

HISTORY OF JOHANNES BOSS

Johannes Boss was born 2 November, 1831, at Guendlischwand, Bern, Switzerland, a son of Konrad Boss and Margaretha Boss. He married Marianne Gertsch in 1857. They were parents of twelve children, eight of whom emigrated to America. His wife Marianne died in Switzerland 22 August, 1885. Johannes was then married the second time to Margaretha Gertsch 28 April, 1891. She was a niece to his first wife. They came to America in May 1891, and became the parents of nine more children. He was the father of a total of 21 children.

The following was written of Johannes Boss by his grandson, Hans Boss III, from Zweileutschinen, Bern, Switzerland, and sent to my mother, Ida K. Boss, 29 August 1960:

"I was barely six years of age in 1891 when grandfather emigrated to America. I therefore don't know very much about him. He was very friendly to us children and quite generous. He was a hard-working, well-known carpenter, which is evidenced by the various schools and hotels which he built. He was also a farmer. He worked very hard to support his large family. All of his children grew to be honorable people, both here in Switzerland and in America.

"When he and his young bride emigrated to America early in the year 1891, three of his sons remained here in Switzerland. They were Johannes (my father), Uncle Christian and Uncle Fredrick. These three brothers purchased grandfather's home and lot. I also remember that these three brothers tried to persuade grandfather to leave his two young sons, Adolf and Peter, here. He couldn't, however, bring himself to do it, and today we have seen that it was for the best."

The remainder of this history was taken from an article written by Arnold Boss, as well as some accounts of events which Arnold remembered.

Johannes Boss was a farmer, and after his marriage started to do carpenter work. He developed his talents until he became a contractor and architect of renown in the Berner Oberland in Switzerland. He built many beautiful homes in Switzerland which were greatly admired by tourists who passed through the mountains from year to year. He also built several costly hotels, and during their erection he employed hundreds of men. He handled huge sums of money which he said must have run into several thousand dollars. During all the years of his building career, he was never found to misappropriate any funds. His honesty and integrity were never questioned. He managed his employees without labor difficulties, and they always respected him. It was the custom in the Alps that whenever a public building of any kind was completed, a great celebration was held in honor of the event, and the builder or architect was the honored guest. He related that at these exercises he had to occupy a seat with other dignitaries which placed him before the people. Since he was modest in disposition and a man of very little show, he said it was more a source of embarrassment to him than of pleasure. He remembered that at one time a beautiful hotel had just been completed and a banquet was being held in celebration. Wine was served to the guests, and cigars were being passed. He had never in his life smoked and declined to accept a cigar offered to him. His friends labored with him to accept just one and smoke with them on this occasion for friendship's sake, so he finally yielded. Someone lit his cigar while he was engaged in conversation with another, and not paying attention, put the cigar in his mouth backwards, burning his mouth severely. In surprise and anger he threw it on the floor, and several people near him laughed. He said that was the first and last cigar he ever took. That was his only experience with tobacco.

Johannes Boss was very influential in the town of Guendlischwand. His counsel was often sought because of his reputation throughout the Alpine country. His ability as a community benefactor was recognized as he proceeded in the building profession. He was chosen as mayor of Guendlischwand and held that public office with distinction until 1888. He was a man beloved by all in his community. His word

was better than a bond, and his ability and integrity were never questioned. He was also president of the school commission for several years. He was a member of the Lutheran Church. He soon lost his influence and prestige when he embraced Mormonism, however.

He was a great mathematician and could handle figures with lightning speed. He never used a pencil to figure with, but used his head. He was at home in the higher forms of mathematics and could tell almost to a fraction of a foot how much lumber was necessary to construct a certain size building. His materials were never short when construction started or when construction was completed. He had a photographic mind and always carried a mental picture of the work that lay before him.

His farming was confined to small acreages, both in Switzerland and in America. He owned some choice cows and always attempted to grow sufficient food upon his land to sustain his family and his animals. He was a lover of healthy and beautiful animals, and they were always provided with comfortable quarters.

Johannes Boss suffered with prostate gland trouble for some time before his death on 12 March, 1912, in Midway, Utah. His son, Arnold, remembered seeing him sit in a chair by the window in the kitchen of his Midway home, which he built. He would read with one eye closed which had given him trouble. Arnold also sat in a place by the stove and read. One day his father commented to him after he had watched him read for a while, "son, see that you get into the habit of reading. If you will always read throughout your life, you will amount to something."

Johannes Boss had the experience of seeing both his parents buried in Switzerland before coming to America. His parents left their home to him after their death.

This History was written by Minerva Boss Jessee

The following was written by Ida Kunz Boss

Johannes Boss was born, 2nd Nov., 1831, at Gundlischwand, Bern, Switzerland, the 4th child of six children, three boys and three girls. His father's name was Conrad Boss, born 10 April 1799, in Gundlischwand, Bern, Switzerland, and died 21 Dec. 1867. His mother's name was Margaretha Boss, born 28 April, 1805, and died 10 Feb. 1889. He received his education in Switzerland, became a great carpenter and contractor and built many frame homes in Switzerland. He married Marianna Gertsch when 26 years old in 1857.

He heard the gospel and accepted it and was baptized into the Church, 26 Dec., 1875, by Henry Eyring and was confirmed by him the same day. There were 12 sons and daughters born to them, 8 of which accepted the Gospel and immigrated to America. Those who immigrated were Marianna, Margaretha, Elizabeth, Rudolph, Emma, Magdalena, Adolph and Peter. Johannes Boss, born 2nd Nov., 1831. Joseph Smith was President of the church at that time which was organized in Apr. 1830. Andrew Jackson was President of the U.S.A. Johannes immigrated in 1891. Wilford Woodruff was President of the church and Benjamin Harrison was President of the U.S.A.