

Franklin Isham Huntington



Franklin was born July 9, 1880 in Valparaiso, Indiana. He made his first visit to Grand County in June, 1901. By September 1901 he was in Victor, CO working as a mining engineer. In 1903 he left that area headed to Hahn's Peak and made a stopover at Grand Lake. He was persuaded by local people to settle in Grand County, so he set-up headquarters in Hot Sulphur Springs, the county seat. He got a start by taking contracts from the Federal general land office to subdivide already-surveyed Township exteriors into Sections. This gained him familiarity with the land survey field notes. He became the County Surveyor of Grand County in 1904 and held the office almost continuously since. The County Surveyor did not get a salary, but got the entire County's surveying work, under his customary fees. Also, he had the authority and privilege of re-establishing obliterated Section corners where such was involved in his practice. Unofficial surveyors did not have such authority.

Franklin met his wife, Harriet, at a chapel in Estes Park where she was playing the organ. She was from Longmont, CO. They were married December 28, 1904 in Longmont and settled in Hot Sulphur Springs. Their five children were born there.

In 1912 he made an inspection and survey of the Fall River Pass on the west side from the Grand River to Poudre Lake. In 1917 he was employed by the Colorado State Highway Commission to make a definitive alignment survey for the road from the North fork of the Colorado River to Milner Pass, and then on to Chapin Pass. Franklin surveyed and mapped the plans for the Grand Lake Lodge built in 1920. (More information about these projects can be found under Historic Places.)

Franklin died February 3, 1947 in Denver at the Presbyterian Hospital. He had undergone an operation, due to a kidney ailment, which was successful, but complications subsequent to the operation caused his death. Funeral services were held in Hot Sulphur Springs and interment was in the Longmont cemetery.

Survivors include his widow, the former Harriet Alison Morgan of Longmont; two sons, S. Sterling Huntington of Idaho Springs and M. Park Huntington of Oklahoma City; three daughters, Mrs. Marjorie A. Moore of Hot Sulphur Springs, Mrs. Inez M. George of Artesia, and Mrs. Carol B. Platt of Grand Junction; a brother; two sisters; and five grandchildren.

Obituary prepared by Mary Lyons Cairns, another pioneer and life-long friend of Frank Huntington's published Sky Hi News Feb 14, 1947.

Franklin Isham Huntington was born in Valparaiso, Indiana, July 9, 1880 and departed this life at 12:25 Monday, February 3 in Denver Colorado at the age of 66 years, 6 months and 24 days.

He came to Colorado in 1900 first settling in Estes Park. Soon afterward he came to Hot Sulphur Springs to make his home and resided there until his death. He was an able engineer and had the enviable record of holding the office of County Surveyor almost continuously since he was first elected in 1904. On December 28, 1904 he was married to Harriet A. Morgan, who survives him; he is also survived by two sons, Parke and Sterling and by three daughters, Marjorie Moore, Inez George, and Carol Platt; and by five grandchildren, Frederick, Carroll and Judy Huntington and Marilyn and Jon Moore.

It matters little where or when a man is born or at what place or time his life is over. What does matter is how he lives in the years that are given him, what use he makes of his God-given talents, and how much he gives of himself to his family and friends.

Of Frank Huntington it can justly be said that it was his great good fortune to possess that rarest thing in life – the ability to form friendships that were to outlast him. He treated friendships as though they were his most prized possessions. He was a gentleman always; dignified, courteous, ever seemingly glad to see his friends who were scattered far and wide throughout the whole of Middle Park. Yet his inherent dignity subtracted nothing from his love of a good time; he was an accomplished violinist and enjoyed music and dancing to the full.

To those now living, the time will never come when he will cease to be missed, not only for his personality but also for his accurate and painstaking surveys and calculations. Often in a dispute over boundaries it has been said: "We'll ask Frank where the lines are; he will know." And he did know. People who have relied and depended upon his accuracy for over forty years will find the adjustment more than difficult. Most of Grand County can say in all sincerity: "He was my good friend".

During his lifetime he witnessed vast changes and development in Middle Park. His first journeys into the county were by stagecoach from Georgetown, over narrow, rutty roads. He was to witness the coming of the Moffat Railroad into Hot Sulphur Springs in 1905; the creation of the Rocky Mountain National Park; and the development of the Colorado-Big Thompson project. He saw Estes Park and Grand Lake joined by the Fall River road, part of which he surveyed. He eventually resigned from this survey because, as he said, he much preferred working among his home people. With Fred Sprague he platted the first trail over Flat Top down the North Inlet to Grand Lake in June, 1901. The blazing of this short trail to join Grand Lake and Estes Park was an accomplishment or merit for the need of it had long been felt.

Few noticed any changes in him and his death came as a shock. Although he was often extremely tired, and for some time he must have been seriously ill, if asked how he felt he always responded that he was "feeling just fine." Through self control and not burdening his friends with complaints, he avoided until the last, depressing those that were near and dear to him.

Each of his days has been filled with accomplishments. His last illness was of short duration. Who will say that it is not best to go when we are needed most?

