



## Keema Park History

The Keemas first came to Franklin in 1852 when Henry Keema, a single man, came to California from Missouri. Henry was a new immigrant from Prussia who came to America to avoid joining the Prussian Army. He established himself in the Franklin area and married Mary Ehrhardt, daughter of John Ehrhardt in 1865. Five children were born into this union: Mary Louise "Lula", Frederick William, Laura Catherine, John Milford and Henry Newton. They farmed the property known as Keema Mound, an area near the intersection of Franklin Boulevard and Lambert Road.

October 17, 1874 brought the arrival of 16 new Keemas to the Franklin area. Henry and Mary Keema picked up Henry's 2 brothers, Carl and George, that day from the train depot in Sacramento. Carl and George were coal miners from Borbeck, Wesfalen, Prussia. Carl and his wife Anna had 5 children: Friederich, Wilhelmine, Anna, Elise, and Wilhelm. George and Minnie Keema reared 6 children: Mary, Annie, Louisa, Rachel, Minnie, and Fredrika. Both families joined Henry and Mary at the Keema Mound. During the 1880s, the Keema family donated land at the corner of Bruceville and Lambert Roads for a community school. The Carroll School provided the education of many children in Bruceville and Franklin from 1877 until 1946.

George Keema's family left Franklin in 1884 and acquired property in Cool, El Dorado County. Henry and Carl Keema and their families remained in Franklin. Their families continued to acquire more land and worked a variety of jobs - farming, dairying, raising cattle and horses, and blacksmithing. Henry Keema's son John Milford Keema, was a Sacramento County Supervisor and Henry Keema's oldest son, Henry Newton Keema, ran the post office in the town of Bruceville. John Milford Keema's son, Elwood "Bud" Keema, served as superintendent of the Grant Union High School District for 25 years.

Carl Keema's descendants continued to farm and contribute to the betterment of the Franklin/Elk Grove community. Only 3 of the 5 children of Carl and Anna Keema survived to adulthood: Friederich "Fritz" Keema, Anna (Keema) Glann and Wilhelmine (Keema) Waite. Anna (Keema) Glann's only child died during childhood. Wilhelmine (Keema) Waite's grandson Ed Kloss and his descendants still live in Elk Grove. Many of Fritz Keema's descendants remain in the Franklin area. Leora (Strong) Keema was a teacher for Elk Grove schools for many years. Delores (Keema) Malka spent many years working for the Elk Grove School District. Kathy (Keema) Hospenthal is currently a teacher in the Elk Grove Unified School District.

Keema descendants continue to be involved in agriculture, the community, and local schools. Ed and Ethel Keema still live in the Franklin area and continue to be involved in various community activities. Ed and Ethel have been board members for the Rhodes School, assisted with the Strauss Festival for the past 12 years, and have assisted the Elk Grove Historical Society. Keema children still attend Franklin Elementary, Joseph Kerr Middle School, and Elk Grove High School.

Several generations of the Keema family are buried in the Franklin Cemetery, including Henry, Carl, their wives and their young children.

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