

ST. FRANCIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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The following is taken from a report written by Kim Cummings entitled "St. Francis Street Names and Their History" (continued).

Jared Thompson, II, Esquire

Jared Thompson, II, who was born on January 31, 1805 and died on February 21, 1890, was a native of Connecticut. Thompson came to Milwaukee from the east in 1837. He opened a tin store on East Water Street in Milwaukee, and he became a prominent man in business, church, and civic affairs. Like many well-to-do Milwaukee men of the time, he purchased land in the Town of Lake which was more desirable because it was higher land.

He first achieved notoriety as one of the organizers of the Wisconsin Temperance Movement. He served politically, first as a Whig and later as a Republican, as State Assemblyman for the sixth ward and as chairman of the board of the Town of Lake.

Jared Thompson, II was the first chairman of the Town of Lake, which is the township that St. Francis, Bay View, and Cudahy grew out of. He was active in politics at every level. He was also dedicated to the principles of his church. He was a dedicated Methodist minister who held services in a one-room building across the street from the current Lake Protestant Cemetery. Thompson originally owned the land of the cemetery and the land across the street, where the previous Thompson School and current Thompson Meadows exist. He donated six acres of the land to be used as cemetery plots, enough for 42 plots. In 1855, Thompson gave six of those plots to his friends, including Zebedee Packard and Elijah Estes.

He also became Justice of the Peace in April of 1855. A little over two months after being elected to this post, a dead person, name unknown was found washed up on the beach of the lake at the south point near Mrs. Sam Sexton's. There appeared to be no marks of violence on the body so no inquest was held. A coffin was provided and the body was conveyed to the Lake Protestant Cemetery in the Town of Lake and decently interred. The following quote is from the June 8, 1855 Sentinel "Any person wishing further particulars can inquire of the undersigned" Jared Thompson, Justice of the Peace. Three more bodies were washed ashore in September of that year, victims of the sinking of the merchant ship Sebastopol. Elijah Estes was fellow Justice of the Peace with Jared Thompson at the time of the Sebastopol disaster.

Thompson was apparently a creditable farmer also. The Sentinel, which continually supported the "substantial citizen" in all his political endeavors, praised Jared's having raised 300 bushels of peach plow potatoes from 12 bushels of seed. Peach plow was a potato that was particularly free from rot that can be kept longer than any other potato.

George H. Wentworth

A native of Lexington, Kentucky, George H. Wentworth left home at the age of 15 to mine lead at Mineral Point. He came to Milwaukee in 1835 and purchased 160 acres in Lake Township. He built the land in to a half section, then sold it and moved to Milwaukee. Wentworth's wife, Sylvia Packard Wentworth, came to a land grant in the township with her father from Bennington, Vermont. Married August 29, 1836, they had seven children.

George Wentworth originally received the land where St. Francis High School is currently located, as part of 160 acres as a soldier's grant from the government. Prior to this, it was Indian Territory. He built his house and barn there, and started his family. The family lived on the farm until 1891. In 1892, Wentworth sold it to the South Point Park Company for possible development. They never developed it, and sold it in 1917 to the Wisconsin General Railway Company. They were forced to sell the land due to financial troubles and Wisconsin Electric Power Company bought it. The Electric Power Company was planning on having their corporate headquarters there, but for some reason, this never happened, and so they just held on to the land and people just rented the property until the School Board bought it. Three families rented the land, house and barn between 1900 and 1956.

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St. Francis Seed Sale

The St. Francis Historical Society will have their 2nd annual Heritage Seed Sale this year. Vegetable and flower seed packets from Seed Savers Exchange will be available for sale from February 5th April 30th 2011.

Bill Moore, a St. Francis resident, gardener and past Park Commission Nursery Man, will return to give a media presentation showing his garden's progress from January through December using Heritage seeds. He will give ideas on starting and cultivating a productive vegetable garden.

Date: Saturday, February 5th, 2011
Time: 1 PM
Where: St. Francis Public Library
Cost: Free

Flower gardening in Wisconsin can be very colorful. Tips will be given to keep your garden beautiful using annual and perennial flowers.. Heritage seeds will be featured.

Date: March 12, 2011
Time: 1 PM
Where: St. Francis Public Library, Hoppe Room
Cost: Free