

SERGE LOUIS BALLIF

Serge Louis Ballif, president of the Swiss and German Mission, was born April 17, 1821, in Ferroy, near Lausanne, Canton Vaud, Switzerland, the son of Jean Francois Fredrick Ballif and Susanne Alexandrina Begue, who were married October 9, 1815. Serge's father was at one time secretary of the Duke de Richelieu, Governor of Middle Russia.

Serge Ballif was educated in Switzerland and Odessa, Russia, receiving a classical education. After his return to Switzerland from Russia, he became a convert to "Mormonism" and was baptized by Thomas B. H. Stenhouse, June 6, 1852. He was quite wealthy when he joined the Church and spent his means freely feeding the Elders and poor Saints. He also financed the printing of the periodical "Reflecteur" published in the interest of the Church in Switzerland, and paid for printing several tracts.

Soon he was ordained to the Priesthood and called to labor as a local missionary. After laboring for several years in Basil, he was sent to Neuchatel. In the village of Saules in the valley of Russ (seven miles from Neuchatel), he baptized three families, all of whom soon emigrated to Utah. Brother Ballif emigrated to America (Utah) in 1854, together with ten families from Switzerland, (namely three from the Valley of Russ and the others from Lausanne and Geneva), traveling under the direction of James Woodard. This small company of Saints left Switzerland February 10, 1854, and arrived in Salt Lake City October 28, 1854. Several of the company died with cholera near Kansas City and Leavenworth.

After arriving in the Valley, Brother Ballif located in Big Cottonwood and participated in the Echo Canyon war, spending considerable time in the mountains riding a mule. In 1858 he went south in the general move. Not being successful as a farmer, he located temporarily in Ogden, and in the spring of 1860 he settled in Logan, Utah, where he made his home until he died.

Being called on a mission to Europe, when his Logan home was about half finished, he left part of his family in Logan and part in Ogden and started on his mission in May 1860. He drove cattle across the plains and walked part of the way through the Southern States, and when he reached New York, he had thirty-eight cents left with which to cross the ocean. After laboring faithfully as a missionary in Switzerland two and a half years, he returned to Utah in charge of a company of emigrating Saints, who crossed the Atlantic in the ship "Windermere." Soon afterwards he was appointed to preside over the German meetings in Logan, which position he occupied until he died. During his presidency a meeting house was erected in Logan in which to hold German meetings.

In 1879-81 he filled another mission to Switzerland and Germany, during which he presided over the mission and returned in charge of a large company of emigrating Saints. While on this mission he was arrested in Berlin, August 16, 1880, for preaching the Gospel. For many years Brother Ballif acted as a president of a quorum of Seventy and remained faithful and true to the Church till the day of his death which occurred in Logan, April 20, 1901.

Brother Ballif was a well educated man, understood German and French and Russian almost to perfection and could read Latin and Greek. He was a humble and unassuming man and on that account perhaps was not appreciated as much as he would have been of a more aggressive nature.

In 1848 (November 24) he married Elise LaCoultre and before he left the old country, three daughters (Louisa, Marie and Helene) were born to him at Lausanne. His wife died May 13, 1872, in Logan, after bearing him nine children, one of whom is Serge F. Ballif, who now presides over the Cache Stake of Zion. The names of the other children are Louisa Alexandrine, Marie Jean, Helene, Kathinka Carolina, Rachel Elizabeth, Sergine Cecile, Serge Fredrick, John Lyman, Jenny Charlotte.

In February 1857, Brother Ballif married Harriette Jeanette Vuffrey, a native of Switzerland. This wife also bore her husband nine children, namely: Julia Susanne, Franklin Fredrick, Olga, Louis Henry, Eva, Henrietta Allie, Adeline Marie, and Joseph Fenelon.