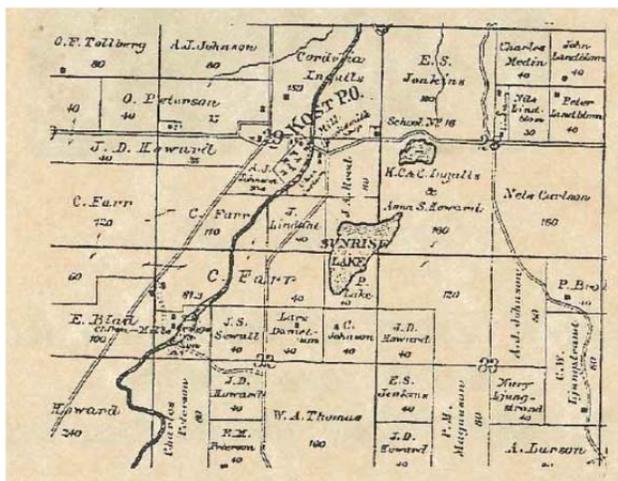


A Brief History of Ferdinand A. Kost and the legacy of the Vanished Village that he founded

Information provided by Chisago County Historical Society.

Ferdinand "Fred" A. Kost was born about 1848 in Germany/Poland area. He came to Minnesota in 1865 and worked in a mill at Marine on the St. Croix. He married Anna Mattson and moved to Franconia.

The in 1883, he moved to the central prairie area of the county and built a first class roller flouring mill at the bend in the river between the two bridges across the sunrise river. The mill cost \$13,000 to build. He also built a saw mill at the same time.



In 1884, he established a post office and became the first postmaster for the new village of "Kost".

Kost was known for his milling skills. Most of the early farmers used oxen teams for their mill trips. Ephraim Johnson, one of those early farmers, remembered one day when there were 80 ox carts parked around the mill waiting their turn to get grain ground into flour. The carts had come from as far away as Stillwater, North Branch, Cambridge, and Rush City.

During peak times, the mill operated day and night. As many as 100 barrels of flour could be produced in a 24 hour period. During this time, Kost also operated the Riverside Mill in Sunrise in a building leased from the Mold family.



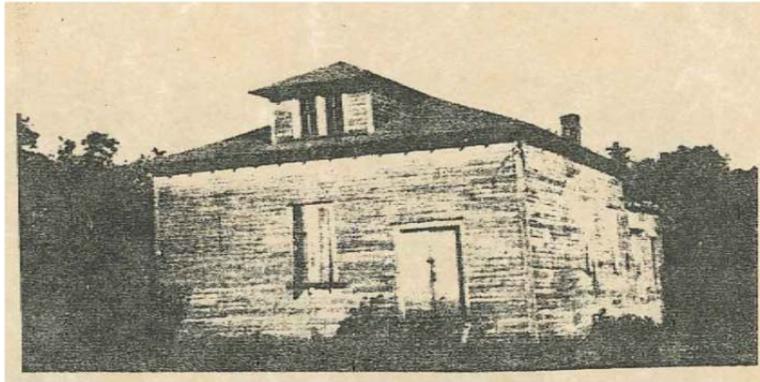
This photo shows that four story mill. The building in the lower right hand corner is the barn where customers could leave their teams overnight while waiting for flour. The building in the upper right side is the boarding house where Annie Kost provided excellent meals for waiting patrons.

In April 1886, rain and high water swept away many of the bridges in the area. The high water on the Sunrise River seriously crippled Kost's mill dam by washing out a portion of one end. Kost had to stop grinding flour for a week while he repaired the dam.

In 1889, a tragic fire burnt the mill to the ground. After the mill burnt, Kost brought out the Clifton Mill, which had been owned and operated by S.S. Griggs & Co. just up the river. This is the site of the present Kost Dam Park.

May of 1890, Kost had the misfortune to lose three fingers and a portion of his hand in a sawmill accident. Not long after, he sold out to P.K. Nelson of Osceola, WI. Charlie Oberg built the cement dam we see today for Nelson who continued to mill flour and saw timber for many years. After he quit the mill business, in the late 1910's, Mr. Nelson installed two electric turbines and sold power to Eastern Minnesota Power Company.

Eastern Minnesota Power Company provided the electrical power for the City of North Branch from 1922 until 1940, when North Branch built their power plant.



The old power house (to the left) was torn down and the turbines dismantled in the late 1960's /early 1970's when the property was donated to Chisago County for use as a park.

At its height, the community of Kost had two sawmills, two flour mills, a feed mill, post office, several general stores, a watch repair shop, a blacksmith shop, church, cemetery, creamery, stagecoach stop, stable and several lodging houses.

Early classes for children were held at the C. Farr farmstead. A one room school was soon built and later remodeled into two rooms. When School District #16 closed, children were bussed into North Branch.

Not much of the village of Kost exists today. The Kost Evangelical Free Church, founded in 1886, and its cemetery are the current focal point of the community. By 1911, businesses had started moving to nearby railroad towns. In September 1942, the village was struck by straight line winds which did significant damage. It was hit again in the summer of 1944 and most of the remaining storefronts and barns were lost and never rebuilt.