place he had seen. Here John Paul worked for the Northern Railroad and also helped his father on the farm for many years. He cut the rock used in the building of the R.B. Baird home of Willard and a number of other stone buildings.



Steam locomotive¹⁴

John Paul married Susanna Barbara Braegger in the Logan temple, 14 November 1888. They were blessed with eight children. Susanna Barbara died after the birth of a pair

¹³Details of the Kuenzlers' travels to Utah can be found in the account of John Paul Kuenzler's wife, Susanna Barbara Braegger, the next entry in this book.

^{14&}lt;u>http://www.trains.com</u>. Picture depicts the New York Central 4-4-0 No. 999, one of a popular type of steam locomotive used with passenger trains in the latter part of the 19th century.

of twin boys, 14 July 1905. This was one of the great trials of John Paul's life.

Three years later, John Paul accepted a mission call to his native land of Switzerland. This gave him the wonderful opportunity of once again meeting many relatives and friends, and bearing his testimony to them. While there, he once again got to see his father's only brother, who then was ninety-two years old. John Paul returned to Willard, Utah on the 25th of December 1910.

On 2 May 1918, he married Ida Braun Wolsky in the Logan Temple for eternity.

John Paul's home was disturbed by the floods that hit Willard; one on the 13th of August 1923 and then again on the 31st of July 1936. The last flood tired him greatly, but he did not complain. However, from that time on, his health gave way and on the night of 21 September 1936 he went to sleep and awakened in the eternal world. He was buried in the Willard, Box Elder, Utah cemetery.

--Written by Caroline Kunzler Perry, daughter (Additional corrections & editing by Norma Kunzler Gessel & Iris Kunzler Meservy, granddaughters, and Michele M. Meservy)