



Kunsting Family Park History

Frank Kunsting, a native of Westphalia, Germany, came to California in 1879 and became a well-known business man in Sacramento and Franklin. Frank Kunsting and his family were the beginnings of what the Franklin and Elk Grove areas are today.

Born February 11, 1855, Frank was the son of Anton and Catherine Kunsting. Frank depended on his own resources and ability for his progress after his mother died when he was eleven years old and his father passing away when he was fourteen. He received an education while in Germany and became a very intelligent business man. He served as a soldier for his native country in the Franco-Prussian war. He later learned more business skills while living in Cologne, Germany, as a bookkeeper.

Frank lived in Sacramento for ten years and worked as a bookkeeper in the Pioneer Bakery, before moving to Franklin in 1889. From that point on he was engaged in the mercantile business. Soon after moving to Franklin, Frank married Bernardina Hoffnecht who was the niece of Frank Luttig. Bernardina was also born in Westphalia, Germany, and came to Sacramento to help her uncle Frank Luttig with his general merchandise store and saloon. After Frank Luttig passed away, Frank and Bernardina Kunsting continued to run the store.

Under Frank and Bernardina's proprietorship, the general merchandise store grew to include a notary public, a Freeport telephone exchange, and the Franklin Post Office. During this time Frank brought his nephew, F. Meinard Kunsting, from Germany to help with the growing business.

After Frank Kunsting passed away December 3, 1903, the general store was operated in partnership between Henry Luttig Sr., son of Frank Luttig, and F. Meinard Kunsting. A few years later, F. Meinard Kunsting left the partnership and purchased the Franklin Hotel & Saloon across the street in Franklin, renaming the business "Kunstings Resort". Next to the saloon, Meinard built a two story building with a dance hall upstairs. This became the center of community activity.

This Kunsting property was a famous Franklin landmark. The traveling circus came to Franklin each year and set up on the Kunsting property behind the hotel. The hotel also sponsored masquerade dances and chicken suppers. Many visitors would come from Sacramento to partake in the festivities and dance the night away.

F. Meinard Kunsting married Nellie Frey who was also part of a well-known Franklin area family. Together they had two girls, Helen (Johnson) and Agnes (Buscher). After F. Meinard Kunsting passed away at the age of 33, Nellie married Henry Luttig Sr.

The home built by Frank Kunsting in 1895 was moved from Franklin Boulevard to Bilby Road and has been restored by Dennis Buscher, grandson of F. Meinard Kunsting.

The information within this document was created at the time of park dedication and may not be current.