

# Thompson School

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The first public school in the St. Francis area (ed. at the time, the 'Town of Lake' area) was Thompson School. Jared Thompson owned the land on which it was built. He donated the land in 1865, with the stipulation that it be used for a school. At the first meeting for the town regarding schools, 6 votes were cast. James Bonniwell, the owner of the farm that was to be the location of the Lakeside Power Plant, was elected clerk of the school district with four votes. Charles Tesch was elected secretary and treasurer. George Wentworth and George Tesch submitted bids for loads of cord wood. The wood was purchased from Tesch, the lowest bidder at four dollars per cord. James Bonniwell was appointed to have some iron seats cast for the schoolhouse. A tax would be levied for \$20 for wood, \$10 for incidental expenses, and \$30 for indebtedness.

The school opened for classes in 1867. The town school 'board' agreed to hire a male teacher to teach for 4 months in the winter and a female teacher for three months in the summer. The male teacher was R. R. Wentworth. He taught school from November to March. His salary was \$50 per month and his duties included lighting the fire, sweeping the school and keeping the premises in an orderly fashion. The female teacher was E. Ophelia Thompson. Her salary was \$20 per month. She taught during the summer.

In 1904, Thompson School had 30 pupils. The school year was gradually lengthened until a 10-month term was approved in 1910 by the school board. By 1910, the school only had one room. In 1914, the State Inspector said another teacher was needed, so the room was partitioned off and another teacher was added. There were no pencils or erasers or paper. Slates and slate pencils were used. The reading text was the McGuffey reader.

The school is no longer in existence. It was demolished in 1993 and is now the site of a senior complex.



Thompson School, 2100 E. North St. Avenue, was built around 1867 on land donated



