



Flight from Persecution to the 'Valley of Praise'

Ferdinand Müller, was a young boy living in Prussia when King Frederick William III decreed that the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches become unified. Those Lutherans who did not obey this new law were prosecuted, fined or imprisoned. Persecution became so severe that his family's only hope for religious freedom was to flee their country of birth and emigrate to South Australia.

On their ship the *Skjold*, passengers' flagging spirits were bolstered by Pastor Fritzsche, with Bible study a regular activity on the ship. Upon arrival at Port Misery, all were transported to Klemzig where some got work, while others relocated to Hahndorf, including Ferdinand and his brothers.

Ferdinand soon obtained work as a shepherd in the Onkaparinga district and it wasn't long before he came across a suitable location for a settlement. He conveyed this information back to his fellow passengers of the *Skjold* with the result that 18 families settled in this valley, which was named Lobethal, meaning Valley of Praise. In September 1842, with Pastor Fritzsche as his mentor, Ferdinand became a student at the newly constructed Lobethal College. His calling was to serve as a missionary for the native Aborigines but Pastor Fritzsche

reminded him foremost of his duties to the Lutheran community. Life for the new migrants was tough and food was scarce but the generosity of unknown donors



Lobethal Lutheran School [Source: <http://lobethal.sa.au/>]

with baskets of food was welcomed by all. Ferdinand spent a great deal of time travelling the countryside with his teacher, Pastor Fritzsche for pastoral visits and teacher instruction. Often they would be away for eight days camping under the skies in both fine weather and rain.

In January 1846 Ferdinand married Auguste Wilhelmine Kleintz in a private home in Lobethal. They had eight children together. A year after his marriage he was the first student to complete his training from Lobethal College and went on to teach at the new Lobethal Lutheran School where his students received religious and secular schooling. Ferdinand resigned from teaching in November 1883 after 42 years of instructing the youth of Lobethal. He died peacefully in his sleep on November 24 1891 after a bout of influenza. He is buried in the new Lobethal Cemetery alongside his wife Auguste.

Ferdinand MÜLLER [1813-1891]

Married Auguste Wilhelmine KLEINITZ
On 29 January 1846 in Lobethal

Departed 3 July 1841
Arrived 28 October 1841 on the

Skjold

Children of Ferdinand & Auguste:

Auguste (1847-1934) m T F OPPATT

Johann (1850-1922)

Paul (1852-1923)

Hulda (1855-1935) m A G MOESER

Adolph (1857-1919)

Emilie (1860-1939) m H C MENGERSEN

Philipp (1863-?)

Anna (1867-1936) m F J DOBSON

From information provided by Rosemary Wong,
Ferdinand's great-great-granddaughter
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