

Sophie Kaestli Jenkins

From Switzerland to Utah

Written by Mary Louise Jenkins Lillian, 2012

Sophie Kaestli was my paternal grandmother. In about 1892, her parents, younger sister and younger brother immigrated to Utah ahead of her. Sophie stayed behind in St. Margrethen, Switzerland, to sell the family property. After disposing of the property, Sophie went by train to the French coast and then by ship to Glasgow, Scotland. There she boarded the S. S. Furnessia. After stops in England and Ireland, the ship arrived in New York City. They arrived at Ellis Island on May 1, 1895¹. Sophie is listed on the ship's passenger list as "Sophia Kasth, Seamstress." She had 3 pieces of baggage on board. She later told her children about the journey by sea: she was so frightened of the ship tipping too far to one side that she spent a good deal of the journey counting the numbers of passengers on each side of the ship; then she would place herself on the side that was lighter. Her memory of arriving in New York was that she saw and tasted a banana for the first time. She did not care for the taste of it.

Upon arriving in Logan, Utah, where her family had settled, Sophie lived with her parents and siblings. On December 13, 1899, she married a widower, David Jenkins, who was about 30 years older than her. Sophie and David had five sons. All five sons became medical doctors to Sophie's delight. Sophie moved to Salt Lake City in about 1950 and remained there until her death in 1960. She is buried in Logan, Utah, alongside her husband. She gave many small souvenirs of Switzerland to her grandchildren; likely they were in the three pieces of baggage she brought from Switzerland. She also left beautiful handmade baby dresses which were worn by her five sons and are now used as christening dresses for her great-grandchildren.

Below are two photos of Sophie Kaestli. One was taken before leaving her home in Switzerland and the other after arriving in Logan, Utah, about 1895.



Sophie Kaestli
Switzerland, About 1890



Sophie Kaestli
Logan, Utah, About 1895

¹ Almost one year later, Sophie's future husband, David Jenkins, sailed from Glasgow to New York aboard the Furnessia.

Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild

SS Furnessia

Glasgow, Scotland & Moville, Ireland to New York
1 May 1895

DISTRICT OF New York – PORT OF New York

I, J Harris Master of the S.S. Furnessia do solemnly, sincerely and truly swear that the following Dist or Manifest subscribed by me, and now delivered by me to the Collector of Customs in the District of the City of New York, is a full and perfect list of all the passengers taken on board said vessel at Glasgow and Moville from which port or ports the said vessel has now arrived; and that on said list is truly designated the age, sex, calling or occupation, the port of embarkations, the number of pieces of baggage, of all the passengers, the date and cause of death of any such passengers who may have died on the voyage, and also a statement, so far as it can be ascertained, with reference to the intention of each immigrant passenger as to a protracted sojourn in this country and also, in regard to Cabin passengers, the country of which they are citizens, and of passengers other than cabin passengers, their native country, their intended destination or location in the United States, and whether they are citizens of the United States, or not, and the location of compartment or space occupied by each, as required by the Passenger Act of 1882 and the Regulations of the Secretary of the Treasury, So help me God.
(Signed) J. Harris Master Sworn to before me this 1 day of May 1895 (Signed unreadable) Deputy Collector.

Information found at: immigrantships.net



S. S. Furnessia